

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL REVIEW

A. The Definition of Vocabulary

Vocabulary is the basic element of language and has an important role in the four language skills. In general, vocabulary is a word in a language. Every language has its own vocabulary. According to Pei (1976: 1111), vocabulary is the stock of words used by a people, or by a particular class or person. Hornby (1974: 957) also states that vocabulary means the total numbers of words, which (with rule of combining them) make up a language. Rivers in Nunan (1991: 117) argues that the acquisition of an adequate vocabulary is essential for successful second language use because without an extensive vocabulary, we will be unable to use the structures and functions we may have learned for comprehensible communication. Furthermore, without knowing vocabulary, students will not be able to speak, write, read and also listen.

Pikulski and Templeton (2004) states that :

vocabulary is the sum of words that are used by and understood by students. The major way in which we use vocabulary is when we speak and write; the term *expressive vocabulary* is used to refer to both since these are the vocabularies we use to express ourselves. We understand vocabulary when we listen to speech and when we read; the term *receptive vocabulary* is used to refer to listening and reading vocabularies.

In addition, Nunan (1991: 118) said that the more one's vocabulary develops, the easier it is to add new words – the first ten words are probably the most difficult to learn.

From the previous definitions, it can be concluded that vocabulary is a set of words that have meaning and is used in a particular language that is known to its users both in spoken and written form.

B. Teaching Vocabulary

1. The Principles of Teaching Vocabulary

As a teacher, it is important to know a set of guiding principles that can be applied in a variety of teaching and learning situation. According to Kieran (2000) there are six principles in teaching vocabulary as follows :

a. Teachers should choose useful words

Teachers should choose words that will be useful for their students to learn. Useful words are words that learners will meet often, or need to use often in their language use situations.

b. Teachers should let the learners do the work

Far too often it is teachers who do all the work for their learners by providing definitions, sentences etc. While helping students with difficult definitions is necessary, it is probably more meaningful for learners to do the work themselves. One way to approach this is to set students the task of learning the words for themselves in preparation for class. That way they can then bring along to class any questions or problems they are having with the words and the teacher can address these.

c. Teachers should focus on different aspects of a word

There is much more to a word than just its meaning. For example, amongst other things, students can learn a word's stress (accent), its collocations and word family members, its grammatical patterns and word parts etc. Learners can enrich their knowledge of a word, and perhaps remember it better, by learning more of these different aspects.

d. Teachers should provide meaningful learning opportunities

It is not enough to simply tell students the meanings of words or get them to only study words out of context. They need opportunities to see or hear target words in a meaningful context, and opportunities to use target words in meaningful writing and speaking tasks. Challenging students to find these words in reading or listening passages and use these words in particular writing and speaking tasks is a simple way to approach this. The provision of these opportunities is the main job of a vocabulary teacher.

e. Teachers should implement a regular testing schedule

Along with directly teaching and studying new words, and seeing and using them in context, students should be tested regularly. Testing can be used to give students feedback on their success and/or failure to learn and use the target words and motivate them to study vocabulary. At the very least, regular testing can provide learners with a chance to retrieve newly learnt words from their memories and use

them in a meaningful way. Good vocabulary tests will have a balance of vocabulary understanding (receptive) and vocabulary use (productive) tasks.

- f. Teachers should be patient with their learners

Students constantly forget words they have learnt. This is part of the learning process. However this can often frustrate teachers. It is important that teachers remain patient with their learners and allow them a lot of opportunities to see, use and revise new vocabulary in a positive learning environment. A patient teacher can reduce the anxiety levels in a classroom and this can in turn have a positive effect on vocabulary learning.

2. Problems in Teaching Vocabulary

Teaching vocabulary is not a simple matter to be done by teacher. Both teacher and students will find some problems as follows :
 (http://www.amityfoundation.org/cms/user/1/docs/teaching_vocabulary.pdf
 retrieved on 10 November 2011)

- a. Text books : long wordlist

Many text books have very long wordlist for each unit – 100 words would not be unusual. This means that, in order to understand the text/s related to a particular unit, students have to know or be able to guess a lot of vocabulary.

b. Teachers and students' boredom

Both students and teachers can become bored and demotivated.

Presentation of vocabulary is often done in the same way repeatedly.

c. Difficulty

For English majors, long list of words are trying enough; for non-majors they are very difficult.

3. How to Assess Students' Vocabulary

Vocabulary assessment should be varied, meaningful, and match instruction. Johnson (2001) suggests that teachers assess vocabulary in their classrooms using written work, cloze passages, hinky pinkies (riddles), memory games, teacher tests, and by asking students directly. Johnson offers some suggestions for testing word knowledge by asking the child to :

- a. Read the word and circle a picture of it.
- b. Look at a picture and circle the word for it.
- c. Read the word and circle a definition.
- d. Read the word and circle a synonym.
- e. Read the word and circle an antonym.
- f. Read the word in context and circle a definition, synonym, or antonym.
- g. Read a sentence and write the missing word.
- h. Read a sentence and supply the missing word orally.
- i. Read the word and draw a picture or tell about it.

- j. Read the word and put it in a category.
- k. Find the word in a category in which it doesn't belong.

C. Learning Vocabulary

Learning vocabulary is a complex process. The students' aim to be reached in learning vocabulary process is primarily their ability to recall the word at will and to recognize it in its spoken and written form. Shejbalová (2006).

Brown and Payne in Hatch and Brown (1995: 373) suggest the principle for vocabulary learning which are briefly described below :

1. Having source for encountering new words

The first essential principle for vocabulary learning is encountering new words, which are having a source for words. The students strategies here included learning new words by reading books, listening to radio, tape cassette or TV. And for Junior High School students, they can read English books, magazines or tabloid for children. Learners can encounter new words by textbook, dictionary, or teacher. This step is the most vital because incidental learning of vocabulary must occur if second language learners are to approach.

2. Getting are to approach

The importance to getting the word form appears when the students are asked to give definition for words. The beginning students are

particularly likely to make mistakes that are obviously related to confusions of the form of one word with the form of the words.

3. Learning the meaning of the words

In this principle learners often get close to the meaning of the English words, choosing means that have some of the features of the words, for example “strong” and “hard” share some features with “heavy”, but one also distinct in several ways.

4. Making a strong memory connection between the form and the meaning of the words

In this principle of learning vocabulary, many kind of vocabulary learning drills such as making exercise, crossword puzzle, etc, strengthen the form meaning connection.

5. Using the words

The final principle of learning vocabulary is using the words. To know the learners’ understanding of the English words the teacher use a vocabulary test, so that learners could feel more confident about their word knowledge when they have used the words.

D. Snake and Ladder Puzzle

1. The Definition of Snake and Ladder Puzzle

Hornby (1995 : 1122) states that snake and ladder is a game played on a board with counters which can move up pictures of ladders (to progress) or down pictures of snakes (to go back). Thus, snake and ladder

puzzle is a word puzzle which uses the rule of snake and ladder game all together with provided clues in completing the missing words.

Snake and ladder puzzle provides clues which bridge the students in understanding the meaning of the words through the context related to the material being learnt. The vocabularies learnt include the content word (noun, verb, adjective, adverb). In helping the students to reinforce their vocabulary, the clues provide definition, synonym, or antonym of the words. Since it is a kind of puzzle, it also helps the students to know the spelling of the words.

2. The Advantages of Snake and Ladder Puzzle

As a game, snake and ladder puzzle has some advantages to teach English vocabulary such as :

- a. Snake and ladder puzzle provides many varieties of clue that help students improve their vocabulary mastery.
- b. Snake and ladder puzzle help students spelling the words.
- c. Snake and ladder puzzle promotes students' interest and motivation in learning English vocabulary.
- d. Snake and ladder puzzle creates a good learning atmosphere in which enable students to get actively involved in the teaching and learning process, so they will learn and retain new words faster and better.

3. The Disadvantages of Snake and Ladder Puzzle

Snake and ladder puzzle also has some disadvantages, those are :

- a. Snake and ladder puzzle needs many preparations before it becomes ready used puzzle, especially in making the puzzle board and the clues.
- b. Snake and ladder puzzle requires a better classroom management skill's of the teacher since it is a game, so the students tend to be noisier during the implementation of the game.

E. Snake and Ladder Puzzle in Teaching English Vocabulary

In this paper, the writer wants to conduct English vocabulary teaching by using snake and ladder puzzle in experimental class. Before teaching the experimental class, the writer makes some preparations as follows :

1. Select the vocabulary which have correlation with the lesson
2. Make snake and ladder puzzle
3. Make some clues used to fill the puzzle
4. Make instructional objective

In vocabulary game, the writer carries out some steps as follow :

1. Give snake and ladder puzzle to the students
2. Give the rule of the game
3. Ask the students to play snake and ladder puzzle

The procedure of playing snake and ladder puzzle are :

1. The class divided into several groups, each group consists of two or four students.

2. Give each group snake and ladder puzzle and its clues.
3. Ask the students to play in turn. The students should shake the dice first. If the number of the dice is odd, they should take the odd clues while if the number of the dice is even they should take the even clues.
4. The students who answer or guess the clue correctly can move forward as much as the alphabets which arrange the word. While the students who can not guess, just stuck on his/her former position until s/he gets the next turn.
5. The students who reach the finish box earliest is the winner.

F. Basic Assumptions

Learning vocabulary has become a difficult process both for teacher and students. The common problem is that the students are bored and demotivated in their learning process. For those reasons, a teacher should have a set of guiding principles that can be applied in the variety of learning situation. Furthermore, s/he also should provide adequate media to support in creating interesting learning atmosphere among the students.

One of the media that can be used is game. In choosing game, the teacher should consider about the positive effect of that game such as able to make all of the students active in participating during the classroom activity. Therefore, the writer assumes that reinforcing students' vocabulary mastery using snake and ladder puzzle will be very interesting. It is a simple and attractive game in which students can play in the classroom. The use of snake and ladder puzzle in English vocabulary learning has a special contribution to

make the students more active and to change the classroom's atmosphere become livelier. It is also good as a review tool since it belongs to one type of games so the teacher find it less threatening to be used in the review session than those of other tests.

G. Hypothesis

Based on the theoretical review above, the hypothesis for this study is that snake and ladder puzzle is effective to reinforce students' vocabulary mastery.

