

## Vocabulary Enrichment through Mnemonics technique for Young Learners In *Smart and Fun* English Course

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### Abstract

The purposes of this study were to describe the implementation of teacher's strategies in teaching English vocabulary to young learners for young learners, and to describe the problems of the implementation of teacher's strategies in teaching English vocabulary for young learners. The design of this study was a qualitative descriptive design by using observation and interview. The research subject of this study was the English teacher who taught the Primary-Intermediate classes at SMART AND FUN English course in Samarinda. To collect and to analyze the data, an interactive data analysis was used. The study revealed the following findings: the researcher found out that the the teacher has already grasped the concept of mnemonics techniques, and tried to use one of them (cards that contain pictures) The use of picture itself is included as the visual mnemonics technique, which makes use of visual aids in teaching vocabularies. The researcher also found out that the teacher has understood the theory of mnemonics technique, based on the statement that he provided at least two techniques – pictures for low-level students and storytelling for high-level ones. The research subject then claimed that he had already tried to implement two kinds of technique, called pictures and storytelling. However, based on the interview from this study, the research subject claimed that the teacher must have knowledge about the concept of memorization in order to understand the mnemonics technique. In addition, the research subject also stated that using mnemonics technique take a certain amount of time, then suggesting the teachers to be prepared well before using the techniques. The researcher concluded that the mnemonics technique is a good way for English teachers to be implemented in future teachings. The mnemonics technique is one of many techniques to teach vocabularies to the students, however, it can be done in many ways that deals with creativity, such as the use of pictures, drilling, storytelling etc. Hopefully, the English teachers do not have to be confused if they want to teach vocabularies, even the particular ones to the students by taking benefits from using mnemonics technique.

**Keywords:** Mnemonics technique, Vocabulary mastery, SMART AND FUN English course, Young learner

### 1. Introduction

Vocabulary of English is one of the language skill elements in which it has a vital role for young learners in learning foreign languages. It also means that teaching listening, speaking, reading, and writing cannot be separated from teaching vocabulary. This is one of language competences which enhances the skill in language. Alqahtani (2015) argued that the possession of vocabulary is critical for those who want to learn a language because if not, the mastery of a language will be hindered. Rivers in Nunan (1991) argued that the acquisition of an adequate vocabulary is essential for successful second language use because without an extensive vocabulary, we will be unable to use the structures and functions we may have learned for comprehensible communication.

## 2. Literature Review

Thornbury (2002) in his book stated that there are several factors contributed in hindering the process of learning vocabulary, especially for students. Pronunciation, spelling, grammar, and meaning are some of the problems. Thus, creativity is an important thing for teachers in order to teach vocabulary effectively and efficiently.

Amiryousefi and Ketabi (2011) mentioned that Mnemonics technique are divided into several methods. One of the most popular mnemonics is keyword method. It can motivate the students and the classroom will be more interesting. Mnemonics technique is a way to help students remember information more effectively and easily. Amiryousefi and Ketabi (2011) stated that these techniques used to aid the recall of new information. The implementation of mnemonic technique helps the students to remember more information they have learned and also can strengthen their vocabulary mastery.

According to Djiwandono (2009) the use of mnemonics techniques are depended on the student's learning style. There are students who prefer to find the meaning of words from the dictionary and save it in their memory. Therefore, mnemonics technique can be used to memorize difficult words. Based on the reasons stated above, the researcher will conduct a research entitled 'Vocabulary Enrichment through Mnemonic Technique For Young Learners in Smart and Fun English course'.

Based on the description above, the reseach questions can be formulated as:

1. How is the implementation of Mnemonics Technique in teaching English vocabulary to young learners in Smart and Fun English course?
2. What are the problems of implementation of Mnemonics Technique in teaching English vocabulary to young learners in Smart and Fun English course?

## 3. Methods

The design of this study is qualitative descriptive study. This study is expected to be able to depict, explain and show the phenomenon investigated on the students' vocabulary mastery in "Smart and Fun" English course. Marczyk et al (2005) explained that descriptive study is useful because it can provide important information regarding the average member of a group. Specifically, by gathering data on a large enough groups of people, a researcher can describe the average member or the average performance of a member, of the particular group being studied.

The subject was taken from teachers of the Smart and Fun English course in academic years 2020 as a population with total 30 teachers. In order to get the appropriate subject, the researcher then decided to put on these criteria as follow:

1. The research subject must have taught English courses at Smart and Fun English course for about three years or more;
2. The research subject must have taught English between Primary and Intermediate classes, and;
3. The research subject allows him or herself to be observed and interviewed.

The research instruments in this study are observation and interview guidelines prepared by the researcher himself. The observation checklist is prepared based on the concept of mnemonics technique by Thompson in Amiryousefi and Ketabi's journal (2011), and characteristics of young learners by Scott and Ytberg (2000), while

interview guideline is prepared by the problems theory of mnemonics technique mentioned by Thompson in Amiryousefi and Ketabi (2011).

#### **4. Result**

In order to answer the research question number 1, the researcher used questionnaire which is based on the theory of readiness provided by Maddox, Forte, and Boozer (2000). There are 30 items of statements which represented the theory.

The study revealed the following findings: the researcher found out that the level of readiness that English Department students of 2015 have is 78%, considered as “high” level. Based on three indicators that represent the theory of readiness used in this study, they are considered ready to act as English pre-service teachers of PPL 2018.

Meanwhile, the researcher used interview guideline to answer research question number 2. The instrument is based on the problems in teaching found by Abongdia, Adu, and Foncha (2015). There are 15 questions which represented the problems.

From the interview session on those two participants, it can be assumed that there were some problems appeared while they were following PPL 2018, however, they could not solve all of the problems. The problems that they faced are: the distance between their home and school, the total amount of students to be handled, the classroom management, lack of advices and support from the mentor, lack of knowledge gained from the observation, lack of initiation to build relationship with school staff, and lack of opportunity to follow school activities besides teaching.

#### **5. Discussion**

The result of observation showed about the teacher’ performance in implementing the mnemonics technique based on the classification of mnemonics technique mentioned by Thompson in Amiryousefi and Ketabi (2011). The researcher found that the teacher has already grasped the concept of mnemonics techniques, and tried to use one of them (cards that contain pictures) The use of picture itself is included as the visual mnemonics technique, which makes use of visual aids in teaching vocabularies. This findings supported the use of mnemonics technique in teaching vocabulary as mentioned by Thompson in Amiryousefi and Ketabi (2011). Furthermore, this findings also same with the previous studies done beforehand. Hilmiah (2016) mentioned in her findings that teachers at “GLC” English course also understand with the concept of mnemonics technique, thus implementing it into teaching process. In addition, the findings also quite same as the findings acquired by Puspita and Muhajir (2014), where they found out that the English teacher at SD Negeri Bogor Baru had implemented word wall technique in the teaching process. Although there are differences regarding the process of implementing mnemonics technique from this study and those that had been done beforehand, it can be concluded that the mnemonics technique are quite popular to be done in teaching vocabulary. The studies from Rosdiana (2009) and Fasih et al (2018) about mnemonics technique in teaching vocabularies revealed that the technique helps both the teacher and students to teach and learn vocabularies better, which are same with the result of this study.

From the interview session, it is known that the teacher has understood the theory of mnemonics technique, based on the statement that he provided at least two techniques – pictures for low-level students and storytelling for high-level ones. The research subject then claimed that he had already tried to implement two kinds of technique, called pictures and

storytelling. However, based on the interview from this study, the research subject claimed that the teacher must have knowledge about the concept of memorization in order to understand the mnemonics technique. In addition, the research subject also stated that using mnemonics technique take a certain amount of time, then suggesting the teachers to be prepared well before using the techniques. According to Amiryousefi and Ketabi (2011), the implementation of mnemonics technique requires a certain level of mastery, and capable to maximize the use of technique after finding the appropriate one. In addition, Amiryousefi and Ketabi (2011) also added that the teachers who implement the technique should be able to understand the students' characteristic which correlates with the type of technique that would be executed when teaching. This findings about the problem that appear while implementing mnemonics technique is also similiar with the previous studies. Hilmiah (2016) and Puspita and Muhajir (2014) found out that the main problem is within the teachers themselves about their understanding about the concept of teaching, including memorization technique, added by the condition experienced by the students. In addition, Puspita and Muhajir (2014) in their study said that there are no difficulties in implementing the mnemonics technique, as long as the teacher does not become lazy to improve the teaching process

Scott and Yteberg (2000) have identified the general characteristic of children as young learners. From the observation, the researcher found out that there are at least three charactristic (point 4, 7, and 10) of young learners found from the students that the subject had taught. The students are prone to lose attention and concentration when following the learning process by the teacher although have been taught with mnemonics technique. They also like to study by having themselves involved in mini games in the learning rime, thus making them enjoyed. Because of that, they have positive attitude and enthusiasm in following the learning of vocabulary as long as they feel enjoyed. Those characteristic affected the result of learning process of the students, so the subject devised a way to solve it – giving a drilling sequence again for those who still did not understand the vocabularies that had been taught.

## **6. Conclusion**

Teaching vocabulary is essential for English teachers in order to make sure that the students know to use English correctly. Mnemonics technique is one of the way of teaching vocabularies through the use of memorization. Based on the discussion in Chapter 4, the research subject (English teacher at “Smart and Fun” English course) had implemented at least two of the mnemonics technique, namely picture cards and storytelling. In accordance with the implementation of mnemonics technique, it is also concluded that the subject mentioned two problems that must be dealt before implementing the techniques, namely lack of understanding about the concept of memorization and readiness of the teacher himself. The researcher then concluded that the mnemonics technique is a good way for English teachers to be implemented in future teachings. The mnemonics technique is one of many techniques to teach vocabularies to the students, however, it can be done in many ways that deals with creativity, such as the use of pictures, drilling, storytelling etc. Hopefully, the English teachers do not have to be confused if they want to teach vocabularies, even the particular ones to the students by taking benefits from using mnemonics technique. On the other hand, it is important for the teachers to always improve their understanding about the characteristic of students and teaching skills so that they can maximize their effort to get the best result.

## **7. Sugesstions**

According to the conclusion, the researcher then would like to give some suggestions as follow:

1. For the English course, the result of this study can be used as a reference in evaluating the use of mnemonics technique as a way to improve vocabulary teaching.
2. For the English Department students, the result of this study can be used as a reference in evaluating the use of mnemonics technique as a way to improve teaching skills, thus training the students as better future teachers.
3. For the future researchers, the result of this study is not a perfect one, because the research subject involved in this research is limited to only one teacher, thus can be used as a consideration for those who want to conduct a deeper research related in examining the use of mnemonic techniques by involving a large group of research subject thereafter, and even adding appropriate research instruments beside observation and interview guidelines

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