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ENHANCING CHILDREN'S ENGLISH VOCABULARY ACQUISITION THROUGH DIGITAL STORYTELLING OF HAPPY KIDS KINDERGARTEN OF PALEMBANG

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Abstract

Enhancing English vocabulary to early childhood is the main problem often faced by the teachers. So, the purpose of this study was to determine the enhancement of children's English vocabulary acquisition by using digital storytelling. This type of research was an action research. It consisted of a series of four activities done in repeated cycles: planning, implementation, observation, and reflection. 30 students of B group (5-6 years old) of Happy Kids Kindergarten of Palembang were the subject of this study. This research was done 3 times cycle. The methods used for data collection were observation and documentation. Analysis of the data was descriptive qualitative and quantitative. The finding showed that the digital storytelling learning activities could enhance the children's English vocabulary acquisition. It based on data of the enhancement in pre-cycle was 37%, to 51% in Cycle I. In the Cycle II was 71% and in the Cycle III was 89.3%. Thus, an enhancement about 14% from the pre-cycle to Cycle I. The enhancement about 20% from the Cycle I to the Cycle II and the enhancement about 18.3% from the Cycle II to the Cycle III. The conclusion of this study was digital storytelling learning method could enhance children's English vocabulary acquisition of B group of Happy Kids Kindergarten of

Palembang. Therefore, digital storytelling can be considered as an alternative to improve English language learning in the classroom.

Keywords

Acquisition, Enhancing, Digital Storytelling, English Vocabulary

1. Introduction

Language cannot be separated from human life. Language is one of the aspects of children development that are essential for stimulated from an early age. Language is also a major contribution to the development of a child. An early age is crucial to the children's growth and development for the future. Therefore, in early childhood education, educators are required to understand the ability of the child, including the children's language ability. Language are divided into 2 (two), namely: receptive and expressive. The receptive is understanding, whereas expressive one is the expression or speech. There are four skills in English Language, Listening and reading are receptive skill, while speaking and writing are productive skill (Mundhe, 2015).

Early childhood's English language acquisition is different with teenagers and adults. Early childhood's English language acquisition was limited in vocabulary that are often encountered in the environment. Language acquisition is the process children use in acquiring first and second languages. It requires interaction meaningful communication between speaker and listener in the target language. it is intended that the message can be understood (Krashen, 2002).

In Indonesia, in the last 10 years showed that early childhood education institutions or Kindergarten school kept racing to develop a program of Foreign Language (English, Arabic, Mandarin) as one of the expertise developed and dominated by children. Even for the managers believe that the value and popularity of Kindergarten is largely determined by the quality of foreign language taught and mastered by children (Rahmat, 2010). Some studies have suggested that taught early bilinguals certain benefits in terms of social understanding. This is reasonable because they have to socialize with people of different languages (Heinlein & Casey, 2013).

Today, the problem in Kindergarten is that more and more children are just starting school, having low speech and listening skills. Today, many children are vague in speech and tend to be incapable of capturing the information heard. The vagueness of the language of the child, including the imprecision in the pronunciation so that his words are not easily

understood. Various methods have been applied by kindergarten teacher in introducing English vocabulary, but it is still not optimally. This is mainly due to less supported by the creativity of the teacher in the classroom. While one method that can be used to develop the mastering vocabulary for children are storytelling. Early childhood's teacher should be able to teach their students appropriately based on children's development. One way to optimize the teachers' skills is by equipping them with many skills through trainings, one of which is storytelling training (Yanuarsari & Muchtar, 2016). Researcher suggests that suitable technology integration in the classroom is a critical condition for teacher and students to be successful in teaching. One thing that is very important in digital story telling is the design, storyline and animation creation, relating to information technology in order to support successful learning process (Rahmat, 2010). Along with advances in information and communications technology, storytelling developed in digital form known as digital storytelling. Digital story is a combination of traditional stories, such as the story told by the electronic multimedia support. It is a form of performance art that combines various types of multimedia, including moving images, speech, sound, narration, and background music so that the display of short stories about a particular topic or theme can be more interesting (Bratitsis & Petros (2015). Digital stories can be expressed as the art of storytelling by combining text, images, recording audio narration, music and video. Those multimedia elements are mixed together using computer software in order to tell a story which is usually based on specific theme or certain topic (Robin, 2016).

There is a close relationship between storytelling and learning, because the process of preparing the story is also a process of meaning-making. Attempts to combine the opportunity to tell a story to the course will strengthen students. Through the story, the students were asked to reflect on what they have known, to assess the assumptions of students, and - through the process of revision cycle – story telling will provide a record of the students' cognitive development thinking process. Teachers can also use in assessing the progress of students achieve the learning objectives (DeNatale, 2008).

Various methods have been applied in introducing English vocabulary to early childhood, but the results have not been optimal. Based on observations of children aged 5-6 years old of Group B at Happy Kids Kindergarten in Palembang, it shows that teachers often have difficulties in introducing English vocabulary to early childhood. Results of pre-cycle that was conducted in September 2016, in which in one theme a vocabulary of 20 words are delivered to students, shows that from a total of 30 students aged 5-6 years, only nine children mastered the 6 (30%) words, three children knew 10 (50%) words, 12 children knew

4 (20%) vocabularies, and six children did not know anything at all (0%). Thus, on average, the children acquired only about 22% of English vocabulary.

From observing the problems of English vocabulary acquisition for young children above, then the solution is needed in order to provide optimal results in the process of learning English. One of them is by applying the method of digital storytelling. Digital storytelling plays an important role in students' learning; it can make learning more interesting for students. In addition, it can also encourage creativity and give students a voice because they use their stories to share ideas and feelings with others (Robin, 2016). California State University has formed a comprehensive five-part definition of digital stories, as indicated by which, for assessment use (Alexander, 2011). Digital interesting story characterized by: presenting compelling narrative, provide a meaningful context, presenting the image to expand the audience emotionally, complementing the music and other sound effects to reinforce the ideas, invite thoughtful reflection from the audience. The acquisition of the second language may progress at faster or slower rates depending on the presence of internal and external factors and students who were provided with enough exposure can beat those who don't have the opportunity for interaction (Halili, 2017). Therefore, through digital storytelling expected in early childhood is able to play an active role in finding itself on the concept of English vocabulary acquisition.

2. Method

The method used in this research was Action Research. Action research is the term which describes the integration of action (implementing a plan) with research (developing an understanding of the effectiveness of this implementation) (NSW Department of Education - and Training, 2010). It consisted of four cycles, there were pre cycle, first-cycle, second-cycle, third-cycle,

2.1 Participants

The subjects were children in B group totaling of 30 children (5-6 years old) of Happy Kids Kindergarten of Palembang.

2.2 Assessments and Measures

Before carrying out this research, researcher formulated and established a research procedure that consists of four stages: planning, implementation, observation, and reflection. The implementation of this research was conducted collaboratively with classroom teachers. Data analysis performed in this study is a qualitative descriptive by using an interactive

model, namely data reduction, data presentation, and conclusions. To determine the success and effectiveness of research, performance indicators are defined.

3. Result

3.1 Pre-Cycle

Researchers looked at children who do not really focus on learning English. Teachers do not use teaching media. Researchers discuss with the teachers about the steps that need to be taken for further learning. The result of the test showed that from a total of 30 students aged 5-6 years, six children did not acquired any word at all (0%). Twelve children acquired 8 (16%) words, nine children acquired 10 (15%) words, and three children acquired 12 (6%) words. Thus on average the children gained only about 37% of the English vocabulary taught about vegetables, fruits and flowers. Based on discussions and interviews, researchers and teachers take steps to improve the quality of English language learning and children's English vocabulary acquisition.

3.2 Cycle I

The results of the analysis show that: (1) Most children were interested, enthusiastic, and eagerly participating in learning activities by using digital storytelling. (2) Teachers were less able to divide their attention to the children who continued to demand attention. (3) The result of the vocabulary test showed that from a total of 30 students age 5-6 years, six children acquired 4 (6%) words, twelve children acquired 10 (20%) words, nine children acquired 13 (19.5%) words, and three children acquired 15 (7.5%) words. Thus, the average of the children acquired only 51% of the English vocabulary about vegetables. From the analysis, the researchers and teachers feel that these studies had not been maximized. Therefore, researchers and teachers made plans for action in the next cycle.

3.3 Cycle II

Based on observations conducted by researcher and teachers, the following data were obtained: (1) Most children were interested and enthusiastic about participating in learning activities by using digital storytelling. (2) There were some children who attended the learning but needed to be motivated by teachers first because they wanted attention. (3) The result of the vocabulary test showed that from a total of 30 students age 5-6 years, six children acquired 10 (10%), twelve children acquired 14 (28%) words, nine children acquired 16 (24%) words, and three children acquired 18 (9%). Thus, the average of the children acquired only about 71% of the English vocabulary about fruits. The results also

showed that there were four children who attained high scores, while only three children had lower scores.

3.4 Cycle III

In Cycle III, which was held in six meetings, the researchers were only focusing on repeating the studies that had been carried out, especially the acquisition of English vocabulary with digital storytelling activities. At the first meeting, the researcher and teachers repeated the activities of the first, second, and third stages of Cycle II, which were focused on the use of the English vocabulary in simple sentences. Meanwhile, on the fourth, fifth, and sixth in Cycle III, the researcher and teachers repeated the story they had delivered from Cycle I and carried out a recapping as a way to memory booster the children's memory. The result of the vocabulary showed that from the total of 30 students aged 5-6 years, two children acquired 10 (3.3%), six children acquired 16 (16%) word, ten children acquired 18 (30%) words and twelve children acquired 20 (40%) words, Thus the average of the children acquired only 89.3% of the English vocabulary about flowers. The observation results showed that: (1) Most of the children enthusiastically watched the digital storytelling repeated. (2) Most children could pronounce vocabulary. (3) Most of children could answer the teacher's question about the vocabulary related to flowers. (4) Most of the children could identify the images of flowers on the screen. (5) The results of the observations showed that the children acquired 89.3% of the English vocabulary presented. The results are presented in Table I below:

Table 1: *Children's English Vocabulary Acquisition of B Group of Happy Kids Kindergarten in Palembang*

Aspect	Percentage of Children's Average Acquisition			
	Pre-Cycle	Cycle I	Cycle II	Cycle III
The Children's Vocabulary Acquisition	37%	51%	71%	89.3%
Achievement criteria	≥ 85%	≥ 85%	≥ 85%	≥ 85%
Enhancement	-	14%	20%	18.3%

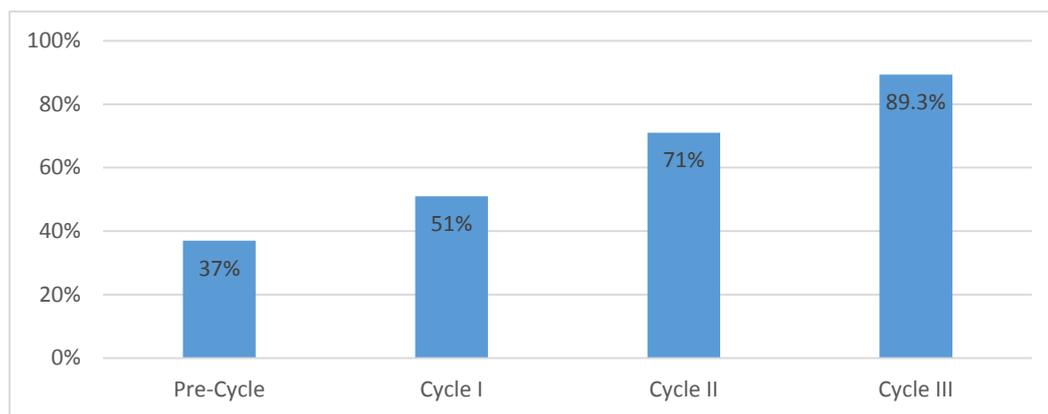


Figure 1: *Enhancement of Children's English Vocabulary Acquisition through Digital Storytelling*

4. Discussion

This research was conducted in 3 cycles, namely Cycle I, Cycle II, and Cycle III. Cycle I executed based on evaluation of the pre-cycle, survey, and observation in Happy Kids kindergarten Palembang. The problems were the children's English vocabulary acquisition who were deemed to be low. The average of the children acquired only 37% of the English vocabulary taught about vegetables, fruits and flowers. To find solutions to these problems researcher and teachers selected and implemented digital storytelling to enhance children's English vocabulary acquisition. In the context of language education, (Rance, 2008) points out that "deep language acquisition and meaningful practice" is embedded in the digital storytelling process.

In the early stages of the implementation of the Cycle I, the researcher and teachers introduced English vocabulary through simple digital storytelling, merely an introduction to the children's learning to be more uplifting. Once children felt happy and accustomed to the digital storytelling given adapted to the theme of learning, although the language used was merged with Indonesian. Most children already showed enthusiasm for the activities carried out, the children were delighted with the display of digital storytelling using the English language that is rarely done before. It is reasonable, the digital devices allow for teachers to create a multidimensional story that is displayed through a combination of animated images (movies), voice, text, and sound effects (DeNatale, 2008).

The average of the children acquired 51% of the English vocabulary about vegetables. The children were also able to achieve an average percentage of targeted, although there were some children who have not reached the target of $\geq 85\%$. The children had the different inhibiting factors, they were unfamiliar with digital storytelling in English learning activities.

Moreover, when adjusted for the theme and they are required to master the vocabulary in the story told. To optimize the children's ability, the researcher continued to the Cycle II. Based on the weaknesses and deficiencies in the Cycle I, researcher reviewed the method. The results shown in Cycle II was enhanced, so that it can be said that successful implementation of the action research. But there are still 8 children who had not been able to reach an average percentage targeted. In the Cycle II the number of children who had not reached the targeted percentage more than in Cycle I. This is because the children must reach a target in Cycle II.

In Cycle II, the average of the children acquired only about 71% of the English vocabulary about fruits. The ability of children growing mostly in the Cycle II is their proficiency in English vocabulary acquisition. Therefore, to optimize the ability of children, especially in the use of English vocabulary into simple sentences will be developed and continued in Cycle III. The average of the children acquired only 89.3% of the English vocabulary about flowers. The show of the digital storytelling given more varied activities so the early childhood do not just memorize, but also understand what they said. It was verified that digital storytelling development encourages interaction between students and the teacher as well (Papadimitriou et al., 2013).

The digital storytelling that contain vocabularies about vegetables, flower and fruits made the children easily to remember them. The finding is also consistent with an earlier discovery that digital storytelling can develop children's verbal skills better, and it can be used as an attractive means of learning and teaching foreign languages. (Razmi, Mehri, Soheila & Sanaz, 2014). The students' enhancement of the new English vocabulary acquisition seemed not only in the Cycle I but also in the Cycle II and Cycle III as well.

The evident from the percentage prior to any action being taken or Pre Cycle which shows the retention rate of 37%. The result from pre-cycle to the Cycle I showed an increase of 14%. Meanwhile, from the Cycle I to the Cycle II showed an increase of 20%. The enhancement in the Cycle II to the Cycle III of 18.3%. These findings are also consistent with an earlier discovery that digital storytelling can improve the acquisition of vocabulary items. In other words, the use of digital storytelling in language learning can improve children's vocabulary acquisition. (Soleimani & Mahkameh, 2013)

5. Conclusion

The following were the conclusions drawn based on the findings of the study:

1. The children's English vocabulary acquisition are shown in the table percentage that is enhancing in each cycle. At the pre-cycle stage that the digital storytelling method has not

been applied showed 37%. In the Cycle I, the children's English vocabulary acquisition enhanced into 51%. Improvement continued in the Cycle II with a percentage of 71% and the Cycle III is also an increase in the percentage of 89.3%.

2. The digital storytelling learning activities can enhance the children's English vocabulary acquisition. Based on the result of the research. The early childhood learner of 5-6 years were enthusiastic in digital storytelling strategy, it can be seen that they were happy and could grasp the meaning of the vocabularies.

5.1 Recommendation

Based on the conclusions cited in here, the following are hereby recommended:

1. It is suggested that digital storytelling can be considered as an alternative to improve English language learning in the classroom.
2. Researchers can provide interventions on the use of digital storytelling in accordance with the applicable curriculum.
3. the factors that influence the acquisition of a second language still need to be studied further.

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