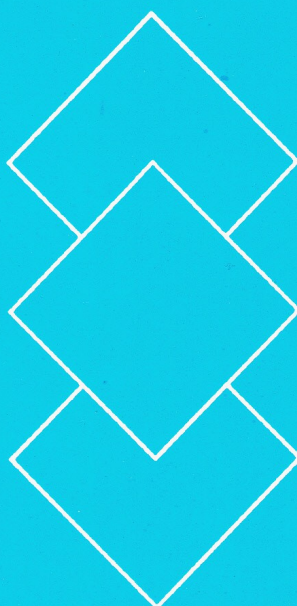


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CAKRAWALA PENDIDIKAN

Forum Komunikasi Ilmiah dan Ekspresi Kreatif Ilmu Pendidikan

Volume 12, Nomor 1, April 2010

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IMPROVING THE STUDENTS' VOCABULARY MASTERY THROUGH JIGSAW TECHNIQUE

Feri Huda

Abstract: Vocabulary is one of the subjects given at the English Department of STKIP PGRI Blitar. The problem is that some of the English department students of STKIP PGRI Blitar are not interested in studying vocabulary. Especially students of Class 2E, most of them are not interested in studying vocabulary because they think that it is not so important, compared with other subjects. Besides that some of students feel bored in vocabulary class because the lecturer often uses the conventional techniques and most of their friends are individualistic. Based on the background above, the researcher carried out classroom action research to get the solution for the problem, because he wanted to improve their students' vocabulary mastery. The researcher used Jigsaw Technique, because it is cooperative learning technique that promotes better learning, improves student motivation, and increases enjoyment of the learning experiences. The research questions were: (1) how can jigsaw technique improve vocabulary mastery for the second year students of English department of STKIP PGRI Blitar, and (2) how can jigsaw technique improve the students' participation in the vocabulary class? After being treated with the jigsaw technique, the students made progress in their vocabulary learning with the model applied. It was indicated by their improvement in the vocabulary mastery and also in partnership. They got motivation to study hard because they would present the material, they got partnership because their friends were their member not their rival, they were more active to discuss and present what they had known. They realized that by cooperative learning they could improve their knowledge and help others to be better.

Key words: improving, vocabulary mastery, jigsaw.

Feri huda adalah dosen STKIP PGRI Blitar.

English is considered as foreign language in Indonesia and it is used as the compulsory subject in education. It has been taught from elementary school until university. Although it has been taught for long enough time, but some of the students' English ability is still poor. One of factors that make the students' English ability still poor is vocabulary mastery.

Vocabulary is very important to develop the four language skills. The more vocabularies the learners have, the easier they develop their four skills. Richard and Rodger (1986:27) say that, "Vocabulary is one of the most important aspects of foreign language teaching." Nunan stated in Rivers (1987:125) that the acquisition of an adequate vocabulary is essential for successful second language use, because without an extensive vocabulary, the learners will be unable to use structure and function they may have learned for comprehensible communication.

Vocabulary is one of the subjects given at the English Department of STKIP PGRI Blitar. This subject is given in the semester 1 up to semester 3. That is why there is Vocabulary 1, Vocabulary 2 and Vocabulary 3. The course lasts for 14 weeks, and there are four sessions per month, and every session lasts for 90 minutes.

The aim of Vocabulary 1 is after studying through this course the student's enable to comprehend English sentences and passages by using their knowledge on word formation. The course gives the student the opportunity to add their vocabularies by identifying synonym, antonym, words in sentences, word-formation, preposition and prepositional phrases. The class activities will be mostly discussion and exercises. The evaluation is based on student performance in mid-term and final tests as well as assignments

The aim of Vocabulary 2, as the continuation vocabulary 1 course, is designed to the student's enable to comprehend English sentences and passages by using their knowledge on word formation. The course gives the student the opportunity to add their vocabularies by studying literal and figurative meanings, idioms, guessing meaning from context (sentences) and guessing meaning from longer context (paragraph, passages). The class activities will be mostly discussion and exercises. The evaluation is based on student performance in mid-term and final tests as well as assignments.

The aim of Vocabulary 3, as the continuation vocabulary 2 course, is designed to the student's enable to comprehend English sentences and passages by using their knowledge on word formation. The course gives the student the opportunity to add their vocabularies by studying derivational affixes, inflectional affixes, functional word and content words, words and morphemes, root and affixes, compound, blends, clipped, acronym, coining, multiple meaning syn-

onym and antonym. The class activities will be mostly discussion and exercises. The evaluation is based on student performance in mid-term and final tests as well as assignments.

The problem is that some of the English department students of STKIP PGRI Blitar are not interested in studying vocabulary. Especially students of Class 2E, most of them are not interested in studying vocabulary because they think that it is not so important, compared with other subjects. Besides that some of students feel bored in vocabulary class because the lecturer often uses the conventional techniques and most of their friends are individualist.

Class 2E is a unique class. It consists of students from different district, regency and even from different city. The social care from one student to other is not good. They do not care about their friends and even the motivation to study is not good enough.

The researcher that is also the vocabulary lecturer has six classes in vocabulary class. He often uses the conventional techniques to teach vocabulary. Some students can understand and some of them cannot. In the semester 2, from the six classes there is one class that has the lowest average score of the final test. It is class 1E. The average score is 63 and the other class is above 70.

Based on the background above, the researcher wanted to carry out classroom action research to get the solution for the problem, because he wanted to improve their students' vocabulary mastery.

WAY OF TEACHING VOCABULARY

According to Hunt and Beglar in Richards (2002:256) there are three approaches to vocabulary teaching and learning i.e., incidental learning (learning vocabulary as a by-product of doing other things such as reading or listening), explicit instruction, and independent strategy development. A major source of incidental learning is extensive reading, which Hunt and Beglar recommend as a regular out-of-class activity. Explicit instruction depends on identifying specific vocabulary-acquisition targets for learners. Independent strategy development, learners need to be taught strategies for interfering words from context as well as those which can help learners retain the meanings of words they have encountered. Hunt and Beglar recommend a combination of all three approaches-indirect, direct, and strategy training-as the basis for a vocabulary program.

Nation in Richards (2002:256) argues for a systematic rather than an incidental approach to the teaching of vocabulary and argues that such a focus is an essential part of a language course. He points out the limitations of incidental

learning and the fact that L2 learners are often unable to benefit from incidental vocabulary acquisition through reading because of limitations in their vocabulary knowledge. Nation illustrates a number of strategies for building in a focus on vocabulary as a part of the design of communicative task and argues that vocabulary instruction should be integrated into listening, speaking, reading, and writing components of a language program.

JIGSAW

Actually, there are some techniques in teaching vocabulary but in this research, the researcher used Jigsaw Technique, because it is cooperative learning technique that reduce racial conflict among students, promotes better learning, improves student motivation, and increases enjoyment of the learning experiences.

The History of the Jigsaw

The history of the jigsaw classroom technique can be traced back to 1971 in Austin, Texas, where it was used to defuse the potentially explosive situation resulting from desegregation of the city's schools. Elliot Aronson, then a professor at the University of Texas, and his graduate students created the strategy to help ease the hostility among groups of students who found themselves in the same classroom for the first time-whites, African-Americans and Hispanics.

Aronson and his graduate students saw that the competitive atmosphere of the typical classroom only served to fuel the fires of inter-group hostility, so the jigsaw technique was born of the need to change the atmosphere from one of competitiveness to one of cooperation. They began with fifth-graders, helping several teachers devise a cooperative jigsaw structure for the students to learn about the life of Eleanor Roosevelt. The students were divided into small groups-diversified in terms of race, ethnicity and gender-making each student responsible for a specific part of Roosevelt's biography. After only eight weeks, the success of the strategy was demonstrated through the attitudes of the students. They showed less prejudice and negative stereotyping, and more self-confidence when compared to students in traditional classrooms. They also showed greater academic improvement and were absent less.

Since its inception, the jigsaw classroom has been used across the nation ranging from the elementary schools where it was first developed to high schools and colleges. According to the American Psychological Association (APA), the

research demonstrating the effectiveness of the jigsaw technique is solid. "For example," APA notes, "in many cases, students in different classrooms who are covering the same material are randomly assigned to receive either traditional instruction (no intervention) or instruction by means of the jigsaw technique. Studies in real classrooms have consistently revealed enhanced academic performance, reductions in stereotypes and prejudice, and improved social relations."

Most fields of career and technical education (CTE) require students to learn how to work together cooperatively on teams consisting of diverse individuals. For example, construction projects require teams of carpenters, electricians and plumbers. Health care workers in hospitals and other clinical settings are members of a team that works together to deliver patient care. The hospitality industry includes a number of often diverse individuals working cooperatively. CTE educators understand this, so many are already implementing some or all of the steps involved in the jigsaw technique.

Ten Steps for the Jigsaw

According to Aronson's Web site, (www.jigsaw.org), here are the 10 easy steps for the jigsaw.

- (1) Divide students into five or six person jigsaw groups. The groups should be diverse in terms of gender, ethnicity, race and ability.
 - (2) Appoint one student from each group as the leader. Initially, this person should be the most mature student in the group.
 - (3) Divide the day's lesson into five or six segments.
 - (4) Assign each student to learn one segment, making sure students have direct access only to their own segment.
 - (5) Give students time to read over their segment at least twice and become familiar with it. There is no need for them to memorize it.
 - (6) Form temporary "expert groups" by having one student from each jigsaw group join other students assigned to the same segment. Give students in these expert groups time to discuss the main points of their segment and to rehearse the presentations they will make to their jigsaw group.
 - (7) Bring the students back into their jigsaw groups.
 - (8) Ask each student to present her or his segment to the group. Encourage others in the group to ask questions for clarification.
 - (9) Float from group to group, observing the process. If any group is having trouble (*e.g.*, a member is dominating or disruptive), make an appropriate intervention.
-

- (10) At the end of the session, give a quiz on the material so that students quickly come to realize that these sessions are not just fun and games.

The Advantages

Aronson notes that the jigsaw classroom technique has a number of advantages. First of all, most teachers find it easy to learn and they enjoy doing it. It can be used with other teaching strategies, and Aronson has found that it works even if it is only used for an hour per day. Finally, it is free for the taking. When children have been exposed to jigsaw in elementary school, Aronson says it is easier to maintain its benefits in middle school and high school, and although it may be more difficult to introduce the technique as a new experience to high school students, it is never too late to begin. His experience has shown that, although it generally takes a bit longer, most high school students participating in jigsaw for the first time display a remarkable ability to benefit from the cooperative structure.

Some Potential Problems

Aronson is realistic enough to know that things do not always work perfectly, and he offers a few things to watch out for when implementing the jigsaw strategy. For example, a dominant student may try to take over and control the group. Also, working with slower students may cause the more gifted students to become bored, and the slower students may affect the quality of the report produced by their group. He says that many jigsaw teachers find it useful to appoint, on a rotating basis, one student to be the discussion leader for each session. That leader's job is to call on students in a fair manner and try to spread participation evenly. Aronson says that students quickly realize the group runs more effectively if each student is allowed to present his or her material before questions and comments are taken, and in this way, the self-interest of the group eventually reduces the problem of dominance. To address the problem of the slow students, Aronson notes that the jigsaw technique relies on "expert" groups. Before presenting a report to their jigsaw groups, each student enters an expert group consisting of other students who have prepared a report on the same topic. In the expert group, students have a chance to discuss their report and modify it based on the suggestions of other members of their expert group. He suggests that teachers may want to monitor the expert groups carefully in the early stages, just to make sure that each student ends with an accurate report to bring to her or his jigsaw group. He adds that most teachers find that once the expert groups get the hang of it, close monitoring

becomes unnecessary. As for the problem of the brighter students becoming bored, Aronson believes that if those students are encouraged to develop the mindset of "teacher," the learning experience can be transformed from a boring task into an exciting challenge. Not only does such a challenge produce psychological benefits, but the learning is frequently more thorough. The research suggests that there is less boredom in jigsaw classrooms than in traditional ones, and that holds true for the brighter as well as the less gifted students. As our country has become an increasingly multi-ethnic tapestry, most technical fields now include professionals of different backgrounds, cultures and genders. Our students will need to become effective members of teams that include diverse groups of individuals reflective of today's workplace, and that may be one of the most important skills career and technical educators are teaching. According to the APA, the jigsaw technique has "the potential to improve education dramatically in a multicultural world by revolutionizing the way children learn," which gives teachers another piece of the puzzle to complete a 21st century education for their students.

Implementation of Jigsaw

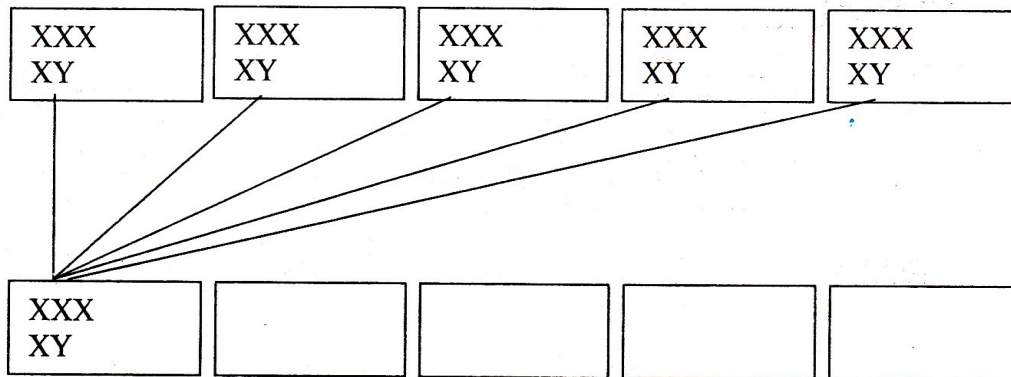


Figure 1
Home Team
 (Five or six members grouped heterogeneously)

Students are assigned to five or six member heterogeneous study team. Academic materials are presented to the students in text form, and each student is responsible for learning of portion the material. Member of different

team with the topic (sometimes called the expert group) meet to study and help each other learn the topic. Then, students return to their home team and teach other members what they have learned.

RESEARCHPROCEDURE

The procedure of this classroom action research used by the researcher referred to Kemmis and Taggart Theory (1988) which consists of cycles. Each cycle has four steps. Step 1 is planning, step 2 is implementing / acting, step 3 is observing and step 4 is reflecting.

In this classroom action research, the researcher used the spiral model as suggested by Kemmis and Taggart (1988) with the spiral steps (see figure 2).

Based on the observation, researcher found some problems in his classes. From six classes there was one class had the lowest class average score of Vocabulary 2 final test. The range was big enough. The class average score of Vocabulary 2 Final Test for First Year Students of STKIP PGRI Blitar, as follow; 2A = 86, 2B = 74, 2C = 76, 2D = 77, 2E = 63, and 2F = 80.

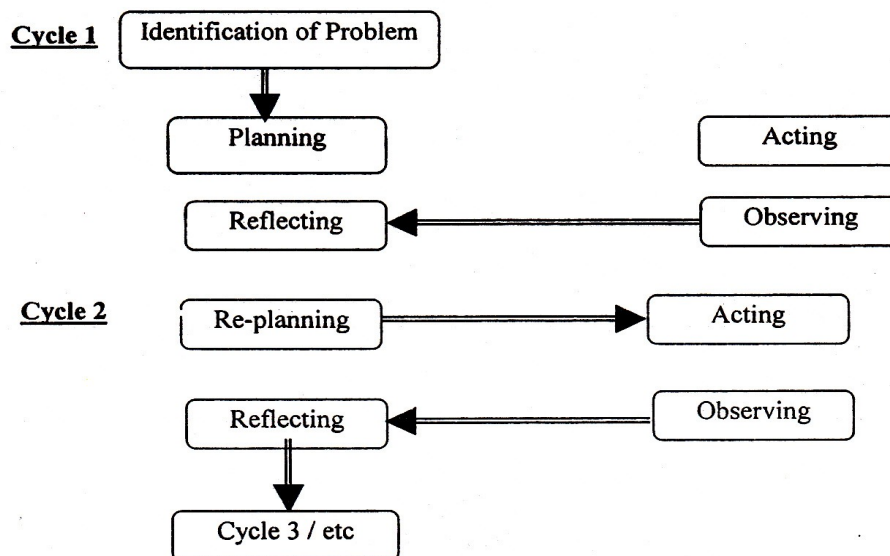


Figure 2
The Action Research Spiral

The lowest class average score of Vocabulary 2 final test was 2E. The class had 36 students. It consisted of 10 boys and 26 girls. They came from different town, some of them could adapt with the class and some of them could not. It made the atmosphere in the class was not conducive for teaching and learning process. It needed to be solved with the teaching technique that made them adaptive and friendly and they could improve their vocabulary mastery. Concerning with the idea, the researcher had a plan to implement a different teaching strategy to improve students' vocabulary mastery through Jigsaw technique for the class 2E.

The philosophy of action research suggests that an appropriate from analysis would be through the discussion of criteria and areas of concern as well as isolated instances of behavior (MC Niff : 1992). The criteria of success in action reflect what areas concern to teacher wanted to emphasize in teaching learning process. This study deals with improving the students' vocabulary mastery through Jigsaw technique for the second year students of English Department of STKIP PGRI Blitar Academic year 2009/2010, the criteria of success, then, was described qualitatively. To know the product of the action in term of qualitative data, the students' achievement toward vocabulary mastery should also be established. The criteria of success in this study as follows:

- (1) The percentage students' participation for vocabulary discussion and presentation in classification of very active students is greater than or equal to 50%.
- (2) The class average score of vocabulary test is greater than or equal to 70.

The criterion of success of number 1 is established based on the results of collecting data from the questionnaires, observation checklist, and the interview. The criterion of success number of number 2 is based on the results of vocabulary test.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study and the discussion of the findings, some conclusions are made as follows;

The appropriate procedure for lecturer to improve their students' vocabulary mastery through jigsaw technique had to follow the ten steps of jigsaw method well. The ten steps of Jigsaw technique was as follows:

- 1) Divide students into six person jigsaw groups. The groups were based on terms of gender and ability.
- 2) Appoint one student from each group as the leader. He or she was the most mature student in the group.

- 3) Divide the material for based on the number of group.
- 4) Assign each student to learn one segment, making sure students have direct access only to their own segment.
- 5) Give students time to read over their segment at least twice and become familiar with it. There is no need for them to memorize it.
- 6) Form temporary "expert groups" by having one student from each jigsaw group join other students assigned to the same segment. Give students in these expert groups time to discuss the main points of their segment and to rehearse the presentations they will make to their jigsaw group.
- 7) Bring the students back into their jigsaw groups.
- 8) Ask each student to present her or his segment to the group. Encourage others in the group to ask questions for clarification.
- 9) Move from group to group, observing the process. If any group is having trouble (*e.g.*, a member is dominating or disruptive), make an appropriate intervention.
- 10) Give a quiz on the material at the end of the session, so that students quickly come to realize that these sessions are not just fun and games.

The students could improve their learning of vocabulary mastery and also could improve their friendship. Because besides to teach how to study Jigsaw technique also teach how to work together. It was shown by the percentage students' participation for discussion and presentation in the meetings of cycle I, there were 33% very active students, 28% active students, 22% passive students, and 17% hesitant students. And for cycle II, there were 53% very active students, 31% active students, 11% passive students, and 6% hesitant students. And the increasing of the class average score of vocabulary test. From 63 in average score of vocabulary 2 final test, to 69 in average score of vocabulary test of cycle I, and to 75 in average score of vocabulary test of cycle II. It meant the criteria of success had been met.

SUGGESTIONS

To follow up the findings, some suggestions are addressed to English teachers, students and future researchers.

To English Teachers

Considering that Jigsaw technique can improve vocabulary mastery and to make friendship, English teachers are recommended to apply this model as one of many alternatives that, can be used in teaching vocabulary. Besides,

they are also suggested to socialize this vocabulary learning model through teacher's forum such as in-service teachers' trainings, workshops, or seminars.

To Further Researchers

It is advisable that further researchers carry out other class action research using Jigsaw technique which elaborate the different level students and also different English subject to prove the advantage the Jigsaw technique for many different fields.

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