IMPROVING STUDENTS' VOCABULARY MASTERY THROUGH TEXT PROJECT FOR THE SEVENTH GRADE STUDENTS OF MTS. AL-MAJIDIYAH NW SUMBAWA

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Article Info

Abstract

This research was aimed at investigating whether "text project" if it could improve the vocabulary mastery of the students of the seventh grade of MTs. Al-Majidiyah NW and finding out how "text project" could improve their vocabulary mastery. The subjects of this research were the seventh grade students of MTs. Al-Majidiyah NW Sumbawa. There were 25 students in the class. In conducting this research, classroom action research (CAR) was applied. There were two cycles in this research which were carried out in four steps, namely planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. The data were gained through observation, documentation, and test. To analyze the data, qualitative and quantitative methods were used. Qualitative method was used to analyze the observation and documentation data. Meanwhile, the quantitative method was used to analyze the data obtained through the test. The results of the observation, documentation, and test showed that "text project" could improve the students' vocabulary mastery. The test result in cycle I showed that the research was not successful as the classroom performance criterion that was achieved was only 72% which was still below the determined criterion (85%). After fixing and replanning some parts in cycle I, the results in cycle II, demonstrated "successful" achievement. This was because the classical performance criterion that was reached was 88%, which was already above the required criterion (85%). In other words, the improvement was 16%. Therefore, the action hypothesis of this research was accepted, that "text project does improve the students' vocabulary mastery".

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INTRODUCTION

Students face a lot of difficulties in learning English. It said that English language skills and elements are the factors. However, English language element should be considered to play more determining role. In this case, vocabulary mastery seems to come to surface in the first place. One

cannot produce any comments, orders, appraisals, or statements without the words entailing the messages of those meant items. The students will not be able to mention a thing in English if they do not know the name of it in English. Vocabulary becomes a central part in English learning. It refers to a list or set of words for a particular language or a list or set of words that individual speaker of a language might use (Hatch and Brown, 1995 in Setiawan 2010).

Vocabulary is a basic or main component of second language proficiency as one of the primary goals of language learning is to know the meanings of the words. It is needed in order to communicate successfully in the second language. Hornby (1995) in Setiawan (2008) gives definition that vocabulary is the total number of the words (with their meaning and with rules for combining them) making up the language. Burns and Broman (1975) define that vocabulary is the stock of words used by a person, class or professional, all having much in common, yet each distinctly different.

Swannel (1994) defines mastery as comprehensive knowledge or use of a subject or instrument. Mastery is also defined as the complete control of knowledge. This definition is supported by Hornby (1984) in Setiawan (2010) who defines mastery as skill or thorough knowledge. From these definitions, it comes to the conclusion that mastery means the competency to understand and apply something learnt.

There have been many efforts done in order to help students have good mastery of vocabulary. Those are direct interaction, story completion, playing cards (Setiawan 2010; Kayi, 2006), etc. Unfortunately, not many studies have been done to investigate the contribution of their surrounding available objects to their English language mastery and understanding, more particularly the vocabulary mastery.

As a result, another way of improving the students' vocabulary mastery should be considered. It is by making use of the available English texts around the students' realm which is called "Text Project". Additionally, text project is an assignment given to the students which requires them to find English texts available in their surroundings (Thomas and Legutke in Jazadi; 2008). The underpinning reason is that people in small or remote villages meet English in their daily life even though not as many objects as people in towns have. For instance, food packages and T-shirts where English words are used to explain the ingredients of the food and conviction of the T-shirt makers are frequently found in the remote villages.

According to online dictionary, merriam-webster.com (2016), the definitions of text are numerous *(1)*: the original words and form of a written or printed work, *(2)*: an edited or emended copy of an original work (3): a work containing such text, (4): the main body of printed or written matter on a page, (5): the principal part of a book exclusive of front and back matte: the printed score of a musical composition.

A project is usually meant to carry out an activity or action which is ordered or instructed by a superior to his or her subordinates (Merriam-webster.com; 2016). Hence, Text Project, according to two experts, namely Thomas and Legutke in Jazadi (2008b), is an assignment given to the students which requires them to find English texts available in their surroundings.

Finally, the researcher was concerned with how English should be mastered in considerably easy and engaging ways and inspired by the curiosity about how text project should be applied to improve the students' vocabulary mastery, the present researcher focused on conducting a classroom action research in a newly established school, namely MTs. Al-Majidiyah NW Sumbawa. Many things were still new in this school, including the use of English texts that existed around the students or "text project" in the teaching and learning processes.

METHOD

This research is done for one week starting from 20th November to 27th November 2017. This research was conducted in MTs Al-Majidiyah NW Sumbawa for the seventh grade students.

As there was only one class for the first grade in MTs. Al-Majidiyah NW Sumbawa, the population of this study was also directly taken as the sample of this research (Sugiyono, 2010).

This research was done in two cycles. Each cycle or step was executed in four procedures: planning, action, observation and reflection as shown in picture 1.
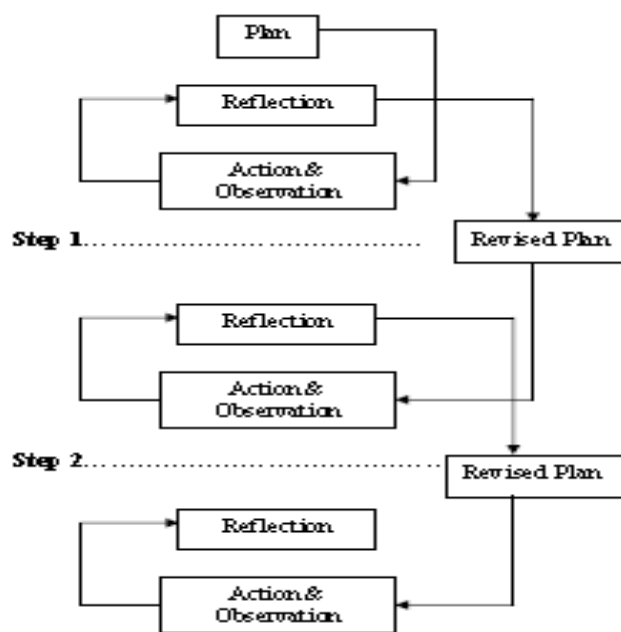
Picture 1. Classroom Action Research Model (Kemis and Taggart; 1985 in Setiawan; 2008)

Techniques of Data Collection

According to Sugiyono (2006) technique of data collection is the ways the researcher uses in collecting any relevant information in order to satisfy the research needs. The techniques of data collection that were used in this study were test, observation and documentation.

   1. **Test**

   Test is set of questions and assignment which are used for measuring knowledge, intelligently (Ridwan, 2007). In this research, the test that was given to students was in form of paragraph completion which is a form test where some words are taken out in order for students to complete those missing words (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2010).

   2. **Observation**

   Observation is the activity of the researcher to look at the subjects of the research deeply. The observation of this research was intended to measure and get clear description about the improvement of the student and teacher activity during the teaching and learning processes.

   3. **Documentation**

   According to Sugiyono (2010), documentation is one of the techniques of data collection in a research where the researcher collects texts, pictures, or monumental works of a person. Documents in form of text can include diary, life history, biography, regulations, and policies. Documents in form of pictures can be photos, life pictures, skates, etc. documents in form of work can incorporate art work, statue, film, etc.

Instruments

Based on the technique of data collection presented above, the following instruments were used for every technique of data collection.

1. **Test Questions**

The test questions that were used in order to get more information about the students' understanding of the materials were matched with texts they found during doing the text project. The type of test questions that were given to the students was in forms of sentence completion or close reading test.

2. **Observation Sheet**

The observation sheet contained some statements regarding the teaching and learning activities during the research which were used to observe the process of the learning and teaching process.

3. **Documents**

The documents that the present researcher collected during conducting this research were in forms of English texts which were available around the students' realm such as on food packages, on T-shirt or other clothes, manuals, etc.

Techniques of Data Analysis

In analyzing the data of this research, the present researcher applied descriptive qualitative and quantitative methods. **Qualitative method** was used in observation or analysis of the process of teaching and learning in the classroom and also the documents. **Quantitative way** was implemented in analyzing the test results in both cycles. To know whether the class was successful or not, two categories of performance or achievement were taken into consideration.

1. **Individual Performance**

Each student was said to be successful when she or he achieved the minimum achievement criterion. The present researcher in coordination with the English teacher for grade seven at MTs. Al-Majidiyah NW Sumbawa stipulated 75 as the minimum individual achievement criterion. In order to know every student's individual performance, the following formula was used in counting the score.

$$IP = \frac{n}{N} X\ 100$$

Where:

IP = Individual student's achievement

n = the score of correct answers obtained by the student

N = total score of the whole questions

2. **Classical Performance**

Classical performance is the whole achievement of the students in the class. This determines whether a classroom action research (CAR) is successful or not. English teachers in school frequently set out 85% of the classical performance as the minimum percentage. If a CAR achieves this number of percentage, it will be said that this classroom action research is successful. Otherwise, it will be said unsuccessful and has to go the next cycles (II, III, IV, etc). Therefore, the researcher in coordination with the English teacher of the students determined 85% as the classical performance criterion. In order to know the percentage of the students' performance classically, the following formula was used:

$$CP = \frac{S}{W} X\ 100\%$$

Where:

CP = classical performance

S = number of students who obtain the minimum achievement criterion
W = number of the whole students

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION
A. Findings

In implementing "text project", two cycles were applied. This was because the first cycle was not successful in directing the subjects to obtain the percentage of the pre-determined classical performance. Each cycle was done in two meetings with the same processes (classroom action research activities). The materials used were actually the same, but some modifications were needed in order to achieve the classical performance percentage.

The materials in cycle one were all about the texts existing around the students, focusing on 'food packages' where English words were written on them.

a. Cycle I

This step was conducted with several activities.

1. Planning

The present researcher, during this first cycle, planned this study to be conducted in two meetings. Throughout those meetings, different activities were organized. The details are in the following.

1) The first meeting

This meeting was held on 20 November 2017. The teaching and learning activities that were planned to be run in this first meeting were in the following:

a. Pre-activities
- Attendance checking which is making sure how many students coming into and joining the class.
- Apperception which is building the students' background knowledge.

b. Main activities
- The teacher introduced the students about what learning activities they were going to do on that day. More particularly, the students were told about what text project was.
- The teacher gave examples of the things (language components) they were going to learn. In this case, the language component they were required to learn and improve was "vocabulary".
- The students were required to find food packages with English words that written on them.
- They students were taught about the meanings of those words and how to pronounce them.
- The teacher assigned the students to understand the meanings of those words in the context of food packages usage and memorize them for other uses in the later activities.

c. Post-activities and follow-up
- The teacher concluded what the students had learnt on that day.
- The students were given opportunities to ask questions if they had any difficulties in understanding the lessons.
- The teacher assigned the students to find other English words that were generally available in their surroundings.

2) Second meeting

The second meeting of this first cycle was planned to be run on 24 November 2017. The focus of this meeting was on testing the students' understanding and memorization of the words they had found and learnt in the first meeting. Besides that,

the present researcher also planned to check the students' homework about finding other English words they commonly found or used in their surroundings. Then, the teacher planned to give first test to know their understanding.

2. Action
   1) First meeting

In this step, the present researcher acted as the teacher of the subject. The focus of this step was on executing what had been planned in the planning section of this cycle. After greeting the students, the teacher checked the attendance list and called out the students' names one by one. Then, he invited the students to brainstorm about what they know about vocabulary.

In regard to the main activities, the teacher firstly told the students about what they were going to learn on that day. Afterward, she went on to give some examples of the words they were to learn in this project and what they were expected to do and achieve. After the students had understood what they were required to do, the teacher assigned them to find food packages available around them with English words written on them. The students were then taught about the meanings of the words they had found and how to pronounce those words.

   2) Second meeting

The teacher, in this meeting focused on testing the students' understanding and memorization of the words they found and memorized previously. Additionally, she also checked the students' homework completion regarding the readily of commonly found English words on T-shirts, manuals, and any other food packages around the students' environment and gave the first test to know their understanding.

3. Observation

In this stage, the first thing done was the process that the students went through in conducting this research and the second is the test that was used to measure the students' understanding and achievement in their vocabulary mastery.

   1) General classroom observation

This includes some items: the students are present in class, come on time, ask questions, find the readily available English words around them, understand the meanings of the words they find, are able to memorize the words they find, pay attention to the example pronunciation of the words, are able to pronounce the words they find correctly, show respect to the teacher, and bring their homework.

The majority of the students were not fully involved in all of the activities. Only was activity number one where students were mostly involved, with 19 students. In one activity, number three, all students were not involved. In activity number eight, only three students took part.

   2) Test

In this test, the present researcher observed the students' involvement in the test and their result in doing it. The result of the test in this cycle shows that most students did not achieve the individual performance criterion.

It can be seen from the table above that the majority of the students did achieve the individual performance criterion that is 75. However, in relation to the classical performance criterion (85%), the students were said "unsuccessful". Therefore, this classroom action research needed to be

reconducted or continued with another cycle in order to reach the classical performance criterion (85%) in order to be said "successful".

4. Reflection

After looking at the results of the observation and the test in this cycle, it was clear that a number of students reached the individual performance criterion (18 students). However, in terms of the classical performance criterion, as the success indicator of the teaching and learning process, the test result shows that "teaching using text project to improve the students' vocabulary mastery is not successful yet" in this cycle. The classical performance criterion that was achieved was 72%, which was still below the determined percentage, 85%. Therefore, this cycle needs fixing and replanning.

a. Cycle II

In this cycle there were some activities.

1. Revised Plan

The researcher did the replanning to solve the problems in cycle 1 where the result was not successful. The activities were the same as those in cycle I, but the focus was on raising the awareness and the activeness of the students to ask and answer question, making the students understand the meaning of the words they had found. Additionally, the research was also focused on showing respect to the teacher. Then, the students had to be more diligent and care about their homework. There were two meetings conducted. First meeting was planned be conducted on 28 November 2017 and the second meeting was on 30 November 2017.

2. Action

1) First meeting

The focus of this step was on executing what was planned in the planning section of this cycle. Same as cycle 1, the teacher greeted the students first. Afterward, the teacher checked the attendance list.

In the main activities, the teacher checked student's assignment and discuss it again. firstly, told the students about what they were going to do on that day. Afterward, she then went on to give more examples of the words they were to learn in this project and what they were expected to do and achieve. The last activity done in this "main activities" step, the teacher required the students to fully understand all the English words they had found, learnt and memorized For the post and follow-up activities, the teacher first of all concluded what the students had learnt and gave opportunities to the students to ask questions.

2) Second meeting

The teacher, in this meeting focused on testing the students' understanding of the words they had found and learnt in the first meeting by giving the test question which they had to complete the sentences used the words they leant. Besides that, the present researcher also asked the students' memory and checked the students' homework in the first meeting about the words they had found. She also made clear all things in the all previous meetings because that was the last meeting of cycle II.

3. Observation

The observation in this stage observed the process and the test. The process is, how the teacher and the students act and participate in conducting this research ang the test that used to measure the students' understanding and achievement in their vocabulary mastery.

1) Classroom observation

This includes some items regarding the students' involvements in the learning processes exactly the same as those in cycle I. such as the students' presence in all meetings, their activeness in the class, and their punctuality.

The results showed that only some students did not give their participation in all the activities. In activity number one, only 3 students were absent, from number three and four shows the same number that is 4 students cannot fully find the English words around them and 4 students not really understand the words they find. From the total students involved most of all the activities particularly in the activities number nine where all students are involved.

2) Test

In this second test, the present researcher observed the students' involvement in the test and their result in doing it. The test result of this cycle illustrates that most students achieved the individual performance criterion. For more clearly can be seen in the table below. The majority of the students achieved the individual performance criterion, that was 75. The number of students who reached that criterion was 22 students. In relation to the classical performance criterion (85%), this researcher was "successful". This is because the classical performance that was achieved was 88%.

4. Reflection

After fixing and replanning some parts of cycle I, it can be clearly seen that the results of the observation and the test in this cycle demonstrate that the majority of the students had reached the required number of individual performance criterion (22 students) or 88%. It had gone up from 72% in cycle 1. In other words, the classical performance criterion had increased 16%. The classical performance criterion (88%), as the success indicator of the teaching and learning process, shows that "teaching using text project to improve the students' vocabulary mastery was successful".

B. Discussion
1. Observation

As seen in the findings, the observation was done using an observation sheet. The results indicate that there were positive results as well as weaknesses in both cycle 1 and cycle II.

The results of observation in cycle I were shown in forms of the students' involvement in the activities listed by the researcher on the observation sheet. In cycle I, most students were not fully involved in the activities. The only activity that most students took part was activity one, 19 students. In activity number eight, there were only three students who participated. The activity that none of the students took part was number three. In activities two and nine, the number of students who took part was the same, sixteen students. In short, in cycle I, not many students were involved in the teaching and learning activities.

In cycle II, the observation process shows positive results. Most students were involved in the activities observed. All of the activities on the observation sheet were

attended by the students. Activity number three where no students took part in cycle I, in cycle II, twenty-one students were involved. Similarly, improvement also happened to the other activities such as number four, five, and six. The most surprising change happened to the activity number nine, where all (25) were involved.

2. **Documentation**

The documents collected and used during the teaching and learning processes were in forms of English words found on food packages, T-shirts, and manuals. The reason for collecting words from those things was to make the students easy to find English words available around them. Besides that, the intention of doing that was to make the vocabulary learning contextual, not learning those words in separated situations.

3. **Test**

The results of the tests in cycles one and two show different findings. In cycle I, the finding indicates that the students' achievement for their vocabulary mastery was unsuccessful. This was because the majority of them did not reach the individual performance criterion. The classical performance criterion was only 72% or only 18 students reached the individual performance criterion. This figure was still below the pre-determined classical performance criterion (85%).

However, the results of the test in cycle two informed us different story. The finding was positive. The number of students who achieved the individual performance criterion was 22 (88%). This percentage directly tells us that cycle II improved 16% from the previous cycle I.

The results of this research were similar to the findings of study conducted by Setiawan (2010). His study was meant to investigate whether "Direct Instruction" could improve students' vocabulary mastery. The result showed that "Direct Instruction" could improve the students' vocabulary mastery.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and discussion above, it can be concluded that first, using "text project" does improve the vocabulary mastery of the seventh grade students of MTs. Al-Majidiyah NW Sumbawa. It can be seen from the tests results showing the students' improvement in their vocabulary mastery in cycle II. The improvement was 16%; from cycle I (72% of the classical performance criterion) to cycle II (88% of the classical performance criterion). Secondly, the observation results also show that the students were more active in the second cycle compared to their activeness in the first cycle. Teaching using "text project" improves the students' vocabulary mastery by encouraging them to use the words they find around them in an appropriate context. It is no use learning or memorizing words that students do not need in real life context.

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