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Siti Sundari

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Volume 2	Number 4	March 2015	Hal. 253- 318	ISSN: 2338- 4190
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A publication on EFL Education Journal

EFL Education Journal is published 3 times a year in the months of March, July, November; it presents articles on EFL education and research

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ISSN: 2338-4190

Volume 2 Number 4 March 2015

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Improving the Seventh Grade Students' Vocabulary Achievement through English Songs at SMP Negeri 11 Jember

Adelya Dwi Ayuningtyas, Wiwiek Eko Bindarti, I Putu Sukmaantara. FKIP, the University of Jember

Abstract: This research was intended to improve students' vocabulary achievement through English songs. A Classroom Action Research was used in this research to overcome students' problems in learning English vocabulary. The subjects and area of the research were the students of class VII-A at SMPN 11 Jember chosen by using purposive method. The research data were collected by test, observation, documentation, and interview. The average results of observations in Cycle 1 showed that there were 65.8% of the students categorized as active students and it increased to 82% in Cycle 2. Moreover, the result of vocabulary achievement test proved that there were 23 students of 38 students (60.5%) who could achieve the target minimum score (75) in Cycle 1, and it increased to 81.6% 31 students in Cycle 2. This means that the use of English songs could improve the seventh grade students' vocabulary achievement.

Keywords: English Songs, Vocabulary Achievement, Classroom Action Research.

There are lots of languages that exist in the world as every country has its own national language that is used by the fellow citizens. From the various languages that are used by all people around the world, there are some languages that are used as international languages that can be used to communicate by all people around the world although they come from different countries. One of the international languages is English.

In Indonesia English is offered as a compulsory subject ranging from elementary schools to senior high schools. The English subject covers four language skills

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namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing. There are also three language components namely vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation.

Vocabulary is a basic component in learning a language. The main section in learning English is having and understanding vocabulary because without having good and enough vocabulary, the students will get difficulties in learning and mastering not only the other language components, but also the language skills. Vocabulary is an important aspect of language learning and no language exists without any words (Fardhani: 2003). It means that vocabulary is one of language components that plays a key role in all language skills.

Preliminary studies of this research were held on April 1st 2015 at SMP Negeri 11 Jember by interviewing the English teacher and observing the research subject after the researcher had collected the seventh grade students' English midterm test scores from the school documents. It was found that the students of class VII-A got the lowest mean score compared with the other classes. There were only 11 students (28.9%) out of 38 students who got score 72 or more. As informed by the English teacher, most of her students in the seventh grade faced some difficulties in learning English due to lack of vocabulary, especially in the way of spelling, memorizing and understanding the meaning of the English words. Besides, the teacher told the researcher that the students in class VII-A were less active in class.

From the observation done by the researcher, it was found that most of the students did not pay enough attention, only a few of them could follow the teacher's instruction well. When the class was going on, some of the students made the class too noisy, especially for the boys and some of the students at the back row. Besides,

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they were lazy to bring dictionaries in English classes. This means that they were passive or less motivated in learning English.

Therefore, this research tried to improve the students' vocabulary achievement by using English songs because songs can motivate students in learning language, especially for weak and passive students. In this case, they practice intensively in the specified pattern without getting bored (Karim & Hasbullah: 1986). By singing songs, the students have to repeat the lyrics several times, so they can get some new vocabularies and they will learn new vocabularies by having fun together.

Some previous researchers have applied English songs as media in the teaching learning process. For example, Indriagni (2009) in her research notes that the use of English popular songs improved students' listening comprehension achievement of the ninth year students at SMPN 1 Giri, Banyuwangi. Similarly, Wening's (2014) research findings show that using songs improved the tenses achievement and the active participation of the seventh grade students at SMPN 1 Jember. The above research findings provide evidence that using songs positively contributes to the improvement of students' vocabulary achievement that is the main concern of this research.

Research Method

The design of this research was a Classroom Action Research (CAR) because the research purpose was to improve students' vocabulary achievement or what Elfanany (2013) notes as the quality of teaching learning activities in the classroom. By improving the quality of the process of teaching learning activities in the classroom, especially for teaching and learning vocabulary using English songs, students' vocabulary achievement was accordingly improved.

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The research area of this research was SMP Negeri 11 Jember determined by using purposive method. In addition, the seventh grade students in this school still experienced difficulties in learning English due to the lack of vocabulary knowledge. Besides, the English teacher never applied English songs in teaching vocabulary achievement. The subject of this research was class VII-A of the school, and they were selected because of their weaknesses in learning English, especially in vocabulary and its participation in English class if it was compared with the other five classes.

The research data were collected by test, observation, interview and documentation, and they were analyzed by identifying the percentage of the students in both the process and the product of the action in the teaching and learning activities in the classroom. The vocabulary test in this research was administered to measure the students' vocabulary achievement after being taught vocabulary by using English songs. The percentage of both the students who got score ≥ 72 in the vocabulary test and their active participation during the teaching learning process of vocabulary by using English songs was analyzed by using the formula: $E = \frac{n}{N} \times 100\%$, where E is the percentage of the students' scores who get score ≥ 72 or of the students who are active in the teaching learning process; n is the total number of the students who get score ≥ 72 or of the students who are categorized active; and N = the total number of the students (Ali: 1993).

Research Result

There research was conducted collaboratively with the English teacher in two cycles, and in each cycle, there were two meetings for the teaching and learning process of vocabulary by using English songs and one vocabulary achievement test.

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The actions in both cycles were conducted in May 2015. In this case, the researcher did the teaching learning process while the English teacher did the observations. The actions in cycle 1 were conducted on May 18th - May 22nd, 2015, and those in cycle 2 were conducted on May 25th - May 29th, 2015.

As mentioned before, the vocabulary test was administered to measure the students' vocabulary achievement after being taught vocabulary by using English songs. The result of students' vocabulary achievement test in cycle 1 indicated that there were 23 students (60.5%) who could achieve the minimum requirement score (72) and 15 students (39.5%) who could not achieve the minimum requirement score. So, it was necessary to conduct the second cycle since the percentage of the students who got the standard minimum score or more was only 60.5% or 23 students. The above percentage did not achieve the target percentage requirement that was at least 70% of the students who got scores 72 or more.

Then the second cycle was done by revising some weaknesses that happened in the first cycle. In cycle 2, there were 31 students (81.6%) who could achieve the minimum requirement score, and only 7 students (18.4%) could not achieve the minimum requirement score. It already fulfilled the required target that was at least 70% of the students could get score \geq 72. This means the actions stopped because the research results showed improvement.

Moreover, the observations were conducted during the teaching learning process of vocabulary by using English songs in each cycle to know the students' active participation during the actions. There were two observations in each cycle. The percentage of the students' active participation in each meeting of each cycle had to be continued to find out the average result of the students' active participation. It

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was intended to know whether the required percentage that was at least 70% had been achieved or not. The average result of the students' active participation in cycle 1 indicated that only 65.8% of the students who were categorized active while the rest (34.2%) was categorized as passive.

The above results showed that the percentage of the students' active participation in cycle 1 did not yet achieve the required target percentage (at least 70%) of the students' active participation. In the second cycle, the average result of the students' active participation was 82%. This result showed that the required target percentage of the active students in the teaching and learning activities was fulfilled.

Discussion

Based on the result of the research in both cycles, the result of the students' vocabulary achievement was improved. The first cycle showed that 60.5% of 38 students got scores more than 72. Meanwhile, the result in the second cycle indicated that 81.6% of 38 students got the scores more than 72. In addition, the students improved their participation while the teaching learning process of vocabulary achievement by using English songs was implemented. In cycle 1, the average percentage of the students who were active was 65.8%. Meanwhile in cycle 2, the average percentage of the students who were active was 82%.

Based on the result of this research, the use of English song as media in English teaching and learning process of vocabulary could improve the students' vocabulary achievement both in product and process achievement. It was proven by more than 70% students could get the minimum requirement score for the vocabulary achievement test. Besides, more than 70% students were active in the teaching learning process of vocabulary by using English songs.

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Conclusion

Based on the data analysis and the discussion in the previous chapter, it can be concluded that the use of English songs could improve the seventh grade students' vocabulary achievement at SMP Negeri 11 Jember. The use of English songs could improve the seventh grade students' active participation in the teaching learning process of vocabulary by using English songs at SMP Negeri 11 Jember.

Therefore, the English teacher is suggested to enrich the students' learning experiences and their vocabulary achievement by using English songs as media because English songs could improve the students' vocabulary achievement and their active participation in this research. Besides, the students as the research subjects are suggested to be more active when the teacher tries to apply English songs as media in the class. They can use English songs outside the classroom to help them to gain new words based on their favorite songs. In addition, the future researchers are suggested to use these research results as information and input to conduct further researches dealing with similar research design and media but in different problems.

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