

THE USE OF QUIZLET AS AN ONLINE TOOL TO IMPROVE VOCABULARY MASTERY

PENGGUNAAN QUIZLET SEBAGAI MEDIA ONLINE UNTUK MENINGKATKAN PENGUASAAN KOSAKATA

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Abstrak

Penelitian tindakan kelas ini bertujuan untuk meningkatkan kemampuan penguasaan kosakata siswa melalui penggunaan Quizlet. Penelitian dilaksanakan dalam dua siklus dan masing-masing siklus terdiri dari dua pertemuan, dimulai dari April 2018 hingga Mei 2018. Proses siklus yang ditemukan oleh Kemmis dan McTaggart (1998, dikutip dari Burns, 2010) digunakan dalam penelitian ini. Langkah-langkah yang ada dalam siklus yakni perencanaan, tindakan dan observasi, dan refleksi. Subyek dalam penelitian ini melibatkan seorang guru bahasa Inggris dan 32 siswa kelas 7 di SMP N Cahaya (nama samaran). Lebih lanjutnya, peneliti memutuskan untuk membagi tindakan ke dalam tiga bagian utama: pre-Quizlet-based activities, Quizlet-based activities, dan post-Quizlet-based activities. Rentetan tindakan yang dilakukan dapat membantu siswa dalam hal penyediaan media yang menarik untuk mempelajari kosakata, mengingat kosakata utama yang diajarkan, dan menuangkan opini siswa. Hasil dari tes yang dilakukan sebelum dan sesudah tindakan juga menunjukkan adanya peningkatan. Nilai rata-rata tes yang dilaksanakan sebelum tindakan yakni 74.8 dan nilai rata-rata tes yang dilaksanakan setelah tindakan yakni 93.3.

Kata kunci: Penelitian tindakan kelas, penguasaan kosakata, media daring, Quizlet

Abstract

This action research was aimed to improve the seventh grade students' vocabulary mastery through the use of Quizlet. The study was conducted in two cycles and two meetings for each cycle from April 2018 to May 2018. A cyclical process proposed by Kemmis and McTaggart (1998, cited in Burns, 2010) was employed to conduct the research. The steps included planning, action and observation, and reflection. The research participants were the English teacher as the collaborator and 32 seventh grade students of SMP N Cahaya (pseudonym). Furthermore, the researcher decided to divide the actions into three main sections: pre-Quizlet-based activities, Quizlet-based activities, and post-based activities. The series of actions could give the students interesting media to learn the vocabulary, memorizing the core vocabulary which was taught in the lesson, and express their opinion in form of a written text. The result of pre-test and post-test also revealed an improvement in which the pre-test mean scores was 74.8 and the post-test mean scores was 93.3.

Keywords: Action research, vocabulary mastery, online tool, Quizlet

Introduction

In Indonesia, learning English as a foreign language is necessary. According to the curriculum 2013, the purpose of learning English for junior high school students is to make them be

able to use the language in various contexts in both spoken and written forms. In addition, the curriculum 2013 also mentions that learning English is a first experience for the majority of junior high school students. That is why some language aspects such as vocabulary mastery,

pronunciation, stress, language structure, and others are not easily learned since those might have many differences from the mother tongue of the students, which is Bahasa Indonesia (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2016).

Furthermore, there are four language skills taught in the classroom based on the curriculum: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. As mentioned above, there are several aspects of language that need to be learned by students. Vocabulary, of all language aspects, emerges as an essential aspect to be taught in order to gain a good understanding of the target language. Indeed, all languages in the world have words. Language emerges as words in the beginning, at a time we learn our first language and any subsequent languages (Thornbury, 2002). It is said that the invention of new words and the acquisition of words never stops. In this way, vocabulary should be taught since it is the foundation of a language.

Regarding the vocabulary mastery in EFL context such as in Indonesia, it is said that students who have learned English for six years are unable to communicate in the language because they have less vocabulary than they should acquire (Nurweni, 1997; Madya, 2002).

The same problem was found in SMP N Cahaya (pseudonym). According to the preliminary studies, the students admitted that they felt it was hard to understand what the teacher said in English because they were lack of vocabulary. Although they had a smartphone, they did not utilize the gadget to access any particular application which could help them to learn the language. Furthermore, the use of

technology in the language classroom was limited. The teacher could not prepare any interesting vocabulary teaching media because she had limitation of time and knowledge.

Based on those problems, the researcher intended to improve their vocabulary mastery with the help of educational technology equipment, especially the computer lab and internet connection. Teaching equipment is believed to be helpful for both motivational reasons and practical when it is used in the classroom (Harmer, 2001). As seen from Harmer's statement, the use of technology in the language classroom is a worth to try.

Regarding the use of technology, the teacher did not utilize the technology in the school thoroughly to create any vocabulary teaching media and activity. The students also did not use their smartphones to help themselves learn the language. The situation mentioned before was the base for the researcher to conduct an action research which employed Quizlet as an online tool to improve the seventh grade students' vocabulary mastery.

Research Method

This study is action research in nature. One of the English teachers of SMP N Cahaya (pseudonym) as the collaborator and 32 seventh grade students were included as research participants. In addition, qualitative and quantitative data were obtained in this study. In order to obtain the qualitative data, observation, photographs taking, open-ended survey, and interview were employed during the study. Meanwhile, the quantitative data were obtained

through the pre-test and post-test to assess the students' vocabulary mastery, and through closed-ended survey. Furthermore, a cyclical process of action research proposed by Kemmis and McTaggart (1998, cited in Burns, 2010) was applied.

Research Findings and Discussions

The implementation of Quizlet in the language classroom involved various activities. Besides the activities using Quizlet, other activities were also included such as building awareness of the topic being learned, looking for the meanings of the difficult words, playing a song, discussing the song, and expressing the students' opinion related to the song. Subsequently, those activities were divided into three main sections: pre-Quizlet-based activities, Quizlet-based activities, and post-Quizlet-based activities. Those series of actions gave positive results on the students' vocabulary mastery. The students were happy to learn the language, especially the vocabulary since the use of Quizlet was interesting. In order to support the findings, the pre-test and post-test were conducted to see their improvement. In the pre-test, the students' mean score was 74.8. Meanwhile, the students' mean score in the post-test was 93.3; it showed an improvement.

The actions applied resulted in the ability of the students to memorize the core vocabulary better. As mentioned, the core vocabulary expected to be acquired was 2000 high frequency words. Thornburry (2002) mentions that mastering those words enable language learners to understand most written texts. Additionally,

the song lyrics in the lesson exposed words which were included in the core vocabulary. Since they were able to memorize the words better, they were able to understand the meaning of the song.

Furthermore, Cameron (2011) states that vocabulary mastery is a cyclical process. It needs a repetition to build language learners' knowledge to understand the meaning of words and its use. It is in line with what Nunan (2015) states that repetition in vocabulary teaching is a necessary. In addition, Quizlet provided various features to teach vocabulary repeatedly. The words appeared in various activities and the students were automatically exposed to those words. It is also important to highlight that vocabulary teaching can be done by using an L1 translation (Nation, 2008; Richards, 2015). This way of teaching could be met on Quizlet. Quizlet was basically a flashcard online. Therefore, the researcher typed down L2 words on one side and L1 words on another side of the cards. That was how the students learned the meaning of the words by using their mother tongue as a resource.

Subsequently, the use of Quizlet as a form of technology also showed positive results. It was in accordance with studies that were conducted by Vargas (2011), Kose et al. (2016), Wright (2016), and Dizon (2016). According to them, the positive results coming from the use of Quizlet was in line with the fact that technology could be a great resource in the language teaching and learning process (Kern, 2006; Harmer, 2007; Richards, 2015). In relation to the findings, the English teacher had more awareness that there was an online tool that could be used in the vocabulary teaching and learning process. The

findings also revealed to the teacher that giving various activities in which the words were exposed repeatedly could effectively improve the students' vocabulary mastery. In conclusion, the use of Quizlet as an online tool was indeed helpful to improve the students' vocabulary mastery.

Conclusion

The research findings revealed that the seventh grade students' vocabulary mastery of SMP N Cahaya improved with the help of Quizlet as an online tool. The implementation of Quizlet itself employed various activities in which those activities were divided into three main sections: pre-Quizlet-based activities, Quizlet-based activities, and post-Quizlet-based activities.

The preliminary studies were conducted and it showed that the students' vocabulary mastery was poor. It was in accordance with the result of pre-test and interview with the teacher and the students. Therefore, Quizlet was proposed to be implemented in the vocabulary teaching and learning process.

By employing the Quizlet in the language teaching and learning process, there was an improvement on the students' vocabulary mastery. It was proven that Quizlet enabled the students to memorize better the words taught in the lesson and to use those words to express their opinion in written form.

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