IMPROVING EFL YOUNG LEARNERS’ VOCABULARY ACHIEVEMENT THROUGH ADOPTING THE DIRECT METHOD

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Abstract

The aim of this research is to find out whether there is an improvement of EFL third graders’ English vocabulary achievement after the Direct Method has been adopted. The population of this research is the third grade students of one elementary school in Garut. The writer took a sample of 30 students. Pretest and posttest were used as the instruments of the research to measure students’ vocabulary achievement before and after the Direct Method had been adopted in the class. According to the statistical research, null hypothesis is rejected if t-observed is more than t-critical, and the finding of this research showed that t-observed was 9.42 and t-critical was 2.045, which means that positive hypothesis “there is some improvement of students’ vocabulary achievement after the Direct Method has been adopted” was accepted.

Keywords: Vocabulary, Direct Method, EFL Young Learners

1. INTRODUCTION

The first thing one does in learning a new language especially the first language is to know words. “By age 4, a child’s interaction with his or her family has already produced significant vocabulary differences across socioeconomic lines....” (Neuman&Wright, 2014). Similarly, in learning a foreign language an EFL learner firstly learns words. In this case, the teacher has important role to lead students to master English Vocabulary as many as possible in order that they are able to comprehend English well. Therefore, it is necessary for a teacher to use the most effective method of teaching vocabulary.

There are various methodologies in English language teaching. However, teacher should be able to select appropriate and effective techniques and to decide which method is appropriate for the learners, especially young learners. One of the most well known methods discussed in this area of study is the Direct Method, which includes lots of oral interaction and spontaneous use of language.

As stated by Brown (1995), the best way to teach vocabulary is not viewing vocabulary items as a long and boring list of words, rather, vocabulary is seen in its central role in contextualized, meaningful language. This statement is related to one of the principles in the Direct Method. Many linguists applied this method in teaching some years ago. In addition, the previous researches conducted by several researchers found that the Direct Method is effective to improve students’ vocabulary mastery (Furqon, 2007; Ratno, 2012; Handayani, 2012).

Furqon (2007) found that teaching vocabulary to the sixth graders using the Direct Method gave the students higher scores than when the students are taught by using the Grammar Translation Method. However, the difference was not too
significant. On the other hand, Ratno (2013) found that the Direct Method was effective to teach vocabulary to the sixth graders.

In accordance with Ratno’s finding, Handayani (2012) who applied the Direct Method to the Kindergarten students found that the Direct Method was effective to increase students’ vocabulary mastery. This finding was obviously in line with Ratno’s finding. Therefore, this study attempts to find out whether the findings of Furqon or Ratno which can be supported by the finding of this study.

Briefly, this study is conducted to enrich literature review in the field of research on the Direct Method in teaching vocabulary. It is to investigate the effectiveness of the Direct Method in teaching vocabulary to EFL young learners. Since the number of research on the use of the Direct Method in teaching vocabulary to EFL young learners is still limited, this research wants to fill in the gap.

This study has one research question to address. It is to find out whether there is an improvement of EFL young learners’ vocabulary achievement after the Direct Method has been adopted. To simplify the problem and to make the study systematic, this study is delimited to the improvement of the third grade elementary students’ vocabulary achievement through adopting the Direct Method. The problem investigated in this study is formulated in the following research question: “Is there any improvement of students’ vocabulary achievement after the Direct Method has been adopted?”

2. METHODS

There were three phases taken in this design. Firstly, the writer administered pretest to measure students' English vocabulary achievement before giving the treatment. Secondly, the writer gave treatment to the sample. Finally, the writer administered posttest to measure students' English vocabulary achievement after giving the treatment.

The population of the research in this study was the third grade students in one Elementary school in Garut. The writer took one class consists of thirty students as sample. There were no experimental group and no control group.

In order to get an objective data, the writer gave some tests to the students. There were two kinds of tests, i.e., pretest and posttest. Pretest was test intended to measure students' English vocabulary achievement before they were taught by using the Direct Method. Meanwhile, posttest was given after the Direct Method had been adopted in vocabulary teaching in the class. It was intended to measure students' English vocabulary achievement after they had been taught by using the Direct Method. The writer used objective tests of multiple-choice type for its validity and practicality.

Both pretest and posttest consisted of twenty items. Each item consisted of four stems. Each test lasted for one period (35 minutes). The writer used the scores in the computation to determine the difference of students' vocabulary achievement before the Direct Method was adopted in the class and after the Direct Method had been adopted in the class.

Since the writer used pre-experimental method, there was only one subject group. The writer followed the following procedures in conducting the research:
1. Administering T1 (pretest) to students.

2. Teaching the students by adopting X (the Direct Method)

3. Administering T2 (posttest) to the students.

4. Comparing T1 and T2 to determine the difference of students' vocabulary achievement as the result of the treatment given.

5. Applying suitable statistic test (t-test) to determine the significance of the difference.

The procedures above belong to the procedures of One-Group Pretest-Posttest Design. The design can be shown in the following chart:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pretest</th>
<th>Treatment</th>
<th>Posttest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T1</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>T2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After treatment had been given and pretest and posttest had been administered, the writer continued to compute and analyze the result of the test. This was to find out whether teaching by adopting the Direct Method improved students' vocabulary achievement by comparing the result of pretest and posttest. The result of the test was used to find out Standard Deviation and t-value. The formulas are as follows:

1. \[ SD = \sqrt{\frac{n \sum D^2 - (\sum D)^2}{n(n-1)}} \]

Note:

SD = Standard Deviation

\( \sum D \) = the total number of \( D^2 \) which is obtained from individual difference between posttest and pretest

\( (\sum D)^2 \) = the square of sig \( D \)

\( n \) = the number of the students

2. \[ t = \frac{D}{\sqrt{\frac{n}{SD}}} \]

Note: \( t \) = t-observed

\( D \) = the mean of the difference between pretest and posttest

\( N \) = the number of the students

SD = Standard Deviation

After finding out the t-critical on the level of the significance of 0.025 for one tailed from the table with \( d.f. \), finally the value of t-observed and t-critical are compared to check the significance of the difference between two means.

**4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

After preparing the formula and counting the data result, the data of the research are as follows:
Student Number | Pretest (Y1) | Posttest (Y2) | D (Y2-Y1) | D2 |
---|---|---|---|---|
1 | 5.5 | 8 | 2.5 | 6.25 |
2 | 5 | 7.5 | 2.5 | 6.25 |
3 | 5 | 8.5 | 3.5 | 12.25 |
4 | 7.5 | 10 | 2.5 | 6.25 |
5 | 6 | 9.5 | 3.5 | 12.25 |
6 | 4 | 6.5 | 2.5 | 6.25 |
7 | 3 | 7 | 4 | 16 |
8 | 6 | 10 | 4 | 16 |
9 | 6.5 | 9 | 2.5 | 6.25 |
10 | 8.5 | 10 | 1.5 | 2.25 |
11 | 6 | 10 | 4 | 16 |
12 | 8 | 9 | 1 | 1 |
13 | 6 | 10 | 4 | 16 |
14 | 8 | 10 | 2 | 4 |
15 | 4.5 | 7.5 | 3 | 9 |
16 | 6.5 | 10 | 3.5 | 12.25 |
17 | 4.5 | 5.5 | 1 | 1 |
18 | 4 | 9 | 5 | 25 |
19 | 8.5 | 10 | 1.5 | 2.25 |
20 | 6 | 6 | 0 | 0 |
21 | 1.5 | 7.5 | 6 | 36 |
22 | 8.5 | 10 | 1.5 | 2.25 |
23 | 7 | 10 | 3 | 9 |
24 | 5 | 10 | 5 | 25 |
25 | 9 | 10 | 1 | 1 |
26 | 6.5 | 9.5 | 3 | 9 |
27 | 7.5 | 9.5 | 2 | 4 |
28 | 5.5 | 6 | 0.5 | 0.25 |
29 | 7 | 6.5 | -0.5 | 0.25 |
30 | 6 | 9.5 | 3.5 | 12.25 |
**Total** | **182.5** | **261.5** | **79** | **275.5** |

The writer interpreted the result of the computation for testing hypotheses by using the data above and the statistical computation. She used the statistical research, which says that "we can reject null hypothesis if the computation shows that t-observed is more than t-critical. The result of the computation showed that t-observed was 9.42 and t-critical was 2.045, which means that t-observed is more than t-critical. Therefore, this research could fairly indicate that the data supported the proposed alternative hypothesis and the writer could conclude that there was an improvement of students' vocabulary achievement after the Direct Method has been adopted.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

In general, teaching English to the third graders focuses on students' mastery of vocabulary. The students' learning achievement actually can be attained by using appropriate teaching techniques. Teaching vocabulary by adopting the idea of the Direct Method to the third graders is found to be effective.
According to the result of the research and experience conducted in the classroom, the Direct Method helps students improve vocabulary achievement. The slow learners even can absorb the lesson well and show progress after the treatment. Therefore, the finding of this study can support the findings of Handayani (2012) and Ratno (2013) that the Direct Method is effective to teach vocabulary to the young learners such as Elementary School students and Kindergarten students.

Moreover, the third graders who became the participants of this study seemed interested in learning English using the Direct Method since one basic rule of the Direct Method was to use real objects and pictures in order that the students could memorize the words. This made the students excited in their vocabulary learning.

Therefore, it is recommended for the teachers to select language teaching methods and techniques, which are not only appropriate for teaching and learning process but also enjoyable for the students. The teachers should be able to motivate the students to take part in the teaching and learning process, for example by giving rewards. The teachers should also be able to manage the class and create interesting and lively classroom atmosphere.

Furthermore, as the world revolves, the teachers should learn more the development of English as international language and improve their fluency in English in order to upgrade students’ skills in English so that they reach the required standard of English as international language. Last but not least, the teachers should prepare their teaching program well so as to make the teaching learning process run smoothly.

6. REFERENCES