

TEACHING VOCABULARY IN TRANSACTIONAL TEXT USING ROTE LEARNING

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Abstract

This research sets out to enhance students' vocabulary in the transactional text by using Rote Learning for the seventh-grade students of MTs Negeri 02 Pontianak in the academic year 2019/2020. The method used in this research is classroom action research which was conducted in two cycles. The subject of the research is 36 students of VII E class, consisting of 17 females and 19 males. In collecting the data, the researcher applied observation checklist, field note, and achievement test. It was found that students' vocabulary improved from cycle 1 to cycle 2. In the first cycle, 14.2% equal to 6 students passed the standard minimum score and it increased up to 91% or 32 students in the second cycle. By using Rote Learning in teaching vocabulary, the students could easily memorize new vocabulary. The students were actively engaged during the learning process. In short, Rote Learning is an appropriate method for the improvement of students' vocabulary mastery.

Keywords: Rote Learning, Classroom Action Research, Vocabulary.

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INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary is one of English language elements that foreign language students need to master. Vocabulary is an essential part of communication and knowledge. According to Huyen and Nga (2003), vocabulary has an important role because it is related to four language skills which needed in mastering English as a foreign language. It means that vocabulary is a foundation of the four language skills. According to Ur (2012), learning the vocabulary of a language is fundamental because vocabulary means how a word conveys a meaning. By mastering vocabulary, the four language skills such as reading, speaking, writing, and listening will be achieved effortlessly. Without sufficient vocabulary, other skill competencies such as reading, writing, listening, and speaking might be difficult to be mastered by the students. In addition, Nunan (1991) delivered the argument that

vocabulary is important for successful foreign learners because, without an extensive vocabulary, the learners will be unable to use the correct structures and functions for comprehensible communication. It can be concluded that vocabulary is the first basic element that should be improved in order to master the English skill. Therefore, as a basic knowledge in learning English, vocabulary is crucial for junior high school students.

However, the students' ability among junior high school is very apprehensive. Based on the researcher's observation and discussion with the English teacher at MTs Negeri 2 Pontianak, the biggest problem in teaching the seventh E grade students is their lack of vocabulary. The students find difficulties in recognizing the meaning and pronouncing unfamiliar words. Moreover, when the students were asked to read a simple sentence or transactional text they were confused and reluctant. They also forgot new vocabulary easily. These problems seem to happen because English was not taught in elementary school.

In learning vocabulary, the teacher should use the appropriate method to make the students interested in joining the class. Because methods in teaching play a big role in students' learning results. There are some methods that can be used in teaching vocabulary. Repetition is one of the effective ways to increase students' memorization the vocabulary. In this case, the researcher used a method called Rote Learning to solve the problem. By using the suitable method in teaching vocabulary, the teacher can improve students' vocabulary mastery.

One of the appropriate methods to teach students vocabulary is Rote Learning. Gairns & Redman (1986) defines rote learning as a memorization technique that including repetition. According to Samian and Tavakoli (2012), rote learning means repeating new vocabulary items until learners can remember them. Li (2004) defines rote learning as learning something in order to be able to repeat it from memory. It points out that Rote Learning is a memorization technique which including repetition as a process to keep the vocabulary in memory. Harmer (2007) said that repetition is useful because it gives all learners chance to say new language immediately, with teacher control. Repetition can support teaching. They will have opportunities to repeat as much as possible the new word. Ayodae (2020) defines Rote Learning as the memorization of ideas, concepts, or information based on repetition. Rote Learning is a method that facilitated the students in learning vocabulary because Rote Learning is defined as repetition, memorization, and practicing. According to Li (2004), repetition refers to saying or doing something repeatedly, while an effort that centers on the retrieval process as well as practicing refers to a strategy or effort to mastery something without any particular time. Students require around ten to sixteen re-encounters with a new item until it becomes their active vocabulary (Ur, 2012). It indicates that through repeating new vocabulary could help the students to memorize new vocabulary.

Teaching vocabulary by using Rote Learning is very helpful for the students to retain the word in long-term memory. For some students, hearing or seeing new vocabulary is not enough to keep the new vocabulary in their long-term memory. Saying the word aloud, clearly, deliberately, and repeatedly is needed to make the students memorize the vocabulary (Ebberts and Denton, 2008). It means in teaching vocabulary to the students, the teacher needs to find a method that can involve the students to say the word aloud,

deliberately, and repeatedly. In this research, the researcher used Rote Learning to teach students vocabulary mastery. Rote Learning is the most commonly required memory task for students in primary and secondary school (Dahar, 2006). Therefore, Rote Learning is one of the most important memory strategies that should not be ignored. According to Foster (2009), memorizing is a way of organizing information to make it easier to remember typically by using codes, visual imaginary, or rhymes. Related to the expert above, the researcher also put some pictures to gain the students' interest in memorizing the words.

There are some previous studies using Rote Learning in teaching vocabulary. According to Tayebi and Marefat (2017), there is some different result between visual and auditory learners when Rote Learning applied. The visual learners outperformed the auditory learners in recalling the new vocabulary when exposed to the Rote Learning method. An analysis research conducted by Samian and Tavakoli (2012) found that about 36.7% of Iranian EFL students used Rote Learning as their method in memorizing new words successfully. Another research conducted by Niswati (2016) claims Rote Learning was an effective method in retaining new vocabulary than any other conventional method. The present research is unlike from any other previous studies since the researcher using a different research method and focused on improving the students' vocabulary particularly nouns and adjectives.

The researcher conducted a classroom action research to provide a solution for the vocabulary problem in the seventh E grade students' of MTs Negeri 2 Pontianak.

RESEARCH METHOD

Classroom Action Research (CAR) method is applied in this research. According to Sagor (2005), action research is a disciplined process of inquiry conducted by and for those taking the action which the primary reason for engaging the action research is to solve the problems that actually happen in the real teaching situation. It means action research is a process in which the classroom teacher conducts a method to improve students learning. Action research is used when you have a specific educational problem to solve (Creswell, 2012). This research is aimed to find the solution for students' problems. There are several steps in doing classroom action research. Kemmis and McTaggart (in Burns, 2010) state that action research consist of four stages; (1) planning, this stage includes identifying and developing a research plan in order to bring improvement. In this part, the teacher and the researcher identified the problems or issues and prepared lesson plan, teaching materials, and field notes. (2) Action, in this phase, the teacher, and the researcher applied the Rote Learning method in order to solve students' vocabulary problems. The researcher acted as a teacher. The researcher taught the students by following the activities in the lesson plan. The researcher presented the students with a list of words and asked them to memorize the words by repetition. (3) Observation, in this phase, the researcher worked collaboratively with the English teacher. The English teacher observed the students and learning activity using field note and observation checklist. (4) Reflection, in the reflection, the researcher with the teacher analyzed and evaluated the process and the implementation of Rote Learning which is derived from the classroom observation. The result of reflection is used to determine the next cycle.

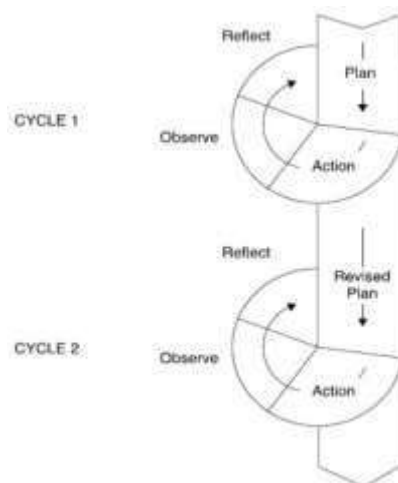


Figure 1. Cyclical action research model

In this research, the participants were the students of class VII E of MTs Negeri 2 Pontianak in academic year 2019/2020. Located on Jalan Prof. M. Yamin, Kecamatan Pontianak Kota, Kota Pontianak. There were 36 students consisted of 19 female students and 17 male students. Based on the observation and discussion with the English teacher, the researcher found that the vocabulary mastery of VII E class was poor.

Technique of Data Collection

In conducting this research, observation and measurement technique is implemented to collect the data. An observation checklist and field note is employed to record the whole process of the learning activity. Meanwhile, the measurement technique was done by conducting the individual test to recognize vocabulary achievement on students in every cycle.

Tools of Data Collection

This research used field note, observation checklist, and test. Observation checklist is used to record what happened during the class activities. Observation is an integral part of the assessment process and provides evidence of what children do (Baker in Janette, Sharon, and Alison, 2015). It means every situation and condition that happened in the classroom during the teacher implement the Rote Learning technique must be recorded in as a source for the next action. Then, field note refers to the note that created by the researcher when the technique implemented by the teacher in the classroom. The researcher as the collaborator took some notes and list everything that happened during the research. The notes and lists include the difficulties that the teacher found during the learning activity. The field note is aimed to support the findings of the data. Next, the researcher used tests in this research to examine the improvement of vocabulary mastery through Rote Learning. According to Cohen et al. (2007), the purpose of the test is to know the students' strengths, weaknesses, and difficulties. The test used in this research was objective test. One of the common vocabulary test types is the completion test. According to Brown (2000), a completion test is a test which the test-takers complete the whole sentence from certain parts that have been omitted.

Data Analysis

Qualitative and quantitative data analyses are used in this research. The researcher elaborated the information from the observation checklist and field note. The results were

summarized, described, and analyzed in qualitatively. Then, to know the students' individual score in the test, the researcher analyzed the result by using the formula below:

$$A = \frac{R}{N} \times 100$$

Note:

A: The student's individual score

R: The right answer

N: Total number of test items

Kriteria Ketuntasan Minimal (Minimum Accomplishment Criteria) was used to determine the students' individual scores. Based on the standard minimum score for English subject at the school, the students are considered to pass the subject when they get scores ≥ 75 . Then, the score was categorized based on average, good and excellent.

Test Score	Classification
90 - 100	Excellent
80 - 89	Good
70 - 79	Average
50 - 69	Poor
0 - 49	Very Poor

(Taken from Heaton, 1998)

Figure 2. Students Score Classification

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Research Findings

In conducting the research, the researcher applied the Classroom Action Research (CAR) in order to resolve the problem that found in the seventh-grade students of MTs Negeri 2 Pontianak. The problem found in the seventh-grade students, especially in 7E. Most of the students were lack of vocabulary that makes them difficult to understand a simple sentence or dialogue. The implementation of Rote Learning was aimed to improve students' vocabulary in understanding the meaning of transactional dialogue.

1. First Cycle 1

The cycle was conducted on January 17th, 2020. In this cycle, the researcher acted as a teacher and the teacher as the collaborator. The teacher explained the materials during the implementation of the Rote Learning method while the collaborator was observing. The researcher and the teacher observed the whole process of learning activity in the first cycle by implementing field note and observation checklist. By observing the whole process, they tried to identify the strength and the weaknesses.

Based on observation checklist and field note. At the first meeting, the students looked confuse to respond to the researcher's question. The researcher need to repeat the question in few times and give clue in Bahasa. Some students looked busy on their own business when the researcher explained the material. However, when the students were asked to repeat the word presented in the PowerPoint slide, most of them looked serious and enjoy it. But, they looked hesitant and mispronounce the word when the researcher asked the students individually. The sum of the students' individual scores was 2115. The highest

score was 80 and the lowest was 35. Then the mean score was 60.4. It was classified as poor classification.

The teacher summarized the problem into several points as below:

- The teacher consumed too much time in preparation because the teacher need to find power sources.
- The teacher did not put fully attention to the students who were playing in the back row.
- The teacher had to manage the time carefully because the students need longer time to do the test.
- The students had difficulty memorizing the word given it seems to be happen because the PowerPoint slide was less attractive.

Realizing those issue, the teacher and the collaborator had to continue this research to the next cycle in order to enhance the learning activity and students' scores. Therefore, the shortages and weaknesses in the first cycle had to revise and improve by the teacher when conducting the second cycle.

2. Second Cycle

In this stage, same as the first cycle, the teacher prepared the learning resources such as the materials of the transactional text and PowerPoint slide to make students easier to learn. Observation checklist, field notes, and students' worksheet also prepared by the teacher to observe the learning process and students' achievement in the second cycle. Also, the teacher used a game to brainstorm the students about the past vocabulary that had been learned.

This cycle was conducted on Friday, January 24th, 2020. Firstly, the teacher did warm up activity to the students about the past material by using the guessing game. The teacher showed a picture of the animal in the PowerPoint slide then the students must mention the name and 3 characteristics of the animal. The fastest students and the most correct answer would get a reward. The students looked enthusiastic while playing the game. After finishing the game, the teacher introduced the material that would be discussed. The teacher also distributed examples of transactional text and showed the vocabulary list in the PowerPoint slide which focused on adjective and noun. The teacher said the word aloud then the students repeat and memorize it. In this cycle, the teacher tried to make some gestures to gain students' interest, for example, when the teacher said "bear" she would make a gesture like a bear. Also, the teacher asked the students to repeat the word in a small group so the teacher could identify incorrectness.

Overall, in cycle 2, from the beginning to the end the activity ran very well. Almost all of the students were enthusiastic to follow the learning process. The teacher also used observation checklist and field note to record the intended activity to see the improvement of the students' performance. Referring to the observation checklist and field note, the students understood the teacher's questions. The students were able to pronounce the correct words and identifying the meaning easily from the picture. When the teacher mentioned the words in Bahasa Indonesia, they could guess the correct words in English. The students also listened to the explanation carefully and they were confident when the teacher asked them one by one. The students' scores in cycle 2 were significantly improved.

In accordance with the result of the observing stage, there was a significant improvement. The teacher agreed that the second cycle showed better improvement rather than the previous cycle. The result of the students' scores also showed significant progress which fulfilled the teacher's expectation. Based on that fact, the teacher decided to stop the cycle.

DISCUSSION

The researcher took 2 cycles to conduct this research. Based on the research findings above, it was found out that the students' vocabulary mastery in the transactional text was improved. From the data, the students' vocabulary mastery improved from cycle to cycle. The improvement could be seen on this chart below:

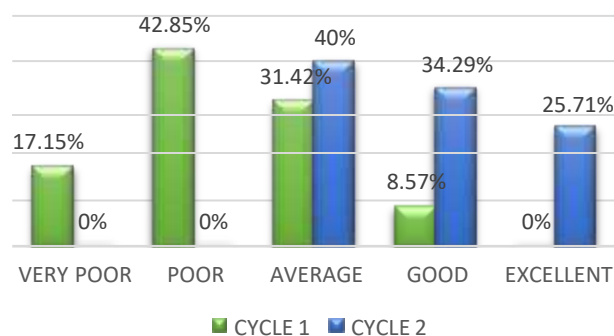


Figure 3. The students Mean Score in Every Cycle

The researcher analyzed the data based on the result of the observation checklist, field notes, and the students' individual tests. From the figure above, the data showed that the students' classification percentages were improved from cycle 1 to cycle 2. In the first cycle, the students who are classified as very poor were 17.15% equal to 6 students, poor 42.85% equal to 15, average 31.42% or 11 students, and excellent 0%. Then, in the second cycle, the students who are classified as very poor were 0%, poor 0%, average 40% equal to 14 students, good 34.29% equal to 12 students, and excellent 25.71% or 9 students. From the data, the improvement in average, good, and excellent classification was proven.

Furthermore, the observation checklist and field note also revealed improvement in students learning process. In the first cycle, the students were confused and reluctant to answer the researcher's questions. The students also have difficulty memorizing the words.

To overcome the problem that appeared in the first cycle, the researcher conducted the second cycle with some interesting activities. The researcher made a game to recall the students' memorization of the past vocabulary that they had been learned and provide some rewards for them to maintain their interest. In memorizing the words, it would be easier when visuals including gestures are applied (Tight, 2010). Therefore, the researcher combining repetition with some gestures to support the students memorize the words. The colorful pictures which were used in the PowerPoint slide also help the students to memorize the words easily. Another improvement that could be seen from the students was about their ability in finding the topic in the transactional text. They also looked confident when the researcher asked them to read the text and more active in answering

the question from the teacher. When the teacher asking them about the characteristic of an animal the students actively raise their hands to answer the question with the vocabulary that had been learned.

In conclusion, this research was satisfactory. The students' achievement was enhanced by using the Rote Learning method. The evidence could be seen from the students' performance and supported by the test score. At the same time, the students' comprehension of the transactional text also improved after being taught using the Rote Learning method. Therefore, the researcher concluded the action hypothesis which was stated as "Rote Learning is able to improve students' vocabulary mastery on the meaning in transactional text for the seventh E grade students of MTs Negeri 2 Pontianak academic year 2019/2020" has proven.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Based on the research findings and discussion, it is concluded that using the Rote Learning method to teach vocabulary on transactional text toward the seventh-grade students in class E had a positive result. Related to the students' individual test in each cycle, in the first cycle, there were 29 students who did not pass the *Kriteria Ketuntasan Minimal* (KKM) standard in that school. However, in the second cycle, the students who did not pass the KKM decreased into 3 students while others have fulfilled the KKM standard. It showed that the Rote Learning method is useful to improve the students' vocabulary achievement.

Related to the students' performance in the class, there were some positive progressions that supported them in learning vocabulary. Using Rote Learning, the students could practice their pronunciation and maintain their vocabulary in long-term memory which helped them understand the meaning in the transactional text. It is suitable to attract students' attention since, through this method, the students could practice the correct pronunciation.

Based on the conclusion above, the researcher offers some suggestions in improving teaching and learning activity, especially in teaching students' vocabulary acquisition by using Rote Learning as follows; 1) The teacher should be able to choose a good method. For instance, the teacher may use Rote Learning to make students enjoy the class. In daily English learning activities, the English teacher could adapt the actions that had been implemented by the researcher. 2) Rote Learning can support students to improve their vocabulary mastery. As a means to improve their vocabulary, the students are suggested to be focused while Rote Learning being implemented. Moreover, the students are recommended to use this method to help them learn vocabulary in an enjoyable way. 3) For other researchers, it could be used as a reference for the action research study. Moreover, from the result of this research, the other researcher could make an evaluation if there are weaknesses that still exist in order to achieve a better improvement.

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