

# **Improving Students' Vocabulary Mastery by Using Realia**

**Vina Sukrina**

English Department, Faculty of Languages and Art

State University of Medan

Medan-Indonesia

## **ABSTRACT**

This study was attempted to discover the improvement students' vocabulary mastery by using realia for elementary students' Grade IV. The objective of this study was to find out whether realia can significantly improve students' vocabulary or not. In this study, the writer was conducted by Applying Classroom Research. The subject of this study was one class of the grade IV students' of SD Negeri 060811 Medan which consisted of 36 students'. The quantitative data were taken from vocabulary test as the instrument to find out the students' score. The qualitative data taken from diary notes and observation sheet describe the improvement of the students' vocabulary mastery of the students' vocabulary mastery was mostly improved in every test. The range of improvement of the first test and the last test was 83,33%. The observation sheet and the diary notes showed that the students' were interested in the teaching learning process. These finding show that there was an improvement on the students' vocabulary through realia that was supported by the result, the mean score of the second test (64,44) was better than mean score of first test (39,17), and the mean score of the third test (78,05) was better than the mean score of the second test. This implies that realia can be an alternative strategy in improving students' vocabulary mastery. It is suggested that realia to be used in teaching vocabulary especially to young learners.

Keywords: Vocabulary Mastery, Realia Media, Procedure of Teaching Vocabulary.

## **INTRODUCTION**

There are about billion people in the world today learn English as a foreign language. English as foreign language has been taught in Indonesia in different levels of education from elementary school until universities. This because, English is an international language, besides being used as a tool of communication, English is also used in science. According to Wardaugh ( 1997:13 ) says “ language is a system of arbitrary communication, i.e. conveying messages about the situation, event the environment, intention, attitudes, in short anything is important in the life of language using individual and societies”.

In foreign language teaching learning process, vocabulary plays an important role. It is one element that links the four skills of speaking, reading, listening and writing all together. Vocabulary is one of the competences of the language. It is an important aspect on learning

English. How well one can communicate with English is partly dependent on how many vocabulary he has mastered. But in fact, the main problem in teaching English in school is the less of the students' motivation in English because of their weakness to use the vocabulary. Students however, always get much trouble to achieve the great success in learning the skill. Yasin (1993:57) pointed out fact of unsuccessful achievement of learning English; one of them is a very mastery of vocabulary.

According to Jordan (1995:149) "Teaching vocabulary is such an important task in teaching English because vocabulary achievement relates to all language learning and it is of concern to all four language skills".

Vocabulary is very essential to comprehend the language well, speak comprehend the language well, speak better, or compose a good writing. It is expected that the learners have to increase their vocabulary about 100 words a year. Similarly on the Competence Based Curriculum, the students are required to increase their vocabulary 1000-1500 words every year so that in three years students have increased their vocabulary around 4000 words.

But in fact, based on the writer experience during conducting teaching practice (PPL) at Junior High School 2010. The writer found the most of the students had many problems in mastery English words and this situation makes them lazy to study English. They had limited vocabulary to comprehend the meaning of a text; they did not know the context of word use in text, they couldn't recognize the meaning of each word, they were not able to hear the English words from speakers, they couldn't compose their writing task successfully, and they get difficulties to state some sentences in English. Those problems cause them too difficulty to communicate in English. So, it can be concluded that vocabulary emerged as the cause of the most difficulty for students.

Based on the problem above, the teacher should find the best or the effective technique to teach English vocabulary. Concerning to the characteristics of the young learners that they can easily get bored, need physical movements and real activities to stimulate their thinking, and respond language with the abstract rather than concrete, so it is important to create the class situation which can motivate the students to study. Media as teaching aids are needed to help the students' understanding in vocabulary.

Students' learn vocabulary quickly by using media such as well chart, real object, picture, flash cards, realia, etc because media can give context to them. So, the writer argues that creating activities using media can keep the meaning of the words in their mind directly and can stand longer. Therefore, the writer hopes that creating activities using realia can help students to improve their vocabulary mastery.

## **THE PROBLEM OF THE STUDY**

Based on the background above, it is important to formulate the problem of this study as : "Does using Realia significantly improve the students vocabulary mastery?"

## **THE OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY**

This study is aimed to find out whether realia can significantly improve students vocabulary mastery.

## **THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **VOCABULARY**

Vocabulary is one competence of language aid. There is no language exist without words. Words are designing ideas as well as the means to enhance people's thoughts. The more words one learns, the more ideas he/she has, and we can share the ideas more effective because without vocabulary nothing is going to be told. Vocabulary is one component and supporting elements to the mastery of four languages skill listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The role of vocabulary can't be ignored in learning English in order to comprehend the target language. So English should be introduce earlier because the younger a learner learners a foreign language, the better she/he is in producing the language.

A vocabulary is defined as all the words known and used by a particular person or a specific group. A vocabulary usually grows and evolves with age and servers as a useful and fundamental tool for communication and acquiring knowledge. Language users construct some words to make sentence and for their communication with other people.

### **THE IMPORTANCE OF VOCABULARY**

Without grammar, very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed. This is how the linguist David Wilkins summed up the importance of vocabulary learning.

While Dellar and Hocking (in Thornbury, 2002:13) say that you will see most improvement if you learn more words and expressions. You can say very little with grammar, but you can say almost anything with words. So a person may be judged by other based on their vocabulary.

Vocabulary has several types, and Haycraft (1978 : 44) divides vocabulary into two types, namely:

1. Active Vocabulary

Active vocabulary is the words which the student understands, can pronounce correctly and use constructively in speaking in speaking and writing.

2. Passive Vocabulary

Passive vocabulary is the words which the students recognize and understands when they occur in context, but which he cannot produce correctly himself.

Vocabulary is very useful for anyone who is studying a foreign language. If someone has a large vocabulary, he will speak English well and vice versa.

## **MEDIA**

Media according to Romiszowski (in Kasihani, 2007:100) are any extensions of man which allows him to affect other people who are not in face with him. Thus, communication media include letters, television, film, radio, printed matters and telephone. Further Heineich and Rusello( 1982 in Kasihani ,2007:101) say that media are any means of communication which carry the information between the source and the receiver. The media called instructional media if they are used to convey the messages in educational environment.

In the word, media could be defined as the carrier of the message the teacher to the students. On learning activity media can help the teacher in conveying the teaching material so the students will clearly understand about the topic.

According to Kasihani (2007:102) there are 3 kinds of media:

1. Visual media is media that can be seen and touched by students, example: picture, photo, real object, map, flash card, and realia.
2. Audio media is media that contain recorded text to listen, example: radio and cassette recorder,
3. Audio visual media is media that can be seen, touched, and listened, example: TV, film, etc.

Wright (1989 : 5, in Kasihani, 2007 : 102 ) says that there are five criteria of media media which are used by teacher in the classroom. They are:

1. Easy to prepare  
If it take you two hours to prepare an activity which you can then use many times with different classes, then it is worthwhile once you have built up to a flashcard, it is usually not difficult to prepare the activity.
2. Easy to organize  
Is it easy organized in the classroom? The teacher has to decide whether the effort of organizing a more complicated activity is worthwhile in terms of the three points which follows.
3. Interesting  
The text book may be interesting but on the other hand, you and your student might like the activity you are considering is unlikely to interest you and the student, then you will have question whether it is worth doing.
4. Meaningful and Authentic  
They should be authentic and intrinsic to the activity. It is probably true that many activities which appear in communication are little more than empty drills, in the sense that no one really about the meaning.
5. Sufficient amount of the language  
The activity will give rise to sufficient amount of the language use in order to justify its conclusion in the language lesson.

## **THE IMPORTANCE OF MEDIA**

A lot of definition of congeniality opened all expert about media among other things is: Association of Education and Communication Technology (AECT) in America limiting media as all the form of and channel used a people to channel the message our information. National Education Association (NEA), saying that "Media" is form of communication print and also

audio-visual and also its equipments. Gagne (1970 taken from Hujair's book 2009;3) said that media is various type of component or

Happening of process learn them. So in general media is assistive appliance which can be used in course of study.

Kasihani (2007:101) say that media functions to:

1. Help learning language more simple
2. Decrease the use of mother tongue
3. Increase student' interest in learning language
4. Explain the new concept in order to student can understand easier
5. Equal some perceptions
6. Improve English learning Quality
7. Make learning process more interesting and enjoyable.

## **MEDIA IN TEACHING ENGLISH VOCABULARY**

Study media is a functioning appliance and used to submit the study message. Study is communications process between study, instructor and teaching substance can be Sais that, form of communication will not walk unassisted of medium to submit message. Stimulus forms can be utilized as media, among other things relation or human being interaction, reality, picture make a move or not, recorded voice or hence fifthly form this stimulus, will assist the study learn the lesson substance or inferential that stimulus from which can be utilized as study media is voice, see, and movement.

Houghton (2004:34) in Hamili and Silsilia reported that using teaching media impacts student learning in the following ways:

1. Diagrams, charts, video, film, animation, plays, pictures (flash cards) and audio help students who do not understand language concepts by giving them a variety of perspectives.
2. Students need material that is of high interest and grabs their attention. Using teaching media provides a variety of ways to enhance lessons.
3. Students may not be able to understand completely unless an aid is used along side the text ( for example, photograph of saturn's rings and sounds of the ocean.

According to Haycraft (1983:97), there are available effective media in Teaching English. They are object (real object), realia flash cards, wall charts, pictures, cards, overhead projector transparencies, film, video, and tape recorders.

## **REALIA**

Realia is a term used in library science and education to refer to certain real-life objects. In library classification systems, realia are objects such as coins, tools, and textiles that do not easily fit into the orderly categories of printed material or naturally occurring (specimens, samples, etc. ), usually borrowed, purchased, or received as donation by teacher, library, or museum for use in classroom instruction or in exhibits.

According to Platt & Platt (1992), Realia (in language teaching) are actual objects and items which are brought into a classroom as example or as aids to be talked written about and

used in teaching or concrete objects and the paraphernalia of everyday life. In Education, realia are objects from real life used in classroom instruction. Realia include objects used by educators to help students to understand better other cultures and real life situations. Anything which has a purpose outside of the ESL and can be bought into the classroom as media in imitation form of all things, for examples: replica of landscapes, miniature of house, imitation of fruits or vegetable (Robertson, & Hofmann in <http://www.wlc.com./oxus/realia.htm>).

A teacher of a foreign language often employs realia to strengthen students' associations between words for everyday object and the object themselves. In foreign

Language instruction, the realia has a broader meaning, which includes photos of objects from a country where the target language is spoken. The two meanings are closely related because of the support many types of libraries give to educational endeavors.

By presenting information through diverse media, realia helps to make English language input as comprehensible as possible. and to build "an associative bridge between the classroom and the world" (Heaton, 1979). As Berwald (1987) note so realia o'are not only a series of artifacts that describe the customs and tradition of a culture, but they are also a 'set of teaching aids that facilitate the simulation of experience in the target culture" (my italics). Realia provides language learners with multi-sensory impressions of the language which, as Rivers (1983) notes is "learned partly at least through seeing, hearing, touching and manipulating" items. And interaction with authentic materials aids in contextually grounding instruction by bringing students into contact with language as it is used in the target culture in order to meet actual communication needs. The use of realia, then, can enhance linguistic and cultural comprehensibility, which are both prerequisites for real language learning.

Realia is objects in the class because it adds interest and relates language to the real world. The use of realia fall into three main areas, first, for descriptions, and second, as props in drama and another type of activity is a creative thinking exercise, finding different uses for object, e.g. a ruler could be a weapon, musical instrument, a symbol of authority and so on.

## **PROCEDURE OF TEACHING VOCABULARY USING REALIA**

Realia that can be used in situational language practice is hence an essential part of the teacher's equipment. Davies, et al. (1975:6-7) cited in Fauziati (2002:47) gives detailed information about teaching procedures to be used with situational language teaching. The sequence of activities they propose consists of.

- a. Substitution drilling in which the teacher uses cue words (words, pictures, numbers, names, etc ) to get individual student to mix the example of the new patterns.
- b. Question-answer drilling in which the teacher gets one student to ask a question and another to answer until most students in the class have practiced asking and answering the new question form.
- c. Individual imitation in which the teacher asks several individual students to repeat the model she has given in order to check their pronunciation.
- d. Choral imitation in which students all together or in large groups repeat what the teacher has said. This works best if the teacher gives a clear instruction like "Repeat," or "Everybody" and hand signals to mark time and stress.
- e. Listening practice in which the teacher obtains his student's attention and repeats and example of the patterns or word in isolation clearly, several times, probably saying it slowly at least once(Where. . . is. . .the. . .pen?), separating the words.

- f. correction, in which the teacher indicates by shaking his head, repeating the error, etc., that there is a mistake and invites the student or a different student to correct it. Where possible the teacher does not simply correct them is take himself. He gets students to correct themselves so they will be encouraged to listen to each other carefully.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

### **THE SUBJECT OF THE STUDY**

The subject of this research will be the grade 4 students of SDN 060811 Medan, one class which consists of 30 students. Choosing this school as the place of the research is because the same research never conducted there and the writer assumes that those students can show the significant improvement in their vocabulary mastery.

### **THE INSTRUMENT OF DATA COLLECTING**

In collecting the data, the writer will use vocabulary test as the instrument. The testing will be given in order to know the result of the students' vocabulary mastery through realia. Beside the vocabulary test the writer also use observation sheet which is going to be used when the researcher want to identify what was happening in the classroom.

According Harmer (2003:346) in observation, teacher can record who speak when in class, how many time each individual student asks for the teacher's help over a week's study, who choose to sit with whom in freely chosen pairs, or count how many times certain specific items of language are used. and mate written records of student language production in general, so the data he/she collects will often be more reliable.

### **THE PROCEDURE OF COLLECTING DATA**

The procedure of data collection of the study is conducted by administrating three meetings in each cycle. Each cycle include four steps namely planning, action, observation, and reflection.

### **ANALYSIS OF QUANTITATIVE DATA**

Increasing of the students' score in vocabulary through realia can be seen from the mean of the students in very test. To find out the mean in every test, the writer applied the following formula:

$$\bar{X} = \frac{\sum X}{N} \times 100\%$$

Where:

= The mean of the students score

= The total score of the students

= The number of the students

1. In the orientation test, the total score of the students was 1410 and the number of the students was 36, so, the mean is  $\bar{X} = \frac{1410}{36} \times 100\% = 39.17$
2. In the orientation test, the total score of the students was 2320 and the number of the students was 36, so, the mean is  $\bar{X} = \frac{2320}{36} \times 100\% = 64.44$
3. In the orientation test, the total score of the students was 2810 and the number of the students was 36, so, the mean is  $\bar{X} = \frac{2810}{36} \times 100\% = 78.05$

To analyze the students, the improvement of the scores was calculated using the formula, as follow:

$$P = \frac{R}{T} \times 100\%$$

Where :

P = Percentage of students who get the point 70

R = The number of the students who get point above 70

T = The total number of students who do the test

The percentage of the improvement students' vocabulary through real objects could be seen as follows:

1.  $P = \frac{3}{36} \times 100\% = \mathbf{8.33\%}$

2.  $P = \frac{12}{36} \times 100\% = \mathbf{33.33\%}$

3.  $P = \frac{33}{36} \times 100\% = \mathbf{91.66\%}$

## CONCLUSION

Based on the result the quantitative data, it can be conclude that teaching vocabulary by using real object can significantly affect to enhance student' vocabulary mastery. It was proved that mean score of the last test (  $M=78.05$ ) was higher than the mean score of the first test (  $M=39.17$ ), which means that the student had an improvements support the quantitative data, that students have the improvement in vocabulary by using realia.

As the research wrote on the diary notes, during the teaching – learning process, the student gave good response. Some of them paid attention and listened to the teacher's explaining in front of the class. At the first cycle , all of them were so enthusiast evens some of them seemed not serious because they often spoke to their chair mate. During teaching and learning in cycle II, the students participated and gave the good response. They were more interested to listen. They asked more about the lesson. They were looked so excited with joining in very part of this phase. They paid concentration and less of noisy.

## SUGGESTION

In teaching and learning process, this study able to useful for :

a. Teacher

In accordance with the recommended minimum criteria of the standard passing score, English teacher are suggested to Apply varieties of strategies in teaching of English to Primary School Students. And of the strategies are using real object as a media, because based on classroom action research, it has proved successful in improving students' vocabulary mastery.

b. Students

Learning English is something new to the Primary school students . So, it is recommended that they should get the lesson in a enjoyable environment. Using real object can be fun and interesting to them.

c. Other Research

Based on the result of the findings, the research use encouraged to conduct a much in depth study especially to young learners.

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