ENHANCING STUDENTS’ VOCABULARY THROUGH LEARNING EDUCATIVE GAMES MEDIA

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Abstract

English is an international language that is used to communicate in many countries, but in Indonesia, English is a foreign language that is taught since elementary schools. As a foreign language, students get difficulties in learning English. Sometimes they got bored in learning English. To overcome students’ difficulties, English should be taught in an interesting way, such as games, songs, and others. In learning English, we can’t separate from vocabulary. Harmer says (1991: 153) if a language forms a skeleton, vocabulary is vital organs in one language skeleton. It can be said if we only spend less time to learn grammar, we can’t improve our English skill because vocabulary plays a main role in learning a language. The aim of this research was to improve students’ vocabulary through an educative games media that is held at SD N Nyatnyono 2 Ungaran Barat Grade 4, Semarang Regency. This research used descriptive qualitative that included research, information collecting, and socialization. The result showed there was an improvement in learning English through the educative games. Students were happy and interested in learning English and their vocabularies were increased.

Keywords: media, educative games, vocabularies

Introduction

These days, mastering a foreign language is important to communicate in many fields. English is as one of foreign languages plays an important role to communicate in this era. People think by mastering English, they can survive and develop knowledge. To support this opinion, government inserts English as one supplementary subject that should be taught since the elementary school grade.

By mastering English, we can’t separate from vocabularies. Through vocabularies, students learn how to listen, how to speak, how to read, and how to write correctly. Students should store and memorize the vocabularies in their mind. They also have high curiosity and motivation in learning vocabulary. It is the government and teacher’s wish. But in fact, the reality is different from the wish. Because English is not our mother tongue, students get difficulties in learning English. They don’t have high curiosity and motivation in learning English. Most students say learning English is difficult and bored. Because of the low motivation, they don’t have many vocabularies. The other factors are English is only taught twice a week (2x35 minutes), and it is taught as an extracurricular activity in some elementary schools. When teaching materials, teachers seldom speak English. They prefer speaking local language (Javanese) to English because students have minimum vocabularies. Some English teachers also teach as teacher class who teaches all subjects, so they can’t focus in teaching merely English among students.

This article is divided into 4 sections. First, in the introduction, I provide the background of the study, research questions, the purpose and benefits of the research. Second, I explained the methodology briefly. I mentioned the design of the study, the subject of the research, data collection procedures, and procedure of the research. Then, I go to finding and discussion that
Finally, some educational implications are discussed in conclusion.

When I visited SDN Nyatnyono 02 Ungaran Barat to do our research, I also observed this situation. Students had low motivation in learning English. They also had minimum vocabularies. After discussing with the English and class teachers, I found that English learning media were not interesting for students. Besides, students got less practice in learning English. Based on the facts above, I was interested in doing a research how to improve students’ vocabulary through learning educative games media. I hope by giving interesting media, students could increase their vocabularies. Two problem statements rise after observing the situation. They are: (1). How can the educative media games improve students’ vocabulary? (2) What are the advantages and disadvantages in applying educative games media? The aims of the research are: (1) To know how the educative media games can improve students’ vocabulary. (2) To know the advantages and disadvantages in applying educative games media. The benefits of the research are supposed not only for students, but also for teacher, or other researchers. For students, using educative games media will create learning activities become more enjoyable. For teachers, using educative games media can develop students’ vocabulary. For readers or next researchers, they can explore or create other educative games media. Learning a language can’t separate from learning vocabulary. According to Hornby (2000: 1331) vocabulary is ‘word’ as a sound or group of sounds that expresses a meaning and forms an independent unit of a language, while ‘vocabulary’ as the total number of words in a language.

Mastering vocabulary plays an important role in mastering language. More vocabulary we have, easier for us to learn a foreign language. Last research that relate with the vocabulary was done by Lutfina Tarita Wulandari which entitled Thematic Vocabulary Cards to Improve Students English Vocabulary Mastery (2014). Her research focused on the improvement of students’ vocabulary through thematic vocabulary cards that were held among students grade 7, SMPN 1 Wonosobo 2012/2013. The result showed there was an improvement among students after they were taught through thematic vocabulary cards. The second research was done by Supriyono Danang Sucayah (2015) which entitled the Using Puzzle Media to Improve Study Result among Elementary Students. The aim of this research was to analyze the study result through puzzle media. The subjects were Grade 3 SDN Sembung, Sukorame, Lamongan, East Java. The result showed students improved their study result after they were taught puzzle media.

English is a foreign language in Indonesia that is not used in our daily field. English is used only in formal communication, such as writing business letters or communicating with foreigners. Moreover, the sound in English is different with the pronunciation. It makes students get difficulty in learning English and memorizing vocabulary. Helping students’ difficulty in memorizing vocabulary, teachers may teach vocabulary interestingly. They can consider the materials that will be given to the students. Teachers can use pictures, songs, cards, models, and others to teach vocabulary. By giving those materials, students can overcome their difficulty and they learn English happily.

Methodology
This research used Research and Development Methodology. According to IES Institute of Education and Sciences, research and development study is a study to develop solutions to achieve a goal related to education or learning, such as improving student engagement or mastery of a set of skills. These projects of this type draw on
existing theory and evidence to design and iteratively develop interventions or strategies, including testing individual components to provide feedback in the development process (https://ies.ed.gov/pdf/CommonGuidelines.pdf. Research). Relating to the study, this method was chosen because it is suitable with the aim of this research that wants to improve students’ vocabulary. Results from the research could lead to the next research and obtain the better understanding of the foundational theory. The subject of the research was one class of grade IV that was held at SD N Nyatnyono 2 Ungaran Barat, Semarang Regency. Steps of research include literature study and field study. The aim of these activities obtains learning vocabulary system at SD N Nyatnyono 2 Ungaran Barat, Semarang Regency. The next step was the development model. The aim of this activity is to find the educative game media, cooperation and participation between the researcher and SDN 2 Nyatnyono, Ungaran Barat, Semarang Regency, and the appropriate time to do the research. Next was the validation model which aimed to gain the positive effect from learning model that used educative games to develop English skill, especially in enhancing vocabulary. There were the operational product and the evaluation activity. In the operational product activity, the researcher applied the media to increase English vocabulary among grade 4 students. Students were divided into 4 big groups and they played the monopoly and umbul games. This activity was done once in a week. The evaluation activity was applied to give evaluation and observation before, during, and after learning process. The aim was to know how far students increased their vocabulary. The research was done four times during September 2016 and the class teacher also involved and helped the research.

Finding and Discussion
How the educative media games can improve students’ vocabulary

Before doing the research at SD N Nyatnyono 2, Kecamatan Ungaran Barat, I as the researcher discussed and asked some suggestions from Bu Ningrum, as the English and class teacher. She suggested how to improve vocabulary among students, especially grade 4 students. Then, I chose what kinds of interesting and suitable media that can improve students’ vocabulary. After some discussions, I decided to create educative games media and I chose monopoly and umbul games because those games were familiar for kids.

First research was held on September 9th, 2016. I distributed vocabularies cards, such as nouns and verbs. Cards were designed interesting and colorful to attract students’ attention. On the front side, it inserted picture, while on the back side it inserted the word itself. The researcher used drilling activity to memorize the vocabulary. Then, I divided students into some groups and asked them to match the pictures. They might draw some pictures to make their task more interesting. 90 minutes run and we had to end the class.

Next day, on September 10th, 2016, I visited the class and continued the research. The material was monopoly game that had been designed by inserting the English words and putting pokemon, upin and ipin, cars, and mickey mouse pictures. The rule was same as the monopoly. The students were divided into 4 groups, that consisted of 6 persons for each group. They played the games in turns. When one student got the turn, he/she should throw the dice, moved the paper, mentioned the picture/word and spelled it correctly. They played twice and the winner was anyone who arrived at the finish line first. The situation was very fun. After all students completed the game, they did some questions and filled the questionnaire that related to the
materials that day. After submitting the paper and questionnaire, they played another game. The researcher said an Indonesian word and students had to answer in English quickly. The winner was anyone who could answer as many as they could correctly and they got some presents. Students were very active and enjoy the activity. They wanted to be the winner.

On September 16th, 2016, I visited SD N 2 Nyatnyono, Ungaran Barat. Before giving another game, we did a review about our last material. Students remembered the vocabularies easily. The researcher gave umbul game and divided students into some groups. The researcher designed the cards. They got some cards and threw them by speaking loudly in English words. Because they got minimum vocabulary, they got difficulty in mentioning the words. Finally, I changed the rule. I did not apply the umbul game anymore, I did another game. I acted umbul as flash cards. I showed the cards and asked them to mention the words correctly. I also gave a question paper and students answered it. They submitted it. I also gave another questions and anyone who answered correctly and quickly would get some presents. Students were very enthusiastic to answer. The next day, September 17th, 2016, I visited the class. I only gave review and shared each other.

When I did a research at SD N Nyatnyono 2, Kecamatan Ungaran Barat, I observed the main obstacle that faced by students grade 4 was the minimum vocabulary. It might be caused by the minimum allotment time for English subject. English did not teach as an obligatory subject for elementary school, but it was only taught as a local subject and an extra curricular activity in elementary schools. Beside that, the low literacy motivation also caused the minimum vocabulary. English teacher just taught material as student’s book’s direction. Teacher seldom created an interesting media to support the material. Teacher only focused to complete the materials. It made learning English became difficult and boring activity for students. Other obstacles were most state elementary schools had limited facilities to support learning process. Those schools only had minimum English or bilingual books and compact disc (CD). Based on the questionnaire, we could see that students enjoy participating in English class. They could memorize the new vocabulary easily. They liked learning English through games.

The advantages and disadvantages in applying educative games media
There were some advantages by applying educative games in learning English. They were:

1. Students enjoy learning English through educative games. They accepted and remembered the materials easily. Because the games were interactive, students were more active.
2. Students could follow the rule and instruction easily because the games were familiar.
3. The games referred students working in group. It made students learning how working in a team
4. The variety of vocabulary attracted students to learn English and memorize vocabulary easily.

The disadvantages by applying educative games in learning English were:

1. Preparing interesting media was difficult for some teachers because they did not have enough creativity and time.
2. Teacher had to complete the material so they focused on the material itself.

Conclusion
The research which entitled Enhancing Students’ Vocabulary through Learning Educative Games Media showed the good result. Although there were some obstacles in learning English, but students enjoyed
participating the games. Through games, they could memorize the vocabulary easily. They also developed their vocabulary. Students were happy learning English through interesting games. They were very enthusiastic during the learning process. They could memorize the new vocabulary easily. They liked learning English through games.

References