

IMPROVING JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS' VOCABULARY ACHIEVEMENT IN READING BY APPLYING WORD WALL

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Abstract

This study focused on Improving Junior High School Students' Vocabulary Achievement in reading by Applying Word Wall. This study was conducted by using classroom action research. The subject of this study was grade eight students of SMP Swasta Kesuma Indah Padangsidempuan. There were 38 students taken as the subject. This research was done in two cycles, each cycle consisted of three meetings. The instrument for collecting data were the students' performance score as the quantitative data and diary notes, observation sheet, and interview sheet as the qualitative data. Based on the data, it was found that the mean of students' score increased from performance 1 until performance 3. The mean of students' score in performance 1 was 65.16. The mean of students' score in performance 2 was 73.39. The mean of students' score in performance 3 was 78.11. It can be concluded that the application of word wall had successfully improved the students' vocabulary achievement in reading.

*Key Words: Vocabulary, Reading, Performance, Data, Classroom Action
Research*

Introduction

Background of the Study

Language as a means of communication is produced by combining words into sentences. Before combining words into sentences, the language users should understand about word's meaning which is called vocabulary. There is no vocabulary without words. According to Milton (2009: 3), words are the building blocks of language and without them there is no language. Knowing about a language should be preceded by knowing about vocabulary so that the communication can be done well.

People can find the words in spoken or written form since words are the building blocks for all of the skills in language namely speaking, listening, writing, and reading. In relation to reading, there is a strong connection between vocabulary and reading itself. Bromley (2004), in a comprehensive review of research on vocabulary development, concludes that vocabulary knowledge promotes reading fluency, boost reading comprehension, improves academic achievement, and enhances thinking and communication. The more words people have the easier people can comprehend a text and those words are obtained partially from the text that people read.

The question is “how to arouse students’ interest in learning English so that they will not lack of vocabulary and able to comprehend a text?” An Ancient Chinese proverb taken by Terrel in case of teaching states: “Tell me, I forget. Show me, I remember. Involve me, I understand”. Therefore, in teaching English,

the students must be involved in the teaching learning activities and also dominate the process of learning. In other words, the teaching should be a student-centered learning. The students are guided to understand the difficulties and to find out the solution to their problems. Therefore, the writer chooses word wall media as one of the solution to improve students' vocabulary achievement in reading.

Research Question

In relation to the background of the study, the problem is formulated in the form of a question as follows: "Does the application of word wall significantly improve grade eight students' vocabulary achievement in reading?"

Conceptual Framework

Reading is one of the skills of language skills that involve a thinking process. According to Burns et al (1984: 10), reading is a thinking process in order to comprehend a text so that a person must be able to use the information to make inference and read critically and creatively in order to understand the language, determine the author's purpose, evaluate the ideas presented and apply the ideas to achieve situations.

Grabe and Stoller (2002:9) asserts that reading is the ability to draw meaning from the printed page and interpret this information appropriately. Reading is the instantaneous recognition of various written symbols, simultaneous association of these symbols with existing knowledge and comprehension of the information and ideas communicated.

In the other side, according to Hatch and Brown (1995: 1), vocabulary is a list or set of words for a particular language or a list or set of word that individual speakers of language might use. Learning vocabulary is closely related with learning about words. Language users build a sentence by combining words for their communication to other people. The more words a language user learns, the more ideas she/he will have. As Milton says (2009: 3) that words are the building blocks of language and without them there is no language. Vocabulary serves as a useful and fundamental tool for communication and acquiring knowledge

The relationship between vocabulary and reading skills is that a language user will not able to draw and interpret the meaning from the printed if he or she does not have vocabulary. A wealth of research has documented the strength of the relationship between vocabulary and reading. Anderson and Freebody in Nagy (1988) say that the proportion of difficult words in a text is the single most powerful predictor of text difficulty, and a reader's general vocabulary knowledge is the single predictor of how well that reader can understand text. In addition, the relationship between vocabulary and reading can be stated in detail as Anderson and Nagy said in Bintz (2011) that reading is the single most important factor in increased word knowledge.

Word wall media is a great way to make the teaching and learning process becomes more interesting and enjoyable. A word wall is a group of words that are displayed on a wall, bulletin board, check board, or white board in a classroom (Cronsberry: 2004: 3). The words are printed in a large font so that they are easily visible from all students seating area. These words are referred to continually

throughout a unit or term by the teacher and the students during a variety of activities. It is relevant to Green (1993: 1) argued that a word wall is an organized collection of large print words on the classroom wall. A word wall helps to create a print rich environment for students, and can be a wonderful tool that is designed to promote group learning.

The advantages of using word wall in the teaching-learning process :

1. build vocabulary, thereby improving reading comprehension
2. reinforce understanding of subject-specific terminology with a focus on students internalizing key concepts
3. help students improve spelling and pronunciation
4. provide visual cues for students
5. encourage increased student independence when reading
6. the process of learning will be attractive and enjoyable because students involve in games activity

Methodology

The research was conducted by using Classroom Action Research. This kind of research could achieve students' competence, as Fang (2007) stated Action Research tended to be directly linked to achieving results in the classroom setting. In this case, teacher as the researcher did the action research in order to get the improvement of the students, which the teacher felt the students have in a specific subject.

The subject of the study were students of class VIII-1 of SMP Swasta Kesuma Indah which was located on Jalan Teuku Umar No.17 Padangsidempuan. The writer assumed that this class needed an improvement in their vocabulary achievement in reading.

The data that had been obtained consisted of:

1. The result students' performance score as quantitative data
2. The result of the observation as qualitative data

Result and Discussion

This study was conducted in SMP Swasta Kesuma Indah Padangsidempuan in class VIII-1. The writer took 38 students as the sample of the research. This study applied quantitative data and qualitative data. Qualitative data is used to describe data which are not amenable to being counted or measured in an objective way and therefore subjective. The qualitative data were taken from the observation sheet, diary notes, and interview. Quantitative data is broadly used to describe what can be counted or measured, therefore it could be considered as objective. The quantitative data were taken from the mean of students' performance score.

The research had been done for two weeks within two cycles. The first meeting was done to conduct the performance 1. The second, the third and the fourth meeting were done to conduct the first cycle. The fifth, the sixth, and the seventh meetings were done to conduct the second cycle. So, totally there were

seven meetings in this research. Word wall media was applied in the process of teaching and learning.

The data analysis were used to describe the situation during the teaching and learning process in order to find out the improvement of student's vocabulary achievement in reading by applying word wall media. They were taken from the four stage of classroom action research, namely planning, action, observation and reflection.

Comparison of the Students' Score in Three Performances

Performance	I	II	III
Lowest Score	30	60	70
Highest Score	85	85	92
Mean	65.16	73.39	78.18
Number of the students	38	38	38

It can be seen from the table above that the mean of the students' score had improved from cycle I to cycle II. The mean of students' score in performance 1 was 65.16. The mean of the students' score in performance 2 improved to be 73.39. It improved again in performance 3 of cycle 2 to be 78.11. Those improvements proved that the students' vocabulary achievement in reading had improved after they were taught by applying word wall.

The Percentage of Student Who Got Score Up to 75

Performance	Number of the students who got score up to 75	Percentage
1	6	15.78 %
2	16	42.10 %
3	36	94.73 %

In performance 1, there were only 6 students who got the score up to 75. After the students were taught by applying word wall, there were 16 students who got the score up to 75 in performance 2 of cycle I and there were 36 students who got score up to 75 in performance 3 of cycle II. As it is shown in the table that there were 94.73 % of the students who got score up to 75 in the last meeting. It had been proved that word wall worked effectively in helping the students to improve their vocabulary achievement in reading.

From the qualitative data, it was found that the students were reluctant to study English at the very beginning because of some problems. The major problem was the students had lack of vocabulary. Not only because of that lack of vocabulary, but also because the teacher taught the students in English in the whole process of teaching and learning. Most of them did not understand the teacher's explanation because the teacher taught them in English. The teacher also used the same method of teaching every time, so the students were easily got bored. After they were taught by applying word wall, the situation changed. The students became more enthusiastic and interested in studying English.

Conclusion and Suggestions

Conclusion

After carrying out the research and analyzing the data, the writer found that the students' vocabulary achievement in reading had been improved by applying word wall.

Suggestions

In line with the conclusions, there are three points would be suggested as follow:

1. It is suggested for the English teachers to improve students' vocabulary achievement in reading by applying word wall because word wall can increase students' interest in learning vocabulary and make the teaching and learning process more enjoyable.
2. It is suggested that the students of Junior High School to create their own word wall to help them in learning English.
3. It is suggested for other researchers who are interested in carrying out further research related to the application of word wall to conduct the same research with different population in order to improve the quality of teaching vocabulary.

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