

THE PROBLEMS OF TEACHING AND LEARNING ENGLISH VOCABULARY THROUGH READING

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ABSTRACT

Vocabulary is a very important for us to master, because without it we cannot do anything in a language especially English. Reading is one of the English skills that not only the students but also the teachers to learn, by reading we can increase the amount of our vocabulary. Thus the more we read in English, the faster they master the vocabulary. The objective of this research is to know the problems that happened in teaching and learning and to know what makes the students difficult to master vocabulary and what makes them difficult to learn English that has been taught since elementary school. The instrument used for collecting data was an interview. The population in this research were the second grade students Junior High School in Banjarmasin which consisted of two classes but the researcher only took one class as the object of research. The sample in this research used chosen randomly from the population of cluster which is usually called cluster random sampling. It has been found that the students are difficult in pronouncing the words, could not understand the meaning of the words, mastery of student in vocabulary is still low and need more effort to teach the important vocabulary to increase the students' English skills. The teacher doesn't use English as the language in teaching and learning, the students don't have their own dictionaries, low on motivation to read English text, lack of English exposure. The students have to work harder in reading in order to get more vocabulary mastery and make them more competent in both. The teachers should also guide and teach the students to make them better in mastering vocabularies.

Keywords: vocabulary, reading, problems

1. INTRODUCTION

English is a global language and an important language which we have to learn. Many things today need English as a media to get knowledge, information, and many things. Nowadays English teaching and learning are applied in elementary, junior high, and senior high school in Indonesia and there are many problems happen in English teaching and learning. In the ordinary situation of teaching and learning, the teachers and the students met new vocabularies in the appointed books and in our daily activity we happen to meet new words that we don't know the meaning of those words

Teaching a language is teaching highly integrated systems which build the language. They are the systems of language's sounds, the systems of word forming, the systems of word formation, the system of meaning, and the system of spelling. All of them build the language. We cannot read, write, speak and understand a language without mastering the amount of words, therefore we must learn English vocabulary if we want to study English. The more people study a language, they will realize that their vocabulary is very limited to understand new words.

Vocabulary is the basic skill that must be mastered. It is obviously more than just presenting new words, but there are other "things" too. For example, students get in touch with a lot of words in their reading text. Some of the words are readily understood, while some other need effort to understand them. Then there are words which are beyond the existing vocabulary range of students.

According Fauziati (2008: 149), vocabulary is central to language and of critical importance to typical language learners. Without a sufficient vocabulary, people cannot communicate effectively or express their ideas in either oral or written form. Having a limited vocabulary is also a barrier that precludes learner from learning a foreign language

Associated with the importance of vocabularies, there are a huge number of words in the language and it is impossible for the teacher to teach more than a fairly small portion of them. A teacher seems should give vocabularies to their students appropriately with students need and level in one side and while in another side they are supposed to select the technique in teaching vocabulary to their pupils in order that they have wide vocabularies as their level and their need of the vocabularies.

Reading is one of the four language skills that is important to be learned and mastered by students. By reading, they can increase their knowledge also can make them relax and get new vocabularies. When we read, we translate graphic symbols into the meaningful words they represent. The reading is a dynamic one, requiring active, meaningful communication between the author and the reader. In other word, reading is a language process that requires us to understand the

written language in order to get information from the text we read by translating graphic symbols into meaningful words they represent. Reading process also requires us to interact with the text.

Reading is a subject that needs more time to understand. Sometimes, students have difficulties in comprehending the text; for example when they face unfamiliar words. This might be caused by the fact that they do not know the essential information needed to understand a word, including how a word is combined with other words. Whereas, the teacher has carried out the appropriate techniques in teaching reading, and also the strategy.

Reading is an activity to read certain written material. In reading various aspects are involved. Since, reader receives author attitude toward certain issues, the reader need to be able to interpret the author messages correctly. They are the one who create meaning through those written materials

Vocabulary teaching is taught integrated with the other skills in elementary school, junior high school, senior high school or maybe in university. It means that there are speaking, reading, writing and listening but vocabulary is already inside those skills that are taught at school. By teaching the students speaking, reading, writing, and listening, unconsciously learn the vocabulary itself in the subject.

2. METHODS

The researcher used classroom observation and interview guideline as the instrument of collecting data. Marshal et.al. in Sugiyono, (2009:310) state that "observation is defined as a data collection technique which is done by observing and recording the things or phenomena that occur during the study.

In this research, the researcher acts as a passive participant observer, which means that the researcher observes what people do, listen to what they say, and but does not participates in their activities. The source of the data is taken from direct observations dealing with the teachers and learners' activities in learning and teaching of English vocabulary through reading in the classroom.

The interview guideline is in the form of semi-structural interview. It means that the interview guide the researcher carried out uses a number of instruments by employing the interview guide containing main point as the objectives of the research. In this research, the researcher collects data through interview to explore the data from the teacher and some students of second grade of a Junior High School in Banjarmasin to find out the problems encountered by the teacher and students in teaching and learning English vocabulary. Esterberg (2002) in Sugiyono (2009:317) defines an interview as “a meeting of two persons to exchange information and idea through question and responses, resulting in communication and joint construction of meaning about particular technique.

The researcher interviews a teacher and some students to get the data. According to Mantja (2008), interview is a focused conversation that aims to gather information or detailed data that will be used for data analysis. Interview in qualitative research also known as in depth interview because this interview search for deep information about the participation, trustiness knowledge, reason, motivation and other people's feeling The researcher chose the second grade of a Junior High School in Banjarmasin. There are two classes but the researcher only took one class. One class consists of 30 students. The sample in this study was chosen randomly from the population of cluster which is usually called cluster random sampling. The sample was chosen by using lottery

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

There were some problems in teaching and learning vocabulary. First, the students' difficulties in pronouncing the words because of the differences between what is written and what is spoken in English. For example, when the students pronounce the word knife, Wednesday, wrong, and hour. Some words that contain silent letters are quite a problem especially for Indonesian whether it is the students or the teacher. The incorrect pronunciation is often caused by the lack of exposure in English. The exposure means the time spent to English. This is in line with what Varasarin (2007) described that in this situation, the students wish they could speak English fluently but most of them think that English is too challenging for them to master. Regarding this, some expert view incorrect

pronunciation has been caused by instruction goal and the teacher himself and the teaching and learning in this area which is inappropriate (Varasarin, 2007).

Second, the problem in reading is they could not really understand the meaning of the words especially low frequency words. This usually happens because students' don't really read, and listen to English.

Third, the problems are in their motivation. They study English at school is just an obligatory to pass the school exam not in their own intention to study English. They think that even if they don't understand English then it is no problems for them because they can still work to get money as their parents for example.

Fourth, teachers seldom use English as their teaching language even if it is just a simple words. They like teaching English by using Bahasa Indonesia because they think that in this way they will explain it better because the students need to understand the concept of English.

Fifth, the students don't have their own dictionary and that quite a problem because they borrow from their friends and their friends cannot use their own because someone borrows it. Even though the price of dictionary is not expensive but because the teacher didn't push them to buy their own dictionary make them lazy to buy one. Furthermore, next problem was related to diction. The students faced the difficulty when they want to use the words based on the context. As we know that a word consists of more than one meaning. It also can be categorized based on word classes. For example the word "patient" can be as an adjective but on the other hand the word "patient" can be as a noun. The meaning of "patient" as an adjective is different from the meaning of "patient" as a noun. Patient as adjective in Indonesian is sabar but the meaning of patient as noun is pasien, a person who is sick that want to get a treatment from a doctor whether in a hospital or other places.

The last, the students are also still confuse when they find words or expression that are idiomatic. It caused by idioms were difficult because of the lack of the cultural background. Students think that the cultural background

affects understanding of idiomatic expressions. Based on the interview it is revealed that

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the theories, the findings and the analysis, the present study arrives at the conclusions. This study revealed that problems or difficulties faced by the students in vocabulary learning were various. The difficulties faced by the students were almost all of the students have difficulties in pronouncing the words, couldn't understand the meaning of some words, lack in motivation to learn English, the teacher doesn't often use English as the teaching language, they don't have their own dictionary to use for themselves. In addition, the students found difficulties in choosing the appropriate meaning of the words and also still confuse in using the word based on the context. The last, the students are also still confuse when they found words or expression that are idiomatic. There were some factors that caused students' difficulties in learning vocabulary (1) the written form is different from the spoken form in English, (2) so many number of vocabularies that students need to master, (3) their motivation from the environment or classmates are not supporting to master vocabulary. (4) perception in explaining using Bahasa Indonesia is easier to do than in English. (5) there is no obligation from the teacher to make the student buy a dictionary. 6) lack of knowledge in knowing that a word means more than one meaning. 7) The complexity of word knowledge. Knowing a words involves much more than knowing its dictionary definition, by having a dictionary is not enough because idiom need more knowledge to understand the meaning of a word.

5. REFERENCES

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