IMPROVING VOCABULARY MASTERY
THROUGH MEANINGFUL ALPHABET TECHNIQUE
AT THE TENTH GRADE STUDENTS OF SMA NEGERI
MODEL TERPADU MADANI PALU

Ahmad Zulfahri[1], Mochtar Marhum dan Abdul Kamaruddin[2]
ahmadaizulfahri@gmail.com
[1] *Mahasiswa Program Studi Magister Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris Pascasarjana Universitas Tadulako*
[2] *Dosen Program Studi Magister Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris Pascasarjana Universitas Tadulako*

Abstract

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui bagaimana penerapan teknik meaningful alphabet memperbaiki penguasaan kosa kata siswa. Penerapan teknik tersebut melalui definisi, konteks, sinonim, antonim dan mengenal kategori kata. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukan pemahaman siswa tentang pengetahuan kata menjadi lebih baik. Jenis penelitian yang digunakan adalah Penelitian Tindakan Kelas (PTK). Penelitian berhasil dilaksanakan dalam putaran pertama yang terdiri dari empat kali pertemuan. Dari hasil evaluasi berhubungan dengan test kosa kata siswa memperoleh hasil yang maximal. Jumlah siswa yang lulus sesuai dengan criteria ketuntasan minimal (KKM) adalah 29 siswa atau 96,6% dari jumlah 30 siswa secara keseluruhan. Berdasarkan angket questioner dan observasi, kesimpulan dapat dinyatakan bahwa proses belajar mengajar berjalan dengan baik. Guru mengimprovisasi pengajaran setelah mengoreksi beberapa kekurangan yang diobservasi pada pertemuan sebelumnya dan siswa-siswa terlibat aktif pada proses pembelajaran.

Kata Kunci: *Meaningful alphabet; Defenisi; Pengetahuan kata; Mengajar.*

The tenth grade students of SMA Negeri Model Terpadu Madani Palu have difficulties to comprehend the text. Most of the students failed to answer the comprehension questions related to the text which had formerly been discussed. The lack of vocabulary comprehension became their main problem. They still got so confused by some particular words that they might misinterpret their actual meanings. Moreover, some words had several different meanings in the text.

Vocabulary has some branches that students need to know (Hiebert and Kamil, 2005). Students have to know the different classes, uses, and meanings of words that are considered as the fundamental principle in learning a foreign language (Schmitt, 2008). For that reason, students need to learn much about vocabulary. However, students will find many items of vocabulary in the text. In most cases, the word use in a particular text creates trouble to the students. In learning a text, students always find difficulties to interpret the message in the text. Consequently, they fail to answer comprehension questions (Yates, 2006). Students should know deeply the related vocabulary that appears in the text. They are supposed to understand clearly the message being conveyed in the text. Every text has a purpose vocabulary which is used in the text. It then outlines to help him/her understand the text by using his/her large vocabulary stocks. One word could have more than one meaning in the context (Turville, 2008).

In the 2013 Curriculum of English Subject (K13 curriculum), it is stated that

vocabulary mastery is emphasized for communication purposes to be applied through an appropriate technique. Apart from that, grammatical component and pronunciation are considered as important aspects to be taught. Thus, language components will contribute to the development of language skill both receptively and productively.

Accordingly, the vocabulary practice is usually related to the teaching and learning language skills with a special emphasis on relation between vocabulary and reading (Pikulski and Templeton, 2004). The texts learnt mostly consist of particular unfamiliar words that students do not understand. Vocabularies that students might need require an appropriate technique to be applied in the teaching process.

As a matter of fact, the ability to comprehend the text depends on students' vocabulary possesses and vocabulary mastery. Although other components have important roles to be taught, student's vocabulary mastery surely influences the success in comprehending a text. Large vocabulary mastery will help a reader to predict the meaning of words in the sentence. This indicates that vocabulary has a very important role in the reading comprehension.

The explanation of unknown word should be maximized. The student's attention to the word needs to improvise. The teacher may ask the students to find the meaning by themselves. The teacher can explain the meaning of the words through the word definition or focus on student's own L2 association. Students' responsibility is to try to connect the appropriate words with provided definitions.

There are many problems that the students encounter in learning vocabulary. Firstly, students find it difficult to predict the meaning of the word. Secondly, students have little understanding and consciousness about word changes. Thirdly, students do not know the different forms of particular words either. Finally, in reading a text they do not fully understand the content that makes them fail to answer comprehension questions. Appropriate vocabulary teaching techniques will help students to be able to recognize the word meaning based on the context of word concepts. One of the techniques is called "The meaningful Alphabet Technique" (Lamasiara, 2013).

Meaningful alphabet is a technique where the teacher provides definitions of a particular word. Based on the definitions provided, students are required to find their appropriate meanings. This technique is considered as an instruction for students to learn words through the definition given by the teacher. The use of dictionary will be facilitated when this technique is implemented. Lamasiara (2013) presents the example of meaningful alphabet technique to encourage the students to think aloud, referring ideas actively, and using reference effectively. The phases are as follows:

- Phase one: Students read the text provided by the teacher. Teacher selects difficult word.
- Phase two: The teacher present a letter followed by the definition.
- Phase three: Ideas solicit from the letter and definition.
- Phase four: Students work and help each other. The teacher monitors.
- Phase five: students decide the appropriate word meaning.
- Phase six: next letters return presented.

Hence, based on the background above the researcher is intended to apply the Meaningful Alphabet Technique to improve student's vocabulary mastery of the tenth grade students of SMA Model Terpadu Madani Palu. The technique is used to solve problems in student's vocabulary comprehension, to

improve the way of the teacher teaching vocabulary, to build student's thinking order, and to maximize the use of dictionary in teaching English. By doing so, it is expected that the student's comprehension about a particular word can be developed. This, then, will help students to be well prepared in learning English.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

This research is designed as a Classroom Action Research (CAR), the researcher and collaborator participated actively to do teaching and do observation during the research. The researcher and collaborator tried to solve the student's problems dealing with vocabulary mastery by applying meaningful alphabet technique. In this Classroom Action Research (CAR), the researcher used the CAR principle to collect the data. Classroom action research is performed in the form of processes that consist of four phases, namely; (1) Planning, (2) Action, (3) Observation, and (4) Reflection. This research consists of one cycle which consists of four meetings. The researcher describes the cycles through the scheme of action research designed by Kemmis and McTaggart (1988)

In the implementation of meaningful alphabet technique in the classroom action research, the researcher and collaborative teacher used one cycle which consisted of four meetings. The cycle consist of four steps namely; planning, action, observation, and reflection. The researcher will provide and design lesson plan, observation sheet, and everything concerning to research tools. The action, observation and reflection will do together or shared to get the maximum input from the students.

This research is conducted at SMAN Model Terpadu Madani Palu, Kota Palu,

Sulawesi Tengah, located on Jln. Sukarno Hatta, Kelurahan Tondo, Kecamatan Palu Timur. The researcher conducted his research on January 2016 to February 2016. The subject of this study is the first grade students of the even semester in academic year 2015/2016. This class consisted of 30 students at the class. In this class researcher applied meaningful alphabet when teaching vocabulary.

1. Planning of Action

The researcher and collaborator teacher stated some steps in doing their classroom action research by applying Meaningful Alphabet Technique to improve the students' vocabulary mastery, and the steps is designed as follows:
a. Designing Lesson Plan
b. Preparing Check List and Field Note
c. Stating Criteria of Success

2. Implementation of the Action Plan

This step is the core activity of Classroom Action Research. The researcher and collaborator teacher are taking an action to what had been planned in the previous steps. This step also describes all things that took place in the procedure in the classroom activity within the application of meaningful alphabet technique. When the researcher taught the students, his collaborator became an observer, whose job is to write all the things happening in the class during the teaching learning activity.

3. Observation

Observation is the process of recording and collecting data from both students and teacher. The researcher taught the students using meaningful alphabet technique when the collaborator observed his performance applying the meaningful alphabet technique. The result of observation is discussed together after the class. In order to get accurate data and reliability of result in this step, the researcher specified the kind and the source of the data to be collected.

Therefore, he prepared the instrument and techniques of data collection.

4. Data Analysis

In this classroom action research, the researcher analyzed data qualitatively taken from the observation check list. In analyzing numerical data the researcher getting the average score which pass the KKM. The minimum criteria of completeness (KKM) considering English subject gains score is 75.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

This research is successfully done in the first cycle covering four meetings. The first meeting that the researcher conducts is the teaching and learning process which is related to the narrative text and the introduction of meaningful alphabet technique. The text discussed on that meeting is Snow White. The second meeting is the discussion of other text entitles "The Loss of Titanic". On the next meeting the discussion still relates to the text of The Loss of Titanic. The implementation of the technique is learned for clarifying meaning of some words that are built in the text. The evaluation is focused on the students' understanding about the word knowledge which covers the word meaning. The evaluation is conducted on the fourth meeting.

Based on the data attained from evaluation, there are 29 or 83,9% students whose achievement in the vocabulary mastery has met the criteria of success 75. The score of their obtained scores is >75. The result of the evaluation has met the criteria of success.

With respect to the observation data attained from checklists and the questionnaire, it is found that the implementation of meaningful alphabet technique gets good responds by the students. The problems that are found when the researcher applies the meaningful alphabet technique in the first

meeting based on the observation are (1) students are noisy because they gave their idea, (2) the poor management of the researcher in organizing the students. The researcher dominates the class and gives too much explanation. As consequence, the students do not have much time to collect information, (3) students' participation in the discussion is still low.

The improvement is done in the next meeting. The researcher and collaborator design the plan to anticipate the weaknesses that is found the previous meeting. In the second meeting the researcher asks the students to write down their answers in their books. So, the students do not need to answer the questions dealing with the meaningful alphabet technique orally. For the other weaknesses that deal with the management of class, the researcher leads the class by writing down the instruction that the students should follow. The instructions are effective because the students know what they have to do during the teaching learning process. Beside that the researcher minimizes too many explanations. The third problems that are found during the teaching learning activities the researcher distributes the texts in order to make students more focus.

For the reflection in this action research is about the teaching learning process. To decide whether the application of the meaningful alphabet technique is applicable or not for the students, the researcher then distributes the questionnaires. The forth question the students ask about the vocabulary teaching that is implemented through the meaningful alphabet technique can help students in overcoming their problems related to the unfamiliar English words that are responded by 22 students, strongly agree. The percentage of the respond is 73,3% of the students want that the meaningful alphabet technique is implemented when learning vocabulary. The numbers of students

that agree with this statement are 6 and 2 students undecided their responses.

Based on the findings of the fourth meeting of the evaluation indicates that the implementation of meaningful alphabet technique has significant results. It is found that most of the students achieve the criteria of success. Related to the observation checklist the teaching learning activities improve. From the questionnaires that are filled out by the students, the implementation of meaningful alphabet technique helps them to learn vocabulary better. On the basis of the data, it can be concluded that the students get enthusiastic in learning vocabulary through the meaningful alphabet technique. It is deserved for the researcher and collaborator to stop the research since the criteria of success have been achieved.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Conclusions

Based on the research findings, some conclusions are taken as follows: (1) The application of the meaningful alphabet technique improves students' vocabulary mastery, (2) The students can improve the way they learn vocabulary through this technique and they aware that one word could has more than one meaning and (3) The students are able to differentiate words categorized by looking in detail for the right spellings.

Suggestions

To follow up the findings, some suggestions are also stated to be addressed for the teachers, students, and the future researchers as follows: (a) The teacher should improve his/her ability to connect the clue with the word which meant to support the students' understanding. He should use familiar word to help students find the actual word. (b) The students should have their own dictionaries in learning vocabulary, so, that they can find the meanings easily based on the instruction that is provided in the technique, (c) For reader, the meaningful alphabet can increase thinking skill in connecting the idea or the students could provide their own ideas to make the learning vocabulary more fun and challenging. This technique can be implemented to continue research to prove the effectiveness this technique for another focus, (d) For the future researcher, the implementation of the meaningful alphabet technique is advisable to carry out at the same level at which this research is conducted. The application of this technique can also be applied for developing students' writing skill and (e) For the future researcher, the implementation of this technique can be used for more than one cycle to measure the effectiveness of this technique.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

REFERENCE

Hiebert, E.H and Kamil, M. 2005. Teaching and Learning Vocabulary. New Jersey: Lawrence Elbaum Associates Publishers.

Kemmis, S and Mctaggart R. 1988. The Action Research Planner. Victoria: Deakin University Press.

Kemdikbud. 2013. Pengembangan Kurikulum 2013. Paparan Mendikbud dalam Sosialisasi Kurikulum 2013. Jakarta: Kemdikbud.

Lamasiara, D. 2013. Mengembangkan Model Pembelajaran Aksara Bermakna untuk Meningkatkan Penguasaan Kosa Kata dan Keterampilan Menulis Teks Deskripsi Siswa Kelas XII SMA Negeri Model Terpadu Madani Palu.Unpublished. Retrieved from personal library/ Research and Development.Oktober 2013.

Pikulski and Templeton. 2004. Teaching and Developing Vocabulary: Key to Long-Term Reading Success. Hougton Mifflin Company.

Schmitt, N. 2008. Teaching Vocabulary. University of Nottingham: Pearson Education.

Turville, Judy. 2008. Teaching the Brain to Read: Strategies for Improving Fluency, Vocabulary and Comprehension. USA: ASCD.

Yates, Y. 2006. *English Vocabulary for Beginning ESL Learners*. USA: The MC.Graw-Hill Companies, Inc.