

USING YOUNG ADULT LITERATURE AS READING MATERIAL IN INCREASING VOCABULARY ACHIEVEMENT FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS

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Abstract

Vocabulary is an important thing for language learning strategies (LLS) especially in learning English as a foreign language (EFL). Many foreign language learners are in desperate for learning the vocabulary. Learners are usually aware of the importance of words in a language and they also usually realize the fact that learning strategies can help them in their vocabulary learning. The aims of this study were to find whether or not (1) there was any significant difference in vocabulary achievement between before and after the students were taught by using young adult literature, (2) there was any significant difference in vocabulary achievement between the students who were in the experimental group and those of the control group, and (3) there were any significant differences in aspects of vocabulary between before and after the students were taught by using young adult literature. The result of paired samples t-test analysis showed that there was significant difference in vocabulary achievement between pre-test and post-test of the students who were taught by using young adult literature. The result of independent samples t-test analysis showed that there was significant difference in vocabulary achievement between the students who were in the experimental group and those of the control group. It means that Young Adult Literature as the reading material successfully increased the students' vocabulary achievement in the experimental group.

Keywords: *vocabulary achievement, vocabulary aspects, young adult literature, reading material*

INTRODUCTION

English is the language most widely learned, read, and spoken the world has ever known (Kachru & Nelson, 1996). Besides, English plays a vital role in economic progress, modern technology, internationalization (Spolsky, 1998), as well as the Internet and The World Wide Web (Pakir, 2000). Lexical knowledge is also considered an important part of the foundation of learning English as a Second Language (ESL) and English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Mastering a new word certainly involves such abilities as form recognition (pronunciation, spelling, derivations) and knowing its dictionary meaning. Knowledge of its specific grammatical properties, however, as well as the ability to use the word appropriately in certain contexts, and its functions (frequency and appropriateness), are all part of mastery process (Nation, 1990). McCarthy (2001 cited in Fan, 2003)

explained that vocabulary forms the biggest part of the meaning of any language, and vocabulary is the biggest problem for most learners (Fan, 2003).

Vocabulary is an important thing for language learning strategies (LLS) especially in learning English as a foreign language (EFL). Many foreign language learners are in desperate for learning the vocabulary. Learners are usually aware of the importance of words in a language and they also usually realize the fact that learning strategies can help them in their vocabulary learning (Pourshahian, Azarfam, & Kalajahi, 2012). Some teachers may think that vocabulary learning is easy and learning new vocabulary items have always been challenging for the learners. Different ways of learning vocabularies are usually utilized by the students such as using flash cards, notebooks, and referring to bilingual and monolingual dictionaries to decipher the meaning, and or giving some synonyms and antonyms to name just a few. The mastery of vocabulary plays a key role in the whole process of the second language learning and is of critical importance to the learners. Vocabulary Learning Strategies (VLS) research attempts to explore and introduce such coveted short cuts and to this end, draws on the initiatives taken by successful learners in order to provide a useful roadmap for those in need. The increasing body of research on VLS, particularly in the last two decades as Atay and Ozbulgan (2007) maintain that wishes to shed more light on learners' strategy repertoire and facilitate second/foreign language vocabulary learning and recall (Atay & Ozbulgan, 2007). Similarly, Cameron (2001) defines "VLS as actions that learners take to help themselves understand and remember vocabulary" (p. 92). Nation (2001) states "Vocabulary learning strategies as language learning strategies which in turn are part of general learning strategies" (p. 217). Therefore, vocabulary learning strategies can contribute successfully to learning.

Literature has been used as one of the best communicative approaches in language teaching. It is supported by Llach (2007) that using literature to develop linguistic competences is the best ways of learning a language. He says that the genres of literature, such as: poetry, novel, drama and short stories may be enjoyable materials to be used in the classroom. The use of literature as a technique for teaching both basic language skills (i.e. reading, writing, listening and speaking) and language aspects (i.e. vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation) are very popular within the field of foreign language learning and teaching nowadays (Hismanoglu, 2005).

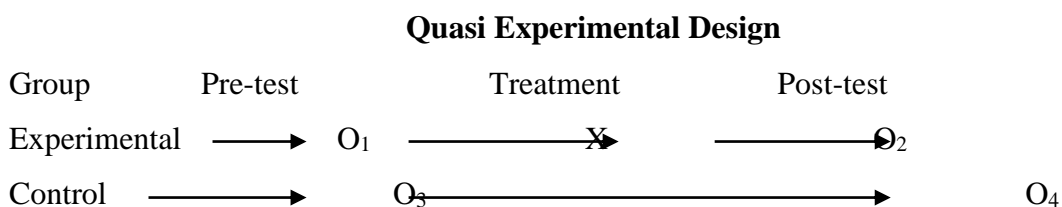
To carry out this study, the writer chose middle school students of SMP Negeri 3 Cilegon in the academic year of 2014/2015. The writer intended to see the effect of young

adult literature in increasing the students' vocabulary achievement. She really hoped that they were ready to accept young adult literature as their additional reading materials whose contents they did not find in their textbook given from school.

From the explanation above, it can be concluded that the aims of this study were to find whether or not (1) there was any significant difference in vocabulary achievement between before and after the students were taught by using young adult literature, (2) there was any significant difference in vocabulary achievement between the students who were in the experimental group and those of the control group, and (3) there were any significant differences in aspects of vocabulary between before and after the students were taught by using young adult literature.

METHOD

The writer used an experimental method by applying quasi experimental design and specifically implementing a non-equivalent group pre-test and post-test design. There were two groups in this study: one experimental group and one control group. The students who were in the experimental group got a treatment by using Young Adult Literature as a reading material. The design of this study as follows :



Where:

O₁ and O₃ : Pre-test of The Experimental and Control Groups

O₂ and O₄ : Post-test of The Experimental and Control Groups

X : Treatment by Using Young Adult Literature with SQ3R

There were 60 students who were taken out randomly as the sample of the study, 30 students were for the experimental group and the other 30 were for the control group.

In order to collect the data of the students' reading comprehension, the researcher used reading comprehension test and administered the test in pre-test and post-test.

Techniques was used by the writer to analyze the data as follows:

- a. Paired samples t-test was used to find out the significance difference of students' achievement in vocabulary test between before and after the students were given the treatment.
- b. Independent samples t-test was used to finding out the significance difference in vocabulary test between middle school students who were taught using Young Adult Literature and those who were not at SMP Negeri 3 Cilegon, Banten.
- c. Regression analysis was applied to find out whether or not there was contribution of the students' vocabulary aspects.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Results of Paired Samples T Tests of Pre-test and Post-test in Experimental Group

The estimation on paired samples t tests statistics in vocabulary achievement is showed at Table 1 below.

Table 1. The Descriptive Statistics of Pre-test and Post-test in Experimental Group

Kinds of Achievements	Kinds of Tests	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Vocabulary Achievement	Pre-test	30	58.93	19.344	3.532
	Post-test	30	70.67	17.509	3.197

The result of paired sample t tests in vocabulary achievement shows that the sig. was 0.000. Since the sig. was less than 0.05, the null hypothesis (H_0) was rejected and the research hypothesis (H_1) was accepted. It could be concluded that there was a significant difference in vocabulary achievement between the pre-test and post-test in the experimental group. Table 2 shows the summary of calculation using paired samples t tests.

Table 2. Statistical Analysis of Vocabulary Scores in Pre-test and Post-test in Experimental Group

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	vocab_pre_exp - vocab_post_exp	-11,733	10,511	1,919	-15,658	-7,809	-6,114	29	,000

The Results of Paired Samples T Tests of Pre-test and Post-test in Control Group

The estimation on paired samples t tests statistics in vocabulary achievement is showed at Table 3 below.

Table 3. The Descriptive Statistics of Pre-test and Post-test in Control Group

Kinds of Achievements	Kinds of Tests	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Vocabulary Achievement	Pre-test	30	58.63	17.567	3.207
	Post-test	30	56.30	17.666	3.225

The result of paired sample t tests in vocabulary achievement shows that the sig. was 0.000. Since the sig. was less than 0.05, the null hypothesis (H_0) was rejected and the research hypothesis (H_1) was accepted. It could be concluded that there was a significant difference in vocabulary achievement between the pre-test and post-test in the control group. Table 4 shows the summary of calculation using paired samples t tests.

Table 4. Statistical Analysis of Vocabulary Scores in Pre-test and Post-test in Control Group

		Paired Differences						t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference					
					Lower	Upper				
Pair 1	vocab_pre_co - vocab_post_co	2,333	2,073	,379	1,559	3,108	6,164	29	,000	

The Results of Independent Samples T Tests of Experimental Group and Control Group

The estimation on independent samples t tests statistics in vocabulary achievement is showed at Table 5 below.

Table 5. The Descriptive Statistics of Experimental and Control Groups

Kinds of Achievements	Kinds of Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
Vocabulary	Experimental	30	70.67	17.144	3.130

Achievement	Control	30	56.30	17.666	3.225
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Based on the result of independent samples t tests in vocabulary achievement, the *levene sig.* was 0.952. Judging from the explanation above, it can be concluded that the data in vocabulary was homogeneous because the sig. of the *levene* statistic was above 0.05. It also can be seen in the Table 6.

The result of independent samples t tests in vocabulary achievement shows that the sig. was 0.002. Since the sig. was less than 0.05, the null hypothesis (H_0) was rejected and the research hypothesis (H_1) was accepted. It could be concluded that there was a significant difference in vocabulary achievement between the experimental and control groups. Table 6 shows the summary of calculation using independent samples t tests.

Table 6. Statistical Analysis of Vocabulary Scores in Experimental and Control Groups

		Independent Samples Test								
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper	
post_vocab	Equal variances assumed	,004	,952	3,164	58	,002	14,367	4,541	5,277	23,457
	Equal variances not assumed			3,164	57,995	,002	14,367	4,541	5,277	23,457

The Results of Paired Samples t-test of Pre-test and Post-test of Vocabulary Aspects in Experimental Group

The estimation on paired samples t-test statistics in vocabulary aspects is showed at Table 7 below.

Table 7. The Descriptive Statistics of Vocabulary Aspects

Paired Samples Statistics

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	pre_synonym	9,60	30	4,966	,907
	post_synonym	11,10	30	5,108	,933
Pair 2	pre_antonym	8,73	30	5,407	,987
	post_antonym	11,57	30	4,400	,803
Pair 3	pre_context	17,87	30	6,897	1,259
	post_context	20,03	30	7,444	1,359
Pair 4	pre_spelling	22,73	30	6,654	1,215
	post_spelling	27,97	30	3,222	,588

The result of paired samples t-test in synonym aspect shows that the sig. was 0.037. Since the sig. was less than 0.05, the null hypothesis (H_0) was rejected and the research hypothesis (H_1) was accepted. It could be concluded that there was a significant difference in synonym aspect between the pre-test and post-test in the experimental group.

The result of paired samples t-test in antonym aspect shows that the sig. was 0.000. Since the sig. was less than 0.05, the null hypothesis (H_0) was rejected and the research hypothesis (H_1) was accepted. It could be concluded that there was a significant difference in antonym aspect between the pre-test and post-test in the experimental group.

The result of paired samples t-test in words in context aspect shows that the sig. was 0.038. Since the sig. was less than 0.05, the null hypothesis (H_0) was rejected and the research hypothesis (H_1) was accepted. It could be concluded that there was a significant difference in words in context aspect between the pre-test and post-test in the experimental group.

The result of paired samples t-test in spelling aspect shows that the sig. was 0.000. Since the sig. was less than 0.05, the null hypothesis (H_0) was rejected and the research hypothesis (H_1) was accepted. It could be concluded that there was a significant difference in spelling aspect between the pre-test and post-test in the experimental group. Table 21 shows the summary of calculation using paired samples t tests.

Table 8. Statistical Analysis of Vocabulary Aspects in Experimental Group

		Paired Differences				t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower				Upper
Pair 1	pre_synonym - post_synonym	-1,500	3,767	,688	-2,907	-,093	-2,181	29	,037
Pair 2	pre_antonym - post_antonym	-2,833	3,582	,654	-4,171	-1,496	-4,332	29	,000
Pair 3	pre_context - post_context	-2,167	5,471	,999	-4,210	-,124	-2,169	29	,038
Pair 4	pre_spelling - post_spelling	-5,233	5,328	,973	-7,223	-3,244	-5,379	29	,000

Discussion

This section presents the discussions based on the findings of the study. Based on the findings, there was a significant difference in terms of vocabulary achievement between the students who were taught by using Young Adult Literature (YAL) and those who were not. This was supported by the result of the vocabulary test; the students in the experimental group, who were taught by using YAL got better vocabulary score than the students in the control group, who were not taught by using YAL. It means that Young Adult Literature was taught by the writer to the experimental group for 24 meetings worked well to increase the students' vocabulary achievement. In those 24 meetings, the students read more literature such as novel, short story, poem, and drama and they got new words in their reading that they did not know before. This significant difference was supported by plausible reasons. During the treatment, the use of Young Adult Literature as reading material helped the students to increase their vocabulary. It is in line with Ur (1996) who lists one of the advantages of literature as a language teaching resources that literature is a good resource for increasing word power [12].

In terms of aspects of vocabulary, there was a significant difference in four aspects of vocabulary: synonym, antonym, words in context, spelling. During the treatment, the students who were in the experimental group enjoyed learning new words in their reading.

Based on the result, there was significant decrease between pre-test and post-test in the control group in vocabulary scores. The writer concluded that the students who were in control group did not get a treatment as same as the students who were in experimental group.

After conducting the treatment of applying young adult literature as the reading material, the writer analyzed and presumed a reflection that students tended to be more excited to read a short story. This might dispatch from the length of the reading material, and the various story with its issues which is comparable and pleasurable to discuss. Further, drama as one of the reading materials was implemented in such a way to bring the

stage way into a reality by acting it out gave a great effect to students to think and experience in various circumstances with a very enjoyable story that stimulates the reader to read more. Peregoy and Boyle (2008) state drama activities provide students with a variety of contextualized and scaffold activities that gradually involve more participation and more oral language proficiency, they are also non-threatening and a lot of fun [13].

However, poem was assumed to be very intricate, because students did not always get the full picture of the scene or emotion being described. However, the figurative language provides by a poem helps students to have a deeper thought to get the gist of what the poets trying to tell in their poems. Learning to use figurative language is an important step in developing mature language skills by taking words beyond their literal meaning. In a novel, it provides access to authentic materials in real-life context and has literary text containing many linguistic and cultural elements of the target language which may help a language learner to have a deep understanding of the target language and culture. In brief, all of the young adult literature materials were used to increase students' vocabulary achievement.

Judging from the explanation above, it was inferred that the Young Adult Literature was effective in increasing vocabulary achievement of the middle school students.

CONCLUSION

From the results of the data analyses and discussion, it could be concluded that Young Adult Literature as the reading material could increase students' vocabulary achievement. The statistical analysis showed there were significant differences between the students who were taught by using Young Adult Literature and that of those who were not. It was also found that Young Adult Literature could be interesting reading material for the students. Furthermore, by giving the Young Adult Literature, the students could comprehend the reading materials well. In terms of aspects of vocabulary, there were four aspects that had significant differences, such as synonym, antonym, words in context, spelling.

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