

Digital Storytelling: A Powerful Media to Enhance Students' Vocabulary Mastery

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Abstract. Vocabulary is one of the most prominent elements in language learning. Any language learners, students, in this case, should be equipped with sufficient vocabulary since its existence greatly influences their language skills such as listening, reading, speaking, and writing. However, it remains some problems. Such things were also experienced by the eighth-grade of MTs NW Juet, Lombok, Indonesia. Therefore, this study aims to improve students' vocabulary mastery by applying digital storytelling at the eighth-grade of MTs NW Juet, Lombok, Indonesia. This research was a classroom action research (henceforth, CAR) with 19 students involved in it. It was executed in two cycles, and each cycle consisted of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. The data were gained through interviews, observation, questionnaires and vocabulary tests. After all, the data were analyzed, respectively. The findings indicated that digital storytelling is an interesting media which can stimulate students' motivation. Besides, it gives students chances to practice the vocabulary in their language skills. Meanwhile, the result of vocabulary test shows a consistent and significant improvement of students' vocabulary mastery in pre-cycle (43.78), cycle I (64.42), and cycle II (73.89). Thus, there was approximately 29.42 point of improvement during the cycles. In a nutshell, this result indicates that the use of digital storytelling is useful to enhance the students' vocabulary mastery of MTs NW Juet.

Keywords: Vocabulary Mastery, Digital Storytelling, Classroom Action Research.

1 Introduction

In learning any language, all language skills such as reading, writing, speaking, and listening are great importance to be mastered effectively. To learn those skills will be consistently influenced by vocabulary mastery [1]. Vocabulary is defined as the whole words, including expressive vocabulary for speaking or receptive vocabulary for listening, which should be mastered to produce acceptable communication to others [2]. It is one of the most prominent and foundational components of language. It is a significant element of four language skills, which has a crucial role in language learning [3]. Furthermore, Wilkins in Nurcahyati [4] argued that without having enough skill in grammar, very little things could be communicated, and without having a proportional number vocabulary, nothing can be communicated with others. In other words, without having a proportional amount of vocabulary, the learners will have problems in their speaking, writing, reading, and listening skills. The more vocabulary they have, the higher their opportunities to use language. In other words, having inadequate vocabulary will hinder effective communication [5]. That is why, it

is impossible to learn a particular language without learning vocabulary. As well as in the context of teaching English at the junior high school level, learning vocabulary is essential.

According to the data released by *Pusat Penelitian Pendidikan, Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan* [6] in 2019 that the comparison chart of English achievement of MTs NW Juet in national exam per school year over the past three years (2016- 2018) has significantly decreased. In detail, within the scope of regency, the chart showed a drop over the past three years (54.64, 47.67, and 40.29), besides, in the provincial rank (55.90, 49.54, and 42. 67). Then, at the national level (57.42, 50.66, and 48.71). In short, those charts continued to decrease from year to year, which indicated a decrease in students' English achievement in the national exam.

In line with this fact, the preliminary research was conducted to the eighth grade of MTs NW Juet on February 20th 2019. It revealed that most learners got difficulties in understanding the vocabulary that was learned. In terms of part of speech, they had problems to differentiate between verb, noun, and adjective of the words, which made them confused when a word changes into another form. They found it difficult to pronounce the word because of the difference between the spelling and pronunciation of the words. In short, they have low vocabulary mastery because they have difficulties in some aspects of vocabulary such as meaning, pronunciation, spelling, and grammar of words. Moreover, they had little motivation to learn vocabulary. Consequently, the learners are lack of vocabulary. Thus, they can not express anything in the class because without vocabulary, nothing can be conveyed. However, the learners should be equipped with a sufficient number of vocabulary because it gives a direct positive impact on building up language proficiency as a whole [7].

Another issue is the ability of the teacher to use the various and proper media in the classroom since teaching vocabulary needs media [8]. However, the teacher used only a monotonous and conventional way and media such as textbook and dictionary. Also, she taught the students the vocabulary in monotonous activities, both translating and memorizing the list of words in vocabulary class. The students were asked to translate the passage by using a dictionary, then memorize the list of words, and after a specific time, the students should repeat them in front of the teacher. As a result, the learning was not fun and enjoyable, which made the students have a low interest in learning English. To solve this problem, the teacher can take any pedagogical benefit of technological development in this digital era. Applying technology to the teaching and learning of a second or foreign language is an essential educational issue [9]. It's believed that combining technologies with traditional teaching methods in language teaching can motivate the students and improve the teaching and learning process [10].

Digital storytelling is the story which is made by incorporating a few computerized media, for example, sound, picture and video components with a length of 2 to 5-minutes, in some cases as long as 10 minutes [11], [12], [13]. It is a process of utilizing a computer-based device to enrich communication in language [14], [15]. It is used a media to tell an individual account, recorded documentaries, and stories that inform and practice the specific idea or practice [16]. In other words, digital storytelling can be defined as the process of integrating the arts of telling stories with various digital multimedia, including video, audio, images, and others. It treats the learner to be more active as the main actor in the learning activity by stimulating learners' involvement, critical learning, task-based learning, and the technological incorporation in the instructional process in the classroom [17]. Furthermore, through digital storytelling media, educators have a broad chance to engage and help their learners [18]. In many aspects, it positively helps and supports learners' teaching and learning process by stimulating them to share their works and knowledge in a meaningful way [16].

In Indonesian context, only a few studies were found related to this issue. First, Tridinanti [19] conducted a research to 30 students of a kindergarten in Palembang to decide the improvement of their English vocabulary mastery using digital storytelling. The finding of this study revealed that digital storytelling activities could enhance their vocabulary mastery. The second, Anggarini & Afifah [20] investigated the effectiveness of developed digital story that was used for teaching the reading of short stories. The finding revealed that there was significant improvement when digital storytelling was implemented as a media to teaching reading of short stories.

This study focused on finding out the enhancement of students' vocabulary mastery through digital storytelling. The research employed the classroom action research towards the eighth-grade students of MTs NW Juet. Meanwhile, the outcome of this study aimed to help the teacher and students to take any pedagogical benefit of digital storytelling. The implementation of digital storytelling as a media of teaching can be the alternative choice for the English teacher to create a fun and enjoyable atmosphere throughout the teaching and learning process in the classroom and motivate the learners to improve their performance. It would be an immense opportunity to improve the quality of English teaching. Therefore, the teacher could take the pedagogical benefit of technological development in this digital era.

2 Method

The researcher employed a classroom action research design proposed by Kemmis and McTaggart in Burns. In accomplishing this research, some procedures were implemented such as planning, action, observation, and reflection. The researcher chose the eighth-grade students of MTs NW Juet East Lombok West Nusa Tenggara as the subject of study. The total number of participants was 19 students consisting of 8 male and 11 female students. They were selected purposively based on teacher suggestions in which this class members had the lowest English achievement compared with other classes.

In collecting qualitative data, the researcher collected them through the interview, questionnaire, and observation of the teaching and learning process. The interview data were gained from all research participants, either students or teacher. Meanwhile, for quantitative data, a vocabulary test was administered to evaluate the students' vocabulary mastery improvement in pre-cycle, cycle 1, and cycle 2. It consisted of 25 questions that cover some aspects of vocabulary to be studied, such as meaning, spelling, pronunciation, and grammar.

The qualitative data were analyzed qualitatively through some steps proposed by Burn such as assembling, coding, comparing, building meaning, and interpretation of the data and reporting the outcome. Meanwhile, the quantitative data obtained through vocabulary test will be analyzed by using SPSS to find the mean score as well as the lowest and the highest score to ensure whether there is an improvement or not in each cycle.

3 Results and Discussion

3.1. Report of Pre-cycle

The result of the interview indicated that students had a serious problem dealing with vocabulary learning. They had difficulties in pronouncing and spelling words correctly. They also had some issues related to grammatical words that they had learned as well as part of speech. Besides, they felt hard to master the meaning of the words. It was also supported by questionnaire data that only 10.53% of students felt that they understood quickly in vocabulary class, and the rest, 89.47% of students admitted that they had difficulty in

mastering vocabulary. In consequence, 73.68 % of students were not be able to answer the task given by the teacher, and only 26.32 % of them could do it. Finally, 21.05% of them had excellent English vocabulary achievement, and 78.95% were in a bad score.

Besides, the students only used conventional media, which were textbooks and dictionaries. They were not provided with various media and activities, which made the class not lively and active. This statement was supported by the questionnaire data in which the students said that they were never taught by digital media as well as with digital storytelling media, and Nearly 100% of students claimed that they were never taught by digital media, digital storytelling so. As a result, only 37.37% of them were able to overcome the problem related to vocabulary mastery issues. Meanwhile, 63.63% could not be able to do so.

Finally, the researcher administered a vocabulary test. It was to know students' initial vocabulary mastery. The data of students' vocabulary mastery will be used as secondary or supporting data. The vocabulary test covered some aspects of vocabulary such as meaning, grammar, part of speech, spelling, and pronunciation. The result of the test showed that the initial students' vocabulary mastery was very low, in which the mean score was 43.78 points. In addition, from 19 students, only 2 students or 10,53% could pass the minimum criteria of mastery learning, which was 70. Then, 17 students or 89,47% could not do it. Meanwhile, the highest and the lowest score were 72 and 28.

3.2. Report of Cycle I

The researcher carried out the first cycle on February 13th, 2019. He implemented all procedures of classroom action research. Those can be seen as follows;

A. Planning

Planning is the initial step in classroom action research. In this phase, the researcher and collaborator worked collaboratively to plan what kind of learning process that should be applied to the students, such as designing a lesson plan, material and content, media, and the source of the material. Therefore, some schemes were planned by the researcher as follows;

Firstly, a lesson plan was made by the researcher. It covered the instructional objective, learning material, teaching approach, learning media, learning resources, and learning activities. Secondly, he also designed teaching and learning strategies. In this case, the think-pair-share technique and digital storytelling media were used to treat the students during learning. Thirdly, a vocabulary mastery test, was employed as an instrument of assessment. It consisted of 25 questions, 15 multiple choices, and ten oral questions that covered some aspects of vocabulary that would be studied, such as pronunciation, spelling, and grammar of the words.

B. Acting

After everything was planned well, then the next step researcher implemented them to the students in the teaching and learning process in the classroom, especially in vocabulary class. He used a lesson plan as a guide for completing this session. All activities in the lesson plan were divided into three phases. Those were;

1. pre-activity

The researcher delivered the opening greeting and prayed together with students. Then he checked students' presence and tried to give such motivation to the students. Besides, he conveyed instructional objectives and gave them a slight question, which can drag them into material that will be learned in this meeting. He finally gave an ice breaker game, which was to revive the classroom atmosphere.

2. Whilst activity

As a warming up, the researcher told the students about his pet with a powerpoint slide and photograph without mentioning the name of the pet. He then asked them to respond to what the pet is. The students looked enthusiastic and happy to guess the answer. It was done to lead them to the topic of the meeting.

By using an LCD projector, laptop, and sound system, the researcher played a digital story in the form of narrative fable with the title little mouse deer and crocodile. While watching it, the students were asked to analyze spelling, pronunciation, and pattern. It was an input of the teaching and learning process. Later, the students and researcher learned some concerned aspects of vocabulary. While teaching, the collaborator did an observation and did not forget to take some notes related to students' problems during the teaching and learning process in the classroom.

3. Post activity

The researcher and student concluded the lesson that has been studied in this meeting. They did the reflection on what has been done in which to find out the strength and weaknesses of teaching and learning process in this meeting. It was used as a consideration to the action in the next cycle. Then, the researcher told the students at a glance about the material that will be discussed in the next meeting

C. Observing

The observation was done to find out the suitability of the implementation of the action plan prepared previously. It also was conducted to discover how far the implementation of the action plan goes. In this step, the researcher used an observation sheet to monitor the entire aspect of teaching and learning during the learning process. Those aspects, such as students' attitude and activeness in the classroom, how they built community learning with friends. A test or quiz also was used to know how the students understand the material that has been taught.

D. Reflecting

After finishing up the series activities in cycle I, the researcher did a reflection on what has been done. It was such as a flashback to ensure whether what planned ran well or not and also to solve students' problem during the learning process in cycle I. After conducting this phase some conclusion could be presented in the following list below;

1. Only a few students were able to produce the words in the right spelling and fluent pronunciation as well as to use excellent grammatical of the words.
2. According to the result of vocabulary test in this cycle, only 10,53% of students could pass the minimum criteria of mastery learning, and the rest could not do it.
3. Since the students were never taught using digital media, they felt that they needed extra time to adapt when taught using digital storytelling.

E. Vocabulary Test

The last phase was administering a vocabulary test. It was to know students' vocabulary mastery improvement. Based on the mean score gained, it could be claimed that students' vocabulary mastery significantly increased. It can be proved by comparing the mean score in pre-cycle and cycle. It improved from 43,78 to 64,42. Thus, there were 20,78 points of improvement. Meanwhile, the highest score was 76, and the lowest was 44. Also, the percentage of students who passed the minimum criteria of mastery learning score increased. From 19 students, 11 students or 57,89 % could reach it, and 42,10% of them still tried to do so. Thus there was 42,11 % of improvement in this cycle.

3.3. Report of Cycle II

In completing the second cycle, classroom action research was held on February 27th, 2019. Some procedures of action research were employed, such as planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. Those four procedures could be shown in the following;

A. Re-planning

The plan made in Cycle 2 was not distinctive with the initial cycle, including designing the scheme of the instructional process that should be applied to the students, designing a lesson plan, material and content, media, and the source of the material. There was just a slight additional plan to complement the weaknesses of the prior cycle. Therefore, the planning in this cycle was completed based on the reflection of the first cycle.

B. Acting

In this phase, the researcher would implement what has been planned. While teaching, the researcher also observed and did not forget to take notes related to students' problems during teaching and learning in the classroom. Such in the prior cycle, the researcher divided the activities into three-phase activities, for instance, pre-activity, whilst activity and post activity. Those would be explained as follows;

1. Pre-activity

It was the same activity as the first cycle.

2. whilst activity

In this cycle, the researcher treated the students in the same way with the previous sequence, except there was a slight additional activity carried out based on a reflection on the weaknesses of the last period. Also, the different title of text was given to the students.

3. Post activity

While concluding teaching and learning in the meeting, the researcher also asked the students to recall the material in the previous cycle and try to relate them to the material in this meeting. He also gave the students feedback.

C. Observing

The observation in this cycle was done and focused on the same aspects as in the previous period. It was to know student improvement compared to the first cycle.

D. Reflecting

The result of reflection in this cycle could be elaborated as follows;

1. The positive change emerge on students' attitude. It can be seen that they became active during learning in the classroom in answering teacher's questions and in asking the material they did not fully understand. Also, they had a discussion when they found difficult vocabulary.
2. There were 14 or 73.68 % of students that able to meet the minimum completeness criteria (*KKM*), and the rest nearly could do it. Thus, there was an improvement of students' percentage who could obtain the criteria for 26.32%.

E. Vocabulary Test

The result of the test showed a significant increase in students' vocabulary mastery score. It could also be seen from the enhancement of the mean score which shows the increase from 64.42 to 73.89. In other words, 9.47 points of improvement was gained in this cycle. Meanwhile, the highest score was 88, and the lowest was 52. Besides, of 19 students, only 5 students or 26.31% failed to pass the minimum criteria of mastery learning and 14 students or 73.68% could finish it well. It means that this cycle could produce 15.79 % points of improvement.

Based on the observation and evaluation in each cycle, there was a significant improvement on students' attitude as well as on students' vocabulary mastery. They are as follows:

Table 1. Students' improvement in each cycle

Pre-Cycle	Cycle I	Cycle II
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The students tended to be passive. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Some students were more open to the teacher. It could be seen when the students asked the teacher when they found difficulties in finding the meaning or understanding the lesson. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Most of the students became active during the lesson. It could be seen not only in answering the teacher's questions but also in asking the material they did not fully understand. ▪ The students had a discussion when they found difficult vocabulary. They asked the teacher after they had no answer.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Most of the students were not actively involved in the activities. ▪ Some of the boys were busy doing their businesses and did not pay attention to the lesson. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Some students were brave to answer oral questions or volunteered to answer the questions. ▪ Some of the boys still did not pay attention to the lesson. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Most students were actively involved in the activities, even passive ones. ▪ The troublemaker students became good ones: they volunteered to answer the questions, actively involved, and showed respect.

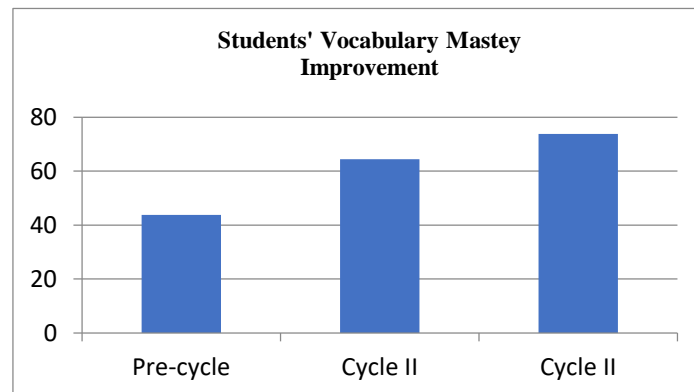


Fig. 1. Students' Vocabulary Mastery Improvement

4 Conclusion

The integration of digital media in education, such as digital storytelling, genuinely helps the students to cope with their problems as well as with vocabulary mastery. It emerged a positive atmosphere to the teaching and learning process, which ease either the students or teachers during the instructional process. It was in line with students' opinions after seeing the implementation of digital storytelling in the classroom. Related to students' achievement, the implementation of digital storytelling as media in teaching vocabulary was successful in enhancing students vocabulary mastery. It was supported by the data of students' mean score in each cycle. The scores in pre-cycle, cycle 1, and cycle 2 were 43.78, 64.42, and 73.89, respectively. It indicated a significant and consistent improvement from one cycle to another.

Besides, the number of students who were successful in obtaining the minimum criteria of mastery learning continued to improve. In the pre-cycle, only 10,53 % of students could pass the minimum criteria of mastery learning. Then, this percentage increased significantly in cycle 1 for 47,36 %. Finally, in cycle 2, the students' percentage who failed to fulfill the criteria decreased sharply to 26,31%, and 73,69 % of students could gain it.

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