

TEACHING VOCABULARY THROUGH CHANTS AND STORYTELLING STRATEGIES TO THE FIFTH GRADE PUPILS OF SDN 2 PALEMBANG

Nian Masna Evawati
nianmasnaevawati@yahoo.co.id
Darmaliana
annapolsri@yahoo.com

English Department
State Polytechnic of Sriwijaya

Abstract: The fifth grade pupils at elementary school in Palembang had difficulties in learning vocabulary and pronunciation. These vocabulary and pronunciation learning problems made the writer interested in teaching vocabulary and pronunciation through chants and storytelling strategies to overcome pupils' difficulty in learning vocabulary and pronunciation. The objectives of the study were to find out whether or not (a) there was a significant difference in vocabulary achievement and pronunciation ability of the pupils before and after they were taught through chants strategy?, (b) there was a significant difference in vocabulary achievement and pronunciation ability of the pupils before and after they were taught through storytelling strategy?, and (c) there was a significant difference in vocabulary achievement and pronunciation ability of the pupils who were taught through chants strategy as compared to those who were taught through storytelling strategy. The population was all the fifth grade pupils of SDN 2 Palembang. The samples were 60 pupils. This study was experimental. The data were analyzed by using t-tests (paired samples t-test and independent samples t-test). The findings showed that chants strategy could increase pupils' vocabulary achievement ($t=10.285$, $\alpha<0.05$) and improve their pronunciation ability ($t=9.607$, $\alpha<0.05$) significantly. Storytelling strategy could also increase pupils' vocabulary achievement ($t=12.751$, $\alpha<0.05$) and improve their pronunciation ability ($t=5.705$, $\alpha<0.05$) significantly. In addition, there was no significant difference in vocabulary achievement ($t=1.725$, $\alpha>0.05$) and pronunciation ability ($t=1.680$, $\alpha>0.05$) between the pupils who were taught through chants strategy and those who were taught through storytelling strategy.

Key words: Vocabulary Achievement, Pronunciation Ability, Chants Strategy, and Storytelling Strategy

In learning any foreign language, vocabulary plays an important role because it is an element of the four skills of language, that is, listening, speaking, reading and writing. Moreover, we cannot communicate effectively without vocabulary. Therefore, the first step to learn English is learning the vocabulary. Mehta (2009) points out that vocabulary is the first and foremost important step in language acquisition and plays an important part in academic achievement. Tozcu and Coady (2004, p.473) state that learning vocabulary is an important aspect of second language or foreign language acquisition and academic achievement and is vital to reading comprehension and proficiency.

But there is failure in vocabulary instruction given by the teachers, Khabib (2009) states that the English teachers cause low vocabulary mastery. It is common to refer to vocabulary just in reference to the meaning of the words. In addition, Lado (1955) says that the meaning, forms, distribution, and classification of words might lead to vocabulary

learning problems and vocabulary teaching difficulty patterns because those important aspects are different in different languages. Based on the survey through an observation to English teacher of SDN 2 Palembang, the English teacher still uses this vocabulary instruction by asking pupils to look up words or vocabulary items in a dictionary. Instruction in vocabulary involves far more than looking up words in a dictionary and using the words in a sentence.

A language teacher should be innovative and proficient in the application of methodologies pertaining to teaching vocabulary items in a classroom situation. An efficient language teacher can use selected vocabulary activities or integrated activities depending on the ability and level of understanding and interest of the learners (Mehta, 2009). A language teacher can use children's literature as a creative teaching approach and suitable supplemental activities. Appropriate selections give students exposure to new, illustrated vocabulary in context, and provide repetition of key words and phrases that students can master and learn to manipulate.

Read (2005) proposes solutions for helping young learners to learn, first, to use stories. Second, use chants and rhymes. These are great for movement and frequent repetition of vocabulary and phrases. It is evident that young learners learn through play easily and they enjoy it. A play is in the essential nature of the child. This is quite a natural way for them to learn. Telling stories to students can result in natural language acquisition on their part (Rixon, 1999, p.37). Storytelling helps children to expand children vocabulary and comprehension skill. Furthermore, Rachmawanty and Istanti (2010) found that telling the stories is one of the recommended techniques that can help language learners in improving their knowledge of vocabulary, grammatical structure, and pronunciation. A study from Cakir (1999) found some importance of chants in English classroom. Songs, rhymes, and chants are fantastic materials for the language teacher to use with young learners. Chants are wonderful means of teaching pronunciation, teach children the rhythm of English, and reinforce structures and vocabulary.

Based on the literature and explanation review above, the writers were interested in doing a research entitled "*Teaching Vocabulary through Chants and Storytelling Strategies to the Fifth Grade Pupils of SDN 2 Palembang*". This study attempted to compare two different teaching strategies, that is using chants and storytelling strategies.

Based on the outlines above, the problems of this study were formulated in the following questions: (1) was there any significant difference in vocabulary achievement of the pupils before and after they were taught through chants strategy?; (2) was there any significant difference in vocabulary achievement of the pupils before and after they were taught through storytelling strategy?; and (3) was there any significant difference in vocabulary achievement of the pupils who were taught through chants strategy as compared to that of those who were taught through storytelling strategy?

The objectives of this study were to find out whether (a) there was any significant difference in vocabulary achievement of the pupils before and after they were taught through chants strategy; (b) there was any significant difference in vocabulary achievement and pronunciation ability of the pupils before and after they were taught through storytelling strategy; and (c) there was any significant difference in vocabulary achievement of the pupils who were taught through chants strategy as compared to those who were taught through storytelling strategy.

METHOD OF THE RESEARCH

This research belonged to an experimental study. The study attempted to compare two different teaching strategies, that is, using chants and using storytelling in teaching vocabulary. There were two experimental groups and no control group. The groups were given two kinds of tests, pre-test and post-test.

Techniques for Collecting the Data

In collecting the data, the writers used vocabulary test. The vocabulary test was taken from the fifth grade pupils' textbooks based on the elementary school's curriculum to collect the data about pupils' vocabulary achievement. Vocabulary test was in a form of written test which consisted of multiple choices. There were forty five questions in this test.

Pre-test and Post-test

The writers gave pre-test before conducting the teaching experiment to the pupils. It was to measure the pupils' achievement as a baseline before the experiment. And the post-test was given after the treatment was conducted. The test items were similar to those of the pre-test. It was to measure the pupils' achievement after the treatment. The items for the pre-test and post-test covered the whole vocabulary given in the treatment.

Validity and Reliability

Before the tests were administered, they were tried out to 30 fifth grade pupils of SDN 9 Palembang on May 4th, 2012. The pupils had more or less the same characteristics as those of SDN 2 Palembang. The writers analyzed the results by using SPSS program whether or not they were valid and reliable. The validity was analyzed using Pearson Product Moment formula. The validity result of vocabulary test was higher than 0.361 (N=30) at 0.05 r-table which r-count 0.366-0.644. For the reliability, the writers analyzed using Alpha Cronbach formula. The reliability coefficient of the test should be at least 0.70 and preferably higher. The result of the reliability was 0.936 which was higher than 0.70 at 0.05 r-table. Based on the result of validity and the reliability above, it could be said that the vocabulary test was valid and reliable.

Treatments

The two experimental groups were given different treatments. The first experimental group was given chants strategy and the second one storytelling strategy. This study was conducted in 26 meetings including pre-test and post-test activities. Each meeting took 35 minutes in which the teaching vocabulary through chants strategy and storytelling strategy. The writers conducted the treatments to the experimental groups of samples in the afternoon, since they were studying in the morning. The materials were taught based on the teaching-learning objectives that refer to the English syllabus of SDN 2 Palembang, relevant to the curriculum of elementary school, and based on the Flesch-Kincaid reading ease to know whether the materials used had the same degrees of difficulty. The writers taught these two experimental groups with the following steps.

The Teaching Procedures:

1) The Stages for the First Experimental Group (Chants)

- a. Pre-activities (8 minutes)
 - (1) The brain storming (4 minutes)

The teacher asked some questions related to the topic to recall the pupils' previous knowledge about the topic.
 - (2) Motivation (4 minutes)

The teacher mentioned the functions or the benefits of learning the chants.
- b. Whilst-activities (20 minutes)
 - (1) The teacher gave the pupils some glossaries of vocabulary items related to the material that they were going to learn.
 - (2) The teacher wrote the chants lyrics on the whiteboard.
 - (3) The pupils listened to chants songs using cassette.
 - (4) The pupils sang the chants songs together.
 - (5) After listening and singing together, the pupils answered questions about the missing words from chants given.
- c. Post-activities (7 minutes)
 - (1) Concluded the material
 - a) The pupils mentioned the vocabulary items used.
 - b) The teacher asked the pupils to make the example orally and also in writing.
 - (2) Gave the follow up activities by giving homework in the form of retelling the chants and singing the chants song together.

2) The Stages for the Second Experimental Group (Storytelling)

- a. Pre-activities (8 minutes)
 - (1) The teacher greeted the pupils.
 - (2) The teacher asked some questions about the topic related with learning material.
- b. Whilst-activities (20 minutes)
 - (1) The teacher gave the pupils the vocabulary that they were going to learn.
 - (2) The teacher told a story to the pupils.
 - (3) The teacher divided the pupils into groups and each member of group prepared themselves by listening to a story and analyzing the story in order to comprehend the story. The teacher explained the simple principle of storytelling activities.
 - (4) The teacher asked the pupils to work in pairs to practice the vocabulary items through storytelling activities, i.e. asked the pupils to act out the story and to draw a picture.
 - (5) Each member from the group took turn to act out the story and told the vocabulary items to the whole class by showing their picture.
- c. Post-activity (7 minutes)
 - (1) The teacher asked several questions orally about their comprehension about the story and vocabulary items got from the story.
 - (2) The teacher informed the pupils to prepare themselves to perform another story in the next meeting.

Techniques for Analyzing Data

The data collected from the pre-test and post-test were analyzed using (1) the analysis of frequency, (2) the analysis of independent sample t-test, and (3) the analysis of paired sample t-test. The analysis of frequency was used to get the descriptive data of samples' test scores such as the pupils' individual scores and their mean scores in the pre-test and post-test. In finding the individual scores of the pre-test and post-test, the writers used the formula proposed by *Direktorat Pendidikan Umum, Ditjen, Dikdasmen, Depdiknas* 2004 to score the pupils' vocabulary test. Here is the formula to score vocabulary test adapted from *Direktorat Pendidikan Umum, Ditjen, Dikdasmen, Depdiknas* 2004.

$$\text{Score} = \frac{B}{N} \times 100$$

Where:

B = right answer

N = total of the test item

The analysis of independent sample t-test was used to see the mean scores of the pre-test and post-test of each group of samples to find out whether there was significant difference in scores between the pre-test and post-test of each group. At the end of analysis, the writers applied the paired sample t-test analysis to compare the mean scores of the pre-test and post-test of each experimental group of samples to find out if there was significant difference through the scores gained.

FINDINGS

The data of the fifth grade pupils' vocabulary achievement were in the form of scores which were taken from the results of the pre-test and post-test of the vocabulary test. The vocabulary test was scored using 0-100 scale.

Before analyzing the data, it is needed to measure the normality of the data. In determining the normality of the data, the writer used *Kolmogorov-Smirnov* in this study. Following Pallant (2005), it assesses the normality of the distribution of scores by seeing its significant value of more than 0.05. Furthermore, Santoso (2010, p. 204) says that the data can be categorized as normal data if the value is 0.05 or higher than 0.05.

The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test showed that the pre-test and post-test results of vocabulary achievement of the first experimental group (teaching using chants strategy) were considered as normal data since their significant values were higher than 0.05. The pre-test of vocabulary significant value was 0.767, whereas the post-test of vocabulary significant value was 0.757. In the second experimental group (teaching using storytelling strategy), the test showed that the pre-test and post-test results of vocabulary achievement were considered as the normal data since their significant values were higher than 0.05. The pre-test of vocabulary significant value was 0.766, whereas the post-test of vocabulary significant value was 0.707.

The Statistical Analysis Results

a. Paired Samples t-test Analysis of First Experimental Group

In the first experimental group, the fifth grade pupils' mean of vocabulary pre-test scores was 57.797, and the standard deviation was 19.447. Their mean of vocabulary post-test scores was 67.443, and the standard deviation was 14.793. Based on the result of the paired samples t-test, the output showed that paired samples difference in mean between pre-test and post-test of vocabulary achievement score in the first experimental group was 9.646 with the standard deviation 5.137, t-obtained was 10.285 and the significant level was 0.000. Since the value of t-obtained 10.285 was higher than the critical value of t-table (2.045) and the significance 0.000 was less than 0.05, it means that there was a significant difference in vocabulary achievement of the pupils before and after they were taught through chants strategy.

b. Paired Samples t-test Analysis of Second Experimental Group

In the second experimental group, the fifth grade pupils' mean of vocabulary pre-test scores was 57.803, and the standard deviation was 19.442. Their mean of vocabulary post-test scores was 73.653, and the standard deviation was 13.044. Based on the result of the paired samples t-test, the output showed that paired samples difference in mean between pre-test and post-test of vocabulary achievement score in the second experimental group was 15.850 with the standard deviation 6.808, t-obtained was 12.751 and the significant level was 0.000. Since the value of t-obtained 12.751 was higher than the critical value of t-table (2.045) and the significance 0.000 was less than 0.05, it means that there was a significant difference in vocabulary achievement of the pupils before and after they were taught through storytelling strategy.

c. Independent Samples t-test Analysis of Vocabulary Achievement

In order to find out whether or not there was a significant difference in vocabulary achievement between the pupils who were taught through chants strategy and that of those who were taught through storytelling strategy, the results of post-test scores of vocabulary test in the first experimental group and the second experimental group were compared by using independent samples t-test.

Based on the results of the independent samples t-test on vocabulary post-test scores between the first and second experimental group, it showed the value of t-obtained was 1.725. At the significant level of 0.05 in two tailed testing with df was 58, the critical value of t-table was 2.002. Since the value of t-obtained 1.725 was less than the critical value of t-table (2.002) and the significance 0.090 was higher than 0.05. It means that there was no significant difference in vocabulary achievement between the pupils who were taught through chants strategy and that of those who were taught through storytelling strategy.

DISCUSSIONS

Based on the findings, from the mean score obtained by each group and the pupils' post-test results, vocabulary achievement of the pupils in first experimental and second experimental groups were improved. This progress is probably caused by chants strategy

which provides audio and storytelling strategy which provides audio and visual so that the teacher helped the pupils acquire the vocabulary that they listened to and practiced.

However, there was no significant difference in vocabulary achievement between the pupils who were taught through chants strategy and those who were taught through storytelling strategy when the results of the fifth grade pupils' scores were compared by using independent t-test. This happened because the fifth grade pupils learned in same condition of environment although they had different treatments. They had the same classroom atmosphere. It made there was no differences among them. Following, Eddy (2010) talked about Piaget's theories of cognitive development. Piaget acknowledged that there is an interaction between a child and the environment, and this is a focal point for his theory. Piaget believed a child cannot learn unless they are constantly interacting with their environment.

Teaching frequency could also be an aspect which contributed to the pupils in learning vocabulary. Teaching vocabulary through chants and storytelling strategies was held six times a week for 24 meetings. Peck (2001, p. 141), who advises teachers of young learners that, "Many children do not tire of practicing a repetitive (chants) and rhythmic story several times a day, many days a week". Thus, McGlothlin (1997) stresses that a child enjoys the repetitive events of his life, and uses this enjoyment to help him learn the new language. Therefore, this limited time of teaching which was one month made some pupils able to cover all questions in vocabulary test so that the pupils' scores in the post-test were higher than those in the pre-test because the writer had given the interventions to the pupils for six times in a week. But some pupils sometimes did not attend the interventions, so they missed some lessons. They did not have more time to practice their vocabulary.

There was another factor that may take an important role in determining the pupils' achievement, i.e, the nature of children played an important role to both of chants and storytelling strategies. It is evident that young learners learn through play and they enjoy fun activities (Rixon, 1999). A play and fun are in the essential nature of the child. This is quite a natural way for them to learn. Learning can be absorbed really well. The chants songs provided some aspects which were demanded by children, i.e., natural and fun situation. The teacher invited the pupils to learn vocabulary with keeping the stress and boredom away using chants songs. The pupils were enjoying their classroom activity. A study from Cakir (1999) found some importance of chants in English classroom. Chants are fantastic materials for the language teacher to use with young learners. Chants had innumerable virtues, wonderful means of teaching vocabulary.

Storytelling strategy was a good teaching resource or material for the teacher that both captured the pupils' enthusiasm for increasing their vocabulary. Learning and developing vocabulary became fun and memorable. Telling stories to students can result in natural language acquisition on their part (Rixon, 1999, p.37). Most of the pupils could catch the stories that were taught every meeting. The pupils were exposed to vocabulary by using chants and storytelling strategies. In short, teaching through chants and storytelling strategies could give significant contribution to the improvement of the pupils' vocabulary achievement.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings and interpretations, two conclusions could be drawn. First, chants and storytelling strategies could increase pupils' vocabulary achievement and improve their pronunciation ability significantly. Second, there was no significant difference in vocabulary achievement between the fifth grade pupils who were taught through chants strategy and those who were taught through storytelling strategy due to the same situation and condition of environment at the classroom, teaching frequency, and the nature of children. The first reason, even the pupils had different treatments, but they learned in same condition of environment. Second, many pupils did not tire of practicing chants songs and stories several times a day, many days a week since the researcher held the interventions six times in a week. The pupils enjoyed the interventions and used this enjoyment to help them learn the vocabulary items. Third, the nature of children also played an important role to both of chants and storytelling strategies, because chants and storytelling strategies provided some aspects which were demanded by children, i.e., natural and fun situation so that learning could be absorbed really well. Therefore, the reasons above made there was no differences among chants strategy and storytelling strategy.

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