OPTIMIZING THEMATIC PICTURES TO ENRICH YOUNG LEARNERS' VOCABULARY MASTERY

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Abstract: Majority of Indonesian EFL young learners struggle with mastering English vocabulary. This community service activity was about to see whether or not incorporating thematic pictures could enrich young learners' English vocabulary. It used quantitative approach with descriptive analysis. Conveniently, one class was taken as the sample of this current activity which consisted of fourteen participants coming from different grades of elementary school. A Dictation test was administered as pretest and posttest before and after intervention to portray the young learners' achievement level. The result showed that using thematic pictures was significantly impactful in enriching young learners' English vocabulary mastery (.00 < .05). Ultimately, some pedagogical implication were also addressed accordingly in this present activity to young learners, future facilitators as well as researchers.

Keywords: thematic pictures; vocabulary mastery; young learners.

Abstrak: Mayoritas pembelajar muda di Indonesia memiliki masalah dengan penguasaan kosakata Bahasa Inggris. Kegiatan Pengabdian masyarakat ini bertujuan untuk melihat apakah penggunaan gambar tematik dapat memperkaya kosa kata bahasa Inggris pelajar muda atau tidak. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif dengan analisis deskriptif. Mudahnya, satu kelas diambil sebagai sampel kegiatan kali ini yang terdiri dari empat belas peserta yang berasal dari berbagai tingkatan sekolah dasar. Tes Dikte diberikan sebagai pretest dan posttest sebelum dan sesudah intervensi untuk menggambarkan tingkat prestasi pelajar muda. Hasilnya menunjukkan bahwa penggunaan gambar tematik memberikan dampak yang signifikan dalam memperkaya penguasaan kosakata bahasa Inggris pelajar muda. Pada akhirnya, beberapa implikasi pedagogis juga dibahas dalam kegiatan ini kepada pelajar muda, fasilitator masa depan, serta peneliti.

Kata kunci: gambar tematik; pembelajar muda; penguasaan kosakata

INTRODUCTION

Teaching English to young learners in Indonesia is always a challenging for English language instructors in particular as they have problems in understanding vocabulary in terms of both pronunciation and meaning. Having good vocabulary mastery plays a prominent role in English language learning. Vocabulary is crucial to the development of integrated English language skills, according to Irvani (2019), since without it, students will find it difficult to learn the language. Besides, Ruliani (2019) verbalized that mastering vocabulary is one of the requirements for learning English as a foreign language at the elementary, intermediate, as well as advanced levels. Furthermore, one of the most important language skills that learners must acquire when learning English is vocabulary (Ilmiddinovich, 2021). Besides, vocabulary is also said as the property of words in a language (Schmitt & Schmitt 2020). Additionally, learning an effective vocabulary could help improve one's knowledge of the English language because fluency in the language is influenced by one's ability to process good vocabulary (Sari & Aminatun, 2021; Ambarwati & Mandasari, 2020). Additionally, according to Lamante (2020), "vocabulary" is a collection of terms that can aid students in understanding what is being taught and learned in the classroom. If students retain a lot of terminology, they will be able to communicate verbally quite a bit. Learning vocabulary in the classroom is essential for students. Besides, it is impossible to separate learning the English language from expanding one's vocabulary of English words, according to Rahmawati et al. (2022). The foundational skill that students need to acquire in order to acquire

other skills like reading, writing, speaking, and listening is vocabulary. In addition, according to Zulkarnain et al. (2022), vocabulary acquisition is essential for helping some learners become fluent in English since students' vocabulary has a significant impact on their ability to read and understand the material. Therefore, it could be concluded that English vocabulary mastery is very basic things to earn in learning English particularly on four main domains of language.

Teaching vocabulary is a common topic of discussion while teaching English as a foreign language. When the process of teaching and learning occurs, the instructor will face challenges in order to obtain good outcomes regarding how to instruct students in an organized and step-by-step manner. Many teachers occasionally have no idea where to begin establishing an instructional emphasis on vocabulary learning and are unclear about the most effective techniques in teaching vocabulary, which can lead to a variety of problems (Hasanah, et al., 2022). Working on communicative vocabulary can be used as a tool to communicate and can assist students' needs to conduct language actions, which is why it is crucial and necessary for students learning English to learn vocabulary. Secondly, to ensure that pupils' vocabulary is resilient and does not easily be forgotten. In addition, vocabulary knowledge is fundamental and crucial for pupils to acquire in order to verbalize with (Kurniati et al., 2020). The likelihood that a pupil is proficient in language or communication increases with vocabulary. Furthermore, there will be clear communication and a good chance for the message to be understood (Liando & Tatipang, 2022).

However, seeing the fact that learning English in EFL classroom

particularly to young learners, they tended to have boredome and unfocused as the presenting EFL materials were not interesting and innovative. Also, they did know how to pronounce or even spell both English words and letters. Another problem arose was that they were not well-engaged with the situation and condition in the class as the learning media provision was not proper. Apart from that, they were not accordingly exposed with experiencing English language as they merely study English as it is. In line with that, Marianca, Liando, and Mamentu (2022) also noted that a lack of vocabulary continues to be a major barrier for many students when it comes to understanding English texts and responding to reading comprehension questions. Their limited vocabulary means that they are unable to understand the meaning of terms found in English texts. Because their mother tongue has an impact on their vocabulary, they struggle to memorize and comprehend it. Since English is not the students' native tongue and is either a second language or a foreign language, teaching English to pupils in Indonesia is difficult (Dilago, Vfliando, & Kukus, 2022). Furthermore, according to Julaiha, Syahputri, and Prihatini (2022), using traditional media, such books, is obviously boring for students. For example, students who are just learning English will find it challenging to understand textbooks that are primarily composed of long sentences and teacher explanations that are delivered in a monotonous voice. Thus, according to Liando, Mangare, and Olii (2021), there is a need for more creative learning materials that are suited to the requirements of the subjects as well as the traits of the learners. Through the use of learning media, students' struggles to

expand their vocabulary in English may be overcome.

On the other standpoint, on the basis of the observation on site that the young learners still had some problems in terms of English learning which encompasses rarely reading English book, never taking English subject in their elementary school, never taking English course, and difficult to pronounce English words. For that fact, it is very mandatory to conduct a community service activity as a solution particularly on the utilization of thematic pictures to boost their vocabulary mastery. Optimizing pictures can enlarge young learners' vocabulary mastery and English language learning engagement. Beside that, Muzatha and Riyath (2019) define a picture as a flat visual representation of an object. A digital camera, scanner, or computer-generated artwork can all be used to create pictures. Having the same line, Soimah (2020) said that picture is a type of communication that takes the shape of counterfeit goods and is intended to serve as informational support for successful message delivery and knowledge transfer. Besides, students will be more at ease and engaged in their studies when using pictures as learning resources. Because there has not been much diversity in the learning materials utilized thus far, vocabulary learning is still rather restricted. For pupils to learn and assimilate new knowledge and perspectives, vocabulary mastery is crucial (Agama & Singaraja, 2020). On the other nore, according to Akram, Sarwat, and Mehmood (2022), the introduction of pictures and real-world examples will excite students and boost their interest in learning. It will also provide stimulation and help students learn language that is memorable and powerful. Moreover, because pictures are

a cheap, easily obtainable, and very valuable teaching tool, they can also assist teachers in reaching educational objectives such as helping students acquire fundamental language. Because of pictures, students' experience and comprehension of the picture become more distinct, sharper, difficult to forget, and tangible in their memory and connection, making it ideal for use in vocabulary mastery for beginners and basic vocabulary (Julaiha et al., 2022). Hence, it could be concluded that pictures can be learning and instructional media to expose young learners with English vocabulary engagement.

Some research were undergone previously pertaining to incorporating pictures to enhance EFL learners' vocabulary mastery. In elementary schools, Efiyanti (2020) used processing of data techniques with pre- and post-tests. The study came to the conclusion that using color images can help pupils learn more vocabulary and have a big impact. Beside that, according to Bates and Son's (2020) research, the participants had a favorable attitude toward learning English vocabulary using pictures as visual aids. Besides, the same research was used by Sabanari et al. (2022), who found that teaching vocabulary through media, specifically pictures, improved significantly students' vocabulary in English. In addition, the same finding was performed by Mu'minati (2020), who noted a noteworthy rise in learners' vocabulary mastery when picture-based instruction was used. Therefore, using pictures in English language teaching classroom significant boost and can be a way out for young learners to get to know with English vocabulary mastery.

In conjunction with the description above, the researchers would like to conduct a community service activity in terms of using thematic pictures to enrich young learners' vocabulary mastery. The objective of this community service was to highlight whether or not integrating thematic pictures significantly enrich participants' English vocabulary mastery. This activity was very beneficial for participant as they were very enthusiastic in learning engagement and boosted their English vocabulary learning.

METHOD

This present community service activity employed quantitative approach with descriptive analysis. It also was done in form of instructing young learners with thematic pictures to boost their English vocabulary mastery. One class was taken conveniently as the sample of this current activity which comprised of fourteen participants coming from different grades of elementary school. Pretest and posttest in form of dictation test was given before and after the intervention to see the participants' level of achievement. This test, consisting of twenty English words, was designed to measure their English vocabulary mastery.

Additionally, instructional procedures of thematic pictures incorporation were as follows: (1) the instructors asked participants whether they have learnt English with thematic pictures, (2) the participants were displayed pictures with Animal theme on screen, (3) the participants were instructed to mention names of animal in Indonesian and English (4) afterwards they were showcased with the name of animal in English, (5) then they were asked to read and spell them out in turn, (6) When some mispronounced the English names of Animal wrongly, the researchers correct them gently, (7) then the displayed words of English in animal

theme were repeated individually and chorally, (8) as slight exercise to their comprehension, the participants were given a picture with zoo theme in which they were needed to pronounce pointed pictures by instructors on screen accordingly.

Apart from that, dealing with data collection to gain participants' attainment in form of scores grabbed, English dictation test were given to participants as pretest and posttest which consisted of twenty English words which are relatable with the topic learnt formerly. The results gathered were well counted and analyzed numerically with SPSS program in order to see their attainment of correct answer after being instructed with theme based picture to enrich participants' English vocabulary.

DISCUSSION

After having calculated and analyzed the data collected from the participants of community service, it was obtained that in pretest result the minimum score obtained by the participants was 40 and the maximum score was 65. Besides, the mean score grabed was 52.50, the median score was 55, the mode score was 55, and the standard deviation was 7.783. On the other point, in posttest results it was obtained that the minimum score grabbed was 60 and the maximum score was 80. Beside that, the mean score grabbed was 69.29, the median score was 70, the mode score was 75, and the standard deviation was 6.753. To earn deeper analysis, progressive analysis was employed. The results showed that the mean score found was 16.786 with standard deviation was 4.644. Then, t obtained was 13.524, the degree of freedom was 13, and p value was .000. As the results

of t obtained was higher than t table and p valued obtained was less than .05, and seeing the results of progressive analysis calculation, it could be further concluded that there was a significant progress made by the participants after being given an intervention with thematic pictures.

After earning the results of descriptive statistics and progressive analysis, it could be ultimately stated that statistically there was a better improvement on the participants' English vocabulary mastery after being well intervened with English thematic pictures. Furthermore, after having the results of data collection and statistical computation analysis of pretest and posttest of young learner' English vocabulary attainment, it could be well revealed that optimizing thematic pictures enriched significantly and statistically the young learners' English vocabulary mastery. This was caused by provision of colourful pictures as the learning media used during the community service activity in which it could draw participants' attention to follow the intervention enthusiastically and attentively. Apart from that, this was caused by providing exposure the participants with various kinds of pictures and English related pictures vocabulary. In addition, after gaining some English vocabulary introduced, the participants were asked repeat individually and chorally in order to make the English vocabulary retain in their mind. This was in line with some experts' statements which stated that students can utilize visual aids such as pictures to aid in their understanding of different parts of a foreign language. Pictures help students experience and comprehend the material more clearly, sharply, tangibly, and in their memory and connection. For this reason, they are perfect for use in beginning and basic

vocabulary mastering programs (Julaiha et al., 2022).

Besides, Lindawati (2019) in her research mentioned that color graphics are one tool that can draw kids in, expand their vocabulary, and facilitate the acquisition of new language. Having the same thought, Efiyanti (2020) claimed that one tool that can help students visually reflect things to illustrate the intended meaning of right language is colored drawings. Employing color images as a tool or instrument that is used as a reference in educational materials, teaching pupils how to use color images to improve their vocabulary. Moreover, Mu'minati (2020) saw a significant increase in students' vocabulary understanding when picture-based teaching was employed, supporting the same conclusion. Furthermore, Sabanari et al. (2022), who discovered that using pictures to teach vocabulary greatly increased participants' vocabulary in English. Thus, it could be concluded that using thematic pictures was very potential to enrich young learners' English vocabulary mastery.

CONCLUSION

After having calculated and interpreted statistical analysis as well as research findings, it stands to the conclusion that optimizing thematic pictures in teaching English vocabulary was very effective to young learners. Beside that, after giving community service activity some implied suggestion were headed to participants to learn English eagerly and diligently particularly using pictures and the like to enhance their vocabulary knowledge. Additionally, they were also needed to note and practice pronouncing English vocabulary when they got new English words from different learning sources. Also, it is highly demanded for the future English teachers/instructors to use this learning media and provide various exercises for participants as well as extend time span for a better outcome. Ultimately, for near future researchers, it is exceedingly suggested to undergo similar activities of community service with different instructional technique, learning media, participants, and instrumentation particularly on using interview and questionnaire for much deeper research analyses.

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