

**THE USE OF VISUAL AIDS TO IMPROVE STUDENT'S
VOCABULARY MASTERY (AN ACTION RESEARCH AT
THE FOURTH YEAR IN SDN GUMPANG 2 KARTASURA)**



RESEARCH PAPER

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTON

A. Background of the Study

English is an international language primarily used by millions of people all over the world to carry out international communication. Crystal (1989: 11) in Alastair (1998: 8) states that English is used as an official or semi-official language in over 60 countries. It is the main language of books, newspapers, airports and air-traffic control, international business, academic conferences, et cetera. It is a fact that English plays a very significant role in human communication.

Due to the importance of English, the Indonesian government has established English as the first foreign language. It is realized through both formal and non-formal education. The role of teaching English in the curriculum is one of the efforts of the formal education to provide English proficiency to the Indonesian. English is formally taught at junior high school level until university level as a compulsory subject.

Meanwhile, English has begun to be taught at elementary school level in the recent years as a local content. It is clearly stated in GBPP (1994:58), *“Pengajaran Bahasa Inggris tidak wajib dilaksanakan di SD melainkan diselenggarakan sebagai muatan local. Pengajaran Bahara Inggris dapat dimulai di kelas IV”*. The government intends to introduce English to elementary school students as the basis for the higher-level education. MI (Sri

Wahyuni 2005 : 1) also stated in *Kurikulum 2004 Mata Pelajaran Bahasa Inggris Untuk SD/MI*:

Bahasa Inggris bagi siswa Sekolah Dasar, bukan berfungsi sebagai Suatu bidang kajian, tetapi lebih pada persiapan siswa untuk mencapai kompetensi yang diharapkan di Sekolah Menengah Pertama.

The elementary school students are generally beginners in learning English. They may be the student who have higher grade in learning English for some time. What the beginners need firstly in learning English, therefore, is to know vocabulary and to understand meaning of words, Allen (1989: 21) states that understanding the meaning is the first step in learning a word. Memorizing both the words and the meaning is the next step that should be done.

Hatch and Brown (1995:1) state that, “vocabulary refers to a list or set of words that individual speakers of language might use”. They add that vocabulary is the foundation to build languages, which plays a fundamental role in communication. By mastering vocabulary, people can express their ideas and understand others well. Gower, Phillips, and Walters (1995: 142) say that there will be a break down of communication if some one has lack of vocabulary stock.

Teaching vocabulary to the elementary school students is therefore necessary. This idea gives a view that teaching vocabulary is more focused rather than teaching other language elements. Cross (1995:5) states, “a good store of words is crucial for understanding and communication. A major aim

of the most teaching program is to help students to gain a large vocabulary of useful words.”

The elementary school students are also young learners, who have special characteristics. Teaching them is different from teaching adult. This is not merely to explain the topics, but also to activate their three domains (cognitive, affective, and psychomotor) through activities which are suitable with their characteristics. Naturally, young learners like funny activities and interesting materials in their learning processes. Therefore, many experts suggest to use, for example, pictures, songs, or games in teaching them.

Even so, it is not easy to teach new foreign words to young learners. The students still get difficulties in learning new words though the teachers have used interesting materials, for example colorful pictures. Low scores in examinations they got prove that the students' vocabulary mastery is still low.

This problem can be caused by the use of a course book. Many teachers only use student worksheets in teaching the students. However, according to House (1997:1), there are many course materials which support the success of teaching-learning process. They can be divided into two groups, such as core components (e.g. course books, activity books, teacher's book) and supplementary components (e.g. flashcards, posters, student' cassettes, etc). It means that, besides the use of a student worksheet, the teachers should also use other components in order to be successful in teaching English to the young learners.

The activities used also influence their vocabulary mastery. Generally, the teachers use the same activities in every meeting such as the teachers explain the lesson, request the students to do exercises and then ask them to check the answers in the next meeting. It is true that the activities are good for the teachers, but in fact, the students become bored with these monotonous activities that will decrease the students' motivation in learning English

Another problem is the limitation of teaching-learning process in the Classroom. Commonly, if classes are over, the teaching-learning activities also end. It means that the students study English only in the class, whereas in fact many of them seldom — or never — repeat the lesson at home. There is a long time (about a week) they do not have contact with English.

Those phenomena bring about a worry that the students do not retain the vocabulary that they learn in the course of a school year. Moreover, many students get difficulties in memorizing vocabulary. They, of course, will not remember everything well. According to Harold Petty and Stoll (1982 :231) in Pressley and Woloshyn. (1995: 101);

the importance of vocabulary is daily demonstrated in schools and out. In the classroom, the achieving students possess the most adequate vocabularies After schooling has ended, adequate of vocabulary is almost equally essential for achievement in vocations and in society.

It shows that the students should always be in contact with English vocabulary as many as possible. The teachers need other activities that can help the students become more familiar with English so that they will

memorize the words easily. Such activities should be organized in such a way that the students can 'store' the words they have learned as well as possible.

The teachers, thus, can use visual aids to support the activities in the class to help the students memorize the words. They may create the classroom as an English corner. They can label real objects in the classroom with cards or picture cards; stick some pictures, a calendar, and a clock on the wall display certain words hang out English accessories; et cetera. They can also ask the students to stick some pictures containing certain words in their notebooks.

These activities are intended to keep placing the students in the English atmosphere outside the class. Hence, they will keep interacting with English and become more familiar with English. By involving them in creating the English corner, the students will get interesting experiences about English and learn English by doing. Therefore, the students will memorize the vocabulary they have learned easily and keep storing the words in their mind

To use appropriate and effective technique in teaching vocabulary, effective teachers should create various teaching techniques and need the correctness of teaching methods to increase motivation of children. The appropriateness of making or using the teaching methods can pursue the achievement of education purposes. The variety of teaching techniques or methods will help young learners feel amusing learning situation, but not all teachers can find or create the right method for their teaching-learning process in order that the student can learn the material easily.

As it is found in the fourth year students of SDN Gumpang 2Kartasura, the teacher has some problems in teaching learning process. For example, the student gets bored in learning English, students are afraid of learning English, and student are still passive in the class. The teacher finds it difficult to motivate the student in improving the learning effort of every student. It makes the student's achievement in learning vocabulary low. Based on the observation the teacher just used conventional method, the teacher only reads the material and not uses medium during the teaching-learning process. So that it was hard for her to achieve the target of teaching learning.

Those problems motivate the writer to conduct a research to find out effective techniques in SDN Gumpang 2 Kartasura to help the students remember and retain the words they learned by making them become closer with English. Therefore, interesting ways to help the students memorize vocabulary and to make the students become more familiar with English are the variables taken in this study. Thus, the research is conducted using an action research approach.

The action research is carried out in the classroom by using aids. The research is entitled : “ THE USE OF VISUAL AIDS TO IMPROVE STUDENT’S VOCABULARY MASTERY (AN ACTION RESEARCH AT THE FOURTH YEAR SDN GUMPANG 2 KARTASURA)

B. Problem Statement

Based on the background of the study above, the research problem is formulated as the following:

1. How is the implementation of visual aids to improve vocabulary mastery?
2. Can visual aids help to improve elementary school student's vocabulary mastery?

C. Objective of the Study

In general, this study is to improve the student's vocabulary. Specifically, the objectives of study are to:

1. describe the implementation of visual aids can improve vocabulary mastery.
2. describe the whether the visual aids can improve the elementary school students' vocabulary mastery or not;

D. Limitation of the Study

In this research, the writer limits the problem on the process of teaching vocabulary using visual aids to improve the vocabulary mastery of the fourth year students of SDN Gumpang 2 Kartasura in 2008/2009 academic year.

E. Benefit of the Study

In this study the writer expects that the research paper has some benefits both in theory and practice:

1. Theoretical Benefits.

The result of this research to solve the problem faced by teacher in teaching vocabulary during teaching and learning processes.

2. Practical Benefits.

- a. For the student, it can improve the students' vocabulary mastery.
- b. For the teachers', it can improve the teachers' technique of teaching vocabulary for the elementary school students'.

F. Research Paper Organization

The writer divides this research paper into five chapters, these are as follows:

Chapter I is introduction. This chapter presents the background of the study, problem statement, objective of the study, limitation of the study, benefit of the study, and research paper organization.

Chapter II is review of related literature. This chapter discusses previous study, underlying theories, theoretical framework, working hypothesis, performance indicator.

Chapter III is research method. This chapter explains the type of research, subject of the study, object of the study, methods of collecting data, credibility of data, research procedures, and technique for analyzing data.

Chapter IV is research finding and discussion. This chapter explains the result of the observation in teaching vocabulary using visual aids in SDN 2 Gumpang Kartasura and the discussion.

Chapter V is the last chapter. This chapter presents conclusion and suggestion.