The Use of Word Clap Game to Improve Students’ Vocabulary Mastery

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ABSTRACT

Teaching English vocabulary to Junior High School should be more interesting and joyful. Teachers can use a strategy in conducting materials in order to attract students’ attention and interest. The objectives of this study are to find out whether “Word Clap Game” can be used as a strategy in teaching vocabulary at the eighth grade students of SMP N 1 Tambusai Utara and to find out whether the use of “Word Clap Game” can improve the students’ vocabulary achievement in learning vocabulary. Vocabulary is one of the English components which has to be mastered and acquired by students in learning a new language. In this study, I used Word Clap Game as a strategy for teaching vocabulary to the eighth grade students of SMP N 1 Tambusai Utara. Word clap game is a game that uses claps and collaboration with other students. An action research was conducted in this study. There were two cycles in this study. Each cycle was carried out through four steps. They were planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. The subjects of this study were 33 eighth grade students of SMP N 1 Tambusai Utara in the academic year 2021. The writer got the data from observation, test, and questionnaire. The writer as a teacher tried to apply word clap game to improve students vocabulary mastery of students. According to the analyses, the pre-test mean is 64,4, while the post-test mean is 77,1. Between pre-test and post-test, they were given one assessment at the end of cycle one with the mean of 69,7. Thus, the students’ vocabulary mastery is improved by 12,7 (19.7%). The students’ activity during the treatment shows that they appreciated the Word Clap game I used in the teaching and learning process. Based on the results, it can be concluded that Word Clap game can be used as a strategy to improve the students’ vocabulary mastery. Moreover, the students’ opinion about the game also indicates that it helps the students in learning vocabulary.

Keywords: Word Clap, Vocabulary Mastery, Action Research

INTRODUCTION

Language is a means of communication. It plays a very important role in social relationship among human beings. Ramelan (2003:1) states that “language is used to express idea, thought, and feelings to other people. People in a society use language, which is mutually understood to communicate with others”.

Being an international language, English is an important means of communication. Language is not only used for daily conversation but also used in education, research and science both spoken and written. Considering those functions of language, people study language both formal and informal. English is also issued as a medium of the flow of information on science, technology, and
culture. People use it in most international events to associate or to cooperate among people in different countries in the world.

Since English is used as a means of communication among nation in the world we have to master it well. Although English is not the largest number of native or “first” language speakers, it is widely used by many people all over the world as their “second” language (Harmer, 2001:1). The advantage of learning English is that we will be the person that knows the development of knowledge, science, and technology since most of books, articles, journals of science are written in English. Realizing the importance of English, the Indonesian government treats English as the first foreign language and sets it as a compulsory subject at elementary school, junior high school, senior high school, and also at university as a local content.

Frank (1972:6) states that “vocabulary is one of the English components, which has to be mastered and acquired by students in learning a new language”. It can be argued that vocabulary is a tool of communication which needs to be taught in context and the people should always be given many opportunities to use the language. Vocabulary itself consists of several parts of speech; they are noun, verb, adjective, and adverb. From those kinds of vocabulary, the first that students need to know is noun.

Vocabulary is very important in studying English. If people have less vocabulary, they not only cannot understand other’s saying, but also cannot make sentences to transfer their messages to the other people. Thus, they will understand English expressions if they have enough vocabularies.

Vocabulary is needed to improve the four language skills, namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Without grammar, very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed (Thornburry, 2002:13). When we just learn about grammar without learning vocabulary, we cannot express anything. The linguist David Wilkins sum up the importance of vocabulary learning; he advise to students from a recent course book (Dellar H and Hocking D, Innovations, LTP) as follows: If you spend most of your time studying grammar, your English will not improve very much. You will see most improvement, if you learn more words and expressions. You can say very little with grammar, but you can say almost anything with words! (Thornburry; 2002: 13)

Teaching for students of junior high school is not the same as teaching university students because they have different characteristics and motivation. They are different from adults, so the way of teaching must be different too. They love to play and like to think that what they are doing in real work. If the teachers can not teach the students properly, they may not enjoy their learning. Consequently, the teaching learning process may fail.

Based upon the explanations above, one of the problems is the students feel bored because teachers still use the same technique and the same strategy to teach vocabulary. The writer believes that the game can be the way to minimize the students’ boredom in learning vocabulary. One of them is words clap game.
The writer chooses words clap game as a medium for teaching English since there are several benefits such as; students can improve their vocabulary mastery and try to remember the vocabularies as soon as possible by clapping their hands. The students also can learn vocabularies enjoy without any boredom. This game also can build students’ self-confidence because this game is played in groups. The writer expects that by using words clap game, students can memorize new vocabularies easily, without any boredom.

**METHOD**

The subject of the research was a teacher who related with the topic of the study. One of the main aims of AR is to identify a problematic situation or issue that the participants – who may include teachers, students, managers, administrators, or even parents – consider worth looking into more deeply and systematically (Burns 2010: 2). Referring to Burns’ statement, conducting a research with the teacher as a subject is possible to be done. Moreover, a teacher cannot be separated in the teaching learning process since they have relation each other.

An action research was conducted in this research. I conducted the research at SMP N 1 Bangun Purba. The subject of the study was an English teacher of Junior High School. The teacher was given an input in order to improve his talk that enhanced teacher-students interaction in the learning process. To analyse the interaction in the classroom, the students were also included in this study. The teacher has been teaching for 17 years. He uses English actively when teaches his students. To him interaction is also an important thing to consider since through interaction as classroom language, students’ language store can be improved. The teacher also uses gesture to help the students understand what the teacher said. He mostly gives instructions in English. He also applies certain method in teaching the students to make the students be more active, like, group discussion, drill, etc.

This research use an action research design. According to Phillips and Carr (2010: 1), action research can be conducted by students pursuing teacher licensure for the first time, in other word, *preservice teachers*. As a preservice teacher, action research is possible to be conducted in a professional teacher’s class in a limited period to collect the data required for the study.

Meanwhile, Arikunto (2010:3) mentions that a classroom action research is an observation toward the teaching and learning process in the classroom. The research is given by the teacher toward the students. In addition Celce-Murcia (2001:490) argues that, “action research is an approach to collecting and interpreting data that involves a clear, repeated cycle of procedure.”

Wallace (1998: 18) argues that the purpose of action research “is not to turn the teacher into a researcher, but to help him or her to continue to develop as a teacher, using action research as a
tool in this process”. It is supported by Burns (2010:3) that the teacher as the investigator or explorer of their personal teaching context in the action research which is aimed to identify a problematic situation or issue, looking more deeply and systematically.

Kemmis and McTaggart (1988) in Burns (2010: 8) mention the four steps in doing action research that are explained as follows:

1) Planning

According to Kemmis and McTaggart in Burns (2010: 8), plan is the first stage of conducting action research. The researcher identifies a problem or issue and develops a plan of action. In this phase, the researcher considers: i) what kind of investigation is possible within realities and constraints of their teaching situation; and (ii) what potential improvements the researchers think are possible.

2) Acting

The plan is put into action over certain period of time. The interventions are „critically informed” as you question your assumptions about the current situation and plan new and alternatives ways of doing things.

3) Observing

Then, during the action, the researcher observes systematically the effects of the action and documenting the context, actions, and opinion of those who involved.

4) Reflecting

At this point, the researcher reflects on, evaluates and describes the effects of the action in order to make sense of what has happened and to understand the issue the researcher has explored. The researcher may decide to do further cycles of action research to improve the situation even more.

Those three stages of action research must be done to create a good action research. However, the method and approach of conducting the action research vary for each person, depending on their purpose.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

I conducted a pre-test on the 8th November 2022. There were two kinds of pretest; close test and guided writing test. Time allotment that was given to the students was around thirty minutes to complete each pre-test. I arranged the sitting position based on the student’s number. The aim of arranging the students’ sitting position was to make sure that the students could not cheat with others.

The first pre-test was close test, there were five texts and the students should fill the blank spaces by the correct adjectives that researcher provided. The first three texts were set by the
requirement of writing the appropriate adjectives. There were twenty four items that students should complete. In the fourth text, there were eight items that students would meet the rules of writing the correct comparative or superlative forms of the adjectives. The fifth text required the students to write the correct adjective order in series.

After the first half pre-test section, the students had to take the second pretest in form of guided writing test. The students should write a short descriptive text by the provided theme from me. The aim of guided writing test was to assess how far the students’ ability in writing descriptive text by their own words.

Conducting Cycle 1

Cycle 1 was conducted on 12th up to 15th November 2013. In cycle 1, I had four meetings during the two weeks. There were four stages that I conducted in cycle 1. It was planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. The data which were prepared at stage planning was: (1) preparing learning material, (2) preparing teaching planning, and (3) preparing learning medium. I also conducted classroom interview with the classroom teacher. I asked the questions about the attitude and motivation of the students during learning activities.

Before conducting the acting, I conducted the pre-test in order to assess the initial students’ achievement in writing descriptive text. The objective of the conducting cycle 1 was to accustom the students with linguistic competence. The linguistic competence components such as wrote the words and collocation appropriately, wrote the appropriate adjective, wrote the correct adjective order, wrote the correct phrase structure, used the modifiers would be given at this cycle.

In order to achieve the linguistic competence that were stated in cycle 1, I would conduct some activities based on the result of the cloze test on pre-test.

Conducting Cycle 2

Cycle 2 was conducted on 19th up to 22nd November 2022. In cycle 2, I had four meetings during the two weeks. There were four stages that researcher conducted in cycle 1. It was planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. The data that was prepared on stage planning was: (1) preparing learning material, (2) preparing teaching planning, and (3) preparing learning medium. In cycle 2, I would concern with the actional competence at which the students would get the explanation about descriptive text as whole.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4.2. Writing skills that must be achieved in cycle 2</th>
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<tr>
<td>Aspect of good writing</td>
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<td>Content / idea</td>
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<td>- Has excellent support</td>
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<td>- Is interesting to read</td>
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<td>- Has unity and completeness</td>
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<td>Organization</td>
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Before conducting the acting, I analyzed the result of the students’ writing in previous cycle. The objective of conducting cycle 2 was to accustom the students with the actional competence, at which defined as competence in conveying and understanding communicative intent. The conceptualization of actional competence in writing was mainly about rhetorical competence. At the end of the study, the students were expected able to write the descriptive text at the semantic level, it's mainly concerned with the ways in which such things as ideas, information, issues, opinions, events, and emotions are organized within the whole text. I would concern with such aspects as patterns of causality, ordering of ideas, patterns of time sequence, cohesion and point of view. The semantic level was realized through overall text structures and particular grammatical patterns

**Conducting Post-test**

I conducted post-test on the 26th November 202. In the post-test the students did the responsive writing, they had to write descriptive text. Time allotment that was given to the students was around thirty minutes. The aim of post-test was to assess the final achievement of students” ability in writing descriptive text. At post-test I assessed the discourse competence of the students, at which they could produce the descriptive text with good coherence, or good ordering of sentences, and the use of spatial ordering. In other words, they had written the sentences that were ordered according to space. In addition, the post-test was also conducted to assess the actional competences.

One of the primary benefits of using Attribute Charts strategy was that it assisted the learner. The basic writing skill of the students could be improved using that strategy, in which the students began with exploring ideas in order to make the students understand the use of adjective
and other language components such as grammar, vocabulary, and spelling. From the research, the conclusion could be deduced from several aspects, namely students’ result, students’ individual observation sheet by teacher, students’ interview sheet and students’ direct observation by teacher’s notes.

**Conducting Interview of students’ writing**

The purpose of conducting an interview of students’ writing was to measure the validity of the results of the post-test. The interviewee was Rosmanidar, English teacher of SMP N 1 Bangun Purba in academic year 2012/2024.

In the post-test, I concluded that the students’ writing products had achieved the semantic level. As mentioned in the previous chapter, semantic level dealt with the requirements such aspects as ideas, information, issues, opinions, events, and emotions were organized within the whole text.

Semantic level took into account such aspects as patterns of causality, ordering of ideas, patterns of time sequence, cohesion and point of view. The semantic level was realized through overall text structures and particular grammatical patterns. The purpose of conducting interview of students’ writing was to make a deal with the researcher’s conclusion that stated that students’ writing result had achieved the semantic level.

The writing aspects that assess by the interviewee were organization, content, grammar, style in expressing ideas, and punctuation. Each criterion was graded from the range of one (worst) to five (best), with each grade representing how well the students did their writing. In the end of interview, I had to calculate the total number of students’ score and find out the average of the students result using the same formula.

**Result of Interview of Students’ Writing**

At post-test I assessed the discourse competence of the students, at which they could produce the descriptive text with good coherence, or good ordering of sentences, and used spatial ordering. In other words, they had sentences that were ordered according to space. In addition, the post-test was conducted to assess the actional competence.

From the data, the interviewee concluded that the students’ writing products had achieved the semantic level. Semantic level dealt with the requirements such aspects as ideas, information, issues, opinions, events, and emotions were organized within the whole text.

The discourse competence of the students, at which they could produce the descriptive text with good coherence, or good ordering of sentences, and used spatial ordering were achieved by the average of the students’ result (71.5). In other words, they had sentences that were ordered according to space.
Table 4.8. Interview result of students’ writing

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<th>students’ code</th>
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The conclusion that was made by the interviewee was in line with the conclusion that I had made. The students had written the descriptive text in the semantic level. This took into account such aspects as patterns of causality, ordering of ideas, patterns of time sequence, cohesion and point of view. The semantic level was realized through overall text structures and particular grammatical patterns.

Analysis on students’ individual Observation

The purpose of conducting an observation was to measure the students’ motivation during research. The observer was Rosmanidar, in academic year 2013/2014.
The initial data that researcher got from the classroom teacher, Mrs. Siti Chalimah was used as the base data of students’ learning motivation. Then, at cycle 1 and cycle 2, I will be assisted by an observer, Sri Lestari. The observation sheet for each observer was in the same form, it was rubric form. The processes observed were responding, willingness, activeness, contribution and enthusiasm in doing the assignments and tasks in the class.

To help the observer in collecting the data, I gave a sticker for each students and they had to stick it on their uniform. The given number was same with the students’ serial number. From the notes that made by the observer, I got that the enthusiastic of the students in learning writing by using Attribute Chart was good. The observer, Srilestari, gave me the result of the observation which the students actually could improve their own skill in writing by using attribute chart. In addition, the use of Attribute Chart also made the students having the sense of deliberation when they had to work in group.

Analysis on the Result of the Classroom Teacher Interview

This interview was intended to find out how the classroom teacher thought about the classroom that was taught using attribute charts in descriptive writing. The teacher who was assigned for this interview was Mrs. Siti Chalimah. She was being the observer that assessed me during the learning process. I gave the lesson plan and the interview sheet in the form of rubric. At the end of answering the rubric, the classroom teacher could write the conclusion and suggestions for me.

The interview was addressed to the English teacher. The purpose of this interview was to get the description of the teaching learning process by using the Attribute Chart. After assessing the lesson plan, the classroom teacher answered the questions in the given rubric. At the end of answering the rubric, the classroom teacher could wrote the conclusion and suggestions for the researcher. The conclusions were; (1) the use of Attribute Charts in teaching descriptive writing was helpful for the students in improving the students” writing abilities. The students could use the appropriate adjectives to describe the object of description were achieved. (2) Attribute Charts used as a strategy during the teaching writing descriptive process to the seventh grade students had given the significant improvement for the students. It could be seen in the final achievement of the students in which they could produce the better descriptive text compared with their initial writing.

CONCLUSION

After conducting the research, there are two points which could be taken as the conclusions, they are:

1) the Word Clap game can be used for teaching vocabulary in the eighth grade students of junior high school. It is well-accepted by the participants. During the activities, they looked active and enthusiastic. In the observation and questionnaire, it stats that they enjoyed the game. The
Word Clap game also improves the students” vocabulary mastery. By playing the game, the students could understand and remember new vocabulary easily. They could play the game while learning vocabulary. It is helpful, fun and interesting. They could also learn new vocabulary stimulated by clapping their hands, following every instruction provided.

2) according to the data analyses, I found that before given a treatment, the pre-test mean is 63,39. However, after being treated using Word Clap game, the mean of the post-test is 77,1. Later on, I calculated whether there is an improvement or not. The result shows that there is an improvement of the students” score at 19,7%. So, it could be concluded that there is an improvement in the vocabulary of the students who are taught using Word Clap game.

REFERENCES


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