

THE USE OF COMIC STRIPS AS AN ENGLISH TEACHING MEDIA FOR JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Atik Rokhayani
atiec_ca3m@yahoo.com
Muria Kudus University

Aisyah Ririn Perwikasih Utari
aisyahririn@yahoo.com
Muria Kudus University

ABSTRACT

Nowadays, teachers have to be creative in delivering materials to the students. Ideally, teaching media are needed to support the success of teaching and learning processes. In English classes, teachers have to create a good atmosphere using interactive teaching media. The objectives of this paper are (1) to know whether Printed Material in the form of *Comic Strips* can improve the English vocabulary of the students of SMP 2 Bae Kudus, (2) to describe the strength and the weaknesses of comic as a means of teaching English. This is action research was conducted at Class VIIA of SMP 2 Bae Kudus consisting of 30 learners. Before conducting the research, the writers administered a pr- test to know the students' mastery of vocabulary. The result of the pre-test shows that the mean score was 68.27, while the standard score (KKM) is 75. Then, the writers in collaboration with the English teacher did Cycle I using *Comic Strips*. The mean score of a test proceeding Cycle I was 76.97. So, the writers continued to do Cycle II. In Cycle II, the writers also gave evaluation to the students. The mean score of the test proceeding Cycle II was 85.10. In delivering the materials, the teacher felt it easier to deliver teaching materials using comic strips.

Keywords: teaching media, printed material comic strips

INTRODUCTION

English is defined as foreign language in Indonesia. Nowadays many people learned English as a need to communicate broadly. Students start to learn English at early ages. All levels of education use English as a communication tool. The skills of English are absolutely needed to master the language. They are integrated one to other. The four English skills are Listening, Reading, Speaking and Writing. There are various levels of learners which are considered as the key – from the lower to

highest level. The requirements of communicating well become the main components of using the four skills to communicate. Some additional English language components also need to be learned; they are grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciations. Those components are important because they are the keys of understanding utterances spoken or written by English speaking people.

Teacher becomes the main key in the classroom during the of teaching-learning processes. Students are facilitated to think

and improve their mind or thought about the material delivered by the teacher. Professionalism is absolutely needed by all teachers in this world. Being professional is compulsory to maintain the condition, plan, and teaching process in the classroom. Students need to comprehend the materials and the teachers share the materials using appropriate media which aims to make the students feel comfortable and easy to understand the materials. Teaching media is developed nowadays. People use sophisticated media to do everything, including teaching and learning.

Multimedia is one of the most commonly used media for teaching and learning process. In the middle of the usage of multimedia, conventional media is still needed and useful. Using multimedia means that there must be a connectivity of electricity or even internet connection. Printed materials are still used as appropriate media if there is no electricity connection. It can be used anytime and anywhere. The visualization through pictures and text can support the sharing of the materials from teacher to students. Successful education can be measured by the result or the output of the teaching and learning process itself.

The four competences of a professional teacher should be fulfilled to make education successful. They are pedagogic, personal, social and professional. Efficient and effective teaching and learning process is the aim of the four competences. They support teacher's credibility to handle the

students in and out of the classroom. Teachers facilitate the students using teaching and learning media. The strategy determines the successful process. If a teacher does not use any media, there will be no interesting teaching and learning process. Students need something new in their process of learning, especially when they are at school.

Improving students' skill is important to improve their English language ability. If they fulfil all of the required skills, the result of the teaching and learning process planned and applied by the teacher can be considered successful. Additional thing for students' learning process is the matter of their motivation. If they are motivated and interested in learning English, they will be able to master the language easily.

PRINTED MATERIAL COMIC STRIPS

Comics with colourful illustrations, the story and the realistic as well as interesting characters can motivate students of all age levels (Sudjana and Rivai, 2009: 69). Pictures are identical to fun, interest, and concrete things. It can attract the reader to read the story further. If the reader is motivated to read the whole story, then the implicit aim of reading the comic (entertainment or education) can be reached easily. Colourful comic can be a very interesting thing for readers especially children.

As printed materials for the teaching and learning processes in the classroom, comic strips are considered as teaching

media. Teachers use comic strips as both materials and media. Comic consists of a story which describes concrete things about the environment at school. The utterances uttered by the characters can be imitated by the students to make their English well-spoken. Teacher can be the main key to maintain the pronunciation.

Interesting materials and attractive media can be shared in the classroom to help the students' learning process. The lesson plan is made by considering the effective usage of comic strips. For young learners, comic strips should consist of short and life-like utterances so that the students can understand the meaning without any significant difficulties. The characters in comic strips are also familiar to the students because the setting is at school.

TEACHING MEDIA

Various teaching media are used for their values or benefits. The same teaching materials can also be used. Media must contribute to creative contents of the materials so that the students learn the materials unconsciously. Unconscious learning is better in language learning because the students will not consider the English lesson as a burden due to its difficulty. Sudjana and Rivai (2009:2) describe the value and benefits of teaching media into the followings:

- (1) Teaching will attract more attention to foster students' motivation to learn
- (2) Teaching materials will be clearer meaning that can be understood by the

students, and allow students to master better teaching purposes

- (3) Teaching methods will be more varied , not merely verbal communication through the narrative of words by the teacher, so students do not get bored especially when teachers teach to every hour lessons
- (4) Students are doing more activities to learn, because they not only listen to descriptions of teachers, but also do other activities such as observe, demonstrate, etc.

Lesson plan is prepared and applied by teachers. They should make the lesson plan by themselves because they know the exact condition and situation around their students' environment. Organizing the class and the process of teaching and learning seem to be a complex thing for teachers. The teaching process is limited by time allotment while they have to deliver the materials which are needed by the students. The effective teaching media has some particular criteria that should be fulfilled by the teacher. The way of fulfilling the criteria is considered to be done to determine appropriate teaching media for a particular teaching material.

According Sudjana and Rivai (2009:4), there are several things to note about the teaching media. First, teachers need to have an understanding of teaching media for instance types and benefits of teaching media, using the media as a teaching aid and follow-up the use of media in the teaching and learning process. Second, teachers are able to make simple teaching

media for the purposes of teaching, especially the two-dimensional media or graphic media, three-dimensional media, and projections media. Third, knowledge and skills are needed in assessing the effectiveness of the use of media in the teaching process.

Creating an appropriate media for particular teaching materials should consist of these criteria; a. is it suitable with the teaching subjective? The chosen teaching media should be suitable with the instructional teaching subjective. It consists of the components of comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis. They are possibly to use teaching media; b. does it support the content of the teaching materials? The teaching materials which are based on fact or true story, principles, concept, and generalizations need teaching media so that the students can understand the materials easily; c. is it easy to find or create? The teaching media can be easily to get, to create by the teacher by the time of teaching and learning process. Graphic media generally can be created by teachers without any expensive thing to pay. It is simple and more practical to use; d. is the teacher skilful to use the media? No matter what kind of media is used by the teacher, the main requirement is whether he/she can use it appropriately or not. The value and benefit that are required are not considered from the media, but it depends on how the teacher uses the media. If the teacher fails to use the media to share the materials, the teaching and learning process can also fail;

e. is the time allotment enough to deliver the materials?; f. is it suitable with the way or level of students' thought and learning process.

One of the important elements in learning English is vocabulary. Mastering vocabulary is needed for the students. From the four skills in English (listening, reading, speaking and writing), vocabulary considered to be the highest level in comprehending the meaning of the text. So, someone who learn English have to master vocabulary well. Vocabulary occurs before grammarians found the language structure or features that make the people feel easier in learning target language (McCarthy, 2008:1).

According to McCarthy (2008:1), there are some elements to be considered by the teachers in teaching and learning vocabulary:

- (1) Composing vocabulary and elements of the words
- (2) Organizing vocabulary of the words
- (3) Using the structure of vocabulary in the higher level e.g. phrase, sentence etc
- (4) Mastering vocabulary is more dominant than people thinking

The guideline in mastering English vocabulary comes from the teachers' role in using appropriate media in delivering the materials based on the contexts in the process of teaching and learning in the classroom. In addition, the students' role in the teaching and learning process of vocabulary also takes the high portion to develop students' recall.

RESEARCH METHOD

Based on the purpose of this paper, the writers did classroom action research. The writers collaborate with the English teacher to do action research. In this research, there are procedures which consist of two cycles. Each cycle involves four steps. They are planning, acting, observing and reflecting. In the planning phase, the teacher prepared lesson plan and the instrument of teaching. After doing the planning, it is continued to do action in the class. The next phase is observation. It is the description about recording procedure and interpretation of data concerning process and product. Then, the last phase is reflecting. Reflection is the analysis and reflection of the data.

This classroom action research was conducted at SMP 2 Bae Kudus. This school is located on Jl. Kampus UMK Gondang Manis Bae Kudus. It is not far from the central Kudus regency.

This classroom action research was focused on the improvement of students' vocabulary of class VII A in SMP 2 Bae Kudus. The teacher used *Printed Comic Strips* in delivering the materials to the students. There were 30 students in the classroom.

RESULTS

This research implemented the use of Printed Material in the form Comic Strips to improve the students' English vocabulary. Before conducting cycle I, the writers conducted pre-test to know the ability of the students in mastering English

vocabulary. Pre-test is done on Wednesday, 4 September 2013. Based on the result of pre-test, the mean score is 68.27. There are 2 students reached standard score (KKM) since KKM is 75. Pre-test score can be categorized into fair. So, the writers considered that the use of interesting media is very needed in teaching vocabulary. Then, the writers collaborated with English teacher of class VII A of SMP 2 Bae Kudus to conduct research on learning English by using Printed Material Comic Strips as a media to improve students' vocabulary.

After doing pre-test, the teacher did cycle I. It was on Monday and Wednesday, 9 and 11 September 2013. The teacher used Printed Material Comic Strips media in delivering the material to the students. Based on the writers' observation, the students were active in the discussion. The students never used comics in learning English especially vocabulary in the classroom. Then, the teacher gave an oral test to the students to measure the students' vocabulary. The mean of the score is 76.97. The improvement is only 1.97 with the pre-test. So, the writers decided to continue to cycle II.

In cycle II, the students were more active than in cycle I because they had already interested in comics. Cycle II is done on Wednesday and Monday, 25 & 30 September 2013. The teacher also gave an oral test to measure the students' vocabulary. The result of the mean score of

cycle II is 85.10. All students have reached KKM. It is categorized into good.

Strength and Weaknesses

The Strength of *Printed Material Comic Strips*

Comic strips have a very exciting potential to help the teachers in achieving the learning objectives. Attractive graphical visualization, short dialogues, simple and easy to understand making everyone from different ages like reading comics. When the readers are interested on the image and character of the comic, they want to know more deeply into the contents of the comic story. This is what is expected of a teacher to the students to be interested in what will be delivered in the classroom.

Student motivation to learn and study the contents of the comic strip as an attractive visual design can be a primary basic of students' interest towards English subject. Based on some research and relevant sources, comics can increase student motivation to be able to complete the task given by the teacher. Teaching and learning process will be the focus, smooth and comfortable in accordance with the criteria of the ideal class standards.

Visual media found in comic books can stimulate students' senses to process information presented through setting and story situation. It is undeniable that nowadays there are more media development that lead to audio - visual, but comics are still able to survive because of its advantages are permanent and comics can

be taken and read anywhere and everywhere. For the students, they do not only learn the content of comics in schools through teacher guidance, but can also learn independently at home

Comic strips also have closely links with the entertainment. In a newspaper or magazine column usually contained comic strips with a different theme and edition. Readers get the amusement and exciting atmosphere after reading serious news in the mass media. English comic is not only the media of learning but also indirectly be refreshment and entertainment for students in the classroom.

Comics aimed at education course contain the values and moral messages that can be delivered to students. In addition, learning materials, soft skills or behavioural are also can be taught while the teachers using comics. Most of the teachers think it is easier in teaching English by using media or comics that make the comics remain focused students' attention and focus on the learning process.

The Weaknesses of *Printed Material Comic Strips*

Good learning media is media that can help teachers and learners to follow the process of learning to achieve learning objectives. Each media has strength and weaknesses.

Comic is a visual medium that consists of a graphic design and characters. For pronunciation or pronunciations, automatically, students rely on examples from the teacher, the comics cannot be the additional

form of media supported audio conversations with native speakers. Therefore, teachers can use other supported media besides just using the comics as a media of learning in the classroom.

Comics will be weakened if there are students who do not enjoy or are not able to follow the learning styles of visual media. Then the teacher must adjust to the level of willingness and ability of students.

CONCLUSION

Based on the description above, the writers can conclude that the use of Printed Material Comic Strips can be used as an English teaching media to improve vocabulary for the Junior High School students. This improvement is based on the test in cycle I and cycle II. The mean score of cycle I is 76.97, while in cycle II is 85.10. In addition, Comic strips is appropriate and effective as teaching media because it gives an easy way for the teachers to deliver the materials. It is also effective for the students' ability in understanding the expression delivered by the characters in comics.

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