
USING LETTERLAND AS CHILD FRIENDLY TECHNIQUE IN TEACHING ENGLISH VOCABULARY FOR YOUNG LEARNERS

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Abstract

This research focused on developing students' learning English vocabulary by letterland. It was used to solve the English teacher's problem in teaching English at SD Bina Putra Sepatan Timur Tangerang. When the writer observed the English teachers in the fourth grade SD Bina Putra Sepatan Timur Tangerang, they used monotonic technique and LKS (Lembar Kerja Siswa) as media for teaching English. The writer offered the letterland technique to the teachers teaching English in SD Bina Putra Sepatan Timur Tangerang. This letterland has many advantages, such as; it make children have fun in learning English, it was because its program provides a secure learning environment where children can happily develop cognitive, language and literacy skill and it also gives teachers the opportunity to utilize useful English in talking with children, and conversation-based teaching provides from extending their vocabulary. As we know, teaching students on elementary school is different from teaching adults. Young children' learning moods is not stable every other minute, and they make themselves difficult to sit still. On other hand, they show a greater motivation that adults to do things. Therefore, the way that teachers teach the young children should be creative. One of the most possible ways the students need is interesting and amusing classroom situation. Therefore, the way that teachers teach the young children should be creative. So, choosing the Letterland as technique for teaching young learners will be the real application in the class and friendly for children.

Keywords: letterland as child friendly technique, teaching English, vocabulary

INTRODUCTION

English has been taught to the fourth graders in SD Bina Putra Sepatan Tangerang, because English as subject that is included to the school's curriculum, so the students have to learn English although they are not interesting and not understanding about English subject. Therefore, the teacher teaches students should be creative to make interesting, amusing classroom situation and using child-friendly technique to increase the students' confidence and make the students were happy and fun in learning English process in the classroom.

Unfortunately, when the writer observed the teacher still applied the monotonic technique. Monotonous technique is a hand of traditional teaching learning process which only applied one method or technique during teaching learning material, the teacher does not use other interesting or joyful technique of teaching and the teacher also does not use various kinds of teaching learning instructions. For instance, the teacher in the class always asked the students to memorize the vocabularies and do the exercise in LKS (*Lembar Kerja Siswa*), LKS is as media for teaching learning process. So the students seem not interesting with the learning English process. It is showed when the teacher asked students to do the worksheet in LKS and after that the teacher asked students come to in front of the class one by one to mention some

vocabularies that they have done in their worksheet. But ironically the students refuse it. It was because the student was shy and not be confidence. It can be a problem for success of learning English process, because the confidence is important of successful process learning English for the students. Yaverbaum (2002) stated that all of the learning strategies are important, but the one related to building learner's confidence, is worth to be considered one of the most important.

As we know that there are many techniques that have appeared in field of teaching structurally, but the technique that imaginative, friendly learning environment, and which build learner's confidence and creates a motivation to inquiry similar as in child's natural language acquisition is still the conventional one. So, choosing the Letterland as technique for teaching young learners will be the real application in the class and friendly for the children. Because the basic mission of Letterland is to ensure that many young learners have fun in learning English. Wendon (1999) said that Letterland is structured learning programed which is designed to teach young children the basics of the English language. This program provides a secure learning environment where children can happily develop cognitive, language and literacy skills which include: phonemic awareness, alliteration and symbol/sound links, letter formation, blending and segmenting,

word and sentence building, vocabulary and language, imaginative play and creative writing.

Based on the language and literacy skills, vocabulary is one of the important skills that be mastered by the learners. It also takes an important part in the language use. It has a great impact to the students when they want to convey and share their opinion by oral and written. Agustina (2015:52-57) stated that in learning foreign language mastering vocabularies become one of the important keys to understand English in order we can comprehend the four skills, they are speaking, writing, reading, and listening. Without having many vocabularies, it will be very impossible for the learners can understand the foreign language.” But teaching vocabulary for children and adult is different. Allen (1983) “the Elementary students need to learn words for common areas of live: words related to food, clothing, shelter, and so on”. Although, learning vocabulary is important, but students still have problem in learning vocabulary.

Problem in learning a word is related to the amount of effort needed to learn and remember it. It is also called as learning burden. Nation (2001) claimed that the learning burden of a word depends on three things: the learner’s previous experience of English and their mother tongue, the way in which the word is learnt or taught, and the intrinsic difficulty of the word. Second language vocabulary learning can be influenced by first language vocabulary. Other factors that make some words more difficult than others. Therefore, choosing the Letterland as technique for teaching English vocabulary will be the real application in the class and friendly for the children.

Referring to the previous explanation, this research is intended to investigate how Letterland technique is applied in teaching English vocabulary to young language learners. It is also aimed to help children learning vocabulary by applying letterland technique. From all of the problems described above children will possibly get improvement vocabulary since they experience learning using Letterland technique. So, the writer proposes the research entitled: “Using Letterland as Child Friendly Technique in Teaching English Vocabulary at SD Bina Putra Sepatan timur Tangerang”

RESEARCH METHOD

The research method that was used in this research is qualitative method. Qualitative research is a method in implementing the action research. Bell, (2005:4) defined action research is inquiry or research which focused on the efforts to improve the quality of organization and its performance.

This type of research is being chosen because it is very appropriate in improving items in measurement instruments, as the object of this research is to develop a measurement that will assist in conducting the research. The writer is going to see the phenomenon of problem in her area research object by participating as an observer in the use of Letterland technique in teaching vocabulary in fourth grade SD Bina Putra Tangerang.

Meanwhile, qualitative research is the researcher’s description of what participants do or say about themselves and their activities in an eeducational setting (Cresswell, 2012).

However, the writer will try to analyze the development of the fourth grade students’ achievement that was taught using Letterland by the teacher of the fourth grade in SD Bina Putra. This observation placed on Jl. Gatot Subroto Kedaung Barat. Sepatan Timur Tangerang.

The research was conducted from April 10th Mei 03rd 2017. It is about a month then the writer would be conducted in six times for twice a week. The research was conducted in the fourth grade of SD Bina Putra. It was because the writer have ever been doing the research when she had opportunity that was given by the University for doing the research to fulfill requirement for thesis writing of the Master Degree in English in 2013 that the title is “The Effect of Using Letterland and Game on Student’s vocabulary”. And the writer also had given training to the English teachers in SD Bina Putra in 2013. And the writer continued her research in different student but in the same class, the fourth grade. In this opportunity the writer just wanted to know how letterland technique is applied in teaching English vocabulary by the teacher in SD Bina Putra Sepatan Ttimur Tangerang.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Teaching vocabulary by Letterland Technique

In order to gain the information of using Letterland technique for developing children’s vocabulary, the teacher would give nine characters of Letterland. They were, Clever Cat, Annie Apple, Dippy Duck, Harry Hat Man, Munching Mike, Talking Tess, Sammy Snake, Impy Ink and Noisy Nick.

For the process activities or the learning process, the teacher adopted the activities from Alfiana Rochmah (2015) in her journal about “The Use of Letterland Method in Teaching Reading at Early Year Level to Pre-school students in an Informal Education in Bandar Lampung.”

The lesson was started by praying together. Under the teacher guidance, teacher asked one of

child that would lead to pray together. It means that the children would have the sense of leadership.

The first meeting was introducing two characters; they were Clever Cat. And Annie Apple. Before introducing Clever Cat, children felt enthusiasm because they would meet new friends and they had meet this character before, and then, the teacher told several things related to Clever Cat, for example her favorite foods or hobbies and so on. Children should guess the characters after teacher told all the characteristic of the character. After children knowing the Letterlander, the teacher told that Clever Cat would have special sound and the sound like this /ke/. By using action trick to link the entire alphabet it may help the children to remember with their multi-sensory.

Continuing to next, the teacher might give was pretending by eating apple. Apple had already been common to them. When introducing this character made children soon recognized it and guessing what the character was. After they were already known. The teacher gave them several words that linked to the letter of 'a' such as 'arrow', 'ant' and 'apple'. There would be several times to repeat if the time was enough.

The second meeting was introducing two characters they were Dippy Duck and Harry Hat man. The first character that would be introduced was Dippy Duck. Before starting the lesson the teacher gave the warming up activity such as singing "banana, banana yellow or green, banana, banana full of vitamins, banana, banana so soft and sweet, banana, banana, it's good to eat, one two tree four". The children were happy and enjoyed the warming up. Then when the teacher introduced the character, she gave a story like "today we are going to meet our new friend, and he like playing drum, and then let's plays your drum". When children were interested to the lesson, they might pay attention and feel happy during learning process. By the end of this learning, children would have puzzle. It became an activity that it was another activity which replaced doing worksheet. Next turn was introducing the character of Harry Hat Man. When the teacher introduced Harry Hat Man, teacher would begin the lesson if the children had already been quiet and one was speaking at all. It was because the character Harry Hat Man would feel horrible headache if he heard noises. Harry Hat Man has special sound just whisper /heh/. For the action trick, children should put they hand in front of their mouth then blew it on to their hand. If it was felt warm then children had succeed to produce correct sound. The activity of this letter was making a hat.

In the third meeting three friends were introduced, they were Munching Mike, Talking Tess and Sammy Snake. Before starting the teacher gave instruction to children that the activity they would take was playing magnet, and then she asked the children to pay attention, and they were not allowed to disturb other friends and to make a noisy. The teacher introduced Munching Mike. The character represented the letter sound of 'm'. This Letterlander has also special sound, he said /me/. The words had introduced some sound liked to the character were milk, map and mountain.

After finishing the first character, the teacher was going to introduce Talking Tess and she said /the/. The children then were invited to meet Talking Tess as their new friend. They would go to their friend's house by pretending to use train in order to get Talking Tess' house. After coming to their destination, they would have several things connected to the character like toy and tree. It would be easy to memorize if the children saw the object immediately. The activity used was a train's puzzle.

The last friend for this meeting was Sammy Snake. He said /ss/. Then, the teacher would always the guide children in their activity while learning process. After all of characters were delivered, teacher would like to review the material to check that the children remembered the characters that had been given. Before going home, they would have fishing activity. The material that the teacher used was papers, magnet and also paper clips. The papers were cut and form into fishes and then sticked by clip paper on it. They felt happy and enthusiastic when the teacher asked them to queue in order to get their turn to fish the paper fishes. It represented the letter of Munching Mike.

The forth meeting was meeting the characters Impy Ink and Noisy Nick. Children would meet two friends. He said /n/. These letters were explained by the teacher. For the first was Noisy Nick. The teacher explained what kind of food that Noisy Nick Likes because he stands for the letter of 'n' then noodle became his favorite food. From Noisy Nick's picture there were 3 kinds of words represented the letter 'n' such as newspaper, nut, and noodle.

Impy Ink was the las friend that they met. The researcher showed Letterlander picture to children in order that children were able to recognize the shape and Impy Ink's picture. Impy Ink had special sound, his sound like /i/. There were several things in the picture such as insect, ink, ink pen, iguana, and invitation.

The fifth meeting was reviewing all the characters of Letterlanders. Children were able to remember all Letterlanders together. Teacher taught

by using videos of Letterlanders. It made children wanted to follow the song happily. When they had felt bored the teacher gave them several things to do, like ringing her laptop until several children took their turn. They felt more enjoyable in learning because they met letterlanders in different ways.

The six meeting was trying to blend the letters. They would find harder to blend the characters. The words learnt were 'it', 'is', and 'cat'. The teacher taught children to read 'it'. First, teacher showed a flashcard of the letter of 'I', it represented the picture of Impy Ink. Next, teacher asked children to decode the letter one by one. Teacher reminded the children each sound of the letters by doing action tricks, such as giving them the picture of the Letterlander of Impy Ink, pretending to have a telephone (to remind the children the sound of Talking Tess). Then, the teacher gave the examples of how to blend the letters /i/t/ into it. Teacher said /i.....i.....i/t.....t/, children were imitating teacher's sound slowly until they could form the word of 'it'.

After that, teacher asked students to remind the word that had mentioned in their learning process. The teacher asked the students the name of Letterlanders and how to produce the sounds. With slowly teacher taught the children how to blend letters into word until they were able to blend perfectly. The children really felt cheerful and joyful during learning process.

From the learning process above, the students would get some vocabularies and they would make easiest a lot of words. Like, for each letterlanders could be some of vocabularies; Apple, ant, arrow, duck, hat, man, cat, house, snake, newspaper, nut, noodle, Ink, insect, ink pen, iguana, invitation and etc. Children were able to remember all Letterlanders together and remind to each other.

Based on the result of observation and worksheets, the writer found that the children had been taught by Letterland technique will have courage in vocabulary as well. It is because the characters are easy to memorize and friendly for the children. Thus, it also makes the children enthusiastic in learning. It showed that children were very attractive in learning and children can answer the worksheet perfectly. But the writer also found that there were still problem in teaching by using Letterland. The crowded class is one of the problem, so when the teacher teach in the class there were some of students make a noisy. But it can be solved by giving reward to children who still pay attention, because reward is one of the strategies to get children attention. Reward in this case is the teacher gave a gift such as, a pen, a pencil, a book or ruler.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

In the conclusion, the writer states that the usage of Letterland technique in elementary school is urgently needed. It will be very useful to change the technique of learning effectively. It is proved by in using letterland technique related in teaching vocabulary had given the influence to students.

After having six meetings, most of the children could remember the letters' sounds, letterlands' characters' names from nine letters that had been taught. The students look happy and fun, and also they didn't feel under pressure to learn English, especially learn English vocabularies.

Letterland can be a great teaching technique in the classroom if they are structured well and have a purpose. Building a new way of learning will give a huge impact on students. The great effort, support and real action to change technique of learning for students will help them to get better result and understanding. And don't pressure the students to do what you want, it will get the bad impact. Start from the small thing and focus with your goal. Then you will get the trust understanding from your students. Hereby, the writer does really believe that this paper is still lack of perfectness. Any input, advice and guidance is needed to contribute the complete one.

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