The Use of Mnemonic Technique in Increasing Students' English Vocabulary Mastery

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ABSTRACT
Acquiring a sufficient vocabulary in English can be a formidable obstacle, which in turn affects one's proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Students frequently encounter difficulties in comprehending word meanings. In order to tackle this issue, multiple strategies are utilized to improve one's command of vocabulary, one of which is the Mnemonic Technique. This study examines the efficacy of the Mnemonic Technique in enhancing vocabulary acquisition among tenth-grade students at SMKS Muhammadiyah Marawola. The data for this study were acquired through field notes, observation sheets, and pre-test and post-tests as part of a Classroom Action Research project. The Mnemonic Technique, specifically the acrostic approach, was employed to enhance memory by constructing sentences. The study comprised two iterations, with each iteration encompassing preparation, execution, observation, and reflection stages. The results demonstrated a noteworthy enhancement in the students' proficiency in language. During cycle I, the average pre-test score was 65.87, which subsequently rose to 73.87 in the post-test. During cycle II, the average post-test score showed a further improvement to 89.87. The proportion of pupils achieving the passing grade increased from 75% in cycle I to 87.5% in cycle II. In conclusion, the Mnemonic Technique has been shown to be beneficial in improving students' vocabulary, increasing their level of engagement, fostering creativity, and leading to higher learning outcomes.

Keywords: *Classroom Action Research; Mnemonic Technique; Vocabulary Mastery*

INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary is one of the most important elements in a language that must be mastered. Lack of vocabulary mastery greatly affects language skills, not only in English but also in other languages, because the four skills that must be mastered involve using vocabulary in their learning. In general, one of the difficulties in learning English is the lack of vocabulary. However, difficulties can also arise because the students do not understand the meaning of words. Although English language learning has been learned since junior high school and even elementary school, students still find it difficult to learn, particularly mastering the four skills, such as speaking skills. Speaking is an ability that requires a lot of vocabulary, but students are unable to speak because they are confused about choosing the right word that will be used in speaking.

The researcher has conducted an interview and discussion with the principal and English teacher at SMKS Muhammadiyah Marawola about the students' abilities and activities in learning English. From these activities, the researcher found several problems that affected students' English learning outcomes, especially among the tenth-grade students of SMKS Muhammadiyah Marawola. Another result of an interview with an English teacher at SMKs Muhammadiyah Marawola showed that one of weaknesses of the students in mastering English was the lack of vocabulary mastery. Therefore, it is the teacher's role to find a solution to solve the problem. One of the solutions is to use techniques that match the students' needs. One of the techniques that can be used is Mnemonic. The Mnemonic Technique is an easy-to-use and effective technique to help students improve their memory. This technique is not only applicable to vocabulary material but also to all skills in learning English. In learning English vocabulary, students can solve the problem of vocabulary easily and pleasantly by using this technique. The use of this technique is to help repeat the new information obtained by students so as to strengthen the mastery of their vocabulary.

According to Mastropieri & Scruggs, Mnemonic Technique refers to direction or learning designed specifically to improve memory, especially words (Susana, 2017). This technique uses words that sound like the first language as keyword. It is used as a clue for the new vocabulary given. One way of applying Mnemonic Technique is to use acrostic technique. It is a technique of practicing memory by using sentences. For example, when we are going to remember or memorize a long sentence which is quite difficult to remember, for example the phrase "World Health Organization". To make it easier to remember and memorize the phrase, we can use the first letter of each word in the phrase accompanied by an illustration image such as W (by image of the earth) + H (by image or health symbol) + O (by image of a group of people) = WHO. When we are familiar with those words, and see the letter, word, and image that related, indirectly we will remember the phrase that we already know. When looking at the letter "W" or looking at the image of the earth, we will remember the word "World".

The researcher formulates the problem as follow, "How effective is Mnemonic Technique to increase vocabulary mastery of the tenth-grade students of SMKS

Muhammadiyah Marawola?". The objective of this research was to find out how the use of Mnemonic Technique can be effective to improve vocabulary mastery of students at the tenth grade of SMKS Muhammadiyah Marawola. The hypothetical formulation based on the previous explanation is as follows (1) The researcher is able to plan and implement Mnemonic Technique in the teaching and learning process, (2) The students at the tenth grade of SMKS Muhammdiyah are able to respond well the subject and material while using Mnemonic Technique in learning, (3) Mnemonic Technique is effectively used in learning to improve the mastery of English vocabulary at the tenth grade students of SMKS Muhammadiyah Marawola.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Vocabulary Mastery

Vocabulary is a set of words in a language that is usually developed and serves as a useful and fundamental tool for communication to gain knowledge. Vocabulary can be defined, roughly, as the words we teach in the foreign language (Penny, 1996). Difficulty in learning vocabulary is generally due to the meaning of the word changing from the real meaning depending on accompanying sentence. Because, when people think about a word, they tend to think about the word meaning. According to Carlo, word knowledge involves spelling, pronunciation, morphology, syntax, and depth of meaning (Hunt et al., 2016). Therefore, vocabulary learning is not only focused on memorizing each word, but the meaning of each word in each sentence. According to Hornby, the mastery of vocabulary is complete knowledge or complete skill (Susanto, 2017). According to the definitions discussed, it can be concluded that vocabulary is a set of words that become part of the communication process as well as in language learning, while vocabulary mastery is the ability or skill in processing and using words in languages and sentences with the appropriate meaning.

Vocabulary is divided into two types: (a) Receptive Vocabulary, receptive vocabulary is known and understood its meaning by learners when reading text or listening to the text. According to Webb's study, receptive vocabulary is the ability to recognize the form of a word and to define or to find a synonym for it (Zhong, 2011). (b) Productive Vocabulary, according to Webb, productive vocabulary can be regarded as a process of active word because learners can generate words to express their thoughts and feelings which are understood by others or to pass on the word as in the original learners' language (Maskor & Baharudin, 2016). It means in productive vocabulary knowledge, the learners know and recognize the meaning of words and able to speak and write.

Mnemonic Technique

According to Elizabeth, Mnemonic Technique comes from the Greek "Mnemon" which means "Mindfullness" and is commonly referred to as a mnemonic device that help capture information in an easy way and able to remember something important (Sujarwo, n.d.). At the same time, Suharman defines that Mnemonic is a strategy learned with the aim at optimizing memory performance with repetition (Anshorullah, 2008). It is important to understand and emphasize that Mnemonic Technique is used to improve memory ability in remembering rather than in designing to improve complicity. From some of the opinions

that have been described above, it can be concluded that Mnemonic Techniques utilize memory.

METHOD

This research was conducted as a Classroom Action Research. Classroom Action Research is research that aims to develop new skills, new strategies, or new approaches to solving problems with direct implementation in the classroom (Mahmud & Priatna, 2008). Mc Taggart in Hanurawan says that action research is a step or real evidence in finding solutions and improving understanding of the environment (Mahmud & Priatna, 2008). Classroom Action Research is another name of Applied Research. Applied Research refers to finding a solution for specific, practical problem faced by an individual, society or an industrial or business organization (Mishra & Alok, 2011).

The location of the research is at SMKS Muhammadiyah Marawola located on Jln. Dahlia No. 33 Binangga Village, Marawola, Sigi District, Central Sulawesi. The subject of this research was the tenth grade students of SMKS Muhammadiyah Marawola. Since the design of the research was classroom action research, then the researcher decided to choose one class only to be observed. The tenth grade observed was the class X AP majoring in office administration.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Cycle I

By analyzing the result of the cycle I, the researcher found that students were able to understand the material by giving explanation more than once because students did not understand English Basic enough from Junior High School, especially in understanding the meaning of the words. Another problem that the researcher found and wrote on the field note was the students got bored which was caused by everyday English class. This decision was given from the school to finish this Classroom Action Research sooner. Due to the fact that the situation was still in covid-19 pandemic, Mnemonic Technique was only used to solve students' difficulties in vocabulary. Therefore, the researcher decided to use other strategies to solve students' boredom.

Cycle II

By analyzing the result of cycle II, the researcher found that the students were more active and enthusiastic in learning even the researcher still had to explain the material more than once. Based on the result of the field notes, the researcher found that the use of game of Mnemonic Technique combined to humorous strategy could reduce students' boredom and also could motivate the students and improve their mastery of vocabulary. Furthermore, students' boredom and interest can be maintained by changing management of classroom and playing game, while students' vocabulary mastery also increased by using Mnemonic Technique based on their imagination. The passing grade (KKM) was 70 and the target was 80%. 83.3% of students could pass the passing grade. So, the researcher stopped the research until cycle II.

From the analyzing of the result in the cycle I and cycle II, students' improvement of each cycle, was as follow:

Table 1. The Mean and Target Percentage of Cycles

No	Analysis	Cycle I	Cycle II
1	Mean		
	Pre-Test	65.87	-
	Post-Test	73.87	89.87
2	Target percentage	75%	87.5%

From the table above, we could see that the mean of post-test in cycle I (73.87) was higher that pre-test in cycle I (65.87). Although there was an improvement mean in the result of post-test in cycle I, it could not reach the target 80%, because the target percentage of cycle I was 75%. In the cycle II, we can see clearly that there was an improvement from the result of post-test in cycle II (89.87) which is higher than post- test of cycle I (73.87). In other words, the target was reached since the target was 87.5%.

Based on the result of the research explained above, the researcher concluded that the use of Mnemonic Technique gave some advantages in mastering vocabulary. They are: (1) Mnemonic Technique could improve students' ability in memorizing new words; (2) Mnemonic Technique could help students be more imaginative and creative; (3) Mnemonic Technique could help students to recall the information based on their imagination; and (4) The result of students in each cycle showed a better improvement.

CONCLUSION

Based on the data explained previously, it can be concluded that the use of Mnemonic Technique can increased students' vocabulary mastery at the seventh grade students of SMKS Muhammadiyah Marawola. There were several students' improvements beside the score that the students got, they are:

1. The students at the tenth grade of SMKS Muhammdiyah were being responsive in teaching and learning process, it can be proved by seeing the total of students who participated in learning process from beginning of cycle I to the ending of cycle II where there are improvement.

2. The students at the tenth grade of SMKS Muhammdiyah were more creative in finding their own way to remind previous vocabularies, it can be proved by seeing where there some different ways of students in memorizing and reminding vocabularies for example using acronym, loci method, etc.

3. The students at the tenth grade of SMKS Muhammdiyah are more synthesis in understanding the meaning of words to increase their vocabulary mastery where the students were able to reuse the words in other sentences.

Related to the students' boredom in the class, the researcher solved the problem by changing the management of class, and playing game. Those activities could help in the success of using Mnemonic Technique where Mnemonic Technique needs a comfortable atmosphere inside the class to support the success. By applying Mnemonic Technique, the students practiced their brain to memorize and recall the new words by their own imagination, then it can improve their vocabulary mastery. Besides, the humorous strategy helped to make a comfortable atmosphere in class. As the final result, they could remember the new vocabularies easily. Therefore, Mnemonic Technique was effective to used in English learning to improve students' vocabulary mastery. Related to this research, it is better for the students to be more active in teaching and learning process. They have to be brave in asking anything they do not know to the teacher. Hopefully, by using Mnemonic Technique, students can be more active in joining teaching and learning process then their achievement can be improved.

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