

ENGLISH VOCABULARY ACQUISITION OF SEVEN YEARS OLD CHILDREN AT PRIMARY SCHOOL

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to describe learning strategies and the factors that influence the mastery of English vocabulary in children aged 7 years in primary school. In conducting this research, the researcher did it at SD Swasta Salsa. The researcher used the descriptive qualitative method to analyze the data. Researchers found several learning strategies used by students in the teaching and learning process of English in the classroom with several methods used by the teacher. The result of this research is that it is easier for students to accept English vocabulary by using cognitive strategies in translating. Because the first language of students and teachers is Bahasa, and English is their second language. So after they repeat the English vocabulary, they also translate it into Bahasa and vice versa. In addition, two factors namely internal factors and external factors are also factors in obtaining English vocabulary for SD Swasta Salsa Students. First, internal factors namely age, learning styles, and intrinsic motivation. Second, external factors namely the classroom climate, curriculum, culture and status, external motivation, instruction, and also the formal situation. Children with a good influence factor of English vocabulary will most likely easily get English vocabulary.

Key words : *Vocabulary acquisition, Children Language Acquisition, Vocabulary Learning Strategies, Factor Influences.*

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I. INTRODUCTION

According to a study by Pateda (2015: 56), a child's language acquisition and reasoning ability is a fairly good time for the child's language acquisition process. In fact, childhood is known as a golden age or a very important time in human life. The success or failure of a child's developmental stages will affect the life and formation of the child in the future. The growth and development of the child's brain allow it to be optimally stimulated in the form of absorption of the stimulus. All stimuli are provided by the home and school environment.

Children's language use is associated with children's language acquisition, which is strongly influenced by the environment. How many languages can parents teach their children in a home environment, especially in communication? In addition, children can learn a language from a social environment such as school or home and interact with friends wherever they are. A human in this case is a child who has acquired language skills since birth using a language acquisition device (LAD) or a language acquisition tool (Chomsky in Hadley, 1993).

The main factors that influence a child's vocabulary acquisition are external and internal factors. External factors related to the family, school environment, or anywhere. Environmental factors allow children to explore other languages during development. Internal factors are related to individual differences such as gender, personality, age, experience, and intrinsic motivation. Ellis (2005) mentions seven elements in explaining individual student differences: belief, emotional state, age, talent, learning style, motivation, and personality. Learning styles refer to different approaches and learning methods. One of the most important elements of learning is the preference for individual learning styles that can influence the learning process.

II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

a. Second Language Acquisition

The process by which people acquire the ability to understand a language. Language acquisition theory can be broadly divided into two general theories: Behaviorism and Nativism. First from Skinner (1957). As one of the

founders of nativism, he took into account the development of language due to environmental influences. Skinner argued that children learn language based on the principle of activist reinforcement by associating words with meaning. When a child understands the value of word and sentence communication, the correct language is strengthened. When the child says "milk" and the mother smiles and gives it, the result is useful for the child and promotes the child's language development (Ambridge & Lieven, 2011). The second is Nativism by Chomsky. Children are born with the innate ability to pronounce the underlying rules of language. He believed that when the human brain was exposed to speech at birth, it would automatically begin to receive and understand speech because it was programmed to do so. The theory developed by Noam Chomsky believes that every child has a Language Acquisition Tool. The Language Acquisition Device is a structure present in babies' brains from the time they're born, allowing them to quickly learn and understand language as they grow.

b. Children Language Acquisition

Three basic theories that have advanced to describe how language is acquired are as follows::

1. Behaviorist theory

Skinner (2013:1) says that children acquire language by hearing and repeating words and phrases. Children acquire language by imitating the speech of others. When children are encouraged and praised for their success, they will repeat the behavior. The child may even realize that their caregiver is good and approving. This reinforcement encourages the child's use of language and helps develop it. The way people speak changes depending on the sounds around them. For example, some people speak with regional accents.

Based on these circumstances, the researcher suggests that children will be able to imitate language even though they have not been able to use good grammar..

2. Nativism

Chomsky called a "language acquisition device" (LAD) and he state that children have an innate ability to extract the rules that underlie language from the

words they hear around them. He believes that humans are programmed to understand language at birth. Garvain (2013:2).

3. Piaget Geocentricism

Piaget (2002:4) says that children are self-centered means that they consider themselves and their opinions or interests the most important or effective. Therefore, they often use role pronouns like my and mine. The theory of interaction between children and caregivers is called the Bruner-Input Theory. He called it Speech for Children. It also refers to the support for language provided by parents and caregivers. Raffill (2013:3).

c. Vocabulary Learning Strategies

Hiebert and Kamil (2005: 3) stated that, vocabulary is knowing the meaning of words. Learning vocabulary helps a person to find and understand the meaning of certain words in the language used. It refers to the words we know to communicate effectively. One of the classifications of language learning strategies were proposed by Shirahata (1999, in Azumi, 2008) also Oxford (1990, in Azumi, 2008) divided language learning strategies (LLS) into six categories; cognitive, metacognitive, memorizing, compensatory, affective and social, in which it is stated both directly and indirectly in relation to the behavior and activities of students. Based on a teaching strategy that is divided into two classes, the first class is called the direct learning strategy is direct language learning. The second class is called indirect strategy. Indirect strategies are ways of regulating the teaching and learning process without involving the target language directly. Direct learning can be divided into 3 groups based on the processes. They are cognitive, memory, and compensation strategies. Indirect strategies, on the other hand, can be divided into metacognitive, emotional, and social strategies.

d. The Teaching and Learning Processes

The teaching and learning process is a way for teachers to share knowledge and content with students so that they can learn what the students are able to learn based on their age, abilities, skills, and living conditions. This is a process in

which an educator assesses a student's learning needs, develops a teaching and learning strategy, and then implements that strategy in a plan of work.

Krashen and Terrell (1983:18) state that language acquisition is the development of language skills through application in natural and communicative situations. Learning a language is different from studying it. Learning a language means "knowing the rules" and knowingly knowing the rules. Students learn languages in a natural and communicative way

e. The factors influences the children acquire their second language vocabulary acquisition

There are some students who learn a new language more slowly and difficult than others. On the other hand, some students learn a new language more quickly and simply than others. Of course, such simple information is known to anyone who is learning a second language or teaching a second language at school. Obviously, many language learners succeed because of their hard work, and persistence. But there are other crucial factors influencing success that are largely beyond the control of the learner. These factors are categorized into internal and external.

1. Internal Factor. Internal factors refer to factors within the students themselves who play an important role in learning English vocabulary. According to Felix (1977), the Student is the most significant factor in learning English vocabulary. Those are : age, sex, personality, experience, language aptitude, intrinsic motivatio, native languag, and learning style.
2. External Factor. External factors are factors that come from outside the individual. Each individual may have different external factors, but their common characteristic is that they are based only on situations and conditions outside the control and effect of the learner. Brown (2007). Those are : climate of classroom, curriculum, intruction, culture and status, motivation (extrinsic), access to native speakers, formal situation, and informal situation.

f. Word Classes

A word class is a word category. According to Hatch and Brown (1995: 218), the classification of words based on their functional categories is called part

of speech. And also according to Kustarjo (1988:24), one possible way to learn vocabulary is to learn vocabulary through derivation.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

a. The Research Design

This research was conducted using a qualitative descriptive design to find learning strategies and factors that influence the English vocabulary of children in SD Swasta Salsa. Bogdan and Biklen (1982) stated that qualitative research is descriptive where data is collected in the form of words or pictures rather than numbers. Data in the form of excerpts from documents, field notes, and interviews or excerpts from videotapes, audiotapes, or electronic communications are used to present research results.

The results will show a descriptive study because the researcher tries to find the learning strategies used by children to acquire their English vocabulary. Data were collected from English vocabulary acquired by children at SD Swasta Salsa. The data was taken from the mastery of the English vocabulary of the children in the classroom. In this research, researchers observed children 7 years total of 15 students Observations will be made during English class. The researcher will also interview the children and teachers to get data about learning strategies and the factors that affect their mastery of English vocabulary.

IV. RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

A. Research Findings

1. Strategies used by the children to acquire English vocabulary

The results of field observations provide a source of information for answering the first question. Strategies used by children to develop their English vocabulary.

a. Cognitive Strategy

First, the application of formal practice with a sound system. Practicing formally with the sound system is one application of cognitive

strategies. Teachers and students practice singing accompanied by voice; song and rhythm.

The second was formally practicing with writing system. The teacher asks students to write about the material being taught, then the teacher gives assignments as student writing exercises.

The third was the application of repetition. Repetition is one of the applications in cognitive strategy. The application of repetition is usually in the singing and conversation methods. The first is in the singing method. The repetition of the singing method was carried out before the teaching and learning process in the classroom. The teacher repeats the English vocabulary as the target word, based on the song lyrics. By repeating words in lyrics such as songs about ABCD, students can more easily memorize English vocabulary about the alphabet. The last one is the conversation method. The practice carried out by teachers and students is during greetings and conversations in class. This greeting is done and repeated when the English lesson begins.

The fourth is the application of translation. Translating is the application of cognitive strategies. The application of translation is carried out after the application of repetition is complete. Translation applications are very necessary and influential in mastering English vocabulary. Since their first language is Bahasa, they must understand English vocabulary in a language they already understand.

Fifth was the application of resources to receive and send messages. This application is used when going to perform a method. To do this method, a source is always required to receive and send messages or knowledge. However, the researcher only found this application in the conversation method using pictures.

b. Memory Strategies

There is one application that exists in the strategy memory found by researchers that children do while in English class, namely using placing new words into a context. This application is done by demonstration method. The teacher gives the students practice to fill in the blank about

nouns in the sentence such as *"This is....."*. After that the students fill in according to the name of the object based on the picture.

c. Compensation Strategy

All teaching and learning processes taught by teachers to students have a topic schedule determined by the school. For example, the teacher has an agenda such as going to teach the names of objects in the class to students, then the teacher holds methods that have to do with mentioning the names of these objects. Then the teacher will provide material with the topic of the A-Z alphabet to students and how to pronounce it, this has actually been taught before.

d. Metacognitive Strategy

Metacognitive strategies allow language learners to control their cognition independently. There is a metacognitive strategy found in the method used by children during English class is paying attention. When the teacher gives explanations and asks questions. Almost all students pay attention.

e. Social Strategies

Social strategy is a learning strategy by involving other people. The social strategy used is asking other parties and cooperating with other. SD Swasta Salsa students use the strategy of asking other parties in the form of asking clarification questions, and asking for corrections. Some students cooperating with other in the form of asking classmates

2. The Factors that Influence the Children to Acquire Their English Vocabulary.

a. Internal factors

1. Age

Based on observations and interviews obtained by researchers, children aged 7 years have begun to be able to speak English well. They find it easier to acquire, remember and repeat English vocabulary. They can already memorize so they can get a lot of English vocabulary well. This

makes them able to answer questions and greetings from the teacher correctly.

2. Intrinsic Motivation

The researcher found out of 15 students, they had intrinsic motivation by acquiring their English vocabulary. What is meant by intrinsic motivation itself is that they are motivated by themselves with reasons that come from themselves such as, they want them to be smart and can speak English. In addition, there are also those who are motivated by the cartoons they like.

3. Learning Style

Based on observations, many children prefer to use visual learning styles. They can see directly from the object explained by the teacher using English. However, there are still some children who are confused when the teacher shows something while asking the name of the object in English. Some of them answered quickly and correctly without looking at the notes in the book, then some other students answered correctly because they saw their notes in the book. While some other students only focused on themselves without answering anything, so these children only got a little English vocabulary.

b. External Factors

1. Extrinsic Motivation

There are several students who have external factors from the teacher. Teachers always motivate their students to master English vocabulary. For example, the teacher gives an explanation about if they meet a foreigner from abroad then they can talk or communicate. Moreover, English is an international language. The teacher motivates students so that students are interested in learning English so that they will be enthusiastic about learning English. The teacher has a bad impact if students cannot remember English vocabulary.

2. Class Climate.

In English class the teacher teaches students with various methods of conversation about the names of objects, so that students do not get bored quickly and understand English vocabulary more easily. Students understand better if the language used by the teacher is like the daily language of students and is not too standard or difficult for them to understand.

3. Curriculum

SD Swasta Salsa that actually there is a curriculum about learning English in primary schools, but SD Swasta Salsa provides a simple and easy introduction to English for students who are still in grade 1. This introduction includes English vocabulary and reading English vocabulary to make it easier students recognize the first stage of knowing English to a more difficult and higher level when they are not in grade 1 anymore.

4. Instruction

In this instruction is taught. Teachers have a variety of Learning Strategies to support English lessons for their students. The learning strategies used have been able to help students acquire English vocabulary at SD Swasta Salsa.

5. Culture and Status

Based on this, the culture and status of students are one of the important factors that affect the mastery of vocabulary in the second language of the children, because their culture, especially for communication, not only uses Bahasa they family also still use Javanese and Bataknese. In addition, according to interviews with teachers, some parents still do not understand and pay less attention to their children to teach English. For example, a student named Yuni. She is a passive student, she cannot mention and pronounce all English vocabulary well. Because she can't read.

6. Formal situations

Every teacher always has planned the material to start the learning process before the teaching and learning process in class, especially in the English class at SD Swasta Salsa. Such as, when the teacher wants to apply the demonstration method. The teacher will prepare and organize the material and may need tools, media, or others. It is hoped that students can follow the lesson well and can master English vocabulary.

B. Discussions

Language learning strategies are strategies used by teachers and students to learn and understand language, in this case English vocabulary. Each school has a different educational process to support the educational needs of each student and improve student abilities. SD Swasta Salsa, they have many teaching and learning processes in English which include language learning strategies. But only because of time constraints, what the teacher uses is Cognitive Strategy. In cognitive Strategy, the application is translating. In translating, first is the children always speak in Bahasa to state the object after that they use or mention English vocabulary to pronounce it. Similarly with the teacher, when learning process the teacher uses Bahasa and then uses English. This is because so that students are easier to memorize and acquire English Vocabulary. Moreover, their first language is Bahasa. Hirsh-Pasek (2006) states that nouns are generally easier to understand than verbs. Likewise, the Researcher found that nouns were a class of words that they often mentioned and memorized. In acquiring English vocabulary for children at SD Swasta Salsa, there are factors that influence them. Including internal factors are age, learning style, intrinsic motivation, and external factors are extrinsic motivation, class climate, curriculum, teaching, culture and status, and induction. These factors make the process of receiving English vocabulary for each child will be different.

V. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

a. Conclusions

To support the addition of vocabulary in children, English vocabulary is very important. So that they can understand and use it well. Vocabulary exists in

the early stages of children, but then goes into more difficult stages. Primary schools currently introduce English as a second language to their students to acquire new skills, especially English as a second language. Children must go through the process of adding English vocabulary. This is known as mastery of English vocabulary. Every child may have a different process in learning English vocabulary. Researchers found learning strategies to learn English vocabulary used by children. The results showed that when students used cognitive strategies when translating, it would be easier for children to know and memorize English vocabulary. Because their first language is Bahasa. The researcher found out how the surroundings affects that acquisition of English vocabulary by children. Researchers found internal and external factors that occurred in SD Swasta Salsa. The first, internal factors are age, learning style and intrinsic motivation. The second, external factors are class climate, curriculum, teaching, culture and status, extrinsic motivation, and formal situations. Children with the influence of factors close to English vocabulary find it easier to acquire English vocabulary.

b. Suggestions

on the result of the study, there are some suggestions that might be useful for English teachers, students, and further researchers:

1. To English teachers : Teachers have a variety of learning strategies that are one way for students to easily understand the material that will be taught by the teacher.
2. To students : Students should pay more attention to their English vocabulary. They should practice more mention vocabulary or speaking English at school or at home, practice with assignments, and learn new vocabulary.
3. To other reseachers : The researcher also hopes to other reseachers can use the result of the findings reseacher as a reference.

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