

Strategy in Teaching Vocabulary at Kindergarten

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Abstract

This research aimed to investigate the general application of vocabulary teaching strategies for young learners in kindergarten. A qualitative research with observation, oral interviews are used it as a useful instrument for data collection. Observation-based surveys aim to identify the general strategy of teaching vocabulary to young learners, a common difficulty usually encountered in teaching vocabulary. Oral interviews are used to elaborate information collected from observations and find out the teacher's views on how to solve problems that arise in kindergarten classrooms, especially teaching the vocabulary section. The results of this study show that the use of images and media-realia in presentation, using questions and answers to young learners as practice and a short answer in vocabulary revision is the strategy the most preferred by many kindergarten teachers in teaching young learners in teaching vocabulary.. The teacher also explained that they had adjusted the strategy if it was deemed inappropriate; a combination of things must be considered. On the other hand, most teachers have revealed that they have experienced certain difficulties such as the lack of focus of young learners when the teacher explained or introduced new vocabulary to young learners because English was still a foreign language for young learners in kindergarten. However, most of the difficulties can be overcome. The researcher also added general strategies used in teaching vocabulary, namely Flashcards, Games, Using Visual Representations, Word Maps, Frayer Models, Stories, Context Clues, Possible Sentences. Therefore, this study identifies providing games in the class is very useful for the learning process of vocabulary in kindergarten.

Keywords: *Strategy, Teaching, Vocabulary, Kindergarten.*

INTRODUCTION

English is the language used for international communication. To master English, vocabulary should be taught the first because vocabulary is an important and crucial part of learning English. Vocabulary is chosen as an important component that must be taught from a young age (Pinter, 2017). Thus, the use of vocabulary affects four skills in English are listening, speaking, reading and writing (Pikulski & Templeton, 2004).

Vocabulary is the most important component of a language.. Vocabulary must be learn if who wants to interact with many people in the world. (Richards & Renandya, 2002) argued that vocabulary is a key component of language skills and provides much of the context for learners to speak, listen, read and write accurately. It is additionally agree the statement of (Mehta, 2009) that vocabulary is the first and most significant step in language learning. This shows the vocabulary is very important and needed in communication and language learning.

There are experts who have identified vocabulary. Thornburry (2002) states that vocabulary is a collection of words which are known and have forms and meanings. In addition, Hornby (2000) stated vocabulary is a collection of language words in which all these words are known and known to someone and used in topics, books, and etc.

Teaching vocabulary is a method used by many teachers kindergarten to teach and transfer vocabulary for students. When you have a board vocabulary, shows that you get meaning verbally and in writing even though you don't understand the grammatical structure in which the text is coded (Nunan, 1999). studying vocabulary is a challenge for young learners due to the dimensions of the task and the kinds of words to be learned as well as collocations, phrases, single words and strategic of vocabulary, idioms, grammatical patterns

and fixed expressions (McCarten, 2007). Therefore, teaching vocabulary is the responsibility for teachers in teaching and helping students in mastering vocabulary.

Teaching vocabulary for young learners and adults is contrasting. Age is a key factor. The difference is a consideration in their teaching. It takes an important role for teachers to teach vocabulary to children. A teacher must pay attention to indicators of teaching; one of them is strategy. The teacher is determining what strategies should be taught. Good strategies will not be useful if a teacher cannot be used and great teachers will not be effective in teaching if they use inappropriate methods (Evan and Lang, 2006).

Before determining the strategy, teachers must know the characteristics of young learners. The first is the characteristics of young learners. Among others; young learners get bored quickly, Young learners are meaningful, Young learners like to discover things, They prefer concrete activities, They are more egocentric, They are imaginative, They imitate. After the teacher knows the characteristics of young learners, then the teacher looks for strategies for teaching vocabulary.

There are several strategies used by teachers to teach English, particularly teaching vocabulary to young learners. In addition, the purpose of this paper is to describe to the strategy used by teachers in learning vocabulary at kindergarten.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative research design that includes all the characteristics of case study. Case studies are conducted with the aim of understanding how abstract ideas and principles can complement each other (Nisbet and Watt, cited in Cohen, 2007). Likewise, this study seeks to identify the teaching strategies that the teachers use in teaching vocabulary to young learners.

In this study, the researcher used method of the observation and interview. Triangulation of two or more data collection methods is required to make search findings, the goal is to make search findings more reliable or more accurate (Wallace, 2001; Holloway & Wheeler, 2002; Cohen, et al, 2007; Liamputtong, 2009). In addition, it may also reduce the risk that the findings will reflect only systematic bias or certain method constraints and allow for a better assessment of validity (Maxwell, 1996).

After the data have been collected, then we must analyze and interpret it. Data from this study was collected from interview triangulation and observation which including interview notes, interview transcripts, interview context notes, and observations analysis.

In qualitative analysis, the initial stage to be taken is the management of data, where original data is first reviewed, then labeled, sorted and coded (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001; Darlington & Scott, 2002; Holliday, 2005), known as coding. The stage of coding is the process of describing the data. In the research instrument, data from interviews and observations were transcribed. As Cohen (2007) argues, the purpose of transcription is to translation from one set of rule systems (spoken and interpersonal) to another very distant rule system (written language).

Afterwards, analysis may then proceed to the explanatory stage at which the analysis data was compiled explain, interpret and validate the accuracy of the finding (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001; Darlington & Scott, 2002; Holliday, 2005; Cohen, 2007; Liamputtong, 2009; Creswell. , 2012). Observation and interview data was explained to reveal the students' response and writing skill. In addition, data analysis was appropriate for answering the research questions. At the last of these steps, the study was systematically presented with a brief explanation of the research questions.

After that, Analysis enters the explanation stage where the data obtained are explained, interpreted and validated by the accuracy of analysis (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001; Darlington & Scott, 2002; Holliday, 2005; Cohen, 2007; Liamputtong, 2009; Creswell, 2012). Data from interviews and observation were explained to reveal the answers and abilities of teachers to teach vocabulary at kindergarten.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the interview with the English teachers and also from observation the research found that are some strategies that the teacher used in teaching vocabulary:

Interviewee 1 stated that kindergarten children really like learning vocabulary in the classroom, because the tools or media used are very interesting and the teacher's delivery is correct. We as teachers must also be

able to determine the interesting media so that children like and feel comfortable when the learning process is taking place. Then before teaching, the teacher usually does some lesson preparation, namely the teacher designs and prepares props, pictures, and the original media used during learning. Interviewee 1 also added the strategy used during learning, namely the question and answer strategy used when the teacher asks children about pictures, props and students can answer questions asked by the teacher during vocabulary learning. Furthermore, the resource person also added that the core strategy aims to increase or stimulate students' vocabulary learning memories. Following the strategy implemented by the teacher, the interviewee also identified the students' responses to the strategies used. According to him, the student's response was very good or liked the lessons given by the teacher. In addition, the resource person also revealed that the strategy used had no difficulties because the media used was complete and had been prepared in advance so that there were no difficulties in the children's vocabulary learning process.

Interviewee 2 stated that children do not like learning vocabulary if the media is interesting. As a kindergarten teacher, must provide a fun media or learning so that children enjoy learning vocabulary in the classroom. After that the teacher prepares the media before teaching is mandatory and the media must match the material. For example, the teacher introduces vocabulary material with the theme of fruit, then the teacher prepares the media like the realia-media / the original media. Then for the practice the teacher prepares a picture that is not colored, then the teacher gives the picture to the child to be given a color. After the picture has been colored. The teacher asks the name of the fruit that the child colored. As for the strategies used by the teacher such as playing games, singing in class, and other fun activities because the aims to create a pleasant learning atmosphere. As a result of the learning process, there were various kinds of responses from children, some were enthusiastic and some were silent. Because children have various characteristics, but most of these children like learning vocabulary in class. He added, the learning process had difficulties. Namely students are still not focused and also children are unfamiliar with English, for that as teachers we should use very creative media.

From the interview above, the researcher also revealed several strategies that are commonly used in vocabulary learning, including:

1. Flashcards.

These are good tools to attract children's attention because using flashcards can attract children's visual senses. That way the teacher can use this strategy to introduce new vocabulary to young learners. And this is also very useful in terms of fulfilling (Gardner's, 1983) Dual Intelligence Theory.

2. Games

This strategy is also very good to use to increase the vocabulary of young learners, because almost all young learners really enjoy playing games. They learn new thing while playing games, as well. For this purpose, strategies to teach vocabulary through games have an important role in the teaching of languages. With regard to this issue, Bakhsh (2016) shows that games can create a funny and interesting ambience for young learners when learn language classes. In fact, Lee (1995, as quoted in Bakhsh, 2016) shows the games are also helpful in developing 4 language skills; listening, writing, reading and speaking. Similary, Gardner (1999, as cited in Bakhsh, 2016) also points out that these games focus on improving the personality, kinesthetic and visual intellectual ability of young learners.

3. Use The Visual Representations

Basic teaching strategies of vocabulary to young learners is use visual reality in the form of a written word. Regarding this problem, Plass, Chun, Mayer, and Leutner (1998, as cited in Nam, 2010) show students are better able to remember words when they are explained in written form and supported by visual material because young learners are very good observers. Brewster (2002) suggest modeling and body language as being of the best ways to teach young learners. Further, Tellier (2008) shows that activities that offer a visual representation of words, especially those that include reproductions of that activity, eg. reproducing movements or images, influencing the memory of young learners. The use of words is often needed for this strategy and is aslo very useful, especially at the elementary level because the teacher uses demonstrations rather than the first language which helps to increase exposure to the language. In addition, this is also useful to keep the student concentration alive because the teacher can use games containing props and movements to make students actively participate. For this purpose, a part of the drawing of pictograms is made available to

young learners in the course book, because concrete concepts are easier for them to learn than abstract concepts. Furthermore, visual memory is very important for young learners and helps memorize.

4. Word Map

Group work is very useful between class activities as it helps students to work together while learning. For vocabulary learning, a word map is probably one of most useful ones that generates creativity. Students are basically brainstorming certain words and creating a map of words between key concepts or keywords. Word relationship helps students remember words easily.

5. Model of Frayer

Organizing is indeed an excellent technique for learning vocabulary because it creates learning fun and more effective. One of these strategy is the Frayer Model, a graphic control model designed to help learn vocabulary. After the teacher gives a draft of the Model Frayer, students draw their illustrations of the target vocabulary and write their meaning, and then give examples. The aim of this model is to develop their understanding of the target vocabulary and make their memorization be easier by making personal connections with illustrations.

6. Stories

The story is one of most helpful features for teaching vocabulary to young learners because it is attractive to children and encourages inductive learning. Neuman & Wright (2014) have revealed that reading children's books is an effective and inspring source of vocabulary development. Based on this statement, the teacher is expected to read a number of stories, including the target vocabulary. This reading will allow students to understand the meaning of words. In addition, asking students to draw illustrations of the vocabulary they notice may be part of the following story. That way, they'll be able to increase and remember the words longer.

7. Context Clues

Context clues are images or phrases used by students use to determine the meaning of a word. and instructions can be given directly or indirectly. As identified by Hulstijn (1992, as cited in Nam, 2010), words will be remembered longer if students do or make meanings correctly, rather than they learn.

8. Concept Sort

This type of concept is sometimes a very useful strategy, teachers need to test background knowledge students of the topic selected so students are asked to choose which word given in the text as specified category. that way the opportunity to familiarize oneself with the target vocabulary, but maybe also discuss words and category.

9. Possible Sentences

Thinking creatively about target vocabulary is a very useful way to teach you how to use file words under all possible conditions. The way to use creative thinking in the classroom can be a sentence strategy is a very important one. WE Pinter (2009) shows the use of creative thinking and imagination is a very fun way study for young learners. Teacher provides a text-reading word list and students guess the subject of the text and write possible sentences. It improves understanding and creative thinking skills of students and needs a lot participation. As well as dealing with in other words, students also deal with the structure grammar sentence for putting words in the proper structure of sentence.

As part of this research paper, this aims of this study to identify the strategies used by teachers in teaching vocabulary to young learners in kindergarten, as well as the difficulties and natural solutions of the teacher. After conducting research on the basis of interviews and observations, the researcher found several main points as follows: first, the researcher found answers to the questions asked. Strategies for teaching vocabulary to young learners can be divided into two groups. The teacher uses media in the form of photos/photos and media-realia to present new words. Because it preferred by most of the teachers in this study. In getting students to practice the words they have learned, the teacher asks young learners, direct questions and answers. For example, the teacher displays a picture of an apple, then young learners answer the vocabulary of the picture. In the final stage of teaching vocabulary, the teacher reviews the strategy used if the strategy used is less attractive to young learners. Regarding the difficulty in teaching vocabulary to young learners in kindergarten, the difficulty experienced by teachers is the lack of focus of young learners when the teacher explains or introduces new vocabulary to them, it is because English is still foreign to young learners in

kindergarten. Even so, this is a challenge for teachers to find the right strategy so that children are interested in learning vocabulary.

CONCLUSION

The researcher found 9 general strategies that teachers use in teaching vocabulary to young learners. 1) Using Flashcards, 2) Games, 3) Using Visual Representations, 4) Word Map, 5) Model of Frayer, 6) Stories, 7) Context Clues, 8) Concept Sort, and 9) Possible Sentences. Thinking creatively about target vocabulary is a very useful way to teach you how to use file words under all possible conditions. The way to use creative thinking in the classroom can be a sentence strategy is a very important one. Teacher provides a text-reading word list and students guess the subject of the text and write possible sentences. It improves understanding and creative thinking skills of students and needs a lot participation. As well as dealing with in other words, students also deal with the structure grammar sentence for putting words in the proper structure of sentence

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