

IMPROVING STUDENTS' VOCABULARY MASTERY BY USING KIDS' SONGS_(SD NEGERI 022 KAMPAR, RIAU)

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ABSTRACT

At the beginning of this study, IVB grade students in 022 primary schools in Kampar face some problems in mastering English vocabulary. Some vocabulary learning model has been applied to improve their vocabulary. However, the study failed to increase their vocabulary. These circumstances affect their learning outcomes. Because of the lack of vocabulary, most of them do not reach the predetermined KKM. Therefore, this study was conducted. The purpose of this study was to clarify whether the use of children's songs can increase the students' vocabulary and to identify the factors that influence changes in their vocabulary for the use of a children's song. This research was carried out with the design of classroom action research during two cycles. The results showed an increased level of positive vocabulary. Their ability to give meaning to a vocabulary that have been studied increased from 70 in cycle 1 to 87 in cycle 2. their ability in spelling also increased from 57 in cycle 1 to 86 in cycle 2. Then, their ability in using vocabulary appropriate to the context of the sentence also increased, from 75 in cycle 1 to 84 in cycle 2. In addition, the factors affecting changes in vocabulary they also identified, namely the use of a children's song that is interesting, learning activities for the use of the children's song gives way to the them to pay attention to spelling, meaning, and how to use koskata in the right context and learning activities also provide an opportunity for repetition of new vocabulary.

Keywords: *Vocabulary Mastery, Kids' songs*

INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary, as one of the language components, is very important in learning English. Many teachers have the same ideas that to master a language, the learners should master its vocabulary. Related to that, increasing students' vocabulary is a significant factor in language teaching. Since words play an important role in expressing feelings, emotions, and ideas to others during the act of communication, many teachers make efforts to find out the effective ways of teaching and learning English vocabulary. Thus, many ways of teaching English

vocabulary are found and could be implemented effectively in various levels of classroom.

Before using the techniques that can be used to teach vocabulary, the teachers should consider three aspects that can infuse students' motivation in learning vocabulary. Firstly, the teacher should be creative in choosing related vocabularies to be given to the students. Mistakes in choosing material will cause bad effect to the students, such as boredom in the classroom, lack of motivation, and less attention to the teacher. Secondly, the teacher also should consider the students condition, in terms of their levels, ages, learning styles, and specific purposes. So, the teachers should be wise in facing their students. Thirdly, the teacher should choose appropriate teaching techniques to make the students motivate to learn vocabulary.

It is realized that vocabulary is very important in language learning. Therefore, the researcher felt it necessary to improve her students' vocabulary mastery. For years, the researcher, as English teacher in Grade IV of SD Negeri 022 Kampar, taught English vocabulary by using a vocabulary book in which the students are asked to memorize words and their meanings. The students were also asked to memorize a certain number of words a day. They might be able to look up at their dictionary for the meaning of the words. However, most of them argued that it was difficult to learn vocabulary from dictionary individually because some of them did not have English dictionary. Moreover, most of them told that they did not enjoy memorizing words. Consequently, the results had been disappointing.

After teaching English for two years at SD Negeri 022 Kampar, the researcher as teacher found that the students in grade IV B had many problems when learning new words. The students may remember and understand the meaning of a word, but not in the appropriate context in which to use it. For example, they were easily confused to put the meaning of several simple words in an appropriate context. The researcher always found that they often misused the word 'I' in simple sentence like "*Mother I is a teacher*". Moreover, many students generally define the word *clock* as *hour*. They were easily confused to put the meaning of *clock* in an appropriate context. Therefore, they often misused it in sentence like "*Excuse me, what clock now?*" for asking for the time.

Besides, a problem of spellings often occurred when the students learn new words. The teacher found that her students might be competent in pronouncing the new word but poor in writing it. Even a simple word like "*book*" is spelled "*buk*" by them. They were easily confused to spell the English words appropriately because the ways of pronouncing and spelling English words were very different. Thus, the notoriously confusing nature between pronouncing and spelling makes the students unmotivated to learn the English words.

Much effort has been done to improve the students' vocabulary mastery and motivation in learning vocabulary. Recently the researcher implemented vocabulary instruction involving the use of definitions such as looking them up, writing them down, and memorizing them. The researcher provided the students with those vocabulary activities in their vocabulary books. It was hoped that the activities could improve the students' vocabulary mastery and motivation in learning vocabulary.

However, the activities also did not work best to improve the students' vocabulary mastery and motivation to learn vocabulary. The students were not motivated to look for difficult words by using dictionary. Many students did not enjoy spending a lot of time to look up a word in a dictionary. They were frustrated and thus did not enjoy studying the English vocabulary using a vocabulary book. It could be inferred based on the facts that only five of thirty-two students (6.4%) did the exercises in their vocabulary book when the teacher instructed them as homework.

These conditions influenced the students' learning achievements. Because of lacking vocabulary, most of the students' daily test scores could not reach the minimum criteria of completeness. The minimum criterion of completeness of English subject for this class is ≥ 70 . However, in every daily test, almost 47% of the students should follow remedial class because the percentage of classical standard completeness is 75%. Thus, the students' vocabulary mastery needed to be improved in order to increase their learning achievements.

Based on the explanation above, it was realized that the importance of improving students' vocabulary mastery by implementing an effective vocabulary teaching technique. For this reason, it was necessary to find ways to help the students (especially for students in class IVB of SD Negeri 022 Kampar) in improving their vocabulary mastery. Besides, it was also necessary to find out the factors that influence the changes of their vocabulary mastery improvements.

After reading some literatures, it was found that songs could be used as effective way for teaching vocabulary. Saricoban and Metin (2000:1) point out the benefits of using songs for teaching vocabulary as follows: (a) motivate the students during teaching, (b) draw the students' utmost attention during teaching, (c) provide authenticity and context, and (d) entertain and relax the students. Furthermore, Jordan, Carlile and Stack (2008:51) state that songs often arouse powerful memories. It means songs are beneficial to retain and recall information. Besides, they explain that songs can connect the lesson materials to the physical experience when the songs are taught with some form of physical exercise. These benefits allow teachers to use songs with fun activities (Allen, 2007:23). Therefore, many teachers use and study the implementation of teaching vocabulary by using songs.

Although studies on teaching vocabulary have been done previously, but it still needed to have more knowledge on teaching vocabulary especially by using kids' songs. One of the reasons is kids' songs are considered as the appropriate songs that can be easily sung by elementary school students. The lyrics of the songs are usually repetitive, simple, and contextual, for example, a song like '*Rock Star Kids: Where*' follows a very simple repetitive format and teaches things in the classroom in context. Besides, kids' songs can be used with specific teaching points in mind (such as developing listening skills, for reinforcing grammar points, teaching vocabulary in context, etc.) or just for fun to motivate the students in learning English (Clarke, 2007:1). Thus, these reasons differentiate this research with previous researches that also use songs in their classroom.

Some studies on vocabulary teaching have been done in previous researches on the advantages of using songs in the classroom. Recently, the previous researchers found that benefits of using songs are not only for increasing the students' vocabulary size, but they also could improve students' speaking skill. It can be inferred from the researches that done by Ufrizal (2011) who found that songs could increase his students' vocabulary size and Dahler (2011) who found that the activities through songs improved his students' speaking skill. Based on their research results, it can be inferred that songs are beneficial for solving lack of vocabulary and inability to spell or pronounce the English words appropriately.

METHOD

To improve the students' vocabulary mastery, it would be helpful to conduct a classroom action research entitled "Improving Students' Vocabulary Mastery by Using Kids' Songs at Class IVB of SD Negeri 022 Kampar". It is because classroom action research is the appropriate research design to solve the students' problem in the classroom. This classroom action research is a cyclical process consisting of four stages. It involves a cycle of self-reflective cycles of planning a change, acting and observing the process and consequences of the change, reflecting on these processes and consequences and then re-planning, acting and observing, reflecting, and so on (Khosy, 2005:3). This research started from practical questions which fit in with the working conditions of the teachers (Altrichter et al. in Burton and Barlet, 2005:37). It was also attempt to do this research without annoying the ongoing teaching learning process where the researcher works as the teacher.

FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

Based on the findings during cycle 1 to cycle 2, which had been carried out for seven meetings, the researcher could answer the research question "To what extent can the use of kids' songs in teaching vocabulary improve the students' vocabulary mastery at grade IV B of SD Negeri 022 Kampar?" To

explain the extent of the use of kids' songs in teaching vocabulary improve the students' vocabulary mastery, the researcher made the following chart.

Table 1

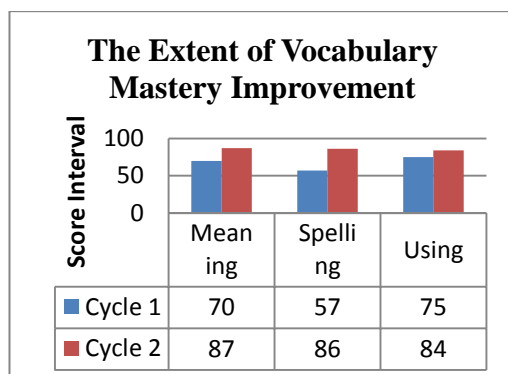


Table 1 shows the extent of the students' vocabulary mastery improvement when they are taught by using kids' songs during the two cycles. As can be seen in the chart, the students' ability to give meaning to a number of learned words correctly improved 17. It was 70 in cycle 1 and improved to 87 in cycle 2. Also, students' ability to spell a number of learned words correctly improved 31, from 57 in cycle 1 and 86 in cycle 2. Moreover, students' ability to use a number of learned words word in appropriate context improved 9, from 75 in cycle 1 to 84 in cycle 2. These findings implied that the students' vocabulary mastery would get richer if this research was continued.

The factors that could influence students' vocabulary mastery by using kids' songs can be revealed from the qualitative instrumentations such as observation, field note, and interview. The factors are:

a. The kids' Songs were Interesting to the Students

Most of the students were interested to the kids' songs. This was showed by the result of interview that most of them agreed that they enjoy the kids' songs. Here are some excerpts of interview that support this finding:

Table 2

Students' Responses in Interview

No.	Questions	Students' Responses
1.	"Do you enjoy learning vocabulary by singing songs in English?"	Student 1: "Yes Mom, the songs are good and easy to sing." (Ya Mam, lagunya enak dan mudah dinyanyikan)

	(Apakamusuk abelajarkosak atadenganber nyayi?) “Why?” (Mengapa?)	Student 2: “Yes Mom, the songs make me happy”. (Iyo Mam, deyen (aku) sonangbernyayi) Student 3: “Yes Mom, singing the songs is fun”. (IyaMem, menyanyimenyenangk an)
2.	“Do you feel your vocabulary mastery improve?” (Apakamume rasapenguasa ankosakataka mumenjadile bihbaik?) “Why” (Mengapa?/Ala sannya?)	Student 4: “Yes Mom, I can remember many words”. (Iya Mam, sayabisamengingatkos akatanya.) Student 5: “Yes Mom, I can answer the vocabulary test well” (Ya, Mom. Akubisamenjawabsoal denganmudah.)

Besides, the result of observation also showed that students were happy to sing the song. It could be seen from their face and active interactions during the lesson that used songs. Since the songs were interesting, they are motivate to learn the new vocabulary presented by their teacher. They paid attention to teacher’s explanation during pre activities in order to be able to do information gap activities during main activity. In the information gap activities, the teacher gave worksheet that contained the lyrics of the played song but some of the lyrics were missing. So, the students had to fill in the blanks on the worksheet based on the song they were hearing. Most of the result of the information gap activities showed improvement on students’ scores. Here are the results of observation (including field notes) that support this finding:

“All students pay attention to the teacher’s explanation”

“All students sing the song happily”

“All students fill in their worksheet individually”

“All students involved in activities using kids’ songs”

b. The Activities during the Use of Kids’ Songs were Designed to Make the Students Gave Attention to the Forms, Meanings, and the Use of the New Words

In the pre-activity, the teacher previewed, pre-taught, and pre-listened the key words or vocabulary related to the topic. These activities provided students with practice of understanding meaning, spelling, and pronunciation of new vocabulary. Then, in the main activity, the teacher used pictures for story telling activity. The story telling activity was purposed to help the students understand on how to use the new vocabulary, which had been

introduced in pre-activities, in simple sentences. Then, to make the students fully understand on how to pronounce the new vocabulary appropriately, the teacher played a song that related to the topic of each lesson. These series of activity helped the students to develop their vocabulary mastery. Especially their ability in giving meaning to a number of learned words correctly, spelling a number of learned words correctly, and using a number of learned words word in appropriate context.

c. The Activities of Using Kids' Songs Gave Chance for Repetitions

The repetitions provided chance for the learners to practice on how to spell the word correctly and pronounce the word appropriately. These activities plays important role in developing students' vocabulary mastery. By the activities, students' spelling mistakes were overcame. It was proved that none of the students made spelling mistakes in cycle 2. Then, most of the students argued in interview that repetitions helped them in mastering the new vocabulary:

Teacher: "Did repetition of singing the songs help you learn new words?"

Student 1: "Yes, Mom. I can understand and remember the new words."

Student 2: "Yes, Mom. I like when you repeat the songs because it helps me learn the new word easily."

Student 3: "Yes, Mom. I repeat to sing the songs at home and I can master words so that I can get good score in the test."

Thus, it could be concluded that the two research questions had been answered positively. The questions are formulated since the teacher as the researcher has to pay great attention to the effort of improving her English vocabulary teaching. As Wilkins (1978:111) points out, "Without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed." It means teaching vocabulary is more important than teaching grammar. For that reason, being a teacher, improving the English vocabulary teaching is very urgent.

Regarding the results of this research, there have been several researches on the use of songs in teaching English as a foreign language that support the results. The research results of Ratnasari (2007) support the findings of this research. She did a classroom action research that used songs. She found that the songs she used could improve her students' achievement in pronouncing English words. Pronouncing of English words is one of the indicators of vocabulary mastery in spoken form (Nation, 2001:50). Therefore, she suggested that songs in teaching English words could be recommended for the English teachers.

Another finding on the use of songs in EFL classroom has been investigated by Mardiyatun (2008). She found that using English children's songs was also effective to teach English pronunciation. As mentioned before, vocabulary mastery involves pronunciation as spoken form of vocabulary usage. Besides, Winter (2010) found that using songs during ESL instruction could lead to productive vocabulary gains. Furthermore, Nurkhaeni (2010), also found that

there were positive improvements on students vocabulary mastery after teaching them by using songs. In addition, Millington (2011) found that songs can help language learners improve their listening skills, pronunciation, and vocabulary. All of the researches findings, which have been described above, have relationship with the results of this research. Thus, the results of this research are supported by the previous researches.

Regarding the factors influencing the changes of the students' vocabulary mastery using kids' songs, some theories also supports the factors found in this research. One of the factors found in this research was the song should be interesting. It is in line with Nurkhaeni (2010) who found that when teacher use interesting songs, the students are motivated to learn during the vocabulary teaching process. It is also supported by Ward in Matt (2011) who states that motivation is one of the reasons for teaching vocabulary by using songs.

Besides that, Saricoban and Metin (2000) point out the benefits from using songs as follows:

- a. Motivate the students on the subject during teaching.
- b. Draw the students' utmost attention on the subject during teaching.
- c. Provide authenticity and context.
- d. Entertain and relax the students.

Therefore, using interesting kids' songs can motivated the students to learn vocabulary then it is continued by improvement on their vocabulary mastery. Accordingly, using interesting kids' songs increase the students' motivation in learning vocabulary. For teachers, bad teaching reduces motivation, increases negative attitudes to learning, and yields lower achievement. Without motivation, attention is lost and there can be little understanding.

Moreover, the best teaching produces learning. Therefore, teachers must facilitate their students with activities that make them learn. The results of this research also found that teaching procedures that provide opportunities for the students to pay attention to the forms, meaning, and the use of new words can influence the students' vocabulary mastery. It is in line with Nation (1977: 23) who suggests that a good vocabulary teaching should makes the learners give attention to the form, meaning, or use of a word.

Additionally, the results of this research also indicate that repetition can influence the students' vocabulary mastery when they are taught by using kids' songs. The use of kinds' songs should give opportunities for repetition. According to McCarthy and O'Dell (1999: 4), to learn a lot of vocabulary, the language learners have to do some repetitions of the following things:

- a. Do vocabulary exercises, and then check the correct answer through friends, teacher, or answer key. Repeat the exercises after a month, and then again after three months. Repeating work is very important.
- b. Develops own ways to study and learn new words and phrases which are not same with the vocabulary exercises. For example, every time the language learners see or hear an interesting phrase, write it in a notebook, and write who said it or wrote it, and in what situation, as well as what it means.

Besides, Nation (1977:22) argues that repetition is an essential part of vocabulary learning rather than introducing a new word. Therefore, when teaching vocabulary, the teacher should try to see that the word is repeated as many times as possible and in many different ways.

Furthermore, Ward in Matt. (2011) gives eight reasons for teaching by using songs. They are repetition, authentic activity, authentic language, motivation, rhythm and stress, new vocabulary, group activity, and practicing alone. It can be concluded that, the use of songs in this research provides many advantages. Thus, the results of this research (using kids' songs can improve the students vocabulary mastery; the songs should be interesting, give attention to the words' forms, meanings, and the use of the new word, and give chance for repetitions) are supported by the theories and the previous researches.

Nowadays, technology makes easier language teachers to find the children's song as teaching materials. One of the easier way is teachers can download free kids' songs from Internet. Therefore, using songs to improve students' vocabulary mastery is not a difficult job.

For that reasons, many teachers/researchers had done researches about the use of songs. It is because the influence of using songs should be proved several times in different real situations. Hence, it is still necessary to do more study about the implementation of songs in EFL classrooms. Besides, it is believed that vocabulary is one of issues that still need improvement. Thus, through the present research, the researcher participated as one of the teachers/researchers that doing research on vocabulary mastery issues. In the present research, the researcher strives to improve her students' vocabulary mastery by using kids' songs. As mentioned before, kids' songs are considered as the appropriate songs that can be easily sang by elementary school students. The lyrics of the songs in this research are usually repetitive, simple, and contextual.

To sum up, vocabulary is a core component of language proficiency and provides much of basis for how students speak, listen, read, and write in the new language. Therefore, vocabulary teaching and learning should be often starting at beginner level. Teachers have important role to motivate beginner students in learning new words. It is hoped that this research has motivated those of teachers who do not yet use kids' songs or use it only a little to give kids' songs a try or

expand its use. Besides that, it also hopes that those of teachers who already are using children songs have gained new ideas from the result of this research.

CONCLUSION

After carrying out this classroom action research for two cycles, the results of this research shows that using kids' songs in vocabulary teaching activities improves the students' vocabulary mastery at grade IV B of SD Negeri 022 Kampar. The extent of the students' improvement when they are taught by using kids' songs during the two cycles are their ability to give meaning to a number of learned words correctly improved 17. It was 70 in cycle 1 and improved to 87 in cycle 2. Also, their ability to spell a number of learned words correctly improved 31, from 57 in cycle 1 and 86 in cycle 2. Moreover, their ability to use a number of learned words word in appropriate context improved 9, from 75 in cycle 1 to 84 in cycle 2. Therefore, it can be concluded from the finding found that most of the students become better in giving meanings to a number of learned words correctly. Most of them become better in spelling a number of learned words correctly and also in using a number of learned words word in appropriate context.

The factors influencing the changes of the students' vocabulary mastery using kids' songs are the use of kids' songs which are interesting to the students, the activities during the use of kids' songs which are designed to make the students give attention to the forms, meanings, and the use of the new words, and the activities using the kids' songs should give chance for the students to have repetitions on the new words. Therefore, the use of kids' songs should consider these factors.

By the conclusions of this research, it can be inferred that the use of kids' songs has some implications for the students' vocabulary mastery. First, the use of kids' songs encourages the students to learn new vocabulary because the students tend to be interested in learning new vocabulary items. Second, the use of kids' songs not merely improves the students' vocabulary mastery, but also improves their pronunciation because the songs provide them repeated practice of spoken words. Third, the kids' songs improve communication through information gap activities. Finally yet importantly, the use of kids' songs helps the students learn vocabulary in a fun way.

SUGGESTION

Regarding the conclusions and implications of this research, it can be proposed some recommendations related to the use of kids' songs in order to improve the students' vocabulary mastery. The followings are the suggestions.

1. It is suggested that the English teachers who have the same problem in elementary school level use kids' songs during vocabulary teaching and learning activities.
2. For further research, the use of kids' songs to improve the teaching and learning process should be supported and extended by facilitating some electronic media such as projectors, televisions, mp3 or DVD players, external speakers, and other visual aids.

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