

IMPROVING THE STUDENTS VOCABULARY MASTERY THROUGH MODIFIED DOMINO CARDS AT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

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Abstract:

This study examines the use of Modified Domino Card as an interesting and enjoyable teaching media which has the necessary aspect of competition and forces the learners easy to learn the vocabulary, store it in memory and recall it (Lebedova: 2011) in improving the fifth year students' vocabulary mastery at Elementary School. The result of the research shows that Modified Domino Card can improve the students' vocabulary mastery. There was an improvement on the mean score of the test. In the first cycle it was 61.38 and improved to 90 in the second cycle. This technique could make the students pay attention to the lesson properly. It also improved students' participation in learning vocabulary. They were not shy anymore but were highly motivated to join the instructional process. The English teachers who want to apply Modified Domino Card should prepare the card well and as interesting as possible and do the following steps: (1) dividing students into group, (2) spreading a set of cards to each group, (3) matching the picture and the definition, and (4) giving test.

Keywords: *Improving Vocabulary, Modified Domino Cards*

Vocabulary is central to language and of critical importance to typical language learner. The more vocabulary that the students have, the easier for them to develop their four language skills. Without sufficient vocabulary, one

cannot communicate effectively or express his ideas in both oral and written form. It is undeniable that learning vocabulary grows through incidental learning such as through continuous exposure to comprehensible language in reading, listening, speaking, and writing exercises. In learning English, vocabulary plays important role in the four English language skills, like what Schmite and Mc. Carthy (1997: 6) say vocabulary has an important role in language skills.

Teaching English will be better if it is started from children. Children can start to learn simple English from elementary school quickly, effectively and enjoyable. Once they have initial grasp of English in primary school, they will have a strong foundation which will be an advantage in their later studies. According to Setiyadi (2006: 177), children are popularly believed to be better at the learning second language that adults they can learn the second language more easily. Young learners are easy to learn everything because their brains are still developing. Besides, young learners are rather curious about everything surrounding them. They imitate the sounds and pattern, which they hear around them until they form habits of correct language use.

There is plenty of ideas in using media to teaching vocabulary. As we know that it's been a long time since picture was introduced as a media to teaching English for the first time. In its development, picture has been significantly developed into various kinds by the former researchers like flash card, posters, picture series, dominoes, etc. Those media are clearly proven effective to be used as teaching media (Komachali and Khodareza: 2012) . Considering that pictures are effective ones, the researcher wants to implement pictures as teaching media to improve elementary students' vocabulary. In this case, the researcher is going to use dominoes to increase students' vocabulary. According to Lebedova (2011), Dominoes are a very useful, easy, and entertaining game to practice any set of vocabulary. This game can be played in groups or in pairs, it has the necessary aspect of competition and forces the learners easy to learn the vocabulary, store it in memory and recall it. The game can be easily modified by practicing parts of

the body vocabulary, storing the vocabulary in the memory, and encouraging communication and cooperation.

In the teaching process, this game can be used as stimulation and relaxation. Students can enjoy practicing new vocabulary through this game. This game encourages students' participation and removes the inhibitions of those who feel intimidated by formal classroom situations. This is either especially made up for parts of the world. One of the most important reasons for using games is simply that they are immensely enjoyable for both teacher and student.

Based on the result of preliminary study, 72,23 % the fifth year students of Elementary school Mergayu 1 could not finish the test well. According to the teacher of the class, it caused by at least three reasons (1) the students are still low in vocabulary mastery, (2) they have less motivation in teaching and learning English, (3) the students do not involve actively in teaching and learning process. In addition the reason of those problems are, (1) The teacher still uses traditional technique like memorizing, and (2) The teacher only uses textbook in explaining vocabulary. Because of those problems, they are not interested to teaching and learning process. So, they have difficulties in teaching and learning English especially in vocabulary mastery. Besides, from the interview, it can be concluded that 1) students got low vocabulary mastery, 2) Students got difficulties in memorizing the meaning of words 3) Students were bored with monotonous class atmosphere.

Based on the description above, this research is intended to improve the fifth year students' vocabulary mastery through modified domino cards at Elementary School Mergayu 1.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study used classroom action research design. It was conducted in two cycles comprising three meetings in each cycle, and carried out in four steps namely; planning the action, implementation/action, observation and reflection. At the end of each cycle, evaluation test was conducted to know

the improvement of students' ability in vocabulary mastery.

Subject and Setting

The subjects of this research were the fifth grade students of Elementary School Mergayu 1. The researcher conducted preliminary study and did the interview with the English teacher as the guideline to decide the class as the subjects of the research. One class that has the most complex problem in vocabulary mastery was chosen as the subjects. The class that has the most complex problem was the fifth grade class comprising 18 students. Therefore, this class was chosen as the subject of the research.

Instrument

There were four instruments that the researcher used in this study including (1) observation guide, (2) interview, (3) questionnaire, and (4) test. Each of those was used to collect either qualitative or quantitative data. Observation guide was used to give specific list of what should be observed. Observation guide was intended to complete the data in real situation concerning the teacher and the students' activities. Interview was used to obtain the data by doing conversation between teacher and the students about the student's mastery on subject matter and their problem in teaching learning and learning process. Questionnaire was used to know the student's motivation, attitude, and interest in learning English.

Procedures

This study was conducted in two cycles comprising two meetings in each cycle, and carried out in four steps namely; planning the action, implementation/action, observation and reflection. At the end of each cycle, evaluation test was conducted to know the improvement of students' vocabulary mastery. The actions given to the subjects were teaching vocabulary using modified domino card. The researcher showed the modified domino card and demonstrated in front of the class. The researcher put one card on the white board, those who get the card containing either

picture or brief description will be instructed to continue the first card put by the researcher. After giving demonstration, the researcher gave a set of modified domino cards to each group. Each group must match the picture and the definition. After finishing matching the card, the researcher ask some question about the vocabulary in the card. The students that the researcher pointed out answered the question correctly. They looked more enthusiastic in playing of modified domino card. After playing the game, the teacher gave evaluation test.

The criteria of success in this study were emphasized on teaching and learning process during on the students' score from paper works given by the teacher. According to the English teacher of Elementary school Mergayu 1, the criteria of success was 80% among whole member of the students in the class. The standard value was 70. So, the students who scored more was classified into pass and the less than 70 was classified into failed. The researcher compared the test score with criteria of success. If the students who passed the test are less than 80%, he made reflection from the previous cycle to decide and plan the next cycle.

FINDING

The result of the research shows that modified domino card can improve the students' vocabulary mastery. There was an improvement on the mean score of the test. Table 1 shows the result of cycle 1.

Table 1 The result of the vocabulary test on cycle 1

No	Students' Name (L/P)	Vocabulary Score
1	AAM (L)	60
2	AB (L)	45
3	AN (P)	50
4	CON (P)	80
5	EB (L)	45
6	ETUN (L)	60
7	IT (P)	80
8	MYPR (L)	40
9	MA (L)	55
10	MDII (P)	60
11	NPF (P)	75

12	NGW (P)	70
13	RIM (L)	35
14	RDPS (P)	80
15	RYS (P)	90
16	SAW (L)	40
17	SMA (P)	80
18	SKK (P)	60

Referring to Table 1, 7 students got score 70 or more and 11 students got less than 70. The percentage of success is $:\frac{7}{18} \times 100\% = 39\%$. It means the students' who passed vocabulary test score on cycle 1 were 39 % and 61 % failed the test. The mean of evaluation test of cycle 1 is 61,38. Thus the criteria of success has not been reached yet and needed to be conducted the next cycle.

Since the result of cycle 1 was not successful yet, the researcher conducted cycle 2 to improve the students' score. Table 2 shows the result of cycle 2.

Table 2.The result of the vocabulary test on cycle 2

No	Students' Name (L/P)	Vocabulary score
1	AAM (L)	95
2	AB (L)	80
3	AN (P)	80
4	CON (P)	100
5	EB (L)	100
6	ETUN (L)	95
7	IT (P)	95
8	MYPR (L)	90
9	MA (L)	95
10	MDII (P)	90
11	NPF (P)	80
12	NGW (P)	85
13	RIM (L)	85
14	RDPS (P)	100
15	RYS (P)	100
16	SAW (L)	80
17	SMA (P)	85
18	SKK (P)	85

The researcher compared the result of test on cycle 2 to criteria of success. There were no students got less than 70. So, 100% of the students passed the test. The mean of evaluation test of cycle 2 is 90. It means that the test was successful. It can be concluded that the students' vocabulary mastery has improved and the result of test can reach the criteria of success.

From the qualitative data, it was found that the researcher had a better classroom management. He could reduce students' noisiness and be more manageable. The students were not busy with themselves. They could put their concentration more on the lesson. Although there was still a little bit noise from back, generally they listened to the teachers' explanation enthusiastically. Some of the students who were previously shy showed up their action confidently and actively. They said that it was fun. Compared with the cycle 1, there were several progressions in cycle 2. The students actively took a part on the lesson. It seemed that they did not feel bored anymore with the teaching learning activity. They could express freely in line with the topic in doing the action. The classroom atmosphere was also much better.

CONCLUSION

After conducting the steps in this classroom action research e.g., planning, implementing, observing, and reflecting, the researcher comes to a conclusion that the implementation of the strategy can improve the students' vocabulary mastery. From cycle 1 to cycle 2, it was known that the number of students who passed the vocabulary test increased from 39% in cycle 1 to 100% in cycle 2. Based on the students' opinion, a modified domino card is exciting and interesting. It motivates the students in learning vocabulary. They enjoyed during teaching and learning process. Thus, based on either quantitative or qualitative data, it can be concluded that tmodified domino card can improve the students' vocabulary mastery.

Based on the conclusion above, the researcher would like to give some suggestions with a purpose of enriching vocabulary mastery as follows: (1) it

is suggested for the English teacher to apply modified domino cards to help the students improve their vocabulary mastery, (2) the students' can use the same activity in their daily lives to improve their vocabulary mastery, and (3) this study hopefully can be used as the contribution in future research to increase the students' motivation in learning English, especially in vocabulary mastery. The further researcher can conduct research on this problem using different subject and level. The researcher may use modified domino cards as much as possible in various kinds.

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