THE USE OF COMIC STRIP FOR ELEMENTARY STUDENTS’ VOCABULARY MASTERY

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Abstract

This research was conducted to find out students’ vocabulary mastery in Elementary school level before and after the use of Comic Strip as teaching media in their English subject. The research problem of this research was how to improve students’ vocabulary mastery by using comic strip as teaching media. The research type was an action research. The subject consisted of 25 students of the fifth class of SDN Dapur kejambon Jombang in academic year 2017-2018. The research data were collected using test (test after first cycle and test after the second cycle). The data on students’ vocabulary mastery were analyzed using descriptive and statistic analysis, to know the improvement in mean students after the first cycle and the second cycle. Based on the preliminary study, the students’ average score was 59.50 and in the first cycle, the students’ average score was 65.57, then, on the second cycle, the students’ average score increase to be 67.89. It can be concluded that teaching English by using comic strip can improve students’vocabulary mastery. The research findings indicate that the students who are taught by using comic stripin learning English are very interested and enthusiastic.

Keywords: Comic strip, Elementary students, Vocabulary mastery, Action research.

I. INTRODUCTION

In this globalization era, everything has changed. Even science, technology and language evolved much faster than we imagined. Every people can enjoy the development of the time easily. People are surely possible to have meeting or communicating with others from the very different background easily. By considering that fact, it is a must for
people to be able to master one or more foreign language which become international language. As one of international languages, English is commonly used by people in the world from different country and region to communicate with others. When people do not able to master it well, it will possibly happen that they will be left behind as the world is somehow getting smaller for them.

Mastering English means we have to learn some skills in it. As known that English has four skills that are speaking skill, writing, listening and reading skill. No skill is more important than other skill. In Indonesia, English becomes the foreign language. The ability to use this language should be introduced from early school-age. That is why the government puts English as one of subjects to be taught in elementary school. Teaching English in early school-age or young learners is not as simple as teaching other learners because the characteristics of young learners are easy to get bored. It makes the learning process more difficult. In fact, students assume and have the opinion that English is one of the most difficult subjects for them. This kind of opinion makes them lack interest to learn English; even they have very low motivation in learning English. Therefore, teacher should make the classroom situation always interactive and enjoyable for them.

Learning English as a foreign language should be excited and active, especially in speaking skill. Students have to practice it more and more. Practicing speaking means that students have to have a lot of vocabularies. This research focuses on how students improve their vocabulary mastery. Having explained before that English is the most difficult subject because of their lack in vocabulary. They have very limited number of vocabulary. Students always find it is hard to express their ideas when they meet the word that they do not know its English word. As the result, they mostly unenthusiastic to communicate with others in English. Even some other students already have sufficient number of vocabulary but still find that English is difficult. Their vocabulary mastery is not the sole indication to say that they find English as an easy subject.

Vocabulary is one of the language components that should be mastered by learners. Many experts state that, some of them are Hatch and Brown (1995:1) state that vocabulary can be meant as a list or set of words for particular language or a list set of words that might be used by individual speakers of language. It has an important role in communication process both spoken and written especially for the beginners. Vocabulary contains of words which make up a language. By considering that, it is clear then that vocabulary is very important in foreign language acquisition. Furthermore Hornby (2000: 1506) states that vocabulary is the total number of words that make up a language, or words known to a person, or used in a particular book or subject, or list of words with their meaning, especially one which accompanies a textbook in a foreign language. Then, Smith (2006: 40) states that vocabulary is a basis of a language. It is important to be mastered first. We cannot speak well and understand the materials if we do not master vocabulary. To measure the ability of the students in English, we can measure it from their vocabulary mastery. Those meant that vocabulary has an important part in learning English.

The measure the success of vocabulary mastery can be seen when students are able to speak English easily and mention all of the things in English correctly. To get used it, teacher should
often give vocabulary exercise to make the students remember and practice the vocabularies. Teacher also should ask the students to practice the vocabularies both at school and at home. Hopefully, the students will be accustomed to the new vocabularies, remember them easily, and use them correctly.

To teach English in elementary students is not as simple as we imagine because the characteristics of elementary students are very active. The teacher needs to apply a good strategy to make the process of learning easier and more effective. One of them is learning English using media that helps students remember, know, and understand the material easily. Using an interesting media in a classroom makes the students active in learning. The various media will be very useful for the students and because of media the boring things can be interesting. There are so many kinds of media which can be used to help students learning English. One of them is comic media. Comic media at present is more popular. As stated by Sudjana (2010) that comic is a kind of cartoon that expressing some different characters and playing the story in series of closely related drawing and it designed to give fun to the reader. in general comic contains several continued stories. Furthermore Csabay (2006) states that the stories are simple but interesting and usually completed with action. Moreover, comics also defined as an art form with a series of static images in fixed sequence. There are two most common forms of comics; comic strips and comic books. Comic strips are serial comics that commonly published in a newspaper, while comic books are popularly called “manga”. It was identically referring to Japanese comic books

There are many reasons why comic is good to be used as teaching media especially for elementary students. Some of them are because comic consist of sequenced pictures and most students like something colourful in drawings.

Beside, as stated by Davis (1990) comics are able to create an enjoyable and entertaining which gives enjoyment to the students. Students always interested in observing pictures. Most students like to be taught with pleasure and joy. It can make the learning experiences they got will stay long in their memory. Therefore, learning English by using comic as teaching media can improve students’ vocabulary mastery. The proof is pictures as visual aids will attract students’ attention and also will motivate them to enjoy learning.

II. RESEARCH METHOD

The method used in this research was classroom action research (CAR) focused on improving vocabulary mastery by using comic strip as teaching media. The subject of the research consisted of 25 students of fifth class in 2017-2018 academic year.

According to Tileston (2003) action research is done to obtain all information about how a particular school operates, how well the students learn and also how to teach in the class. Indeed, the teacher does an action, which aims at improving her/his own students based on problems and situation of their classroom. Meanwhile Elkins (1971) states that action research is an act undertaken by teachers, to enhance their own or colleague’s teaching, to test the assumptions of educational theory to practice, or as a means of evaluating and implementing whole school priorities. As explained above, it meant that action research is done based on the problems in the classroom and aimed to overcome those problems.
In conducting the research, the researcher was helped by one teacher who was acted as a collaborator while the researcher acted as the teacher who taught the students. The researcher worked together from the beginning up to the end of the research activities with the collaborator. The procedures done in this research were planning, implementing, observing and reflecting.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This research was done in eight meetings within two cycles. In both cycles, three meetings were allocated to teach English lesson and one meeting was allocated for evaluation.

Findings in Cycle 1

The findings of the teaching and learning process were related to the students’ participation in the classroom. The data obtained from the observation checklist and field notes. Cycle 1 was conducted in three meetings and it was conducted from April 4th 2018 to April 25th 2018.

The materials were chosen based on the LKS Book. In fourth meeting the researcher conducted test. The researcher provided the worksheet to support teaching and learning process for each topic and prepared some pictures related to the topics. Then, the researcher utilized observation checklist and field notes as the instruments. The last, scoring rubric was used to measure the students’ achievement. It was beneficial to evaluate the students’ final ability.

The Students’ Active Involvement in the Teaching Learning Process in Cycle 1

The findings of the teaching and learning process were related to the students’ activeness in the classroom. The data obtained from the observation checklists and field notes. From the data presented in the observation checklist, it
showed that in opening activity in teaching learning process only 9 out of 25 or 36% students answered the questions about the topic. Then, in whilst activity, the teacher tried to manage the discussion. Most of the students or about 64% were silent. But, when they were asked to discuss the content of the comic, 13 students or about 52% did the activity while in post-activity there were 14 students or 56% of the students did the activity.

The data from field notes in the first meeting can be shown that in the earlier teaching learning process the students were hard to catch when the teacher guided them, some of them were reluctant to do the activity. But they were enthusiastic when the picture was shown and they were eager to observe it. For several time they were asked to observe the sequenced pictures in that comic strip. After the worksheets were distributed, however, they could not response the materials easily. The condition was caused by the possible reasons; they were shy to make mistakes in speaking English. Moreover, their vocabulary mastery was limited. So, the result of their observation to the picture just could help some students to answer the questions. Some students were asking vocabularies’ meaning in English about the terms they did not understand in English while most of them only kept silent. Furthermore, the students preferred speaking mostly in Indonesian. They felt shy and afraid in making some mistakes in communicating using English. That was why most of the students could not participate actively.

In the second and third meetings, the situation was better than the prior one. It can be indicated that the students are beginning to enjoy the English lesson.

In general, the students’ involvement in the teaching and learning process by using comic strip as teaching media in the Cycle 1 in the Meeting 1 was rated as ‘poor’ (total score: 63.5). While, the students’ involvement in Meeting 2 was rated as ‘good’ (total score: 65.5). Then, their performance in Meeting 3 was rated as ‘good’ (total score: 67.92). Based on the result of the two last meetings, it can be concluded that in terms of the students’ involvement, the process of implementing comic strip in Cycle 1 was rated as ‘good’.

Table 1. The Students’ Involvement in the Cycle 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meeting</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>The Criteria of Success</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>63.5%</td>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>Not achieved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>65.5%</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Achieved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>67.92%</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Achieved</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Students’ Scores in Cycle 1

The test of the Cycle 1 was conducted on April 25th, 2018 to evaluate the result of the implementation of comic strip in the teaching. The test format was subjective test. The findings showed that there was an improvement of the students’ mean score taken from the preliminary study to the test 1. The mean score in pre-test was 59.5 and the mean score of the test in Cycle 1 was 65.57. It meant that there was great improvement on the mean score. From the score, it could be said that the improvement of the score was 6.07. However, this result was also not satisfactory since it did not yet achieve the criteria of success that should be at least 65% of students get greater than or equal to 65. Then, the number of the students who obtained the score of greater than or equal to 65 was 15 out of 25 students or 60% students. There were still 10 students or 40% who obtained the score less than 65. It was apparent that the students had an improvement in their
achievement. However, the result was not satisfactory yet, because it did not achieved the criteria of success as defined in this research, which should be at least 65% of the students in a total number.

Reflection of Cycle 1

The students’ achievement in Cycle 1 had improved. However, the result had not yet achieved the criteria of success as defined in this research.

Table 2. The Students’ test in Cycle 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mean Score</th>
<th>Number of the students who obtained the score of greater or equal to 65</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>65.57</td>
<td>15 out of 25 students</td>
<td>60.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The students’ mean score in Cycle 1, in terms of their mean score and the number of the students who obtained the score of greater or equal to 65, did achieve the criteria of success, but the percentage of the students, 60.00%, did not achieve the criteria of success.

Revision of Cycle 1

This stage was done as a revision with the purpose of making the implementation of the comic strip as teaching media better than in the previous one. It was also to achieve the criteria of success were not achieved yet, it was necessary for the researcher to revise and improve the plan. After having an implementing stage in the Cycle 1, it was apparent that there were some findings related to the teaching English by using comic strip.

Before conducting the Cycle 2, the researcher and the collaborator made some slight revisions to the steps in using comic strip. The revisions were needed in order to get better results in the Cycle 2.

The first, the researcher will use more interesting series pictures in the comic strip to activate the students’ background knowledge to make the students more interested in discussing the topic in the comic strip. Second, in giving some leading questions related to the comic strip shown, the teacher delivered the leading questions to each student one by one randomly. It will make the students going to have active involvement in the class and also make them better in improving their vocabulary mastery.

Findings in Cycle 2

From the data obtained, the students’ participation in learning activity was better than in the Cycle 1. During the three meetings in the cycle 2 the students were actively involved. Most of them were fully pay attention to the teacher’s explanation and also more interested in the comic strip’s material. The students’ could do the tasks instructed by the teacher in the right way. Therefore, all the activities could be done well.

In the first meeting, the students’ performances were more active and more enthusiastic. The students who could answer the questions related to the comic strip shown were more than prior. This activity was conducted by 15 students or 60% of all students. It was also indicated that the students were more active in joining the learning.

From the observation checklist, it showed that in the first meeting, the situation was getting better than before. In general, the students more actively involved, their performances were better than before. It indicated the students’ involvement in learning were good. From the field notes, it could be shown that in the first meeting the students were very enthusiastic when the teacher activated the students’ background interestingly by using several pictures which could draw
the students’ interest and could activate their background knowledge about the topic.

In the second meeting, the improvement of the students’ participation was better than in the first meeting. There were 17 students or 68% students who achieved the score above the criteria of success. It meant that the achievement was also above the criteria of success (65%). In the third meeting, they were 18 students or 72% who achieved the score above the criteria of success. It meant that the achievement was also above the criteria of success (65%).

From the findings in the Cycle 2, it could be summarized that the students’ involvement in teaching and learning process had achieved the criteria of success. It indicated that the students’ involvement in teaching and learning process were more than 65%.

The Students’ Scores in Cycle 2

Based on the analysis of the students’ test in Cycle 2, it was found that the students’ scores improved significantly. It was indicated by the improvement of the students’ mean score from 59.50 in the preliminary study to 65.57 in the Cycle 1.

The test in Cycle 2 was conducted after the implementation of the third meeting. The test was conducted in May 23rd 2018 considering that in the first period the students’ brains were still fresh. Meanwhile to keep validity of the result of the test, the teacher and the observer supervised them in doing the test. Then, the students’ answers were corrected by the observer.

The result of the test showed that from 25 students there were 18 students who got equal or greater than 65 and 7 students got less than 65. In terms of the number of students obtaining the score greater than or equal to 65 in the Cycle 2 were 18 of 25 students or 72%. There were only 7 students or 28% who obtained the score less than 65. Accordingly, this result was satisfactory in the criteria of success which required the number of the students obtaining the score greater than or equal to 65 were 65% of the total numbers of the students.

Reflection in Cycle 2

To conclude, the students’ vocabulary mastery in the Cycle 2 has improved. Furthermore, the result has achieved the criteria of success as defined in this research.

Table 3. The Students’ score in Cycle 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mean Score</th>
<th>Number of the students who obtained the score of greater or equal to 65</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>67.89</td>
<td>18 out of 25 students</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The students’ score in Cycle 2, in terms of their mean score and the number of the students who obtained the score greater or equal to 65 and 65% students did achieve the criteria of success.

The discussion is based on the activities done in teaching learning process by using comic strip in each cycle. It describes the use of comic strip as teaching media in teaching English and the improvement of the students’ participation.

The Implementation of comic strip

Based on the finding of the research, it was shown that the use of comic strip as teaching media provided beneficial contribution both in improving the students’ involvement during the teaching and learning process and the students’ score in their vocabulary mastery.
In first step of teaching learning process, the teacher prepare the students’ readiness in learning English, to activate their background knowledge, and encouraged their motivation in doing the class activities.

After having the warm-up activity, the teacher starts to use comic strip as teaching media. There were two main activities here, namely working together in group and discussing the task. The first, they should observe the sequenced pictures thoroughly to understand the content of the comic strip. The teacher asks the students to try to comprehend the pictures as a whole. Understanding one picture could need a longer time. As stated by Ur (1996:10) that incomprehensible vocabulary could be tricked guessing the meaning from the surrounding text. Then, in this activity, students are allowed to use dictionary only when they find too difficult word. Meanwhile the teacher walks around to help students to recognize the difficult vocabulary. It became an interesting activity for them and it was proved by their activeness in participating to find the intended words. After finding the word, the students competed to be elected by the teacher mentioning the word by raising their hands. It caused the activities become more interesting and it also makes them speak much in English.

Second, the teacher asks the students to make some small groups to discuss the sequenced pictures in comic strip. Then, the group leader should manage the discussion. The teacher would monitor each group to make sure that the discussion took place. It meant that they exchanged opinion or shared ideas, questioned and answered, debated and argued about material in the comic. Finally, they should share the answers with the whole students. In this time, all students should be active to present what had been discussed with their group mates. In this stage, teacher should support all students and encourage them not to be shy or afraid to speak in English even when they made mistakes. Later, it makes most students were willing to participate actively.

The Improvement of the Students’ vocabulary mastery and the use of comic strip as teaching media

The findings of the research showed that the use of comic strip could improve the students’ involvement in teaching and learning process as shown by the results of the tests and the observation checklist in this research. It meant that there was a significant improvement on the students’ involvement to the use of comic strip. Besides, there was a positive impact of the use of comic strip toward the improvement of the students’ vocabulary mastery.

Table 4. The Students’ result during the use of comic strip.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Criteria of Success</th>
<th>Cycle 1</th>
<th>Cycle 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>The students were actively involved during the teaching and learning process.</td>
<td>60.00%</td>
<td>72.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>The students’ mean score improved: 65.57 to 67.89</td>
<td>65.57</td>
<td>67.89</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As analyzed from the data in the observation checklist, it was found out that the students were actively involved during the use of comic strip as teaching media. The percentage of the students’ involvement in the learning process was showed at the Figure below.
The above figure shows that the students’ involvement in the learning activities improved from the Cycle 1 to the Cycle 2. In the Cycle 1, there were only 60.00% of the students who participated actively during the action. In the Cycle 2, it could be seen that there were 70.00% of the students who involved actively. Besides, the students performed positive responses toward the use of comic strip.

Moreover, the students’ vocabulary improvement could be seen from the result of the test. It showed that the scores were gradually improved. It meant that there was a good improvement of the use of comic strip toward the students’ involvement during the teaching and learning process. The improvement of the students’ mean score could be seen as figure 2.

The figure shows that the students’ mean score in preliminary study was 59.50 increasing to 65.57 in Cycle 1 and 67.89 in Cycle 2. This improvement had fulfilled the target score as stated in the criteria of success. As stated previously that the criteria of success of the use of comic strip as teaching media were measured by two criteria of success. First, the students were actively involved during the teaching and learning process, in which 65% of the students did the activities. Then, second, the students’ score improved, with the indicator if 65% of the students’ score were equal or more than 65.

In sum, all the criteria of success defined in this study had been achieved. Those were indicated by: 1) the teaching and learning process was conducted based on a good lesson plan, 2) the use of comic strip as teaching media had effect on students’ achievement indicated by the progress of the mean score of test administered during the study.

IV. CONCLUSION

It was concluded that the use of comic strip have some benefits in improving students’ vocabulary mastery. On the other hand, the implementation of comic strip as media teaching in English lesson could improve the students’ vocabulary mastery. The indicators that the students had achieved the target could be seen from the criteria of success in this research. In the Cycle 1, 15 out of 25 students or 60.00% students were actively involved in the learning activities. Meanwhile in the Cycle 2, 18 out of 25 students or 72.00% students were actively involved.

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