THE USE OF ELECTRONIC PICTURE BOOKS TO IMPROVE THE VOCABULARY MASTERY OF THE FIFTH GRADERS OF SDI SURYA BUANA MALANG

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ABSTRACT: This research aimed at investigating how electronic picture books can be used in an English classroom. This research used observation checklist, field note, student tests in vocabulary, and interview guide as the instruments to collect the data. The results of the research show that there are many advantages by using electronic picture books, which are: (1) making the class more attractive and alive; (2) increasing the students’ vocabulary mastery; (3) making the vocabulary learning becomes more enjoyable and attractive.

Keywords: electronic picture books, vocabulary mastery, fifth graders.

In order to be able to communicate with people around the world, Indonesian students are required to master other languages and one of them is English. The English lesson itself starts from elementary school level. Vocabulary is one of language components that should be mastered by the young learners. It is also supported by the decree of Minister of Education and Culture No.060/U/1993 (1994:15) which states that English could be introduced to the fourth grade of elementary school as a local content subject. It is supported by the Suyanto’s opinion (2010:1) that learning process usually starts in the young age.

For young learners, vocabulary is considered as the salient issue in English teaching and learning process, especially in this research. According to an e-book entitled A Closer Look at the Five Essential Components of Effective Reading Instruction: A Review of Scientifically Based Reading Research for Teachers (2004:22), the term vocabulary refers to words we need to know to communicate with others. This component has a big role of students’ comprehension in learning English. By comprehending vocabulary, students will be able to learn many things from many sources which use English. Moreover, Cameron (2007) states that vocabulary development is not only about learning more about words but also formulaic phrases, finding the words inside them, and learning more about them. That is why the teaching of vocabulary to young learners of English becomes important for English young learners, especially for elementary school students.

There are so many kinds of teaching techniques used in teaching vocabulary, especially for young learners. A technique that can be used to teach vocabulary for young learners is using media (Suyanto, 2010: 101). Media is anything that contains information from the source and receiver. In other words, media is a kind of tool or equipment or anything that can assist the student to learn. The students will learn better if they are interested in the lesson since they
will pay more attention in the materials given. Moreover, they can memorize and comprehend the new vocabulary they got better if they are actively involved in class. Furthermore, Arsyad (2009: 91) states that visual-based media has a big role in learning process. Visual media can also assist the learners to comprehend the material and encourage their memory. Hence, media is needed to assist young learners in comprehending the new vocabularies. In line with the media explained previously, there is also a term named multimedia. According to Mayer (2009:3), multimedia is a presentation of a material using words and pictures.

Electronic picture book is a kind of electronic book so that it can be classified as computer-based media. Computer gives a chance to learn in dynamic, interactive, and personal way (Arsyad, 2009:98). That is why the use of electronic book can be an alternative to attract the students’ attention in learning. In addition, picture books are books that consist of pictures and plot (Anderson, 2010: 11). Hence, electronic picture books can be used as a media because it can give illustration of the story so that it can help the students in learning or obtaining new vocabularies. Moreover, they also contains plots and character that provide authentic language and learning activities in meaningful contexts and the illustrations strongly support the process of children’s understanding (Niemann, 2003).

Furthermore, there are other benefits that can be achieved by using electronic picture books in teaching and learning activity. According to Murphy (2009: 21), the first benefit is picture books are short enough to be read in one sitting. The second is the picture books contain arguing illustration and are pleasurable to view. The next benefit is that the picture book texts, with their trademark brevity, contain carefully chosen words. The last benefit is that the picture books are reader friendly.

In line with the ideas of teaching English for young learners, this research was intended to solve a problem occurred in teaching and learning process in a particular school by using a media named electronic picture books. The school which was chosen was SDI Surya Buana Malang because it was considered as a good private school in Malang. Electronic picture books were used as media since they were rarely used for teaching English in Indonesia. Therefore, the research problem to be investigated is “How can electronic picture books be used to improve the mastery of new vocabulary of the fifth grade students of elementary school in SDI Surya Buana Malang?” If the media applied was successful enough to help the students in learning vocabulary in this particular school, the media can also be used in other school that have the same problem.

**METHOD**

This study was conducted in a form of Classroom Action Research (CAR). It was intended to see how electronic picture books could help the fifth graders of SDI Surya Buana Malang to improve their vocabulary mastery. The data were in the qualitative form since the research exposed on the quality of the vocabulary
mastery of the fifth graders of elementary school. The sources of the research were the students of the fifth graders and the English teacher in the particular school. In this research, some instruments were needed in collecting the data. This research used observation checklist, field note, student tests in vocabulary, and interview guide as the instruments to collect the data needed.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The result of the test conducted in Cycle 1 was found unsatisfactory. The mean score was 75. There were 15 out of 26 students (58%) who could obtain 75 or more. While, there were 42% of the students or 11 students who could not pass the minimum passing grade, as they only could obtain 40-73. In Cycle 2, the students’ score were improved. The students’ mean score was 80. There were 20 out of 26 students (77%) who could acquire 75 or more. However, there were just 6 students (23%) who could not pass the minimum passing grade.

Based on the findings of the research, the implementation of electronic picture book which was conducted with the use of competition strategy could help improving the students’ vocabulary mastery for the fifth graders in SDI Surya Buana Malang. It was because the media applied is in the form of picture book, it could attract the students’ attention. It is in line with Dunn (2008) who states that children are busy exploring their world and most are keen to find out something new, particularly if it is presented in an encouraging and attractive way. Furthermore, the competition strategy could encourage the students’ attention. According to Suyanto (2009) young learners are active learner who keen on learning by doing process.

Moreover, the media used was in the form of visual media so that it could help the learners to comprehend the material better. It was in line with the statement of Arsyad (2009: 91) who states that visual-based media has a big role in learning process. Visual media could also assist the learners to comprehend the material and encourage their memory. That was why the students could memorize the material given well by using the electronic picture book.

Furthermore, since the media was in the form of electronic book, the LCD projector was needed to show the book toward the students. Logically, the students would be more attracted by the use of sophisticated media, such as LCD projector since they rarely use it in class. By using sophisticated visual-based media, the students would pay more attention toward the lesson and the materials given. It is in line with Arsyad (2009: 91) who states that visual-based media has a big role in learning process. Visual media could also assist the learners to comprehend the material and encourage their memory.

The use of electronic picture book results in the improvement in students’ vocabulary mastery. The media was proven to be efficient to improve the students’ vocabulary mastery since it contented attractive picture and context in the form of simple sentences which were easy to understand. This is in line with
Niemann’s (2003) statement that picture books provide authentic language and learning activities in meaningful contexts and the illustrations strongly support the process of children’s understanding. Phillips (1995) in Suyanto, (2010: 47) also states that “... Both vocabulary and grammar need to be taught in context and the children should always be given plenty of opportunity to use the language that they have learned in class.”

By using Electronic picture books, the fifth grader students in SDI Surya Buana Malang could acquire better score and attitude to accomplish the criteria of success in Cycle 2. It was because of the changes done in Cycle 2, such as exploring more on the story of the electronic picture book, making a quiz in learning activities, and giving more motivation to the students.

Therefore, using electronic picture book with an attractive strategy, such as using competition in the learning activity, could help the students in improving their vocabulary mastery since they could be active in the class. It is in line with Shin (2005) who states that children are very much linked to their surroundings and are more interested in the physical and the tangible. That was why the students were attracted toward the activity so that they could enjoy the lesson.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Conclusion

On the basis of findings of the present study, some conclusion can be drawn. They comprise the implementation of electronic picture books and the students; attitude toward the electronic picture books.

The first conclusion is about the implementation of electronic picture books. This study has proved that electronic picture book makes the class more attractive and alive. The use of electronic picture books in teaching vocabulary can increase the students’ vocabulary mastery. They can be more familiar with the words they learn and can use them in appropriate context. The second one is that the electronic picture books were needed to be implemented in the main activities. The first activity was the teacher read the electronic picture books loudly in front of class. Then, the students listened to the story and participated in the story reading, such as counting the creatures or answering some questions related to the story. The third one was the teacher divided the students into four groups and asked the students to compete in finding the verbs in the past tense form to increase their attention. After that, the teacher listed the verbs and asked the meaning of the verbs they found. The last one is the students’ attitude toward electronic picture book. In the teaching and learning process, the electronic picture books with appropriate strategy can make the vocabulary learning more enjoyable and attractive since the students can memorize the new vocabulary without asking to their friends or teacher or opening their dictionary anymore.

Moreover, there were no more students who made noise by coming in front of the class and asking about their questions which were not related to the lesson, seemed bored toward the lesson, etc. Thus, the temporary English teacher could conduct the activities planned well.

Hence, it can be concluded that the electronic picture books can improve the students’ interest toward the English subject. They could be more active and could enjoy the class while studying through a good strategy in using the electronic picture books.
Suggestions

This section presents some suggestions for the classroom English teachers, the headmaster, and the further researcher.

It is suggested that the classroom English teacher use more sophisticated media as the strategy in teaching English. The electronic picture books can be one of new strategies that can be used in other classes in that particular elementary school as one of various strategies in teaching vocabularies. Moreover, this research can increase the motivation of the teachers to increase their creativity in making the teaching and learning activities more fun and effective.

For the headmaster, it is recommended that she provide more sophisticated equipment, such as laptop, LCD projector, and others in school to facilitate the teachers who want to improve their creativity in teaching. Moreover, it can also raise the students’ attention in learning in the classroom so that they will get higher achievement in their study.

It is also urgent for the future researchers to develop the media since electronic picture book are rarely used in Indonesia so that the sources are quite limited. The finding in this research can be a guide line or example for the next research. It can be used as recent data valuable source to conduct further research of the same aspect of study.

REFERENCES


