



IMPLEMENTING THEMATIC SONGS IN TEACHING VOCABULARY SKILLS TO ELEMENTARY STUDENTS IN TAMAN BACA MASYARAKAT KUDI GUNUNG CUNIL BANYUMAS

PENERAPAN LAGU-LAGU BERTEMA DALAM PENGAJARAN KOSAKATA UNTUK SISWA SEKOLAH DASAR DI TAMAN BACA MASYARAKAT KUDI GUNUNG CUNIL BANYUMAS

Dyah Raina Purwaningsih, Rosdiana Puspita Sari & Gigih Ariastuti Purwandari
Universitas Jenderal Soedirman
Jl. HR. Bunyamin, Purwokerto 53125 Indonesia
Email: dyah.purwaningsih@unsoed.ac.id

Permalink: <http://dx.doi.org/10.24036/ld.v11i2.8097>

Submitted: 09-11-2017

Accepted: 31-12-2017

DOI: 10.24036/ld.v11i1.8097

Published: 12-01-2018

Abstract

The discussion on English vocabulary teaching is not a new thing, especially when it is about the technique and method used in the teaching-learning process. The purpose of this paper is to disseminate the result of community service experience in teaching vocabulary for elementary students by using thematic songs. This activity is conducted to different grade students that belong to a reading community called *Taman Baca Masyarakat Kudi* that is located in one of Banyumas subdistricts. The use of songs is in accordance with our community service purpose that is to motivate the students that English is fun to learn. Teaching vocabulary especially to young learners should be fun and and the teacher should avoid monotonous activities. However, some teachers are still stuck in the conventional method, for example by asking students to memorize a stack of vocabulary items without taking into account student's boredom in doing such task. Songs are considered effective to be used in teaching children because they can trigger children's creativity and curiosity especially in dealing with vocabulary acquisition.

Keyword: teaching, vocabulary, thematic songs, English

Abstrak

Pembahasan tentang pengajaran kosakata bahasa Inggris bukanlah hal yang baru, terutama bila menyangkut teknik dan metode yang digunakan dalam proses belajar mengajar. Makalah ini bertujuan menyebarkan pengalaman dalam pengabdian kepada masyarakat dalam mengajarkan kosa kata dengan menggunakan lagu-lagu bertema untuk siswa sekolah dasar. Aktivitas ini dilaksanakan dalam sekelompok siswa sekolah dasar yang berasal dari kelas berbeda yang tergabung dalam komunitas baca bernama Taman Baca Masyarakat Kudi yang terletak di salah satu kecamatan Banyumas. Penggunaan lagu sesuai dengan tujuan pelayanan masyarakat kita, yaitu untuk memotivasi siswa bahwa bahasa Inggris itu menyenangkan untuk dipelajari.

Lagu dianggap efektif untuk digunakan dalam mengajar anak-anak karena bisa memicu kreativitas dan rasa ingin tahu anak-anak terutama dalam kaitannya dengan proses pemerolehan kosakata.

Kata kunci: pengajaran, kosakata, lagu tematik, bahasa Inggris

A. INTRODUCTION

Teaching is an activity that requires the teacher to be creative and explorative to avoid boredom in the class, especially in teaching children. According to (Scott & Ytreberg, 1990), children are categorized into two main groups; the five to seven years old and the eight to ten years old. The five to seven years old groups are at level one, or the beginner stage. The other group might be also at the beginner stage but they are more likely to be more familiar with English subject. To be more specific, teaching language to children is very challenging, and the teacher has to be sure that s/he applies a suitable teaching method in order to reach the goal.

In teaching language to children, a teacher needs to set certain goal that is to make the students able to use or practice the language. Young children love to play and learn best when they are enjoying themselves. Most young students are also bored with grammar and the theory taught by the teacher; instead, they need more practice and fun learning activity. They are also hesitant, if not afraid, in practicing their English because of the mistakes that might be made during the practice. This problem is also faced by the elementary students in Dusun Gunung Cunil in a village called Pegalongan that belongs to the regency of Banyumas, Central Java.

Located in quite a remote area, the children of *Gunung Cunil* take much time to reach the schools; and it makes them feel hesitant to go to higher levels of education. Not to mention the lack of material and moral support given to them that makes the motivation to get more education lower. Seeing the problems, some young people that belong the village initiated a reading community called *Taman Baca Masyarakat Kudi* that provides the children with books and positive programs to encourage them in improving their knowledge as well as to improve their confidence in showing their abilities. The community was established in 2016 by the youth community of the village, and during its existence, they have conducted a series of programs that involve some other parties. The programs are mainly in the areas that are close to children, such as reading contest, dancing competitions, story-telling contest, and many more.

This paper is written based on a community service conducted there with a purpose to teach the students vocabulary skill by using thematic songs as the learning media. Vocabulary is defined roughly by (Ur, 1991) as words that are taught in teaching foreign languages. This paper is focused on the vocabulary teaching because based on the information received by the researchers, one of English problems faced by the students is the vocabulary acquisition. Vocabulary is very important for the learners to master major English skills that include speaking, listening, reading, and writing. As stated by Zhihong in (Ekawati, 2017), vocabulary is important successful English learning since without extensive vocabulary, there may be some difficulties in communication. Songs are often used in teaching English because most children like singing together, and songs that contain certain themes are suitable for teaching children in a fun way. It is in line with (Alan, 1987) who says that playfulness is important in learning a foreign language, and songs might contain the playfulness needed by the young learners.

Currently, there are some method proposed in teaching vocabulary to avoid memorization and giving hundred words to the students. Some fun activities have been proposed, such as, jumbled-letter game (Fudhla, 2013), paper airplane game (Okselina & Anwar, 2017) however those technique are conducted at school setting. In this case, the students are the same group of students. Meanwhile, this activity is conducted outside of the school. This activity is also given to different group of students. They come from different grade.

The use of songs in the learning process is closely related to the use of audio visual material as one of teaching methods. According to Wright in (Çakir, 2006), many media and many styles of visual presentation are useful to the language learner. All audio-visual materials have positive contributions to language learning as long as they are used at the right time, in the right place. In language learning and teaching process, learner use his eyes as well as his ears; but his eyes are basic in learning. In the community service activity we have done, the video clips containing songs are played through audio visual media such as LCD projector, television, sound system, and the students are asked to pay attention to the vocabulary items mentioned in the videos. To make the teaching-learning process more communicative, students are asked to respond to the questions related to the song themes. We realize that communication and interaction are important in language learning and the use of song can open the opportunity for students and teacher to interact and communicate.

In teaching foreign language vocabulary to children, we cannot simply give them a list of hundreds vocabulary items to be memorized at once, because we cannot expect the students to feel that the vocabulary that they get from the teacher is important. Instead, they will just feel forced to remember them all. According to (French Allen, 1983), teacher needs to create the sense of need in the classroom not by making the students feel that the vocabulary they learn is only to satisfy their teacher nor to pass the examination. The sense of need can be created by giving students list of vocabulary items that are close to their surrounding, for example about parts of body, family members, names of animals, names of fruits, etc.

Another thing that must be avoided in teaching vocabulary to children is showing the meaning of the vocabulary directly because it will stop students' curiosity about the things they are looking at. Teacher can use some teaching aids to help the students understanding the meaning of each of the items; the aids can be in various forms, such as picture, video, diorama, etc. It is aimed at triggerring students' creativity and giving chances to students and teacher to be more interactive and communicative.

Teaching in formal schools is surely different from teaching in informal schools or institutions. In schools, they sare demanded to be inline with the curriculum and students are also demanded to accomplish the learning objectives set by the teacher. Another thing is that in formal education; the students are classified based on their grade, so the teacher can focus on the same objective that is applied equally to the students. In informal education, the teacher as demanded to be really creative in delivering the material, and s/he must be sure that the method that is applied is suitable for all students. The objective of the lesson is not simply to improve the students' score, but more on the students' experience improvement.

B. METHOD

Since this paper is based on a community service program, the method is a kind of reflection of teaching that has been done. The actity consisted of the steps that we took in the implementation from the beginning until the end of the program. The first step was approaching the *Taman Baca* to get information about the program that is

likely to be held there. After knowing the situation of the location, we set the teaching method that is suitable to apply. After that we discussed the learning procedure that might be suitable to apply in accordance with the implementation of the teaching method. There were around sixty students that joined the Taman Baca that range from 5 to ten years old.

Since the students that joined the reading community were from various grades of elementary school, we decided to apply the most universal method. In applying the method, we also took into account the characteristics of the students that come from different grades of education as the considering the way to teach them.

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Since this article is an elaboration of a community service program, the writers focus only on the description of the activities held there. This community service is held four times during April until September 2017. The first meeting is held on 23rd April 2017 and the theme is about *animal*. The second meeting is held on 11th May 2017 and the theme is *fruit and vegetable*. The third meeting is held on 25th May 2017 and the theme is *part of body*. The last meeting is held on 10th September 2017 and the theme is *family*.

The first meeting is held on 23rd April 2017. The theme of this meeting is *animal*. Because *Taman Baca Kudi* is being renovated, we do all the activities in one of the local people's house which is located next to the building. At the beginning, we describe the names of animal such as *lion, tiger, duck, roaster, mouse, penguin, kangaroo, snake, elephant etc.* We also provide pictures in our power point, so that the students of Taman Baca can understand and memorize well all the names of animal that are given. After describing the names of animal, we also teach the students how to pronounce them in a right and good pronunciation because some of the students still read the name of animal in Indonesian spelling. The students are very enthusiastic when we play some videos and song which are related to the theme. We sing and dance together with the students of Taman Baca while watching the video on the screen. One of the songs entitled "Let's go to the zoo". In this song, several names of animals and their movements are mentioned. For instance, stomp like an elephant, slither like a snake, and waddle like a penguin. This makes all of us try to imitate the movement of those animals. Some students also laugh and imitate all the movements happily. After singing and dancing together, we invite two students to be the volunteers. The two students will lead their friends to sing and dance together. They enjoy it much, even they ask us to play the song for many times. The last activity is reviewing all the animal vocabularies that have been taught. Most of the students can answer our questions well. They have memorized all the vocabularies by using audiovisual media. Audiovisual media is successful to make students changed their mind that learning English is fun.

The second meeting is held on 11th May 2017. The theme for this meeting is *fruits and vegetables*. The students of *Taman Baca Kudi* are taught the names of several fruits and vegetables such as *mango, oranges, grape, apple, guava, cauliflower, cabbage, cucumber, tomato, etc.* At first, we describe the names of those fruits and vegetables by using power point. We also display the picture for each name so that the students can easily memorize the vocabulary. Not only describing and introducing the name of common vegetables, we also give them and introduce them the names of fruit and vegetable that may become new vocabulary for them such as, bitter melon, dragon fruit, jack fruit, snake fruit, lettuce, mushroom, etc. After describing those names of fruit and vegetables, we play some songs which are related

to the theme. One of the songs entitled “Happy fruits”. We sing together loudly while following the dance of the fruits that are shown on the screen. The students are very happy to sing together with their friends. Even, one of the students is brave enough to lead their friends to sing and dance. They enjoy this learning process very much. At last, we give some quizzes to the students. For those who can answer our questions well, we give candies. Surprisingly, all of the questions are answered perfectly. The use of audiovisual media can be a good way to increase their motivation to learn English enthusiastically.

The third meeting is conducted on May, 25 2017. The theme is Parts of body which introduces various name of parts of body to the students in Taman Baca Kudi. In this meeting, the method is Audiovisual combined with Total Physical Response (TPR) and using pictures and video as technique to implement the theme. According to Shin in (Sariyati, 2013), teaching English to young learners or students of elementary school is different from teaching adults as they especially have fun with movement and physical participation. Total Physical Response is a teaching method that enables students to make body movements based on the command delivered by the teacher. Young learners, especially students will memorize words well when they can make fun with them. In doing Total Physical Response teaching method, teacher also has to take into account the effectiveness of their commands and make sure that the command is interesting and clear.

Applying TPR in teaching students of *Taman Baca Masyarakat Kudi* is quite fun and successful, and to make students engaged to the activity, we start with the most common technique of elicitation; at first, the students get brainstorming activity. They are given some pictures related to parts of head such as eyes, hair, ears, nose, mouth. The students are asked to guess what the pictures were. After answering, they still find difficulties to mention the correct vocabulary in English. Then, they are showed a song entitled Head, Shoulder, Knees and Toes. They are asked to listen carefully while watching the video. After hearing the song, the writer and students discuss what the song tells us about. In learning activity, the students are asked to practice some vocabularies about Parts of Body using TPR. According to (Larsen-Freeman, 1986), in the TPR method, students listen and respond to the spoken target language commands of the teacher. By using this method, the students’ vocabulary mastery about Parts of Body are measured. For instance, the students are asked to stand up and listen to the teacher’s command. The teacher mentions various name of Parts of Body such as head, eyes, nose, ears, mouth etc. while touched them. After giving the illustration, the students take turn. When the teacher says some vocabularies about Parts of Body, for example, “Eyes, Ears, Nose, Cheek, Shoulders, Hands, Fingers, Knees, Toes” then the students have to respond by touching their Eyes, Ears, Nose, Cheek, Shoulders, Hands, Fingers, Knees, Toes. By implementing this method, the students seem don’t have difficulty in construct the vocabulary. The students memorize a lot of word about Parts of bbody that new for them and they can spell them well. They are very enthusiast to study new things and motivated to study continuously.

Besides, the learning process goes smoothly and it creates an interesting atmosphere so they can be more active and communicative students. They are not afraid to deliver their ideas in English. They trigger their self-confidence and highly motivated to study English vocabulary continuously.

The fourth meeting is the last meeting in this community service. It is carried out on September 10 2017 with theme Family. Before learning process, the teachers apply a fun activity to recall their vocabulary mastery in previous meeting. The

activity is started by giving them some pictures about Animals, Fruit and Vegetables and Parts of Body. Afterward, the teachers also give a game. In this game, the students are asked to stand up and sing an English song entitled “ABC”. While singing the song, they have to give a small ball to the other student until the song completed. The last student who hold the ball should mention a vocabulary related to Animals, Fruit and Vegetables. The students feel happy and do the activity enthusiastically.

After having warming up activity, students are requested to mention their family member in English. This is as a brainstorming. A brainstorming activity leads the students to catch the topic which is going to learn in certain meeting. Some students still make mistaken when they pronounce vocabularies about Family. Therefore, the teachers train them how to pronounce some vocabularies related to the topic. In order to make the students more comprehend some vocabularies, the teachers play an English song. Firstly, they are announced the most recent song entitled “Baby Shark” which is very popular amongst children. The teachers play the song with the lyrics, which are important since in those lyrics the target vocabulary items are mentioned. The students are introduced to names of family member, such as daddy or father, mommy or mother, brother, sister, grandma or grandmother, grandpa or grandfather, etc. The students seem interested in singing while imitating every motion in that song. The students interest in the learning vocabulary with songs, can be seen from their enthusiasms in singing the songs and memorize the word in the songs. In addition, in this last meeting, there is a handover, an LED TV, which is given by public officials to *Taman Baca Kudi Gunung Cunil* as a form of community service. Hopefully, it can be very beneficial to improve students’ achievement in English and also for *Taman Baca Kudi Gunung Cunil* as a place to develop many potencies in their community.

When implementing vocabulary learning by songs in every meeting, the students are evaluated by asking them to mention some vocabularies repeatedly through songs, spelling them or have question and answer which is given by the public official team. At first, they still produce many mistakes since they are not accustomed to learn English vocabulary in their daily life. Although getting English subject in elementary school, it does not ensure them to have vocabulary mastery. In everyday life, they usually speak in Javanese as their mother tongue. They often practice English in daily conversation so that they have a lot of English vocabulary mastery. It also leads to their pronunciation fluency which is still inferior. They still do many mistakes when producing some words. Yet, after having enrichment in four meeting, the obstacles lessen gradually. Songs as the media of vocabulary learning have made them interested in English vocabulary learning. They learn enthusiastically and seem fun when having English learning by using a song. It can trigger students to improve their curiosity in English vocabulary and produce new vocabularies. They try to find out as many as they can and do not feel afraid anymore to speak in English. Moreover, they compete to answer some questions which are given by the public official team and also pronounce the words correctly. It indicates that the students have shown their improvement in English vocabulary mastery.

D. CONCLUSION

Based on the community service that has been conducted, it can be concluded that songs that contain certain themes are suitable to apply in teaching young children. This activity can be done to different group of students at the same time. In this case teacher have to select the thematic songs. Teacher’s creativity in making a good use of songs is important to reach the learning goal. Teacher also has take into account

the characteristics of the students that include age, grade, and their familiarity in English vocabulary. In addition, teacher also has to start introducing English vocabulary from the most basic and real ones, because children sometimes find difficulty in differentiating the real and the imaginary ones.

REFERENCES

- Alan, M. (1987). *Interactive Language Teaching*. (W. . Rivers, Ed.). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Çakir, İ. (2006). the Use of Video As an Audio-Visual Material in Foreign Language Teaching Classroom. *The Turkish Online Journal of Educational Technology – TOJET October*, 5(4), 1303–6521.
- Ekawati, A. D. (2017). Teachers' grading practices: In search for clear grading criteria. *Journal of ELT Research*, 2(1), 15–23. <https://doi.org/10.22236/JER>
- French Allen, V. (1983). *Techniques in teaching vocabulary*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Fudhla, N. (2013). Enhancing student's vocabulary by using jumbled-letter game in English language teaching. *Lingua Didaktika: Jurnal Bahasa dan Pembelajaran Bahasa*. 6(2). DOI: <https://doi.org/10.24036/ld.v6i2.7405>.
- Larsen-Freeman, D. (1986). *Techniques and Principles in Language Teaching: Diane Larsen-Freeman*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Sariyati, I. (2013). The Effectiveness of TPR (Total Physical Response) Method in English Vocabulary Mastery of Elementary School Children. *Parole*, 3(1), 50–64.
- Scott, W. A., & Ytreberg, L. H. (1990). *Teaching English To Children.pdf*. London and New York: Longman.
- Okselina, M. & Anwar, D. (2017). Reviewing elementary school students' vocabulary through paper airplane game. *Journal of English Language Teaching*. 7(1).
- Ur, P. (1991). *A Course in Language Teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511732928.011>