A TEACHER'S PERCEPTION TOWARD THE USE OF VOCABRA GAMES IN MASTERING ENGLISH VOCABULARY FOR EYL

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ABSTRACT

The core problem that young learner faced in language is about how to memorise new word. We know that English language is the universal language which is used to communicate with other nations. That is why it will have a good result to study English from basic level, especially for teaching and learning vocabulary. Giving the suitable media such as a game will give good effect in acquiring new words to make EYL enjoy in learning process. Many educators seek the suitable media in mastering English vocabulary for EYL. For that reason, recently, numbers of researchers propose a simple media used to improve in mastering English vocabulary named vocabra games. This media is still rarely used to enhance both vocabulary test and oral performance. This study aimed to investigate the teacher's perception toward the use of vocabra games in mastering English vocabulary for EYL. The research is a qualitative study used purposive sampling technique. Interview method has been used in this study by asking list of questions to the respondent that guided the teacher and researcher in a particular situation. This study revealed some findings related to the implementation of vocabra games for EYL. The findings are vocabra games improve students' vocabulary mastery; vocabra games give positive effects to the development of students' pronunciation, spelling, meaning, and using words. Some problem faced in the implementation of vocabra games; and the solutions proposed to deal with the problems.

Keywords: perception; vocabulary; vocabra games.

INTRODUCTION

In learning English the students are demanded to understand and use the language skill such as listening, speaking, reading and writing. But before the students achieve all of them, they should pass some steps in learning English. In the first step students will study vocabulary because it is the most important component in English. Vocabulary is a component of a language that is easy to study. There are so many ways to teach vocabulary and one of them is by using game. Most of teachers teach vocabulary using game to young learners. Of course the game

which is used by the teacher must be combined with a suitable teaching media. So it can be used to develop learning style of the children. Interview with the respondent of teacher class revealed that the English young learners have sufficient vocabulary mastery to be able to mention, remember, say, and write words rightly even though they do not know the meaning. From that case the respondent applies vocabra games in teaching English to young learners and make them acquired about new words curiously. Through Vocabra Game as a teaching media, it can help the teacher to teach English vocabulary to the students.

Teachers' Perception

There are some researchers define perception in different ways. Robbins (1994) defines perception as a process by which individuals organize and interpret their sensory impression to give meaning to their environment. According to Kotler (2000), perception describes the process of how a person selects, organizes, and interprets the information inputs to create a meaningful overall conception. Gibson, et al. (1996) provides a definition of perception as a cognitive process that is used by individuals to interpret and understand the world around it (the object). They also explain that the perception is the process of giving meaning to the environment by the individuals.

Fieldman (1999) defines perception as a process of sorting out, analyzing, interpreting, and integrating the stimuli involving in our sense, organs, and brain. According to Devito (1997), perception is the process when we become aware of many stimuli that affect our sense. Chih-Lun Hung and Feng-Chin Li (2017) define innovative teaching media will develop the students' vocabulary mastery and enjoy to study English in the class. In addition Barcelos (2003) states that language perceptions influence what language teachers do in the classroom.

Vocabulary

Caroline and David (2005: 121) say that vocabulary is the collection of words that an individual knows. Hatch and Brown (1995: 1) prove that the term of vocabulary refers to a list or set of words for a particular language or words that individual speakers of language might use. Ur (1996: 60) argues that vocabulary is the words we teach in the foreign language. It means that all words in foreign language that have been taught by teachers in order that the students can use those words in sentences or daily communication. Crystal (2003: 2) states that the vocabulary of a person is defined either as the set of all words that are understood by that person or the set of all words likely to be used by that person when constructing new sentences.

Brown (2001: 377) views vocabulary items as a boring list of words that must be defined and memorized by the student, lexical forms are seen in their central role in contextualized, meaningful language. Cerce and Murcia (2001: 285) state that vocabulary is central to language acquisition whether the language is first, second or foreign language. It is real that vocabulary plays an important role for everyone who wants to learn and master the language skills. Nation (2008: 30) states that the learner needs to know of the "words". It means that students need to know the words not only the meaning but also the spelling, pronouncing, and the usage of words.

Extracting from the statement above it can be concluded that vocabulary is a set of words or collection of words that must be memorized by a student or an individual speaker in order to construct new sentences or words covering its meaning, pronunciation, spelling, and using word.

Vocabra Games

Rider (2003) says that Abra Vocabra Game is real-world words, words that anyone is likely to read in a newspaper, hear on the news, read in a magazine. In fact, just seeing and hearing the words outside the classroom reinforces for students the idea that the words are useful and important ones to know. Hadfield (1999) summarizes that Abra Vocabra Game is memorizing, personalizing, and communicating vocabulary games which become a set of new words to integrate them into our existing word store easily based on in a daily activity. Samston (2001) says that Abra Vocabra Game is helping students improve their vocabulary as a relatively easy project for the classroom and one that reaps results almost immediately where this teaching media powerfully makes the students easy, interesting, practical and enjoyable in vocabulary mastery. Benham as cited in Rider (2003) summarizes that Abra Vocabra Game is helping the students to improve their vocabulary that's why they feel smarter and powerful to find themselves understanding more of what they read and what they hear. Larson as cited in Rider (2003) says that Abra Vocabra Game is the process to know the new word not only spelling but also explaining the position, because it should be based on the common words, not obscure words that the students will encounter only once or twice in a lifetime.

From the aforementioned statements, the researcher would like to find out the teacher's perception toward the use of vocabra games in mastering English vocabulary for EYL. As mentioned in several studies that vocabra games give effects on positive influence in mastering English vocabulary.

The Classroom Activities of Vocabra Games

Vocabulary Bee

The students can acquire new word by a vocabulary bee, conducted somewhat like a spelling bee. In a vocabulary bee, the class is divided into two teams. Unlike a spelling bee, however, students aren't eliminated from the game when they miss a word. Because students will probably know most of the words, it's a good idea to add question "levels," to make the game more interesting. Let each student to select one, two or three point question. For one-point question, students simply define the word correctly, and they can earn their team a point. Then ask students to repeat that word for pronunciation and spelling by the teacher. For two-point questions, they must define the word correctly and use it in a sentence. Three point questions require the student to define two words correctly and use both in one sentence that indicates their meaning. To get the students' ability to spell the words correctly, the teacher can give the jumbled letter. It can be the simple media to make the students understand how to spell the letter based on arrangement the letter.

Categories

The teacher asks students to work in small groups to categorize the words, to place at least three words in each category after the class has studied four or five word lists. Students should come up with their own categories. There are, of course, no limits to the number and kind of categories students might choose. Just a few examples: "adjectives," "words that begin with *t*," "words that describe someone who is mad," "words good for describing food," "words that might be used by a doctor," etc.

The teacher is not allowed to try to give the groups any hints. Insist that the students themselves determine the categories, and remind them that there is no one right answer to the exercise. As long as the category has done at least three words and the words must fit the category, the answer is correct. By these three words, the students can study pronunciation and spelling by the teacher's repetition. Then the teacher gives students some simple media such as sentences or pictures to match the three words before, so the students can get the meaning. This exercise really requires creative thinking and a strong understanding of the words. It is an excellent activity for review.

Sell It

The teacher divides the class into small groups, and give each group one of the assigned vocabulary words. The teacher ask the group to imagine being an advertisement agency hired to

sell the word to the rest of the class. The teacher gives students a short time to come up with an idea. For example the teacher gives three adjective in an advertisement: cheap, satisfied and delicious with three sentences to be matched to each other. The teacher can asks also the students to match the word based on clues for the other topic, it is the same media for sell it that the teacher sells the words to the students and the students will buy those words. So the student can study the meaning. Then the teacher can ask students to repeat those words by teacher's repetition to study pronunciation and spelling. Finally, the teacher can know how far the students understand the meaning words by asking them to use them in a sentence.

Dialogue

The teacher asks students to find the meaning in the bracket. The teacher also can ask them to write a short two or three-person dialogue (conversation) using all the words on the vocabulary list. Or ask them to design a short comic strip that includes all the words on the vocabulary list. As a usual simple media, the teacher can serve at least three words with three sentence randomly. Then the teacher asks the students to match them. After they know about the meaning, the teacher asks students to repeat those words to study the pronunciation and spelling. To encourage the students to study vocabulary, the teacher can use jumble words to make the students understand how to use the words to be a correct sentence.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study aimed to investigate the teacher's perception in implementing vocabra games to improve the English vocabulary mastery for EYL. The design of the study was a qualitative descriptive study using purposive sampling technique.

An English teacher from a school in Indonesia was selected to participate in this study based on his experience and knowledge through the implementation of vocabra games. The researcher used interview method to lead a qualitative process in discovering circumstances and perceptions realistically and totally in natural environment which emphasizes meanings, experiences, and definitions.

FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION

This study revealed some findings and interpretation, as follows:

Vocabra Games can improve English vocabulary mastery for EYL

The respondent argued that vocabra game is one of the suitable teaching media in mastering English vocabulary for EYL. There are several points which can be improved by vocabra games in regard to develop vocabulary mastery. They are pronouncing, spelling, meaning and using words (Ur, 1996: 60-62; Jackson and Amvela, 2000; Richards and Schmidt, 2002: 580; Thornbury, 2002: 15; Harmer, 1991: 158).

For pronouncing, the students use dialogue how to pronounce some words based on the topic given from the teacher. It is in line with Rider (2003: 13) who stated that vocabra game was an effective media in fostering the pronouncing of the participants. The students can use also categories based on the words categories such as the words about camping, the things in the house, public services or the other topic.

For spelling, the students use vocabulary bee.

It is in line with Rider (2003: 13) who stated that vocabra game was an effective media in fostering the spelling of the participants. In vocabulary bee, the students can be more active to get the students' ability to spell the words correctly, the teacher can give the jumbled letter. It can be the simple media to make the students understand how to spell the letter based on arrangement the letter.

For meaning, the students use sell it. In sell it like the situation in the market for transaction between seller and buyer, it can be the same for students and teacher in a transaction of acquiring new words.

It is in line with Rider (2003: 13) who stated that vocabra game was an effective media in fostering the meaning of the participants. The teacher can asks the students to match the word based on clues for the other topic, it is the same media for sell it that the teacher sells the words to the students and the students will buy those words. So the student can study the meaning.

For using words, the students use dialogue, sell it, or categories after they know the meaning of word from the topic given by the teacher, then the teacher can guide the students how to use the words correctly. It is in line with Rider (2003: 13) who stated that vocabra game was an effective media in fostering the using words of the participants.

*** Vocabra games can give positive effects for students' pronouncing, spelling, meaning, and using words***

The respondent argued that vocabra games could contribute to the development of students' pronunciation since it relates to vocabulary mastery. Students will be accustomed to listen to appropriate English pronunciation and to practice proper English pronunciation by the

teacher's repetition. It is consistent with Bogaard and Laufer (2004: 11) who states that pronouncing is one of the important aspects in mastering English vocabulary.

Vocabra games will also be contributive to the students' English spelling.

The learner has to know what a word sounds like (its pronunciation) and what it looks like (its spelling). These are fairly obvious characteristics, and one of them will be preserved by the learner when encountering the item for the first time. In teaching, teachers need to make sure that these aspects are accurately presented and learned (Ur, 1996: 60-62).

It is contributive to the using words. However, for accurate using words knowledge he stated that students need more input and guidance from the teacher's role. It is because when talking about using words, the thing will be very extensive and complicated. In short, vocabra game is contributive for using words aspects of vocabulary mastery such as using dialog, categories or vocabulary bee. (Rider, 2003)

It will be contributive for meaning. The students can enjoy to acquire new words without feeling bored when they know new words. By giving categories based on matching picture, the students will stay to complete the meaning. (Rider, 2003)

The problems emerged in the implementation of vocabra games in mastering English vocabulary

The differences of students' English level

The main problem is the students' English level is various. Some of them have been adequately experienced with English, and some of them are still beginners as well, this situation often challenges the teacher to choose the appropriate level of English media for them if the practice of vocabra game is undertaken in the class.

Students who ignore the students' role of vocabra games

The problem when the students ignore their role in mastering English vocabulary is they will lose their concentration to acquire new word in their memory. It will happen if the teaching media is monotone. In the implementation with monotone media such as crossword game makes the students bored and slothful to study vocabulary and sometimes they get complicated to do the rule and complete anything they face in the class.

Second language acquisition

In second language acquisition, age is one of factors which may affect the approximate system of the second language learner. The child's memory span increases with age. The child acquires a greater number of abstract concepts and uses these ones to interpret his experiences.

Game as the potential media

A game which has the potential to address many of the limitations of the traditional class-room education.

Games accommodate more complex to learning process and outcome, allow for interactivity, promote collaboration, peer learning, and foster active learning. Outside the classroom, playing is one of the fundamental human activities so that the children can develop together with talking, toddling, and relating to others (Miller, 2008: 3).

Games engage students and then motivate them to interact with the topic. This interaction drives players to demonstrate their understanding of the topic in a friendly competition against themselves, other players, the time, and scoring standards. Moreover, during this play, players practice the social skills of communication, collaboration, and following instructions, as well as cognitive skills such as problem solving and critical thinking.

Solutions of the problems faced in mastering vocabulary using vocabra games

To deal with the problem related to the English levels are various, the teachers recommend them to use the various media from vocabra games based on the level of class. The solution is to encourage students to be more independent to choose various media.

The solution for the students who ignore the students' role of vocabra game is that vocabra game is an alternative media to choose and apply an easy media of vocabulary, because we will make it or even find it in a daily work book easily. Using vocabra game makes vocabulary to study easy, interesting, practical and, even enjoyable.

Some investigators suggest that in second language acquisition, a critical period theory must predict to the children are better than adults in learning second languages, as well as first languages. Lenneberg (in Brown, 1995: 77) states that language acquisition must occur before the onset of puberty is reached so that the language is able to develop fully. His argument contains two parts. First, he reviews available behavioral evidence suggests that normal language learning occurs primarily or exclusively within childhood. His review includes various types of indirect evidence, for example, the differences in recovery from aphasia for children versus

adults, and the differences in progress of language acquisition, before they versus after puberty. Second, he proposes a mechanism which might be responsible for a maturational change in learning abilities. The proposed mechanism was fundamentally neurological in nature. He suggests that the brain has been reached its adult values by puberty, has lost plasticity and reorganizational capacities. It is necessary for acquiring language.

Games help and encourage many learners to sustain their interest and work, especially for English Young Learner. Games also help the teacher to create in which the language is useful and the learners want to take part and in order to do so much understand to acquire new words.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

This paper explores the teacher's perception toward the use of vocabra games in mastering English Vocabulary for EYL. The results of this study indicate that vocabra games improve the students' vocabulary mastery which covers the aspects of pronouncing, spelling, meaning, and using words. There are some problems encountered by the teachers in the use of vocabra games in mastering English vocabulary for EYL. They are the differences of students' English level, the students who ignore the students' role of vocabra games, second language acquisition, and a game as a potential media. Teacher proposes some solution in dealing with the problems. For instance, teacher provides several media from vocabra games for students, gives students a group task of doing vocabra games in that while practicing vocabra games, and recommends them to do the various vocabra games based on the level of class. The conclusion and suggestion could not suggest to be generalized into the larger context due to it was just a specific case. Therefore, it is suggested for the future research to do more empirical studies with a larger sample by using either quantitative or qualitative research methods with a larger sample to add existing data, and to understand the problem well.

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