INVESTIGATING TEACHERS' STRATEGIES IN TEACHING VOCABULARY

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ABSTRAK

Tujuan dari penelitian ini ada 2: untuk menemukan strategi mengajar kosa kata yang digunakan oleh guru bahasa Inggris di SMP Negeri 6 Palu, dan untuk mengidentifikasi alasan dalam mengimpelementasi strategi tersebut di kelas. Penelitian ini dilaksanakan dengan menggunakan desain kualitatif. Peserta penelitian ini adalah 3 orang guru bahasa Inggris. Dalam pengumpulan data, instrumen yang digunakan adalah observasi dan wawancara. Data penelitian di analisis dengan menggunakan deskriptif analisis. Hasil penelitian menujukkan beberapa strategi guru dalam mengajar vocabulary. Strategi yang di gunakan oleh guru bahasa Inggris dalam mengajar vocabulary adalah; (1) penggunaan game/permainan (dengan mengacu pada topik pembeajaran) (2) membaca buku pelajaran, (3) penerjemahan (dengan menggunakan kamus), dan (4) menanyakan pertanyaan. Adapun alasan dalam mengimplementasikan strategi mengajar yaitu; mereka ingin menstimulus siswa untuk aktif dalam pembelajaran. Alasan mendasar sebagai aktif fasilitator dalam memilih strategi mengajar yaitu membuat suasana kelas yang membuat siswa dapat berinteraksi secara bebas satu sama lain dalam mencapai tujuan pembelajaran.

Key words: mengajar kosa kata, strategi guru

ABSTRACT

The purposes of the research are two folds: to find out the vocabulary teaching strategies used by the English teachers at SMP Negeri 6 Palu, and to identify the reasons of implementing the strategies in the classroom. This research used qualitative research design. The participants of this research were three English teachers. In collecting the data, the instruments used were observation and interview. The data were analyzed by using descriptive analysis. The findings showed that there were some teaching strategies used by the teachers in teaching vocabulary. The strategies used by the English teachers in teaching vocabulary were: (1) the use of game like guessing game and dictation (by relying on learning topic), (2) reading textbook, (3) translation (by looking up dictionary), and (4) asking question. The main reason of implementing teaching strategies was, they wanted to make the students active in the class. The basic consideration as an active facilitator in choosing the teaching strategies was to make classroom atmosphere that can make the students interact freely with each other in achieving learning goals.

Keywords: teaching vocabulary, teacher strategies

INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary plays an important role in language learning. It contributes much on language skills: reading comprehension, listening comprehension, speaking, and writing. Those skills are not running well if lacking of vocabulary mastery. The learners

need to master vocabulary as much as possible because they always use words to express their ideas and use it in four English skills.

Since vocabulary becomes the basic thing that must be mastered in learning a language. So, In teaching and learning process, learners have to be familiar with vocabulary first. Wilkins in Thornbury (2002: 13) states that without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed. In case, the students who masters grammar without knowing the meaning of a word it would not be able to communicate to others.

The formal instruction of English as a foreign language in Indonesia has implicitly recognized vocabulary as an essential part of the instruction. Vocabulary learning in current Curriculum Era (2013) emphasizes that vocabulary is the main priority to be learned. Because, it plays an important role in the English language teaching program.

In order to gain broader knowledge of learners about vocabulary, a teacher has to design teaching and learning strategy effectively and efficiently. If the teacher still lack in their strategy, the teaching and learning process does not run well. Huda (2016), in meeting the needs of students in learning vocabulary, teaching strategy is needed in the current situation that suits to classroom situation and condition. The teaching strategy can promote the students development in vocabulary.

Based on the phenomenon of the lexical competence of learning English in Indonesia, it shows a lack of development in the learning. This is due to the general situation that vocabulary learning was considered secondary. This is supported by Nurweni (1997, in Cahyono and Widiati, 2013). She states that the English vocabulary of Indonesian students is relatively low. However, this phenomenon is more likely happened in SMP Negeri 6 Palu. Where, the students are rarely using English in daily life. Therefore, the students' score in English exam is very standard. Their speaking ability is low because lacking of vocabulary.

Considering the problems above, the teachers' involvement in providing meaningful activities by applying the teaching strategies is crucial. Because teaching vocabulary is more about encouraging the students to be words' lovers and involving them to fit the words into the world. Therefore, developing relevant learning strategies can affect students' development in vocabulary acquisition. Therefore, in choosing a

learning strategy that suits the needs of students is very beneficial. Teacher has to apply the strategies that affecting students' development in enhancing vocabulary to align fascinating learning process.

Therefore, the researchers investigate the teaching strategies used by the teacher in order to increase students' comprehension in learning vocabulary. Teaching strategy is the way of teachers to develop their creativity to improve the teaching-learning process which is appropriate to the student's needs. The suitable strategies have the potential to make the learning process more active and enjoyable. In teaching vocabulary, the teacher has to increase the students' understanding of the use of words either in context or not.

METHOD

This research used a descriptive qualitative research design. Thus, the research data were written in form of descriptive data that obtain from observation classroom and interview the informants involved. The interview was used to get the information from the teacher about the teaching strategies and impact toward the students. Meanwhile, observation conducted by making field note. It was used to observing the classroom activity in learning process. The participants or informants of the study were teachers who taught English at SMPN 6 Palu. Participants' names were hidden. To identify findings, the researcher used P1 (participant 1), P2 (participant 2), and P3 (participant 3) to represents the three teachers as the participants. The research instruments of data collection were interview and observation.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

FINDINGS

The result of interview was analyzed in descriptive technique. The lists of interview consist of ten questions which referred to the problem statement.

The first question was about the first thing the teachers did in teaching vocabulary. As for the responses from the three participants, the English teachers prepare some materials from different ways and sources before teaching the students. P3 did the preparation better than others. She prepared the materials by searching them on internet, but still sticks with the lesson plan. The others, fixed only depended on the

materials from the package books mentioned in the lesson plan, and another just found it from the internet without paying attention to th*e* lesson plan.

The second question was about whether the teachers taught vocabulary separated or integrated with other language components or language skills.. The three participants said that they taught vocabulary integrated with other language skills. They determined that vocabulary teaching was an integrated part of teaching and it takes places automatically.

The third question was about teaching strategies applied by the teacher in the classroom. The three participants give different responses related to the strategies used in the classroom. P1 taught vocabulary by using game and asking the students to read a book. P2 use translation and giving students' opportunities to ask as his/her strategies. P3 prefer taught vocabulary by using game like dictation. The three participants also applied reading textbook or package book as their teaching strategy.

The fourth question was about whether the teachers use media in applying such teaching strategy. The three participants said that they used media in teaching vocabulary while applying their strategies. The media used are based on the learning topic or theme that will be delivered on that day.

The fifth question was about whether the teachers did an activity or not in training students to spelling the word. The three participants decided spelling is the most important part in teaching English vocabulary. Therefore, they involved spelling in its practice to anticipate the meaning error.

The sixth question was about whether the students finding any problem in teaching vocabulary by using such strategy. The three participants faced various problems in applying their teaching strategy. P1 and P3 said their problems come from students' learning motivation. Another one said that the problem come from studying time. Where, the lack of time was interferes the learning efficiency.

The seventh question was about whether the students get success in vocabulary achievement or not when the teacher applied his/her strategy. From 3 participants responses, There were some students have not showed grade point average on the standard yet. But the students could increase their vocabulary and getting the high score when the teachers applied their strategies.

The eighth question was about the level of achievement that students must achieve in learning English. From 3 participants responses, P3 asses the students' achievements by paying attention to result of evaluation that the students passed while P1 and P2 asses it by seeing the students' improvement in vocabulary acquisition.

The ninth question was about the activity conducted by the teacher if the students do not reach the target of success. The three participants said that they give evaluation to the students who did not reach the target of success yet. P1 and P3 gave assignments to the students about what terms they did not understand about. While P2 gave homework to the students who did not reach the target.

The tenth question was about the reasons of the English teachers for using their teaching strategies in teaching vocabulary. The three participants gave similar responses. Where, the teachers choose their teaching strategy because they want to make classroom situation more active, focus and enjoyable during the learning.

The result from conducting observation classroom in three different level of class can be seen below:

In the first observation, the researchers observed class VII D. In that class process, the teacher explained the material with the theme *"We love what we do* by using the two languages (English and Bahasa) to make the all students are able to understand. Vocabulary teaching conducted by the teacher integrated with other skills like *writing* and *listening.* It helps the students a lot to be master at English. Other activities the teacher did in her teaching that aims to assist students' vocabulary mastery were the teacher asked the students to learn word in context as well as the students is required to know the meaning of each word. Meanwhile, she also observed her students difficulties in taking learning material. If the teacher found any difficulties, she gave solution to overcome that difficulty by giving the students opportunities to ask the teacher directly and giving an assignment to make the students learn by their own. In implementation of the teaching strategy, the teacher asked the students to read the book and ask them to observe the material. The teacher asked the students to translate the word if they found unfamiliar words by looking up dictionary. In reading the book, the teacher gave opportunities to the students to ask about something they did not know after they read the book and heard explanations from the teacher. The teacher asked her

student by saying "do you have any question? Or "have you understood?" Those questions were replayed by the teacher before she continued her teaching.

In the second observation, the researchers observed class VIII C on January 15th 2022. In that class process, the teacher explained the material first with the topic about *descriptive text* specifically *animal characteristic*. In teaching the students, the teacher used two languages (English and Bahasa) during the learning. By looking the implementation of teachers' strategy, the teacher taught vocabulary integrated with other skills like writing, reading and listening. The teacher also guided the students to learning words in a context as well as the students are demanding to know the meaning of each word they wrote. In order to anticipate the meaning error, the teacher also pays attention to the students' spelling of a word, she used repetition if the students still wrong in spelling the word. When the students got any difficulties in learning, the teacher discussed it with the students and giving them space to interact freely. Then, the teachers gave feedback. In teaching the students, the teacher prepared her media (dictionary) according to the topic of learning that day. In applying games strategy, the teacher asked the students to read a paragraph about animal characteristic. The teacher asked the students to match the picture with the verbs or adjective which describes the characteristic of that animal and wrote it down on their book. After that, the students were asked to mention the vocabulary they have written. When the students have difficulties in pronounce the word, the teacher asks them to repeat it till correct.

In the third observation, the researchers observed class IX G on January 17th 2022. In that class, the teaching strategy was almost same with the second observation but the implementation was different. The teacher explained the material first with the topic about *Advertisements text.* In the implementation of games strategy, the teacher build up students' vocabulary acquisition by asking the students to writes down as much vocabulary as possible. The teacher gave one word and the students have to write another word then with last letter of the first word. For example the word of "advertisement" the students may write down vocabulary like two, table, and trace. Meanwhile, dictation strategy was also implemented. The teacher provided text which pasted on whiteboard and asked students to dictate it by scanning and skimming to the other student who was tasked to write down. After that, each student was asked to read and explain the purpose of that text. In teaching the students, the teacher used two

languages (English and Indonesia) during the learning. By looking the implementation of teachers' strategy, the teacher taught vocabulary integrated with other skills like *listening and writing.* The teacher taught the students to learning words in contexts and the students must know the meaning of each word. The teacher also gave task to the students to evaluate their comprehension.

DISCUSSION

The researchers analyze about the strategies used by the teacher in teaching vocabulary at SMP Negeri 6 Palu. From the result of the interview and observation, the researcher finds various strategies applied by the teacher when teaching vocabulary as follows: P1 using game and reading textbook as a teaching strategy. P2 using reading strategy with providing the students' opportunity to ask directly. While P3 prefer using dictation game and word game in order to teach vocabulary.

The result of this research related to the finding of Huda (2016) and Ningrum (2020). They find that the teacher teach vocabulary by using various strategies. The strategies are applied by paying attention to the learning topic and the students' needs. It can be concluded that teaching strategy applied in this research and related study are equally varied. The differences between them are exists in teaching techniques. The strategies are applied by paying attention to the learning topic and the students' needs. It can be concluded that the teaching strategies applied in this research and related study are equally varied. The differences between them exist in teaching techniques. Where the techniques used by the teacher in this research are in accordance with the types of teaching strategies being applied.

Another finding from Ningrum (2020) which connect with the result of this research is about the appropriate strategies in teaching vocabulary can change the classroom atmosphere into fun learning experience and leads to the vocabulary collection improvement for most students in the classroom. She contends that the students give the positive response when the teacher used their strategies in teaching and learning process. However, the strategies used by English teacher at SMP Negeri 6 Palu can assist the learners to be easier to understand and it can make the students to be active and enthusiastic in taking learning materials. The students also have a wide interaction space between other students in exchanging ideas.

Meanwhile, the researchers identify there is a discrepancy between the results of the observations and interviews. Where, participant 3 is not applying one of the learning strategies that she/he mentioned during the interview process. In an interview, she/he said; she/he uses a total physical response strategy when teaching students in grade 7 but when the researcher conducts an observations classroom, the researcher realizes that this strategy is not being applied. So that, the researcher concludes the selection of strategies is not only based on the topic of learning but also based on the level of the class being taught. Because sometimes there are strategies that are only suitable to be applied to students in transitional classes such as grade 7.

Despite having discrepancy findings, teaching strategies that are applied by the teachers are relevant to support the students' vocabulary mastery. These strategies include in the three kinds of teaching strategies based on Schmitt (2002).They are determination strategy, social strategy and cognitive strategy. Determination strategy is individual learning strategies that help learners to identify the meaning of new words without the other's help. Translation and reading text are the strategies included in this determination strategy. Besides, social strategy can be used to determine the word definitions by asking teachers, classmates and native speakers. Giving students opportunities to ask (asking questions) and the use of game are the strategies included in this social strategy. Cognitive strategy deal with mechanical aspects of learning vocabulary and it is not related to mental processing. Repetition is one of the most commonly used cognitive strategies. Based on the research findings, the teachers always involved repetition to increase students' vocabulary mastery.

CONCLUSION

The strategies used by the English teachers of SMP Negeri 6 Palu in teaching vocabulary are various. The strategies used by P1 as the English teacher are teaching vocabulary using game. P2 are asking the students to translate the words they found unfamiliar with by looking up dictionary or let them ask to their friends. P3 prefers teaching vocabulary by using games like dictation. The media used by the teacher is in accordance with the learning topic. The strategies chosen by the teachers in the classroom are aim to stimulate the students to be active. The strategies are expected to

create an active class atmosphere that can make the students interact freely with each other in achieving learning goals.

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