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IMPROVING STUDENTS SPELLING ABILITY BY USING MAKING WORDS IN SDN 6 PALEMBANG

Agus Wahyudi
wahyudiagus.aw@gmail.com
Nursing Science Program,
STIK Bina Husada, Palembang

Arief Pamuji
arief_black85@ymail.com
Midwifery Science Program,
STIK Bina Husada, Palembang

Abstract. Spelling is the forming of words from written and oral forms according to accepted usage. English spelling is difficult and often unpredictable. To be a better speller, a student must be able to remember sounds of letters in isolation as well as how to blend them into whole words. The students need a great deal or practice using the words functionally, as in writing. Therefore, the students have to associate letter sounds with the correct letters. Making Words is an innovative word study and word play activity, students are guided through the process of using a limited number of letters to make a series of words. This study was conducted in SD Negeri 6 Palembang, One of the quasi-experimental designs, the pretest-posttest non-equivalent control group design was applied in this study. The results of the study showed that there was significant difference in Spelling ability between the students who were taught by using Making Words and those who were not. On the basis of the independent samples test, t-obtained of the posttest of experimental and control groups was 2.511. Finally, the results of the interview showed that most of the students were interested in learning Spelling through Making Words. Therefore, Making Words is an effective way to be used in teaching spelling.

Keywords: Spelling, Making Words, Young Learners

Introduction

Spelling (Manser, 1991, p. 399) is to name or to set down from memory, in the correct order, the letters of a word. The other meaning of spelling is the forming of words from written and oral forms according to accepted usage.

English spelling is difficult and often unpredictable. The difficulties of spelling are caused by some reasons. One of those is as stated by Kinsella (1985,

p. 380), that English is not a phonemic language in which some words are not spelled as they are pronounced. In many cases, different letter combination produces the same sounds and the combination of same letters may produce a different sound in different words.

To be a better speller, a student must be able to remember sounds of letters in isolation as well as how to blend them into whole words. The students need a great deal or practice using the words functionally, as in writing. If students are still visually confusing *b* and *d* or *m* and *w*, they may have difficulties in moving from sheer rote memory to see the consistence language patterns that exist in the English language.

Mc Clung (1992, p. 449) stated that spelling is dominated by sound segments which convey meaning and that learning to spell is acquiring knowledge of how alphabet reflects meaningful language. Therefore, the students have to associate letter sounds with the correct letters.

Making Words is a guided spelling strategy which can be used in both individual and group instruction. In addition to providing a window on the growth of children's phonetic knowledge, invented spelling during writing is increasingly seen as processing reading instructional as well…. (Cunningham & Cunningham 1992, p. 217). Furthermore, Making Words is not only having young students involved in invented spelling during writing helps them become better spellers but also facilitates their development of decoding ability in reading (Adams, 1990; Chomsky, 1971, Richgels, 1987), (Cunningham and Cunningham, 1992, p. 107).

In "Making Words", an innovative word study and word play activity introduced by Pat and Jim Cunningham (1992, p.106) is that students are guided through the process of using a limited number of letters to make a series of words. They are begun by creating short words and end with the longer ones. Through this activity, students learn about the spelling structure of words to the point where their word recognition will improve. "Making Words" promotes not only growth in spelling and decoding but also in vocabulary acquisition. "Making Words" is an excellent activity for helping students to develop greater awareness of word structure while gaining important practice in spelling.

In the process of learning English especially in learning the spelling of English words, there are many factors that influence the students, Lado (1952, p. 54) cited in Putra (1994, p. 2) points out that the contradiction between the first language and the new language that will be learned make the students able to measure and describe the patterns that will cause some effectiveness in learning the new language.

Method

The method used in doing this study is a quasi-experimental design. In this research, the writer first administered the pretest to both the experimental group and the control group. Then the writer taught the experimental group by using Making Words and the control group by using conventional way, each group was

taught 14 times @ 45 minutes from January 10th, 2005 to February 28th, 2005. Finally, the writer administered the posttest to both groups.

In teaching Spelling through Making Words, Patricia and James (1992, p. 106-116) introduced some steps that should be followed:

1. Place the large letter cards in a pocket chart or along the chalk ledger
2. Have designated children give one letter to each child
3. Hold up and name the letters on the large letter cards, and have the children hold up their matching small letter cards
4. Write the numeral 2 (or 3, if there are no two-letter words in the lesson) on the board
5. Say to the students to take two letters and make a word. Use the word in a sentence after I say it
6. Ask the student who made the first correct word to make the same word with the large letter cards. Encourage anyone who did not make the word correctly at first to fix the word when they see it made correctly
7. Continue having them make words, erasing and changing the number on the board to indicate the number of letters needed. Use the words in simple sentences to make sure the children understand them. Cue them as to whether they are just changing one letter, changing letters around, or taking all their letters out to make a word from scratch. Cue them when the word you want them to make is a proper name, and send a child who has started that name with a capital letter to make the word with the big letters
8. Before telling them the last word, ask, Has anyone figured out what word we can make with all our letters? If so, congratulate them and have them and have one of them make it with the big letters
9. Once all the words have been made, take the index cards on which you have written the words, and place them one at a time (in the same order children made them) along the chalk ledge or in the pocket chart. Have children say and spell the words with you as you do this. Use these words for sorting and pointing out patterns. Pick a word and point out a particular spelling pattern, and ask children to find the others with that same pattern. Line these words up so that the pattern is visible
10. To get maximum transfer to reading and writing, have the children use the patterns they have sorted to spell a few new words

Findings and Discussion
Findings

The results of these tests were presented in the form of scores. The score ranges from 0 to 100, and in order to classify the students' spelling achievement, the writer used score category as follows:

86-100	Excellent
71- 85	Good
56 – 70	Average
41 – 55	Poor
≤ 40	Very Poor

(*Source: SDN 6 Palembang*)

The Result of Paired Samples T-test of the Pretest and Posttest in Experimental group.

The result of the students' pretest and posttest statistical summary is presented in the Table 1.

Table 1. The Paired Sample Test of the Experimental Group

	Pretest	Posttest
Mean	62.65	76.50
Std. Deviation	12.027	9.384
Std. Error Mean	2.689	2.098
t	11.323	

In the table 1, the mean of the pretest of the experimental group is 62.65, its Std. Deviation is 12.027 and Std. Error Mean is 2.689. The mean of the posttest is 76.50, its Std. Deviation is 9.384, Std. Error Mean is 2.098, and the t-obtained of the experimental group is 11.323. Since the t-obtained by the experimental group is higher than the critical value of the t-table (2.021), it can be stated that it has significant difference in t-value.

The Result of Independent Samples T-test of the Post-Test in the Experimental and Control Group

The writer compared the result of the post-test between the experimental and control group by using Independent Samples t-test. It was aimed to find out t-value of the two groups.

Table 2.The Independent Samples Test On The Post-Test

Equal Variances Assumed	
T	2.511
Sig. (2-tailed)	.016
Mean difference	6.950
Std. Error Difference	2.768

Table 2 shows that t-value obtained from the post-test of the experiment group and the control group is 2.511 or the t-output is higher than t-table 2.511>2.021 at the significant level of $p<0.05$ and df 38. It means that there is a significance difference between the experimental and control group after the treatments were given.

Data Analysis of Interview

The second data were gained through the three interviews which were given to both the students in experimental and control groups in order to know whether they like learning spelling through Making Words, whether they like learning spelling, and their difficulties in learning spelling. The distribution of the interview is shown in Table 3.

Table 3. The Distribution of Interview

No	Question	Experimental Group		Control Group	
		Yes	No	Yes	No

1	Do you like learning spelling through Making Words?	90%	10%	-	-
2	Do you like learning spelling?	-	-	95%	5%
3	What is your difficulty in learning spelling? a. Unfamiliarity of the English words	40%		25%	
	b. The spelling of words are different from their pronunciation	60%		75%	
	c. …….. (Students' own answer)	-		-	

In the first interview, the percentages were obtained by computing the number if the students of experimental group (Group A) who liked learning spelling by using "Making Words" divided by the number of sample students in experimental group (group A) times 100%.

In the second interview, the percentages were obtained by computing the number of the students of control group (Group B) who liked learning spelling divided by the number of the sample students in control group (Group B) times 100%.

In the third interview, the percentages were obtained by computing the number of the students of both groups who chose a, b or c divided by the number of the sample students in Group A and B times 100%.

The data which were gained through the first interview showed that 90% students in experimental group (Group A) liked learning Spelling through Making Words more than the ones who only learned Spelling without Making Words, the second interview showed that 95% students in control group (Group B) liked learning spelling more than the ones who disliked learning spelling. The data which were gained through the third interview showed that 40% students in experimental and 25% students in control group answered that the difficulties in learning spelling caused by the unfamiliarity of the English words, 60% (Group A) and 75% (Group B) students answered that the spelling of words are different from their pronunciation, and none of them gave their own answer as their difficulties in learning spelling.

Discussion

The findings of this study showed that the students in the experimental group got a higher progress compared to the students who were not taught by using Making Words. Based on the statistical analysis, it was found that t-obtained for experimental group was 11.323 and t-obtained for control group was 9.875.

From the calculation of the post-test of the experimental and control groups, it was found that t-obtained was 2.511, the writer consulted the t-table at the significance level 0.05 and the degree of freedom 38 was 2.021. The value of the t-obtained was higher than the t-table, it means that there was a significant difference between the students who were taught by using Making Words and

those who were not. It showed that Making Words used by the writer was more effective than conventional way. So, the research-hypothesis stated that there was significant difference in spelling ability between students who were taught by using Making Words and those who were not was accepted. Therefore, the research hypothesis stated that there was no significant difference in spelling ability between students who were taught by using Making Words and those who were taught without using Making Words was rejected.

The result of the interview showed that most of the students liked learning spelling through Making Words. Based on the results of the study, the writer concludes that Making Words could make the students active and interested in learning spelling. During the experiment, the writer observed that most of the students were involved in the classroom actively. For example, on the pretest none of the male students got excellent score but on the posttest fifteen percent of them got excellent. This situation happened because the writer taught spelling items which was different from the common activities and they began to understand that English spelling was important. By applying this, the writer not only built up students' motivation but also gave a lot of fun in taking parts in the activities. Finally, Making Words can be used as one of the means in teaching spelling at elementary school.

Conclusion and Suggestion
Conclusion

On the basis of the independent samples test, t-obtained of the posttest of experimental and control groups was 2.511. Since t-obtained (2.511) was higher than *t-table* (2.021), it could be stated that there is significant difference between the students who were taught by using "Making Words" and the students who were not.

Furthermore, the writer concludes that the students in experimental group made better improvement in spelling ability after they were taught by using "Making Words" than those students in the control group who were taught without "Making Words". It implies that "Making Words" not only helped them became better spellers but also increased their motivation in learning spelling. The use of Making Words (James and Patricia, 1992, p. 106-116) could encourage and motivate students to be more active in learning spelling and also attract the students' enthusiasm and interest. Therefore, Making Words is an effective way to be used in teaching Spelling to the fifth year students of SD Negeri 6 Palembang.

The result of the interview showed that ninety percent of the students in experimental group liked learning spelling by using "Making Words", ninety percent of the students in control group said that they liked learning spelling and the difficulties in learning spelling were caused by some factors, one of them is that English is not phonemic language in which some words are not spelled as they are pronounced. In many cases, different letter combination produce the same sounds and the combination of the same letters may produce a different sound in different words. Sixty percent (Group A) and seventy five percent (Group B) students said that it was caused by the spelling of words are different from their pronunciation.

Suggestion

Since spelling is sometimes difficult for young learners to do, the writer suggests the English teachers to find some interesting techniques; one of the interesting techniques to teach Spelling is through Making Words. Making Words technique is given to the teachers who are looking for ways to provide variety in their classes because variety is very important especially for the young learners. Besides that, it is also better for the teacher to combine Making Words with other techniques of teaching to avoid boredom and to have fun in English teaching. For other writers, as well, the researcher suggests them to help the students to develop their English pronunciation since another difficulty that faced by the students in learning English was pronunciation.

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