DEVELOPING THEMATIC ENGLISH MULTIMEDIA
FOR TEACHING VOCABULARY TO YOUNG LEARNERS

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ABSTRACT

The observed inappropriateness comes from textbooks used in teaching young learners are too difficult, dominated by written form, unspecific, and decontextualized interactive multimedia. Hence, the researcher would like to develop Thematic English Multimedia (TEM) for teaching vocabulary to young learnersat kindergarten B of Islamic Centre Purwodadi, Grobogan. This study employed R&D Design proposed by Borg and Gall (2003:772). Seven stages employed were information and research collecting, planning, developing, validating, revising, try out, and producing final TEM. Observation, interview, validation, performance-based assessment, and pre also post-test were administered to collect data. From results of collected data, they were found that applying TEM got positive perspectives toward teaching and learning process. In line with above statements, TEM is effective and feasible to teach young learners at kindergarten B of Islamic Centre Purwodadi, Grobogan.

Key words : Developing, Thematic, Multimedia, Young learners.

INTRODUCTION

Teaching English as foreign language to young learners is extraordinary challenging. For that reason, teachers have to utilize approaches, techniques, and strategies to grab learners' involvement and motivation. Before deciding sort of them for teaching and learning process, teachers have to meet particular characteristics of young learners. Scott and Ytreberg (1993:3) wrote that young learners tend to love playing and they will do something seriously when they enjoy those activities, also they do not bear in their mind whether those activities are difficult to solve when they feel comfortable and interested in activities. Moreover, Phillips (2010:5) stated that learners

prepared themselves to enjoy the planned activities from teachers without any anxiety and unselfconsciousness. In addition, Shin (2011:4) inserted that learners, especially young learners very love playing with language sounds, imitating, and making funny noises. From aforementioned young learners' characteristics, it can be said that teachers of young learners are requested to be creative in both designing and preparing materials in their classrooms. Teachers' creativity can be realized through creating, transforming, applying, and preparing song, chants, game, video, puppets, cards, and story, also movie for teaching their learners.

Nowadays, multimedia is one of the alternative tools that can be applied by

teachers in improving learners' vocabulary. Husty and Jackson (2008:34) proposed that the use of software can support learners' vocabulary development. It means that multimedia, software, and information technology can be considered as the choices for learning language to young learners. The consideration of applying multimedia in young learners' classroom is building on the attractiveness and interactivity for them. The attractiveness of this multimedia comes from performed display, pictures, sound, and animations. Meanwhile, the interactivity of it derives from interaction between learners and utilized multimedia which provides much information, answers, and exercises for learners.

Various types of multimedia emerge within some periods. Those multimedia types are linear, interactive, and hypermedia. This study focuses on the interactive one. Principally, the elements of interactive multimedia are voice command, mouse manipulation, text entry, touch screen, video capture, and live presentation. An interactive multimedia has unique characteristics that can be divided into eight categories: simulations, tools and open ended learning environments, hypermedia, games, web-based learning, tutorials, drills, and tests (Allessi and Trollip, 2001:75). Those media require users' participations or interactions for getting intended information. Moreover, the interactivity of interactive multimedia offers mutual action between learners, the

learning system, and the learning materials (Hick, 1997). In other words, it can be used by interacting through clicking the intended button that users acquire the certain information. The use of multimedia is not limited by situational context; it can be used every time and everywhere depending on the users' needs and purpose. This study employed some theories which linked to teach vocabulary for young learners, interactive multimedia for language learning, and its assessment. Those theories are learners centered learning, thematic-based learning, computer assisted language learning, contextual materials, interactive multimedia, and performance-based assessment.

Principally, the theories used for teaching English vocabulary for young learners, especially kindergarten B learners are learners-centered learning. Through this learning, learners are broadly engaged and be active in the whole class activities. Meanwhile, the role of the teachers are facilitating and guiding learners when they meet some difficulties and need for helps. Although the interaction happens limitedly, it was believed that learning occurs when learners interact with materials prepared by teachers (Montessori 1909/1964 in Bredekamp, 2011: 50).

Theme-based learning is appropriate method for learning early childhood based on the developmentally appropriate practice (DAP) because learners can learn in depth about particular topic related to

their needs. Dewey in Bredekamp and Copple (1997:53) claimed that this learning requires teachers also applied child-centered curriculum which curriculum should reflect the concept and topics that the learners is interested in and capable in learning. It means that materials used in the learning also have to contextualize to learners. Those contextual materials can be realized through contextual vocabulary, pictures, song, and rhymes, also video.

Ensuring the teaching and learning process run well, the assessment is totally needed for this issue. For young learners, performance-based assessment is one best way to show the learners' capabilities within learning process (Bredekamp, 2011:335). The reflection of this assessment is separated into two parts. The first one deals with performing on the computer-based assessment and second part refers to the total physical response in the classroom context.

When we are talking about young learners, it can be separated from their ages. Learners with age fifteen years old are assumed to be adulthood (Santrock,et al, 2007:42). Then, Paul (2003: 23) claimed that young learners in his book is addressed to learners which are attending primary school, whose their ages are six years old to the around eleven years old. It can be seen that young learners are one with ages six to eleven years old. Moreover, Reilly and Ward (2010:4) noted down that young learners, in their book have written very young learners refers to learners who have not started to attend to the compulsory school and still illiterate in both reading and writing. It can be stated that learners who are attending on the preschool which involve the learners from the ages four to six years old. In addition, Shin (2011:5) argued that young learners are divided into two parts namely very young learners and young learners themselves. The very young learners are addressed to them with under seven years old, while young learners for those with ages seven to twelve years old. So, the scopes of young learners are between ages of zero or baby to twelve years old. In schooling, those standard ages cover the early childhood education and primary schools. Linear view comes from Informal, Non-formal, and Early Childhood Education Department (2012). It can be summarized that early childhood start from baby to six years old and childhood end when the children complete the primary schools normally. Taking into account the brief review about young learners, the researcher assumes that young learners are children who attend to the schools from both preschool and primary schools. In Indonesia, various levels of preschools are packaged into early childhood education which offers to public from baby's care, playgroup, kindergarten A, and kinder-garten B level. Meanwhile, the primary schools are those who age seven to twelve years old and various schools are also available in Indonesia such as: state primary school, private primary school,

international primary school, and natural school. This study focuses on discussing on the kindergarten B level which involves learners with their ages 5 to 6 years old.

Vocabulary can be defined as the words or set of words which plays important role in the communication. Then, Snow, et al (1998) in Bredekamp (2011:361) stated that vocabulary is the combination of receptive and expressive language that is represented through the number of words which person knows and uses when listening and speaking. It can be notified that vocabulary is one of language components which involve receptive and productive skills. So, when one is assumed to master great vocabulary, he or she commonly is not difficult to express their ideas and information either spoken or written style. Moreover, vocabulary knowledge is important because it encompasses all the words we must know to access our background knowledge, express our ideas, communicate effectively, and learn about new concepts (Sedita 2005: 11). It can be said that vocabulary is the medium for communicating ideas and information between participants in the interaction. Without vocabulary, it is guaranteed that communication is impossibly built. For learning in depth, the study deals with the words including new and background knowledge of words which influence the learners' communication focuses on receptive and expressive language.

The importance of vocabulary impact on others components and skills of language. As it is stated by Rivers in Nunan (1991:117) claimed that vocabulary plays significantly in communication whether it is on the first, second or foreign language. By using vocabulary, speakers or learners do not meet any difficulties in expressing their feelings, idea, and share information. By doing so, vocabulary also plays crucial role in classroom context. As far as we know, the objective of teaching English itself whether as first, second, or foreign language is to develop learners' communicative competence. In one hand, Thornbury (2002:13) asserted that the communication cannot be run if learners or speakers do not have vocabulary, otherwise they still do little thing in communication if they do not master the grammar. It means that speakers or listeners can express their meaning without syntax, but it is impossible thing to express the meaning without vocabulary.

Before teaching and learning vocabulary will be conducted, types of vocabulary should be recognized by teachers for achieving clear learning objectives for their learners. Nation (1990:70) ascertains that two types of vocabulary are receptive and productive vocabulary. The former one refers to the knowing a word involves being able to recognize it when it is heard (What is the sound like?) or when it seen (What does it look like?) and having an expectation of what grammatical pattern the word will

occurrence. In other words, this type asks learners to recognize vocabulary through both sound and picture in order to enables guessing grammatical pattern of vocabulary that have been learnt. The latter one concerns on the knowing a word involves being able to pronounce the word, how to write and to spell it, how to use it in grammatical pattern along with the word in usually collocates with it. It can be said that this type demands learners to pronounce, write, spell, and apply those vocabulary. Thus, their recognitions of those words are indicated through correct pronouncing, writing, and spelling of intended vocabulary. This study focuses mainly on the receptive vocabulary and a little bit of productive vocabulary of pronouncing. The consideration of choosing this type is building on the characteristics of this kindergarten learners in which they actually respond physically and imitate what their teachers' ask for them (Reilly and Ward, 2010:9).

Many researchers and experts asserted that R&D is not new in education. For bridging our understanding, they describe the definitions of R&D. As this study deals with, Borg and Gall (2003:772) mentioned that R&D is the process of developing and validating educational products. It can be said that this process is developing and validating either new materials or only the existing materials. Moreover, additional view comes from Rodgers (1998:23) wrote that R&D referred to systematic, investigate, and

experimental activities which involve innovation or high levels of technical risks and it carried on the purpose of acquiring new knowledge whether or not that knowledge will have specific practical application, creating new or improved materials, devices, processes, or services. In other words, this kind of study which has systematic cycles in developing and creating intended products. Another supporting definition emerges from The National Science Foundation (2012) assumed that it is sort of creative work undertaken on a systematic basis in order to increase the stock of knowledge, including knowledge of man, culture and society, and the use of this stock of knowledge to devise new applications including administrative expenses for R&D. For doing so, it can be claimed that this study deals with innovative efforts of researchers in applying knowledge and theories to develop expected products.

From the elaborated descriptions about the gap between significance and facts concerning on language learning to young learners, the researcher intends to develop English multimedia for young learners, especially kindergarten B learners. This study distinguishes from the previous product which this one is focusing materials in a theme, so learners study more and detail information which relates to the theme for their daily lives and communications.

Method

The purpose of this study is developing Thematic English Multimedia (TEM) for kindergarten B learners of Early Childhood Education especially Islamic Centre Purwodadi, Grobogan which focuses on "Plant Theme". The researcher considers the appropriate research design of this study is Research and Development (R & D). According to Borg and Gall (2003:772), it is one of the research designs which intends on developing and validating educational products. As it was written in the earlier part, the educational products are referring to materials object encompassing textbooks, instruction film, procedures and processes such as a method of teaching or organizing instruction.

The process of this design can be defined as R&D cycle. As Borg and Gall (2003:772) noted down that this cycle employed observation the preliminary studies related to developed product or materials, developing intended product, validating developed product to some experts, and revising suggestions from expert, and trying out the product which it will be applied eventually. This study dealt with stages of development proposed by Borg and Gall (2003). Those stages are modified depending on the needs of development of this study, especially developing self- instructional multimedia for kindergarten B of Islamic Centre, Purwodadi, Grobogan. The researcher applied and modified the basic stages of development are (1) research and information collecting, (2) planning , (3) developing preliminary form of product, (4) validating product, (5) revising product, (6) trying out product, (7) final product.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

For getting intended data, the researcher decided to apply some instruments for collecting those data. First instrument deals with observation. Some points of this observation involving teacher's preparation, teacher's presentation, execution or methods, personal characteristics, and teacher/learners interaction. English teacher at Islamic Centre, Purwodadi, Grobogan prepared this interactive multimedia well by lighting up LCD, arranging learners' seat and arrangement, and creating lesson plan. Then, classroom presentation of English teacher was found attractive and interactive. It can be seen that she explained material in understandable way, and then she also gave well atmosphere for learners through answering learners' questions attractively and instructing learners in a fun way. More, methods or executions used in the classroom were attractive. Besides using of Thematic English Multimedia, she also applied some methods for grabbing fun classroom such as guessing, puppet, and songs. Fourth, personal characteristics found that teacher transformed her patience in eliciting responses into better way. Here, she added more chance for growing up

learners' responses and gave well feedback when her learners posed wrong responses. Last, teacher and learners' interaction were found that they interacted attractively, smoothly, and funny during teaching and learning process by using Thematic English Multimedia. From previous elaborations, it can be drawn a conclusion that teacher changed her style in teaching. In addition, learners found that they transformed their behavior positively in English class. They were found that class changed well including their activeness, involvement, and happines in the classroom. Their activeness was found that learners were eager to imitate and respsond questions and instructions from Thematic Englsih Multimedia. The second one involved that they well managed during an hour of meeting than in the previous observation. Last, they looked happy and attractive during teaching and learning process, they felt that they did not learn but play at that time.

From the result of questionnaires, it was found that 85.71% of English teacher had positive perspectives about applying Thematic English Multimedia in teaching and learning process and only 14.29% found that negative perspective of applying Thematic English Multimedia in English class. Her positive perpectives were about understanding, feasibilty, attractiveness, and competency of Thematic English Multimedia in the classroom, meanwhile the negative one referred to the preparing Thematic English Multimedia for English

class, she thought that it was time consuming because she needed to prepare LCD and external speaker before operating it.

From the result of interview, this study administered structure interview for some learners which represented their friends. There were four learners which were interviewed with five questions. They were both two females and males. Those five questions were involving easiness of presented materials in Thematic English Multimedia, effectiveness of this multimedia, attractiveness, learners' happiness, and learners' competence for operating Thematic English Multimedia. All of them also have positive perspectives toward Thematic English Multimedia for learning English. Then, they stated that games, songs, and story were really interesting so that they were not bored in the classroom. In addition, they felt that provided materials were easy to be understood, and they also felt happy when imitating utterances from model. Then, existing games were also interesting and funny because they could play many games and they felt that they did not like learn but they played.

Fourth, it was found that there were thirteen learners who got score above 70 and four learners who got score under 70 while three learners were absent at that time. From the result, it was indicated that the average of this assessment was 87.65%. Then, 81.89% of learners got above average and 18.12% got under

average. The learners who got under the score investigated that they did not pay attention to the instructions and did not respond instructions properly. The result of observations, questionnaires, interviews, pre-test and post-test, and performance-based assessment were found that Thematic English Multimedia can be accepted for teaching and learning at kindergarten B of Islamic Centre Purwodadi, Grobogan.

CONCLUSION

Firstly, it was found that kindergarten B of Islamic Centre Purwodadi, Grobogan do not apply some learning media for teaching English, this school used textbook and some flashcards for teaching learners. Meanwhile, the characteristics of young learners of those ages love playing and doing fun activity. In doing so, this study contributed to develop learning media that is Thematic English Multimedia for teaching English.

Secondly, in developing Thematic English Multimedia, there were some stages which were proposed by Borg and Gall (2003). The first stage dealt with starting to organize an observation at kindergarten Islamic Centre Purwodadi, Grobogan. This observation intended to do need analysis and determine what materials were developed. Afterwards, the researcher got some facts from preliminary observation from school, she planned and developed intended product that is Thematic English Multimedia (TEM). Then,

validating also was done of some experts to know the feasibility of product that has been developed. Moreover, revising TEM was employed to correct the previous suggestions and corrections from experts. Next, trying TEM out was the following step in this study. At last, the final TEM was ready to be published. In this study, the researcher modified some steps which are proposed by Borg and Gall (2003). In other words, this study only implemented seven stages for developing Thematic English Multimedia.

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