

Scavenger Hunt on Students' English Vocabulary Mastery

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Abstract

Learning vocabulary is the most fundamental aspects of learning for students in learning the language. In the process, the teacher is expected to be a good facilitator so that the vocabulary learning process can proceed smoothly. Creativity in learning vocabulary is absolutely necessary. Scavenger Hunt technique was chosen as the solution of the saturation experienced by students in the process of learning English vocabulary. The purpose of this research is improving the mastery and understanding of the students' vocabulary appropriate with context and function of everyday use, through the application of Scavenger Hunt technique. Moreover, this teaching technique is also expected to add a new learning experience for students. The research was carried out in Gema Insani Indonesia Foundation by employing a classroom action research with two cycles of assessments. There were 18 third grade elementary school students as an object of the research. The data was collected by observation, note taking, and test. The findings showed an increase in the ability of students' mastery and understanding of the meaning of the vocabulary through the application of Scavenger Hunt technique that can be seen from the increase in student's mean score on the second cycle with 82 that is considered as good predicate.

Keywords: *scavenger hunt, vocabulary, vocabulary learning*

1. Introduction

In a learning process, the success in achieving the goals and objectives of learning is determined by the precision of methods and techniques used in teaching. A teacher is required to provide the best way to obtain maximum learning results. It certainly can not be separated from the ability of a teacher in selecting methods and techniques of effective and efficient teaching. Compatibility between methods and techniques of teaching has an important role in achieving the expected goal. Larsen-Freeman (2000:1) states "Language teaching method is a coherent set of links between actions and thought in

language teaching. The actions are the techniques and the thought are the principles.” The statement explains that the method of language teaching is not merely a way of teaching, but also as a complete unity between thought and execution that promote accuracy between the techniques and principles of language teaching so that the teaching objectives can be achieved.

The accuracy of the selection of methods and teaching techniques is absolutely necessary before the stages of the learning process begins and one of them is at the stage of vocabularies. Vocabulary mastery is a basic competence in language learning which will support other skills i.e. listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Therefore, vocabulary teaching should be given priority in the early stages of language learning. Decario in Fauziati (2010:61) states that “Vocabulary learning is central to language acquisition, whether the language is first, second, or foreign.” In other words, vocabulary is very important to the success of second language usage, because without extensive vocabulary we will not be able to use the structure and function that we have learned to communicate well.

Vocabulary learning is also a priority to be taught to students at the early ages. As stated by Fauziati (2010:91) that “Children in primary or elementary school are at the concrete operational stage of cognitive development and classroom activities should create and offer opportunities to learners for learning.” The age of child development is a very effective time to introduce the new vocabulary. However, the right strategy will greatly assist children in learning. According to Seal (1991) vocabulary teaching activities are divided into two, planned and unplanned. In teaching activities that are not planned, the students asked the meaning of words to the teacher and the teacher try to uncover the meaning clearly by using different strategies such as body language, antonyms, synonyms, images, and so on. Then the teacher asks questions about the words to ensure that students have understood the meaning. Meanwhile, in planned activities, teacher must first prepare the instruments and techniques of teaching.

Oxford and Scarcella (1994) divides the vocabulary teaching activities into three categories: (1) decontextualized, (2) partially contextualized, and (3) fully

contextualized. Decontextualized activities are those vocabulary items which are removed from the context in which they first appear in and are presented in situations free from any communicative values (e.g., word lists, flash cards, dictionary look-up). Partially contextualized activities are often termed as intentional or planned vocabulary learning or teaching (e.g., word grouping, word association, word elaboration, physical response). Finally, fully contextualized activities are supposed to play an important role in vocabulary teaching since they provide students some opportunities to practice authentic communication such as reading stories, plays, magazines, newspapers, or letters; listening to the radio; watching TV; participating in conversations; or writing messages with the purpose of communication in real-life situation.

The description above shows us that vocabulary teaching, especially in the early childhood does not seem quite simply done by applying conventional methods in which children were asked to listen to new words presented on the board and the teacher repeated those words many times. Students at the early age requires a fundamental understanding in absorbing new words they learn, especially on English vocabulary as a foreign language. Therefore, physical interaction between teachers and students is needed in the learning process in order to facilitate the students to understand and use the vocabulary. In this case, the teacher can use a variety of body movement (gesture) and students can actively participate in imitating the movements. Interaction between teachers and students can create fun learning environment where students can directly be actively involved in learning activities and teachers can easily evaluate the learning process.

One of the techniques of vocabulary teaching that is able to create an atmosphere of learning effectively and efficiently is through the technique of the game. Through this technique, students gain a learning experience which is different from conventional learning they usually encounter. Hopefully, by applying this technique, students can improve their vocabulary mastery and motivation in learning that support other language skills, as expressed by Brand

(2004:4) that “The goal is for students to become word-savvy, to develop an understanding of how words work within context of reading and writing, and to become excited about words as they learn to manipulate them in playful way.” In other words, the technique is expected to generate students’ interest in learning vocabulary, especially the English vocabulary. Thus, students can explore their potency since they have been actively involved in following every stage of learning activities. Direct student involvement in games that involve physical movement and objects around them will be an experience that will allow them to remember what they have learned.

Various game techniques has managed to increase students’ understanding of vocabulary learning . One of them is Scavenger Hunt which can help students to enrich vocabulary. In this game the teacher will make a specific list of objects that should be sought by the student. This game is built on the basis of understanding and it encourages students to learn more about their environment. “Young learners have to use cognitive skills to determine which unit the word would be found in. This helps learners classify words according to different categoris” (Linse & Nunan, 2006:130). It can be concluded that in Scavenger Hunt students can explore their cognitive capabilities to the more specific understanding of the vocabulary.

In Scavenger Hunt, vocabulary is classified so that the student can distinguish vocabulary based on the concepts such as based on the concept of form, function, color, or class vocabulary. At this stage, teachers can use flash media cards as a teaching tool in introducing the concept of vocabulary. Flash card is more effective than a vocabulary list (Mondria & Mondria de Vries, 1994; Schmitt & Schmitt, 1995). The use of flash cards is a creative which can assist students in memorizing voczbulary. If it is done appropriately, the use of flash cards will increase the overall vocabulary.

Scavenger Hunt triggers students to gain a deeper understanding of the vocabulary learned, whether it is the understanding of the meaning or function of the use of vocabulary in everyday life as described by Wise (2003:158)

“Scavenger Hunt is a game in which the organizers prepare a list defining specific items, which the participants – individual or teams – seek to gather all items on the list – usually without purchasing them, or perform tasks or take photographs of the items, as specified.” Through this game, the students are directed to actively involve their cognitive and psychomotoric abilities in order to carry out any direction given by the teacher. In addition, teachers can also easily perform evaluation of learning in terms of both material and learning media.

Various studies show that the benefits of using games in the classroom is very diverse. Such benefits include the cognitive aspect of language learning to the more cooperative group dynamic. The game also decrease the affective filter and encourage creative use of language spontaneously, and promote the communicative potential. Vocabulary teaching as a major component of language learning have been the object of various studies developed into a learning-based educational games Scavenger Hunt integrated to various implementations of multimedia technology as practiced by Jones (2006), Gressick, Spitzer & Sagarsee (2014), and Lu , Chao & Parker (2015).

In his research, Jones (2006) uses website-based multimedia technology in which the students do various exercises through the media power point black board with various templates that have been designed in such a way so as to attract students’ attention while doing exercises. The focus of this research is to bridge the long-distance learners by online system, so as they do not feel bored with conventional techniques. The results proved that the technique of Scavenger Hunt on black board media is very helpful in achieving the targets and goals of learning management systems which are packed with a variety of activities interactively. It can be seen from the thoroughness of the work tasks with a maximum score..

Furthermore, Gressick, Spitzer & Sagarsee (2014) also apply Scavenger Hunt game techniques in the process of reading by using QR codes (quick response codes). The use of QR codes technology in this research is by using a two-dimensional camera that can be detected by a variety of access media such as

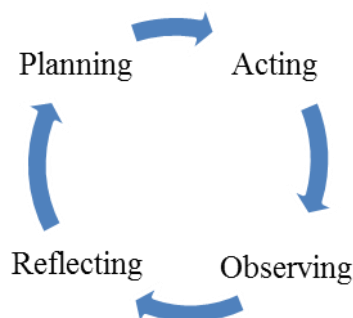
websites, text messages, and download applications. In practice, students can directly explore themselves to access a variety of exercises. The results showed that the use of QR codes technology in the Scavenger Hunt is very helpful in assisting students do the work more effectively due to the open access in the execution of various exercises given by the teacher

The iOS i-Phone “HUNT” with Augmented Reality (AR) can also be utilized in Scavenger Hunt as a study that has been conducted by Lu. Chao & Parker (2015). This application is designed on an information system in order to enable students to search for the data and complete information in an attractive way by using variety of games that have been designed. The results showed that the implementation of this application is proven attract the students attention in accessing data and information.

2. Method

This present research aims at increasing student’s English vocabulary mastery through Scavenger Hunt technique. The research was carried out in Gema Insani Indonesia Foundation by employing a classroom action research with two cycles of activities. There were 18 third grade elementary school students as an object of the research. The data was collected by observation, note taking, and test. Each of cycle in the process of Scavenger Hunt is conducted by various activities as stated by Wise and Forrest (2003) who divides its implementation into three phases, namely Sample Item Lists, Organizing the Scavenger Hunt, and Overseeing the Scavenger Hunt. The research design in this Classroom Action Research is cycling the process of Scavenger Hunt activity as McNiff (1992:2) described action research as “spiral of steps”. Each step had four stages, namely: planning, acting, observing and reflecting which is drawn as follows:

Figure 2.1 Action Research “Spiral of Steps”



The planning step is a step related to the planned activities that are going to be held by teachers in the classroom. It is about the lesson plan, material, technique, as well as assignments to improve the students' English vocabulary; both in the form of process Scavenger Hunt activities and scoring. Acting is the action after planning has been managed. It is when the technique, material and assessments are already applied. Observing is conducted to see how the activity is running and to gather the data as the information to be assessed. Reflecting is the stage to reflect how the research has been carried out, from the planning to the observation stage.

In this present research, the writers who also acted as the researchers conduct the research into two cycles by observing, note taking, and testing, of which each activity is carried out by using Scavenger Hunt. Those are sample item lists, organizing the scavenger hunt, and overseeing the scavenger hunt. By doing such activities, the writers expect that Scavenger Hunt possesses many advantages for students improve their English vocabulary mastery. In this case, the writers facilitate students with various interesting learning materials to succeed the teaching-learning process. Scavenger Hunt is then believed to be able to give students new experience as they have better learning circumstance in learning English vocabulary.

At the first cycle, numerous interactive materials were prepared in the planning stage. In the sample item lists, the writers observed the student's need

and arranged the items that will be used in finding the objects in the Scavenger Hunt activity. The writers then prepared the materials and instruments needed for the activity by making the list of everyday items-easy to find item consisting of each item's functions with the base of understanding about shapes as its focus. In the phase of organizing the Scavenger Hunt, the writers made a technical rule for applying Scavenger Hunt systematically. The writers determined the place and time allocation of the activity. Here, the writers divided students into two groups consisting of four students of each. Vocabulary item is selected by the theme of shapes with clues to ease students finding the hidden items.

Note taking was held on the acting stage of the last activity of Scavenger Hunt (i.e., overseeing the Scavenger Hunt). This activity was the main activity of the Scavenger Hunt where students were acted as treasurers to find hidden objects that are set up by writers before the game began. By this activity, the students were hoped to be able to classify the objects into conceptual categories as well as to count the total objects found in the game. Here, the writers observed the students' progress and analyzed it into students' weakness and strength to ease writers to have a better preparation in the second cycle of activity if it is required. When the activity ended up, the test was given as the reflection of student's understanding of vocabulary. The students were given worksheets of exercise and were asked to come to the front of the class to write the target word of vocabulary on the board. On this reflecting stage, writers overviewed all activities by giving a range of scores of each student's assessments. The writers, however, decided to conduct another cycle as they found that the level of students' vocabulary mastery was not yet considered as satisfactory.

A more well-prepared material was set up in the planning stage of the second cycle. More practical and interactive assignments were given in the acting stage. The sample item lists were added by various detailed information on items, i.e., definition and function of each items to give more visualization for students understand the use of each item in the daily context. The phase of organizing the Scavenger Hunt released on giving students more interactive game's rule by

giving interesting reward for the team who won the game. Otherwise, funny punishment was given to the other team who lose the game. By doing so, students are expected to have more effort to do the best.

In the acting stage of the second cycle, overseeing the Scavenger Hunt was also conducted by more full enjoyment activity. This is done by giving students various items in the form of three dimensions. Students' progress was then observed, noted, and scored. As for the feedback, in the reflecting stage, the writers overviewed the students by having them get into the small talk to discuss about all activities they had been going through both in the first and second cycle. The writers then gave them a simple book report about their progress in each activity.

3. Result and Discussion

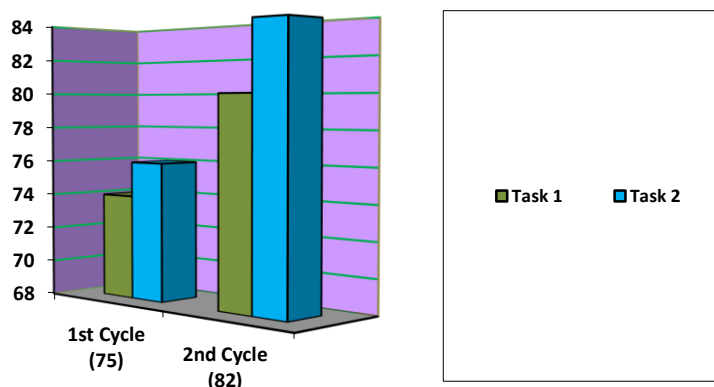
From the analysis above, the writers found that there was an increase of students' performance in the second cycle. Students' mean score was also increasing as they had a better understanding about both the concept and the function of each item in the daily context. They had a moderate progress in defining each item that was appropriate to its function used in every day situation. The mean score will be averaged in each cycle that can be seen from the table below:

Table 3.1 Student's Mean Score of Each Task in Each Cycle

	Task 1		Task 2	
	1 st cycle	2 nd cycle	1 st cycle	2 nd cycle
Student				
1	73	77	75	82
2	75	79	76	85
3	74	78	77	83
4	76	80	78	85
5	75	79	76	84
6	77	83	77	87
7	73	78	75	81

8	72	78	75	82
9	71	77	74	84
10	74	82	74	86
11	72	81	73	79
12	74	82	75	83
13	74	78	76	85
14	74	78	76	85
15	76	85	80	87
16	76	87	79	86
17	74	80	77	85
18	72	78	75	83
Mean	74	80	76	84

Chart 3.1 Student’s Mean Score in Each Cycle



As the results displayed, there is a good progress of students’ English vocabulary assessments from one cycle to the second one. In the first cycle, student’s mean score releases on 75 point as the result, of which it was categorized as moderate score. This point showed that the students’ understanding in vocabulary mastery was fair. As the first start, Scavenger Hunt was expected to foster student’s English vocabulary mastery rapidly, but in fact, some students

still face problems in differentiating the concept of vocabulary with its function in daily context. This might happen as they are not familiar enough to the items lists given, particularly for those in the form of compound nouns, such as the words ‘smart board’, ‘mobile phone’, etc. In accordance, student’s confidence was also still at a low level as they perform their first experience.

The mean score was increased by 82 point in the second cycle, of which it indicated a good improvement from previous cycle both of their score and of their confidence on performance. In this cycle, students were more blended each other as a team work. They got more confidence in expressing their ideas each other by giving comment and feedback among themselves so that activities assigned in a team work can be solved properly. The mean score was categorized as good score.

This present Action Research had been conducted in two cycles that comprised of eight meetings. In each cycle, there were four spiral steps investigated, namely: planning the activities that are going to be held in the classroom; acting the assessments that are already managed; observing the activities that are already been assessed; and reflecting the activities that have been carried out, from the planning to the observation step. Each cycle was then accomplished by using Scavenger Hunt activities to see student’s progress in learning English vocabulary. The analysis is examined by observing, note taking, and testing. Observation and note taking were carried out to overview the process of learning in the classroom, whereas the test was conducted to measure and score the student’s English vocabulary mastery.

At the first cycle, the writers found that many students still got difficulty to differentiate the concept of vocabulary with its function in daily context. Also, most of students still had lack of confidence to actively get involved in a team work. As the result, the cycled-activities did not run smoothly. Hence, the writers brought a better learning circumstance in the second cycle to review the activities in the former cycle. A more interactive learning experience was designed in the second cycle. By doing so, the writers create more practical assessments, such as the use of colorful poster picture consisting more detail information of the

vocabulary items to give students a deeper understanding about the concept of vocabulary items given. Students then began to be very enthusiastic in learning. They got more active taking part in the activities. The mean score was also increasing by the time they were given various interactive activities of learning. In this second cycle, students were totally getting involved in their learning process. The technique of Scavenger Hunt made students experience a better understanding of learning English vocabulary.

4. Conclusion

The result shows that the application of Scavenger Hunt works well at improving student's English vocabulary mastery. This can be seen from the increase of student's mean score of their performance in the second cycle, of which 75 point at the first cycle and 82 point at the second cycle. They got better understanding of the conceptual vocabulary that is suited to the function of its daily context. Moreover, Scavenger Hunt is also said to be successful to develop students' confidence as they have a wide range of opportunity to explore their knowledge of vocabulary together with their team. This kind of situation of learning makes them able to receive the lesson materials easily. The results of the study are hoped to give a contribution to the enrichment of vocabulary knowledge, particularly in educational importance.

The present research deals with the lexical field of which vocabulary understanding as its main focus. The more comprehensible input of meaning is considered as necessary to put the context of language function in daily context appropriately. Hence, it is hoped for other researchers to elaborate more about language function, particularly of lexical items used in the specific context by applying such other teaching techniques.

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