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EFL Theory & Practice: Voice of EED UKI

English Education Department (EED) Collegiate Forum 2015-2018

Editor
Parlindungan Pardede

Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris
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English Education Department Collegiate Forum (EED CF) 2015-2018

"EFL Theory and Practice: Voice of EED UKI"

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PREFACE

English Education Department Collegiate Forum (EED CF) is an academic forum organized by the English Education Department, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Kristen Indonesia (EED FKIP UKI). Initiated in 2008 by Mr. Parlin Pardede Dean of FKIP UKI, the event was held bi-monthly in every even moth. It aims at providing a friendly and open opportunity for the faculty, students, alumni, and English teachers to share ideas, research findings, and experiences in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) field. It is expected that the forum can cater the interested parties an innovative and exciting opportunity to share, care, and collaborate for developing their professionalism in EFL learning and teaching.

Following related parties' recommendation, staring from 2015 the papers presented in the forum will be compiled and published in a proceeding in every four years. This proceeding, therefore, includes the 24 articles presented in the forum from 2015 to 2018. Since the presentation in this forum is voluntary, every resource person is free to decide the EFL topic he or she presents. Consequently, the articles in this volume cover a broad theme. Despite the broad theme, the topics covered in the articles do represent current hot issues in EFL, such as learning and teaching methodology and strategies; language skills, pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar development; curriculum, evaluation and assessment matters; language research methodology, and the implementation of technology in EFL.

On behalf of EED FKIP UKI, I would like to offer my appreciation all faculties, students, alumni, and fellow English teachers who had contributed in EED CF along 2015-2018. My special thanks should go to Parlindungan Pardede whose hard work in editing the articles in this proceeding has made this publication possible.

Finally, I hope each article in this proceeding can inspire every reader as it had inspired the audiences when it was presented in EED CF.

Jakarta, July 26, 2019
English Education Department Chairperson,

Hendrikus Male

CONTENTS

Using Stories to Develop EFL Students' Vocabulary at SMK 17 Agustus 1945[1]

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Abstract

Story reading has long been recognized as an effective educational strategy. Current researches strengthened the ideas that reading stories provides a powerful language inputs for EFL learners in the attempt to develop language skills and vocabulary. This study was an action research aimed to improve tenth graders' vocabulary mastery by using stories at SMK 17 Agustus 1945. The study was carried out in two cycles. Throughout the study, quantitative data was collected by using tests and qualitative data was obtained through a questionnaire. The results showed that the use of story reading technique was successful to develop the vocabulary mastery. It did not only enhance the students' vocabulary test scores but also changed their views from a negative one to a positive one concerning the study of English in general, the importance of vocabulary development, and the use of story reading to develop vocabulary. Based on the results, teachers are suggested to use story reading technique to improve students' mastery of English vocabulary.

Keywords: stories, vocabulary, ELT, classroom action research

INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary plays a substantial role in the foreign language learning process because it facilitates language learners the foundation for learning listening, speaking, reading and writing. Vocabulary is the expressive tool of thoughts and feelings to be conveyed through language. Without it, no language skill can be developed. Kamil and Heibert (2005) suggested that vocabulary learning is the basis of language learning, and without vocabulary, one cannot learn a language. In addition, Schmitt (2000) emphasized that

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[1]This article was presented in The UKI English Education Department Bimonthly Collegiate Forum held on Friday, June 10, 2016

"lexical knowledge is central to communicative competence and to the acquisition of a second language" p. 55). This is clarified by the results of studies (e.g. Anderson & Freebody (1981); Qian, 2002; Ben Salem, 2006) indicating the significant correlation between vocabulary learning and foreign language learning. Moreover, In the context of English as a second language (ESL) and English as a foreign language (EFL) learning vocabulary items play a vital role in all language skills (i.e. listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Nation,2011).

Despite the high importance of vocabulary in language learning, most EFL students find English vocabulary difficult to acquire. Twenty-five years ago, Oxford (1990) had found that "language learners have a serious problem remembering a large amount of vocabulary necessary to achieve fluency ". Many EFL students frequently suffer from their insufficient knowledge of vocabulary and become frustrated by their unfamiliarity with the meaning of keywords in a passage or by not having the suitable words to express their idea or feeling while writing. Such conditions make reading and writing as tiresome, laborious and tedious jobs. This is probably due to the differences between the learners' mother tongue and English vocabulary in terms of pronunciation, spelling, meaning and word use. In addition, many English words are pronounced differently from the way they are written.

Based on the present researcher's observation, the tenth graders of the Accounting class in SMK 17 Agustus 1945 also found difficulties to develop vocabulary. Their poor vocabulary always made it difficult for them to get the meaning of sentences and paragraphs they read. It also caused them unable to appropriately express ideas through speaking and writing. Pronouncing English words seem to be a big problem for them. Therefore, to help them develop English vocabularies, applying the correct technique seemed inevitable.

According to Siahaan (2012), vocabulary teaching is regarded the area in ELT that provides the most various strategies and techniques which are classified into direct and indirect approaches. Some of the most popular ways of the direct approach is having students look words up in a dictionary, analyze the word root and affixes, find synonyms or antonyms, write definitions, and use words in a sentence. To conduct the indirect approach, the students are let incidentally acquire vocabulary through the act of reading. Brown, Both of the direct and indirect approaches can be useful, depending on the learners' linguistic background, learning abilities, and learning styles. Thus, the teacher should consider these factors. Moreover, vocabulary learning should be made enjoyable and meaningful to the students.

Based the preliminary study conducted by interviewing the students and their English teacher of the Accounting class in SMK 17 Agustus 1945, the researcher concluded that using stories seemed to be one the most suitable techniques to help the students develop their vocabulary. The main reason for choosing stories to achieve the purpose is, as Povey (as cited in Pardede, 2011b) had argued, stories contains real examples of grammatical structures and vocabulary items so that they raise learners' awareness of the range of the target language and advance their competence in all language skills. In addition, Erkaya (2015) posited that stories are advantageous to use in language teaching because they offer motivational, literary, cultural and higher-order

thinking benefits. Pardede (2011b) accentuated "Short stories are very useful in the trials to improve students' vocabulary and reading" (p. 19).

A story, which is defined by Simmons (2006, p. 31) as "a narrative account of an event or events true or fictional" is an effective means of education because it is believable, memorable, and entertaining. Stories make information more memorable because they involve in the action of the characters. By reading the stories, students can develop their ability to understand the vocabularies in the stories and engage in thinking skills. Besides, with the stories students develop learning strategies such as reading for general meaning, predicting, guessing the meaning and hypothesizing. In addition, stories are also interesting to almost all people because they are entertaining. They also develop imagination, so when someone reads a story, it can help him improve his imagination.

Some previous studies revealed that stories are effective and interesting to use to develop student's vocabulary Tutwisoot (2003) experimental study conducted to see if short stories could enhance reading comprehension of EFL learners Thai learners showed that after taking short story reading course, the mean score of the experimental group was considerably higher than that of the control group on reading comprehension test. Pardede's (2011a) study focusing on the interest and perceptions of the pre-service English teachers' on the inclusion of short story in language skills classrooms revealed that the majority of the participants found short stories interesting to use both as materials for self-enjoyment and of as components language skill classes. Most of them also agreed or strongly agreed that the incorporation of short stories in language skills classes will help learners achieve better mastery of language skills. Palupi (2009)'s action research focused on the use of story to develop the eighth graders in SMP N 5 Sukoharjo improved the participants' vocabulary. The study of Ajideh (2013) investigating the effect of summarizing short stories on Iranian EFL learners' vocabulary learning revealed that the experimental group was considerably better than the control group in terms of vocabulary. In addition, Sihaan's (2012) action research conducted to improve young leaners' English vocabulary showed that story reading techniques improved the participants' vocabulary mastery.

Based on the discussions above, it is obvious stories have some good effects on the students and are advantageous for their vocabulary improvement as well. By reading stories, the students can enrich their vocabulary in an interesting way because they study the vocabulary while enjoying the stories. In relation to that, the present researcher aimed to story reading technique to develop students' vocabulary. Specifically, the study addressed the following research questions: (1) Can the use of story reading technique improve the tenth-grade students' vocabulary? (2) Are the students interested in the use of story reading to improve their vocabulary?

METHOD

This study employed an action research design. It was conducted in two cycles in two months, April to May 2015. The participants were 25 students of the tenth grade of the Accounting class .of SMK 17 Agustus 1945, Jakarta Selatan. The study was conducted in two cycles (five sessions per cycle) in April to May 2015.

Each session of the action was conducted in about 40 minutes after the students finished their learning session with their English teacher. While the action was conducted, the English teacher played the role of the observer. The procedure of each session could be generally described as follow. First, the students' interest was incited by telling them one or two unique feature of the story to read. Second, the text of the story was distributed to each student who should read and discuss it in a group of five members each. The students first read the story once or twice individually. Then everyone underlined every unfamiliar words or expression. After that, the students work in the group to discuss the meaning of each underlined unfamiliar word and practice how to pronounce them, during which the researcher moved from one group to another to provide help in case the students needed one. Finishing the discussion and pronunciation practice, representing his group, a member of each group read the story aloud to the classroom and another one told what the story about.

The data was collected using test and non-test techniques. The test technique was a pre and two posttests used to measure the vocabulary mastery of the participants. The pre-test was administered before the action, while the first posttest (posttest I) was conducted at the end of cycle 1, and posttest II, at the end of cycle 2. The non-test is a questionnaire and observation sheet. The questionnaire was used to collect data concerning the response of the students of the use of story reading technique. The questionnaire was administered three times, i.e., before the action research and at the end of both cycles. The observation sheet was used by a collaborator to record the actions. All of the gained data were analyzed employing the descriptive analysis technique. The success indicator of this action research was the participants' achieving of the mean score of 75.

Each of the three tests consisted of 25 vocabulary questions designed in three types: (1) identifying word (2) word selection and (3) matching. To guarantee the content validity, each test was consulted the English teacher and a language testing expert.

FINDING
Initial Condition

Table 1.
Score Range of Students' Pretest

Category	Score Range	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Excellent	85 – 100	0	0%
Good	75 – 84	0	0 %
Fair	55 – 74	12	48 %
Low	0 – 54	13	52 %
	Total	25	100%

In order to measure the participants' vocabulary mastery level, on April 8th, 2015, a week before the action implementation, a pretest was administered. After the test, a pre-action survey was conducted. Then, a simulation of learning vocabulary through story reading (using the procedure previously mentioned) was carried out. As shown in Table 1, the results showed that the participants' vocabulary was very poor. More than

a half of them (52%) got the low score for the vocabulary test, and the rests had the fair category. The mean score obtained by the students was 55.2.

The problem faced by the students was not only indicated by the poor score of the vocabulary test but also by their view of English. Based on their responses to the questionnaire administered before the action research, 36% of them disliked English and thought vocabulary was not important. What is more, 60% viewed vocabulary was difficult to learn (see Table 2).

Table 2
Data Obtained through the Questionnaire in the Pre-Action

No	Statements	Yes		No	
		Total	%	Total	%
1	I like studying English	16	64%	9	36%
2	English vocabulary is important to develop	16	64%	9	36%
3	English vocabulary is easy to learn	10	40%	15	60%

Report of Cycle I
1. Planning
The plan of cycle 1 was focused to overcome the problems identified during the initial observation, the pretest results, and information obtained from the pre-cycle questionnaire. As previously described, that the participants generally had poor vocabulary and found vocabulary learning difficult.

2. Action
The actions of Cycle 1 were conducted in five meetings on April 15th, 17th, 22nd, 24th, and 29th. The five cycles were conducted in line with the procedure described in the method section and used a short story of 500-1.000 words length in each session. The actions ran better and better as the students more and more adapted to the practice. In the sixth meeting, the researchers administered posttest I and finally asked the participants to fill in the same questionnaire they got in the pre-cycle added with three more statements concerning learning vocabulary by employing story reading.

3. Observing

Table 3.
Score Range of Students' Posttest 1

Category	Score Range	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Excellent	85 – 100	0	0%
Good	75 – 84	11	44%
Fair	55 – 74	14	56 %
Low	0 – 54	0	0 %
	Total	25	100%

As shown by Table 3, the learning activities employing story reading in cycle 1 managed to improve the participants' reading comprehension skills. After completing

cycle 1, no more student got the low-level score. The mean score had even increased to 69.28 (from 55.2 in the pretest). However, more than a half (56%) of the participants still got the fair level score. Based on this finding, cycle 2 was planned.

In line with the improvement of their vocabulary mastery, their view of English and vocabulary also changed. The majority (84%) now liked studying English and viewed vocabulary development is important. However, those one third (32%) of them still viewed English vocabulary difficult to learn. After participating in learning vocabulary using story reading in five times, 80% of them enjoyed learning through story reading and liked reading stories. However, only two-thirds of them who though reading stories developed their vocabulary. (See table 4).

4. *Reflecting*

Based on the data obtained in cycle 1, the researchers reflected short story reading was very potential to employ to improve respondents' vocabulary. It managed to increase their vocabulary mastery and changed the negative views of most of them to a positive one. However, since the number of participants who had negative views on vocabulary learning was still big, the researcher planned to carry out cycle 2. In line with the observer's suggestion, to make the activity in cycle 2 more effective, the researchers planned to make the group membership smaller by dividing the class into eight groups. Thus, in cycle 2 seven groups would have 3 members and the eight group would have four members.

Table 4
Data Obtained through the Questionnaire in Cycle I

No	Statements	Yes		No	
		Total	%	Total	%
1	I like studying English	21	84%	4	16%
2	English vocabulary is important to develop	21	84%	4	16%
3	English vocabulary is easy to learn	17	68%	8	32%
4	I enjoy learning English using stories	20	80%	5	20%
5	I like reading stories	20	80%	5	20%
6	I think reading stories develop my vocabulary	17	68%	8	32%

Report of Cycle II
1. *Planning*
As indicated previously, the action plan of cycle two was designed using the procedure similar to that of cycle 1. However, different from the number of the learning group members in cycle 1 which consisted of five students each, the number of members in the groups in cycle 2 was reduced to three students in order to increase every student's engagement and contribution.

2. *Acting*
Cycle 2 consisted of five meetings which were held on May 6th, 8th, 13th, 15th, and 20th, 2015. Like in cycle 1, the five sessions were conducted in line with the procedure

described in the method section and used a short story of 500-1.000 words length in each session. Since the members of each group were now smaller, every student's involvement and participation in the learning group were increased. In May 22nd, the posttest and questionnaire of cycle 2 were administered.

3. Observing

As shown by Table 5, the learning activities using mind story reading in cycle 2 managed to improve the participants' vocabulary. At the end of cycle 2, no more student got the low and fair level score. More than two-thirds (68%) had even got an excellent level, while the rests got a good level. The mean score had even increased to 88.88 (from 69.28 in posttest 1).

Table 5
Score Range of Students' Posttest 2

Category	Score Range	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Excellent	90 – 100	17	68%
Good	70 – 89	8	32 %
Fair	50 – 69	-	0 %
Low	0 – 49	-	0 %
		25	100%

The participants' view of English, vocabulary, and the use of story reading technique also changed significantly. All of them now have a positive attitude to English and considered English vocabulary development is important. Although not all of them now thought vocabulary easy to learn, almost every student now enjoyed learning using stories reading technique and believed the technique implementation developed their vocabulary (See Table 6).

Table 6
Data Obtained through the Questionnaire in Cycle 2

No	Statements	Yes		No	
		Total	%	Total	%
1	I like studying English	25	100%	0	0%
2	English vocabulary is important to develop	25	100%	0	0%
3	English vocabulary is easy to learn	23	92%	2	8%
4	I enjoy learning English using stories	24	100%	1	0%
5	I like reading stories	24	96%	1	4%
6	I think reading stories develop my vocabulary	24	96%	1	4%

4. Reflecting

Based on the data obtained in cycle 2, the researcher reflected that story reading technique is an effective tool for improving students' reading comprehension. Although this action research was conducted only in two months, it managed to increase the participants' vocabulary mastery and changed their views of English in general and

English vocabulary in particular to be a positive one. Since the success criteria (the mean score of 75) had been attained, the action research ended.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study revealed that story reading technique could effectively enhance the students' vocabulary learning achievement. Before participating in the action research, as shown by the pretest result, none of the students got the "good" and "excellent" score categories. In addition, only two-thirds of them who liked studying English and considered English vocabulary is important to develop. More than half of them even thought vocabulary difficult to learn. After participating in the vocabulary learning using story reading technique in cycle 1, no more student got the low-level score, although 56% still got the fair level. Their mean score also increased from 55.2 in the pretest to 69.28 in the posttest. Their perception also became more positive. The majority (84%) now liked studying English and viewed vocabulary development is important and those who viewed English vocabulary difficult to learn had decreased from to only 32%. This finding revealed that the story reading technique could effectively enhance the students' vocabulary learning achievement clarified Tutwisoot's (2003) study results.

The implementation of story reading technique in cycle 2 became more effective due to the limitation of the number of the learning group members. Since each group now had a smaller number of member, everyone became more involved and active in the learning process. After completing cycle 2, no more student got a low and fair level score. A majority 68%) had even got an excellent level. The mean score also increased to 88.88 (from 69.28 in posttest 1). In addition, the data obtained from the questionnaire administered at the end of cycle 2 revealed that the whole students had a positive attitude towards English and considered English vocabulary development is important. Their enjoyment and belief in the effectiveness of the story reading technique to develop vocabulary also increased. This is line with Pardede's (2011a) findings that short stories were interesting to use both as materials for self-enjoyment and as components of language skill classes

By comparing the three mean scores obtained from the three tests administered in this study (see Figure 1), it is very obvious that story reading is an effective technique teacher could use to improve the students' vocabulary. The more active and engaged the students in the group activities including reading stories, discussing meaning with peers, listening to peer's reading aloud, and listening to other groups' interpretation of the story, the better their vocabulary development. This is closely linked with the fact that since English is not used in their daily lives, EFL learners reading English texts and listening to English auditory discourses are the main sources of language input. Thus, story reading is a very potent technique for their language development since it stories offer the learners a lot of stimulating and enriching input. This is verified by the results of Martinez's (2007) study in which some stories were used to stimulate EFL learners' interest motivation. The study showed some favorable results. The students were enthusiastic to engage in exercises and to fulfill all tasks assigned throughout the study.

CONCLUSION AND SUGESSTION

Based on the findings and discussion presented in previous sections, it can be concluded that the use of story reading was successful to increase the vocabulary mastery of the tenth graders of the Accounting class .of SMK 17 Agustus 1945, Jakarta. Story reading implementation also changed the students' view on English study in general, the importance of vocabulary development, and the use of story reading to develop vocabulary. In relation to this, the researchers suggest teachers to use story reading technique as an alternative to help students develop their vocabulary.

Since this study is an action research involving 25 tenth graders of SMK majoring in accounting, the details could not be generalized to other groups of students. Future studies, therefore, are recommended to implement the technique in different levels of education and to modify some aspects of the materials, activities, media, and strategy used in this study to suit the conditions of the target group of students.

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