

Implementation of Local Context Vocabulary Exposure in Teaching English at SMP Negeri 1 Padaido Biak Regency

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Abstract

The study aims at investigating the effect of local content vocabulary exposure in teaching English at SMPN 1 Padaido Biak Regency. This study employed a descriptive study and total sampling conducted to 75 students (from the first to third grades) of SMP Negeri 1 Mbromsi, in Aimando subdistrict, Padaido islands of Biak Regency. Data were gained from students' results of pre and post tests on vocabulary relating to things near them or familiar to them like things in the sea. The result shows that the implementation of contextual teaching and learning have brought influence to students' vocabulary achievement since the approach allows teachers to creatively produce their learning materials that accommodate students' learning needs based on school and home environments as well as to develop freely their pedagogical technique in fun ways.

Keywords: exposure, contextual, vocabulary, learning need, pedagogical

1. BACKGROUND

English has been established as a foreign language taught in formal education since 1945. It has been exposed from junior secondary school level (Huda qtd in Kam, 2002). After several decades precisely in 1994, it was then introduced from the fourth to the sixth graders of elementary schools as a local content subject. This has been implemented by most schools in urban areas. It, however, is hardly found in rural and remote schools because there are lacks of English teachers (reference <http://tabloidjubi.com/artikel-2056-gawat-sd-hingga-smk-di-kota-jayapura-kekurangan-guru.html> 28/11/2016).

As a result, being limited basic exposure of English can contribute to students' unconfidence in communicating their minds. In addition to their lack of English language knowledge, they learn under the pressure of teacher centred learning atmosphere. So this way could limit students expanding their learning via trial and errors. For instance, if they are requested to respond to questions given by their English teacher, they may be doubtful to convey their answers due to mistake alert. This situation may build passivity of students learning and can be fossilized.

Furthermore, English textbooks are mostly published based on the contents and images of western of Indonesia like Borobudur, Monas, Mount Bromo, etc. Students

who have not been there or seen the places yet might have difficult to visualize the surroundings and appearances of those places even from pictures. As a consequence, they fail to show their understanding of the topics learnt.

In relation to these situations, many students and their English teacher of SMP Negeri 1 Padaido have encountered such problems. The teacher admitted that English language teaching conducted refers to curriculum and textbook guidelines designed nationally because it is a must. Therefore, he teaches based on contents of the textbooks used at school and the teaching approach implemented focuses on the teacher-centered learning. These may affect either the teacher or the students on their feelings and minds since the teaching and learning materials are mostly not related to their daily background knowledge and environment so it may probably suspend their capacity in building creativity skills and expanding their language repertoire. The writer seems these should be overcome via contextual language teaching (CLT); therefore, the title of this study is Local Context Vocabulary Exposure.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1. Review of Indonesian English Curriculum Adoption and Teaching Approach

Prior to the 1994 curriculum, there were several approaches adopted in terms of teaching English namely the Grammar translated approach (1945), the Oral Approach (1968), the Audio lingual approach (1975), the Communicative Approach (1984), the Competency Based Curriculum (1994), the 2004 Curriculum, the School Level Curriculum-Text Types (2006), and 2013 Curriculum, abbreviated K-13 (2013) in which English subject is served as an optional subject from elementary to senior high schools. These curricula were called so based on the electoral ministers of education.

In the context of classroom implementation, these have brought teachers' misconception of teaching approaches/techniques/procedures used. As a result, the English teachers have been shadowed by being lack of professionalism (Suhirman, Atmowardoyo & Husain, 2016). Therefore, there are some programs conducted by the government and education based institutions to upgrade teachers' knowledge and skills to design English instructional materials using various teaching and learning models via trainings, workshops and in-service trainings. For example training on K-13, this has not reached some teachers in remote areas yet due to access problems like transportation and the Internet. As a result, many teachers from rural and remote areas have never been exposed to such events (Rinantanti & Suhirman, 2018).

In addition to curriculum, textbooks (Suhirman, 2018a) that have been published vary in terms of English level of difficulties and provide different themes per semester by some publishers like BSE, Erlangga, Intan Pariwara, Department of National Education, and many more. These are also problematic choices for English teachers to select which one is the best for their students to use. Since, a school can only provide textbooks from one publisher. Moreover, teachers deliver their subject following the structures and the contents of the books (Suhirman, 2018a). Because they think it is an obligation designed by the ministry eventhough the contents may be difficult or unfamiliar to both teachers and students. They have to reach the target of curriculum

with too many objectives by teaching the subject superficially, so they ignore students' comprehension and interest. Besides, these materials are far from perfect and vague because there are no variations of developing materials into interesting activities due to the shortage of authentic materials in English (Rinantanti & Suhirman, 2018).

According to Mistar, the English lecturer of the Islamic University of Malang, "some students receive little exposure to English communicative situations, which in turn leads to poor results of the overall teaching-learning activities" (2005:76). Furthermore, the number of students in a class also has an impact on students' practice using the language. The reason for this is that most Indonesian schools have up to 60 students per classroom so this contributes to the passiveness of learners producing the language. According to Jacobs and Ratmanida, learners have an uneven and unfair opportunity to speak the target language and a language teacher has an active role to contribute (1996). Therefore, the limitation of time to practice English in the classroom with the size of classes influences students' performance.

Lack of teachers' competence toward the language and teaching methodology is also considered as another cause of the poor quality of students' English proficiency (Suhirman, 2018b). This is due to the fact that most English teachers are unable to use the language properly. On the one hand, as Ur (2002) states, English teachers must participate in local, national and international conferences, they must take follow-up training based on their job, they must be able to communicate in English and to elaborate on how the language works and they must be independent and be accountable for their job (qtd in Yuwono, 2005:5). On the other hand, Yuwono argues that these ideals are still in doubt because there are some problems dealing with resources, facilities, and funding (2005:5). Additionally, Hamid (1996) and Ridwan et al (1996) figure out that "many of our English teachers have not themselves mastered the language they are teaching (cited in Dardjowidjojo, 2000:27)". Thus, they facilitate students with inadequate language usage and they are unable to develop language activities further, which make the lessons uninteresting to students.

The cultural bonds of learning and teaching styles are indicators of students' ability in language learning. Learning the language means learning the culture of both ways of communication and ways of thinking (Suhirman, 2016a). English learning requires learners to take part actively in the learning process; however, in Asian education, learners have to learn passively by "listening, reading, observing and imitating teachers' lectures. Moreover, they should make notes and memorise them in order to restate them on exams" (Cheng, 1991:13). This model of teaching and learning does not encourage students to think critically so as to make language learners become spoon fed learners; they are not self-directed learners who learn independently. Teachers usually provide a "critical analysis of ideas or articles" for students to memorise (Pikkert and Foster, 1996:58). Moreover, it is considered impolite when students question and argue with teachers, because teachers have power over their students and must be respected; therefore, the harmonious atmosphere maintained between students and teachers should be in the first place rather than 2 way communication between a teacher and his/her students (Rinantanti & Suhirman, 2018).

Another possibility of students' low level of English is students' attitude toward the lessons. For example, if they have a bad experience of a boring English teacher, it will have an impact on their motivation to study the language. Slavin (1990) believes that creating a better learning atmosphere improves students' motivation to succeed in learning the language (cited in Jacobs and Ratmanida, 1996:112). Hence, the role of language teachers is important to stimulate students learning without pressure by applying various teaching approaches such as suggestopedia and games. They also need to be able to create a learning atmosphere that is comfortable and safe and avoids the atmosphere that threatens students' feelings (Suhirman, Atmowardoyo & Husain, 2016c; Suhirman, 2018b).

2.2. Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) Approach

Contextual teaching and learning (CTL) is an approach that is able to assist English teachers relate the materials of a lesson to the real situation since this approach motivates students to relate their knowledge which gathered in the class to application in their life and vice versa. There are many definitions regarding CTL formulated by educational experts. Some say that CTL is the process of using a variety of contexts, teaching methods/strategies, and student initiated learning. Other say that CTL is the learning and teaching based on pedagogy that is grounded in real life. CTL is about creating environments and situations where both teaching and the related learning takes place. It should enrich learning, making connections between ideas. As Bando (2008) states that:

“CTL is a holistic learning process and aims to help students to understand the meaning of teaching materials with it to the context of day to day (the context of personal, social and cultural), so that students have the knowledge / skills are dynamic and flexible to actively constructing their own understanding.”

Besides, CTL is called a contextual approach because the concept of learning that help teacher's content associate between the lesson and the real world situation with the students and encourage students to make the relationship between knowledge held by the implementations in their lives as members of the community. According to Johnson (2002:16), CTL is

“a system that stimulates the brain to weave patterns that express meaning. Contextual teaching and learning is a brain compatible system of instruction that generates meaning by linking academic content with the context of a student's daily life. Taking advantage of the fact that the environment stimulates the brain's neurons to form pathways, the system focuses on context, on relationship.”

Furthermore, CTL is the concept of learning that helps teachers link the subject with students' real world situations and encourage students to make relationship between knowledge by implementations in their life as family members. In relation to

this intention, the US Department of Education defines CTL approach as “an educational process” to bridge academic materials learnt and the context of their daily lives like personal, social, cultural, and environmental circumstances in which they are encompassed by the following components namely active, self-regulated learning, making connection, significant work, critical and reaching high standard using authentic materials (2001).

Contextual is a response to an approach well-known behaviorism that emphasizes on responding stimulus with a drill practice. So that language learners may be able to speak naturally in various situations. It needs also a critical thinking and a significant teaching in order to bring together students’ learning and experiences. Briefly, contextual teaching and learning is a process of teaching and learning which the materials and the actions have relationship with students’ experience out of their schools. CTL according to Suhirman (2018b), it can bring students closer and familiarizing themselves with learning in a real environment, close, and commonly experienced by students so that it will be easier for them to master the lesson and with brilliant learning outcomes (Suhirman, Atmoardoyo & Huasain, 2016c).

From those definitions above, it can be said that CTL is an approach derived from combination of behaviorism and constructivism theories. It, in one hand, includes behaviorism because it also learns the observable behavior produced by learners to respond to stimuli. On the other hand, it includes constructivism since it engages students to construct the meaning from their prior knowledge then relate it with the new knowledge to get the new understanding. The contextual teaching and learning emphasizes on the role of students instead of teachers. In other words, CTL provides an opportunity for students as the center of learning (student-centered learning) and the role of teachers here as facilitators who empower students to learn (Suhirman, 2018b; Rinantanti & Suhirman, 2018). The materials are gained through the students. In this case, the teacher allows the students to find their own materials in their real contexts. So, they are easily to memorize and understand the materials. Contextual teaching and motivates the students to explore their learning, creativities and talents.

2.3. Localized and Contextualized Curriculum: Best Practices of The Philipines

Learning from other countries like the Philipines geographically similar to Papua, the Department of National Education designs their curriculum based on local needs (Tylor 2004 cited in Bringas, 2004). The Contextualization concept emphasizes on developing new skills, knowledge, abilities, and attitudes in students in presenting new subject matter in meaningful and relevant contexts of previous experience, real life, and workplace. While, localization refers to freedom for school or local authorities to adapt the curriculum to local conditions and relating the context of the curriculum and the process of teaching and learning to the local environment. The development of the curriculum is flexible enough to enable and allow schools to localize, indigenize, and enhance the same based on their respective educational and social contexts. In relation to that, the local production and development of materials are encouraged to support teaching and learning based on national policies and standards. Therefore, localization and contextualization are expected to accommodate learners’ needs based on learning

materials and school circumstances available and respect cultural, linguistics, and racial diversity.

3. METHODS

This study employed a descriptive study and total sampling conducted to 75 students (from the first to third grades) of SMP Negeri 1 Mbromsi, in Aimando subdistrict, Padaido islands of Biak Regency. Data were gained from students' results of pre and post tests on vocabulary relating to things near them or familiar to them like things in the sea. The questions consisted of 30 numbers that were only a repetition of 10 words in different types of questions namely matching the pictures and words, matching the English words to their Indonesian ones or giving the Indonesian words to their English ones, and word jumbles. The order of the tests began from the easiest to the hardest ones. The teaching and learning process was conducted in 3 days including pre and post tests. Focus group discussion was done to confirm the process and product of teaching and learning in terms students' satisfactory of the technique/approach and materials used during the treatments.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of the study show the students' vocabulary results of pre and post tests and their satisfactory of the technique/approach and material used. The data of pre and post tests are presented in tables per grade as follows:

Table 1. The Seventh Grade Students' Results of Pre and Post Tests

No	Sex	Pretest	Post-test
1	P	36,67	86,67
2	P	3,33	43,33
3	P	10	50
4	P	6,67	20
5	P	26,67	86,67
6	P	10	36,67
7	P	6,67	16,67
8	P	33,33	80
9	P	3,33	6,67
10	L	6,67	30
11	P	3,33	6,67
12	P	0	10
13	P	0	3,33
14	P	0	20
15	L	0	3,33
16	L	0	26,67
17	L	0	20
18	L	0	26,67
19	L	0	NA
20	L	0	NA
21	L	0	NA
22	P	0	20

23	P	0	20
24	P	0	36,67
25	P	0	3,33
26	P	0	6,67
27	P	0	40
28	P	NA	3,33
	Total	146,67	703,33
	Mean	5,24	25,12

Table 1 shows that the mean of both pre and post tests is 5.24 and 25.12 consecutively. The mean indicates that there is an improvement of students' vocabulary building although the scores seems lower. This is due to the fact that English is a new subject for them since it is exposed at junior high school at first level. As a consequence, it affects the results of their tests.

In addition, it can be seen from the data that there are some results of either the pre test nor the post test unavailable because of students' absence at the time of pre and post test administration. Only 3 out of 28 students (11%) achieve good scores (60–100) of the vocabulary post test. 24 out of 28 students (86%) have completed both tests. While 4% (1 student) did not participated in pre-test and 11% (3 students) did not attend during the post-test.

Table 2. The Eighth Grade Students' Results of Pre and Post Tests

No	Sex	Pre-Test	Post-Test
1	P	10	70
2	L	3,33	66,67
3	P	3,33	46,67
4	P	6,67	83,33
5	P	3,33	NA
6	P	3,33	100
7	P	13,33	3,33
8	L	3,33	10
9	P	6,67	90
10	L	10	NA
11	P	10	NA
12	P	3,33	90
13	P	3,33	23,33
14	P	3,33	33,33
15	P	3,33	90
16	P	6,67	100
17	L	3,33	46,67

18	L	3,33	NA
19	L	3,33	6,67
20	L	6,67	66,67
21	L	6,67	16,67
22	L	20	NA
23	P	NA	20
24	L	NA	26,67
25	P	NA	33,33
Total		136,67	1023,33
Mean		5,47	40,93

Table 2 presents the results of both tests of the eighth graders' vocabulary and the mean achieved from 5.47 of pre-test to 40.93 of post-test. The results show an increase in students learning contextual vocabulary. The scores achieved by the students from pre-test to post-test are high in which they are indicated by 8 out of 25 students (32%) reaching good scores (60–100) of vocabulary post test. 68% of students (17 out of 25 students) have done the tests. While 3 out of 25 students (12%) did not come to class for pre-test and 5 out of students (20%) were absent during post-test administration.

Table 3. The Ninth Grade Students' Results of Pre and Post Tests

No	Sex	Pre-Test	Post-Test
1	P	3,33	96,67
2	P	3,33	70
3	P	6,67	90
4	P	13,33	83,33
5	P	13,33	100
6	P	0	86,67
7	L	6,67	73,33
8	P	6,67	100
9	P	3,33	100
10	L	3,33	90
11	L	6,67	76,67
12	P	0	90

13	L	16,67	93,33
14	L	13,33	93,33
15	L	3,33	NA
16	L	10	90
17	L	6,67	NA
18	P	NA	30
19	L	NA	83,33
20	L	NA	40
21	L	NA	53,33
22	L	NA	70
Total		116,67	1610
Mean		5,30	73,18

Table 3 indicates that the results of pre and post tests of the ninth graders increase significantly. There are 17 students (77%) have good scores (60–100) of contextual vocabulary post test. It can be seen by the mean of pre-test, 5.30 and the mean of post-test, 73.18. 15 out of 22 students (68%) have accomplished the tests while 23% of students did not complete the pre-test due to absence and 9% of students did not attend during post test administration.

Overall, the data show that the improvement of students' vocabulary achievement is remarkable when contextual teaching and learning is occupied in teaching English because "teaching is the process or activities educating or instructing from the teachers to students and learning is not something done to students, but something that students do themselves." (Ambrose, 2010 cited in Sary's slide presentation).

Furthermore, the results of focus group discussion show that the students are satisfied with the way of teaching and the topics because they have been facilitated in fun atmospheres like games, songs, etc., and the topics are familiar to them so the materials are comprehensible easily. The teachers also make an effort to design their lesson plans properly in order to meet the students' needs and levels of English so as to accommodate students learning by using contextual materials. This contributes to positive perception towards teaching English using local context materials since they are not only familiar by the teachers but also by their students. Therefore, teachers in rural and remote areas may well be introduced to localized and contextualized teaching material development for future training.

As can be seen from the data, there is an improvement of students' vocabulary shown by the mean of both tests each grade as follows:

Table 4. Sums of Mean Increase in Pre and Post Tests

Grade	Mean of Pre-Test	Mean of Post-Test	Σ increase
7th	5.24	25.12	19.88
8th	5.47	40.93	35.46
9th	5.30	73.18	67.88

Table 4 shows that these increases are resulted from the approach used by the teachers in which the teaching and topics are interesting to students. It means that the implementation of contextual teaching and learning have brought influence to students' vocabulary achievement since the approach allows teachers to creatively produce their learning materials that accommodate students' learning needs based on school and home environments as well as to develop freely their pedagogical technique in fun ways. By doing so, it can be a stimulus for students to absorb, explore and express what they have already learnt.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

There may be some students' unconfidence due to lack of basic English exposure and limited vocabulary knowledge and some fossilized with the passive experience. However, teaching using contextual materials are both challenging and fun as students are also encouraged to use their prior knowledge to elevate and explore.

Learning from this experience, the following are suggestions to be put forward in order to improve pedagogical techniques and learning activities that can accommodate students' needs, cultural and linguistics diversity:

- The English curriculum and teaching materials should be localized and contextualized based on local needs.
- The learning activities from textbooks should be simplified based on students' English level proficiency.
- The teaching techniques and approaches should be enjoyable in order to easily facilitate and broaden students' comprehensible inputs.
- Teacher cluster meeting should be activated in order to improve teachers' professionalism and capacity development.
- Local and national training design should meet the needs of local teachers in rural and remote areas.

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