

USING THE WORD CARD TECHNIQUE IN TEACHING VOCABULARY

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ABSTRAK

Kosa kata atau *vocabulary* adalah elemen penting dalam pembelajaran bahasa Inggris. Keempat ketrampilan dalam bahasa Inggris yaitu *listening*, *speaking*, *reading* dan *writing* sangat membutuhkan kosa kata. Oleh karena itu dibutuhkan tehnik yang menarik untuk menyampaikan materi kosa kata ini. Seorang guru bahasa Inggris harus mempunyai tehnik, strategi dan media yang menyenangkan agar kosa kata yang diajarkan dapat tersimpan dalam *memory* jangka panjang siswa. Dalam artikel ini penulis menjelaskan tehnik mengajar kosa kata dengan menggunakan tehnik *the word cards*. Tehnik ini menggunakan kartu dalam menyampaikan materinya. Tehnik ini dapat mempermudah guru dalam mengajarkan kosa kata dan dapat meningkatkan motivasi belajar siswa.

Key words: *Vocabulary, the word cards dan Teaching*

A. INTRODUCTION

Words are the primary building blocks of effective communication. Although gestures and facial expressions work well in face-to-face communication, words carry the weight of meaning when people are removed from each other in distance and time. Thus, when students are reading a book, what they know about the words in the book matters. In the ESL classroom, word it is called vocabulary, that is one of essential elements of language. It is a core component of language proficiency and provides much of the basis for well the learners speak, listen, read and write. The vocabulary knowledge will help the students know the language from basic. The vocabulary knowledge will help the students to understand the language. They cannot be listening, writing, reading and speaking English well if they do not have enough vocabulary.

As second language learners, L2 will probably have a vocabulary of round 20.000 words (or more accurately, 20.000 word families). This is the result of adding about a thousand words of a year to the 5000. Most adult second language learners, however will be lucky to have acquired 5,000 word families even after several years of study.² Furthermore, the learners need not only to learn a lot of words, but to remember

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²Scott Thornbury, *How to teach Vocabulary*, (USA: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p.20.

them. In fact, in learning is remembering. Unlike the learning of grammar, which is essentially a rule-based system, vocabulary knowledge is largely a question of accumulating individual items. The systems are the short-term store, working memory. And long-term memory.³

The teacher should be concerned with these case, the second language learners need ways how to improve their vocabulary. The teacher must be preparing and find out the appropriate way, which will be implemented to the students. A good teacher teacher should prepare himself or herself with various techniques and always up to date. The teachers need to be able to master them material in order to understood by students, and make them interested and happy in teaching and learning process in the classroom.

B. DISCUSSION

1. The Nature of Vocabulary

Vocabulary is important aspect of language when we study in foreign language. It is one of component for the language where is vocabulary help learner in speaking and communication. Vocabulary is the stock of words on which you can draw in expressing yourself.⁴ Furthermore, vocabulary is groups of word should be learned as unit in conveying idea for listening, reading, writing and speaking. According Shirly Burrige vocabulary is all the words in language list of words in lesson or books, all the word that one person knows.⁵

Learning vocabulary is one aspect that should be owned by students to make them understand and increase their aspect of language. Howard Jackson said "vocabulary is a represented collection of the words that exists in English Language."⁶ Then Hornby says vocabulary is all the words that person know or use, the words that people use when they are telling about particular subject.⁷ From definitions above, it can be concluded that vocabulary is the total number

³*Ibid.*, p. 23.

⁴Richard D, *Howto Enlarge and Improve your Vocabulary*, (New York University:1994),p.1.

⁵Shirly Burnidge, *Oxford Basic English Dictionary*,(New York:Oxford University Press, 1981), p.447.

⁶Howard Jackson, *Word, Meaning and Vocabulary*,(London:Casell,2000),p.118.

⁷A.S. Honbry, *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*,(New York: Oxford University Press,1995) p.1506.

of words that are needed to communicate ideas and express the speakers' meaning. That is the reason why it is important to learn vocabulary.

2. Kinds of vocabulary

There are two kinds of vocabulary. The first type of vocabulary refers to the one that the students have been taught and that they are expected to be able to use. Meanwhile, the second one refers to the words which the students will recognize when they meet them, but which they will probably not be able to pronounce. Haycraft, quoted by Hatch and Brown indicate two kinds of vocabulary, namely receptive vocabulary and productive vocabulary.

a. Receptive vocabulary

Receptive vocabulary can be understood only through listening and reading. Receptive vocabulary is words that learners recognize and understand when they are used in context, but which they cannot produce. It is vocabulary that students recognize when they see or meet in reading text but do not use it in speaking and writing. Someone doesn't need to know much about the receptive vocabulary because someone rarely uses the receptive vocabulary and it is impossible for someone can understand that ideas of the utterances contextually not word by word.

b. Productive Vocabulary or Active Vocabulary

Productive vocabulary is the words that the learners understand and can pronounce correctly and use constructively in speaking and writing. It involves what is needed for receptive vocabulary plus the ability to speak or write at the appropriate time. Therefore, productive vocabulary can be addressed as an active process, because the learners can produce the words to express their thoughts to others.⁸

Based on the kinds of the vocabulary above receptive or passive vocabulary will be easy for understand by using listening and reading to record words or collecting vocabularies, while productive or active vocabulary will be easy understand by using concentration patterns and grammatical word in recording vocabulary.

3. Teaching vocabulary

Teaching vocabulary is an activity to collect some new words to increase the language, it is an important thing because can help the learners in understanding activities in the second language classroom. Teaching vocabulary

⁸Jeremy Harmer, *The Practical of English Language Teaching*,(New York: Longman, 2000), p.158.

can guide the learners to record more vocabulary. For the teacher, there are several principles for successful in teaching vocabulary as follows:

- a. Focus on the most useful vocabulary
 The most useful vocabulary that every English language learners needs whether that use the language for listening, speaking, reading or writing, or whether they use the language informal and informal situation. In other hand, the teacher must know what words to teach and learn.
- b. Focus on the vocabulary in the most appropriate way.
 This principle will look at the four most important vocabulary learning strategies of using word parts, guessing from context, using word class and using dictionaries. The teacher need clearly distinguish the way they treat low frequency words. In other words, this principle looks at how vocabulary should be taught and learned.
- c. Give attention to the high frequency words across the four strands of a course.
 High frequency vocabulary needs to occur in all four strands of a course. It should get deliberate attention through teaching and study and should be met and used in communicating message in listening, speaking, reading and writing.
- d. Encourage learners to reflect on and take responsibility for learning.
 It is important principles that lies behind choosing and learning and that is that learners need to realize that they must be responsible for their own learning. Taking this responsibility requires; knowledge of what to learn and the range of options for learning vocabulary, skill in choosing the best options and the ability to monitor and evaluate progress with those option.⁹

So, for the teacher, those 4 principles are better to be considered and can be applied in the vocabulary classroom. Teacher has to consider to focus the useful word whether the word is for informal or formal word, or whether it is appropriate for the context that is talked or not. Also, the teacher needs to give attention to the students that have high frequency vocabulary, the students are supported to use their words in all aspects of skills; listening, speaking, reading and writing. The last is the teacher has to keep on that he/ she needs to encourage students to reflect on and take responsibility for learning like the teacher can monitor and evaluate the students' progress in the vocabulary aspects.

⁹David Nunan, *Practical English Language Teaching*, (New York:MC.Grow Hill,2003), p.135-140.

4. The words Card Technique

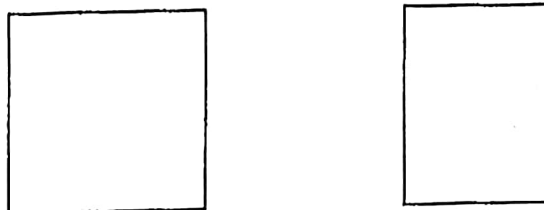
The word card technique is one of the technique that will used in learning vocabulary. The word card technique is one kind of form focused instruction, these techniques involves some attempts to focus learners' attention on specific properties of second language learner that they will learn them.¹⁰ From that statement is known that using word cards is intended to develop some elements of language such as pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, spelling and so on. Furthermore, learning using word cards is the association between a foreign language word form and its meaning in the form the first language definition or a picture or real object.¹¹

Word cards has function to memorize the words, it is also supplies the word repetition that can be helpful for their memorization. The words is stored at longer time or long term memory on their mind than just memorizing the words list. It is flexible because the words on the cards can be applied with student's material. It is easy for the teacher in preparing the material just need a creative and need time to prepare it.

a. Steps in Using the Word Card Technique

The teacher has steps in teaching vocabulary by using the word card, from these teachers can arrange the material. Based on Scoot there are seven steps in using the word card technique, these steps are¹²

- 1) The students write a word to be studied on one slide of a small card and its mother tongue translation on the other



- 2) Depending on the difficulty of the word a full set at any one time should consist of between 20 and 50 cards.

¹⁰Rod Ellis, *The Study of Second Language Acquisitions* Second Edition, (USA: Oxford University Press, 2008), p.963.

¹¹ISP NL, *ISP Nation Learning Vocabulary in Another Language*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p.169.

¹²Scoot Thornbury, *How to Teach Vocabulary*, (Pearson Education Limited: UK 2007), p.146.

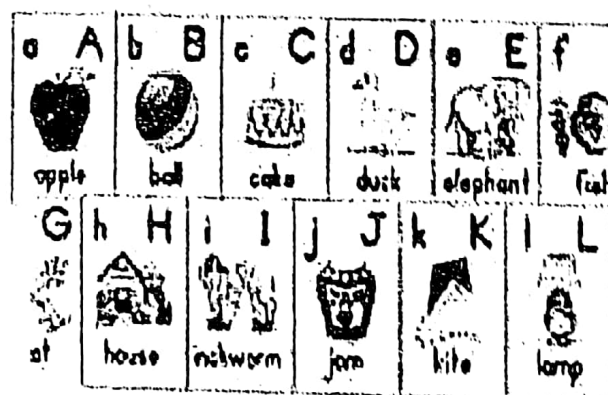
- 3) Words do not have to belong to lexical sets in fact it is probably better that they don't, so as to avoid the interference effect of words of similar meaning being learned together.
- 4) Then they reverse the process, using the translation to trigger the form of the new word.
- 5) Words that because difficulty should be moved to the top of the pile, in any case, the cards should be shuffled periodically to avoid serial effects that is, remembering words because of the order they come in and not for any other reason.
- 6) The sequence of learning and review should become increasingly spaced.
- 7) As words are learned they should be discarded, and new word cards made and added to the set.

On the other hand, a linguist wrote some activities class in using word card. These are those activities for using flash cards: Memory, drilling, identification and TPR activities.¹³

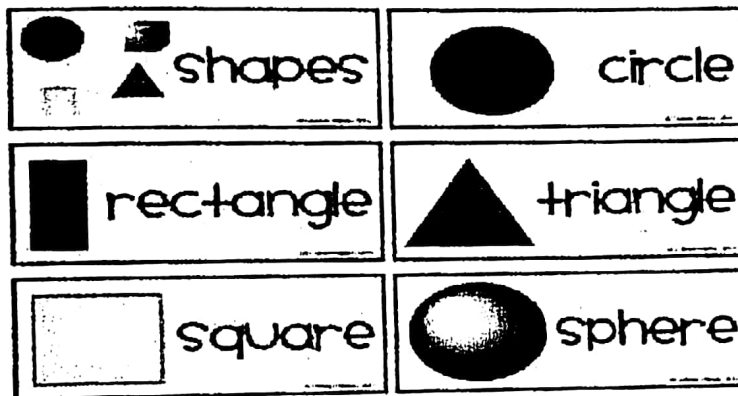
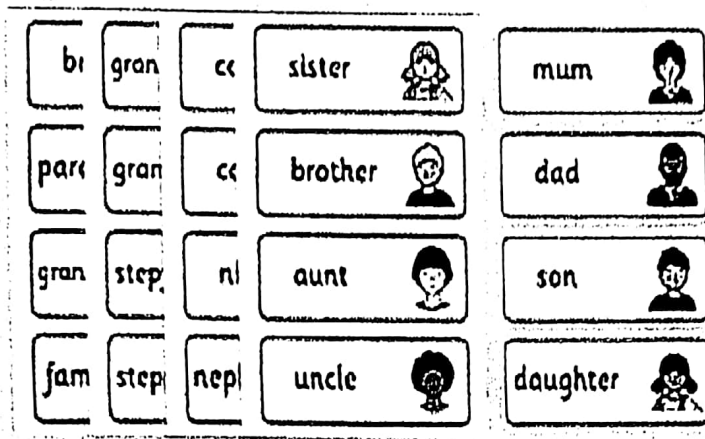
1) *Memory Activities: Memory Tester*

- a) Place a selection of cards on the floor in a circle.
- b) Students have one minute to memorize the cards.
- c) In groups, they have two minutes to write as many of the names as they can remember.

Here are the examples of memory tester word card:



¹³British Council, "Using Cards with Young Learners", accessed on Friday 11th of November 2016 from <https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/using-flash-cards-young-learners>.



2) *Drilling Activities: Invisible cards*

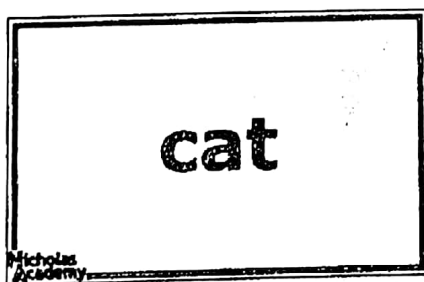
- Stick 9 cards on the board and draw a grid around them.
- Use a pen or a pointer to drill the 9 words. Always point to the card you are drilling.
- Gradually remove the cards but continue to drill and point to the grid where the card was.
- When the first card is removed and you point to the blank space, nod your head to encourage children to say the word of the removed card.
- Students should remember and continue as if the cards were still there. They seem to be amazed that they can remember the pictures.
- Depending on the age group the teacher then put the cards back in the right place on the grid, asking the children where they go, or I ask students to come up and write the word in the correct place on the grid.

3) *Identification Activities: Reveal the word*

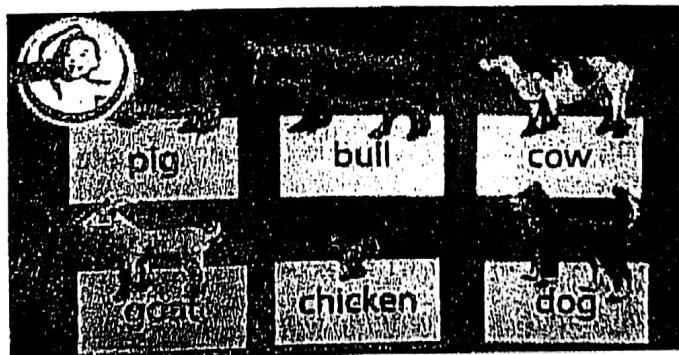
- a) Cover word card with a piece of card and slowly reveal it.
- b) Students guess which one it is.
- c) Once the card is shown, chorally drill the word with the group using different intonation and silly voices to keep it fun. Vary the volume too, whisper and shout the words. Children will automatically copy your voice.
- d) Alternatively, flip the card over very quickly so the children just get a quick glimpse.
- e) Repeat until they have guessed the word.

Or the other procedures are:

- a) The teacher puts many words card and the flash cards contain picture relate to the word card in the middle of the class.
- b) The teacher divides class into 2 groups.
- c) One of both groups are having turn to find word that is said by the teacher then match the word into the card. For example: teacher says: "Cat" then the students have to match it with cat picture. Here is the example:



Or it can be like this:



- 4) *TPR activities: Point or race to the cards*
- a) Stick cards around the class.
 - b) Say one of them and students point or race to it.
 - c) Students can then give the instructions to classmates.
 - d) You can extend this by saying "hop to the cat" or even "if you have blonde hair, swim to the fish" etc. So, the students point the word card "CAT" and come to the cat picture card or flash card.
 - e) You can also incorporate cards into a game of Simon Says. "Simon says, jump to the T-shirt" etc.

b. The Advantages and Disadvantages of the Words Card

1) The advantages

Working with word cards has a number of important learning psychological advantages over learning of words with the help of lists, in whatever form. These have been partly discussed already, but it seems useful to completely list them below:

- (a) While learning, the learner concentrates on those words he does not know yet: the word (s)he does know, or has learned in the meantime because they were not difficult, (s)he can put aside or-with the hand computer-move to compartment 2 straight away. In this way, each word gets from each learner precisely the amount of attention it needs. In this way, the available time is used efficiently [cf. Atkinson (1972)].
- (b) The order of a series of words to be learned is flexible. Consequently, the position of a word to be learned in a series no longer wrongly offers any help. While working with word cards the order can be changed by shuffling the cards; while working with the hand computer the order automatically changes for "known" words constantly disappear from compartment 1, new ones are added to it, some old ones return, etc.
- (c) With the hand computer, the knowledge of all words learned is checked at various moments (distributed practice) by means of ever bigger intervals (expanding rehearsal). In this way, the words are repeated. Because of the long period that it takes for a card to be processed through the hand computer-the hand computer described can contain over 1000 cards long-term knowledge is much better ensured. As the necessary repetition checks for known words remain limited, sufficient time is left for the learning of new words, as well as for forgotten words, which again receive full attention.¹⁴

¹⁴Thomas M. H., and Dieter J. N., *The positive effects of writing practice on integration of foreign words in memory. Journal of Educational Psychology*, (Netherlands: Pergamon, 1987), p. 250.

Besides these advantages that meet the objections pointed out in Section 3 against the learning of words with the help of lists, some other learning-psychological advantages may be mentioned:

- (a) By writing the cards the learner pays more attention to the word form of the foreign language word than is usually the case. Research has shown that this writing down of the foreign language word has a positive effect on the productive retention.
- (b) During learning (receptively or productively) the learner does not at once see the translation of the word to be learned. This stimulates him/her to first think before checking whether (s)he knows the word (retrieval practice). In this way the mental activity during learning corresponds with that during later testing.
- (c) As learning is supported by motor, manual activity-the learner is constantly handling the cards-(s)he is better concentrated on the task, something which appears to work especially in learners who are by nature easily distracted. To these learning-psychological advantages some motivational advantages may be added, especially for weak learners: Learners have a strong affective bond with the material for they have made the cards themselves. The deck of cards is something truly theirs.
- (d) Learners see the results of their learning (experiencing of success): an ever-growing pile of cards with words they already know.
- (e) Learning words is no longer a dull cognitive activity, but a real activity with playful elements.¹⁵

2) The disadvantages of Using Word Cards Techniques

Some techniques in teaching vocabulary has some advantages and disadvantages. Advantages already explained the above paragraph. Here the writer explained the disadvantages using word cards technique in the classroom, they are:

- a) Using word cards is an out dated technique in learning vocabulary and this is not relation in the purpose of the communicative approach to language teaching.
- b) Using word card has principal that the students learn from the word cards means that they are learned forever.
- c) Using word cards does not mean that all knowledge of a word has been learned, even though it can be designed to include a wide a range of information about word.¹⁶

¹⁵*Ibid.*, 251.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, p. 252.

3) The Activities in Using of Word Card

Word card is interactive technique, it can have applied in the classroom. The word card can encourage the students to produce their word card sets, and invite them to comment on their usefulness, how many words they have learned, and how often they reviewed them. Here are some activities that can be used in the classroom to encourage the independent use of word cards:

- (a) Peer teaching and testing. Start the lesson, pair students off, and ask the students to compare their current word card sets. Stimulate them to teach each other the words in their sets that the students don't share, and take evaluation top test each other.
- (b) Association games: for instance, each the students lays down one card at the same time. The first to complete the coherent sentence incorporating both words gets a point. If no association can be made by either player, put the cards aside and deal two more. Does it until the cards are used all?
- (c) Guess my word: the students have already familiar with each other's word card, each takes a word at random, and the other has to guess which word it is by asking yes/no questions, such as It is Noin/verb/adjective/.....?
- (d) De-vowelled words: each of a pair selects a word from their word cards and writer it down without its vowels – their partner has to work out what the word is.
- (e) Categories: In pairs or small group, learners organize their words into categories, e.g. according to whether the words have hot or cold, or masculine or famine, or good or bad, or sweet or sour, associations.¹⁷

For examples: Finding opposite of word:

GDDD

BAD

SWEET

SDUR

¹⁷Thomas M. H., and Dieter J. N., *Log. Cit.*

The other activities that can applied in the classroom such as suggested by Irfan Toucouleur:

- (a) Write the vocabulary items on individual cards with their translation on the reverse side. See how many words you can remember from the English definition by turning them over one by one; then try it the other way around. (This game is more fun if played with two or more people) separate out the ones you find hard to recall and them around with.
- (b) Studying the words in the context of the sentences in the dialogues of your text book.
- (c) Say the words out loudly.
- (d) Write down the words that are most difficult to memorize on a separate sheet of paper and give extra time to them.
- (e) Tape record the words and their definitions; then listen to the tape several times. Use the 'pause' button to test yourself. Associate words with picture.
- (f) Group them by generic categories, e.g. furniture, foods.
- (g) Make sentences using the new vocabulary (and grammar patterns) ready for use in classroom.¹⁸

C. CONCLUSION

From the explanation above, the writer get idea that activities in the classroom by using the word card is not only memorizing the words and their meaning, but the teacher can combine into studying elements the language. It is very active and enjoyable when using in the classroom. From this strategy, the students get the experience learning that it can stored the vocabulary in long memory term. They get enjoyable and fantastic situation when they study using the word cards strategy. Furthermore, they can have created their word card at home to increase their vocabulary. The important one for this strategy, the teacher has creative person, they must spend time to make the cards that suitable with the theme and material. Finally, the writer hope the teacher can apply the word cards strategy as one of their strategy in improving the vocabulary.

¹⁸Irfan Tosuncoglu, *Teaching Vocabulary for Active Use*, (Kyrgyz: Manas University Press, 2008), p.143.

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