

USING MAKE A MATCH TECHNIQUE TO TEACH VOCABULARY

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ABSTRACT

This research was done to see if the use of the Make a Match technique could improve the mastery of vocabulary of eighth grade students at Junior High School (SMP) Negeri 18 Banda Aceh. The main purpose was to find out if students taught using the Make a Match technique would get better scores for vocabulary compared to those who were taught the usual way. The material given to the students was vocabulary in the context of a narrative text. The population and sample for the study was two classes of year eight students at Junior High School Number 18 (SMP Negeri 18), Banda Aceh which had 58 students, 29 in each class. The data for this research was collected from a pre-test and a post-test that were analyzed using SPSS 15.0. The mean of the post-test of the experimental group (EG) was 49 which was significantly higher than that of the control group (CG) at 42. The mean from the pre-test of the EG was 39 the same as that from the CG which was also 39. The result of the t-test concluded that the students taught using the Make a Match technique got better scores in vocabulary than those in the CG. However the results from the tests of the parts of vocabulary were not conclusive. As a follow up from this research, it is suggested that English teachers should try using the Make a Match technique for teaching reading as an alternative to be applied in teaching reading in English.

Key words: *Teaching Vocabulary, Make a Match Technique.*

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INTRODUCTION

In English language teaching, students are not only expected to master the four language skills; listening, speaking, reading and writing but also to master the components such as English grammar, collocation and vocabulary (Harmer, 2007: 102). The ability of the students to master grammatical features and vocabulary contributes much to their efforts in mastering the four language skills. In other words, the smaller the vocabulary the more difficulty students will have in comprehending oral and written texts in English (Komariah, 2011: 13). According to Depdiknas (2006), Junior High School students are expected to master 1500 words to help them understand and use the four language skills. However, most students cannot learn this many words.

As a matter of fact and based on several research findings eg. those of Arifah and Kusumarasdyati (2013: 5), most Junior High School students still face many problems in comprehending English texts because of their limited vocabulary. The researcher interviewed some second grade (year 8) students from State Junior High School (SMPN) 18 Banda Aceh about their problems with learning vocabulary. When the researcher asked about this difficulty, the students said that it was hard for them to master many words that the teacher introduced to them or that they found when reading texts. This condition also affected the students' ability in comprehending the meanings in texts that they are given.

Based on a preliminary study at SMP Negeri 18 Banda Aceh, the writer found that most of the students did not get satisfactory result in their tests of English. When the students were given a test related to vocabulary mastery, about 60% of the students answer the questions incorrectly since they do not know the meaning of the words. This low mastery of vocabulary can affect the students' ability in understanding the four language skills; listening, speaking, reading, and writing. As Arifah and Kusumarasdyati (2013: 6) have said in their article that English language learners with low vocabulary development are less able to comprehend a text at grade level than other learners who have fast vocabulary development. Such students are likely to perform poorly on assessments in those areas and are at risk of being diagnosed as learning disabled. Based on this explanation, it is assumed that if this condition still happens, it is predicted that the students' ability to cope

with the national final examination test will be low and unsatisfactory as well.

Based on the preliminary study and the writer's observations when the teacher taught in her class, the condition of the class can be illustrated as follows:

1. The English teacher who taught the students in this class seldom taught vocabulary separately and usually without specific preparation. He only taught vocabulary according to instructions in the text book.
2. The teacher who taught this class seldom used a variety of techniques for teaching vocabulary but often used techniques like drilling, or word memorizing .

In referring to the above condition, the researcher as one of the English teachers was inspired to apply a teaching technique that the teacher had never applied yet. The technique chosen was Make-a-Match; one of the co-operative learning techniques which can be applied in all subjects and at all levels of studying. Arifah and Kusumarasdyati (2013: 5) defined Make a Match as one of the co-operative learning techniques that is used with pairs. The students are put into 2 groups, group A and group B. The number in each group depends on the number of cards prepared. Each student gets a card. Group A gets question (topic) cards; while group B gets the answer cards. When they have already found their matches, they can report it to the teacher.

Previous researches have been conducted about the effect of the Make a Match technique. In April 2013, Arifah and Kusumarasdyati (2013) conducted research with the seventh grade students from SMPN 1 Karangbinangun, Lamongan about how to teach English using the Make a Match technique and they proved that this technique can result in significantly improved results. The students who were taught using the Make a Match technique got better results in tests of English vocabulary than those who were taught in a traditional way. In addition, Iriyani (2013) conducted a classroom action research study into improving students' vocabulary with grade VIII students from MTs Swasta Al-Badar at Tanjung Balai. The research findings proved that after the application of the Make a Match technique in teaching vocabulary, the students' vocabulary improved a lot. Moreover, Wahyuni (2011) conducted an experimental study on the implementation of the Make a Match technique in teaching vocabulary to the first grade students of SMP Negeri 2 Sulang, Rembang,

Semarang. The result of that study showed that there was a significant difference in vocabulary mastery between the students who were taught using the Make a Match technique and those who were not. Pratiwiningsih (2013) conducted a research study on teaching reading comprehension by applying the Make a Match technique with the students of SMA Negeri 1 Limbang, Lamongan. The results from her study proved that the students who were taught using the Make a Match technique had better comprehension of the reading text than those who were not.

In line with the above research finding, the researcher was therefore curious about the application of the Make a Match technique for teaching vocabulary. She wanted to find out the positive and negative impacts of applying the technique with her class.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Nature of Vocabulary

Many definitions have been given for what vocabulary is. Vocabulary can be defined as “words we must know to communicate effectively; words in speaking (expressive vocabulary) and words in listening (receptive vocabulary)” (Neuman & Dwyer, 2009: 385). This word collection is used as a medium for expressing the purposes of speakers or writers and to illustrate their speeches and writings. A person will be better able to communicate fluently if he has a sufficiently large vocabulary that will enable him to communicate more easily. In other words, vocabulary is one of the main requirements for a person to communicate well.

Another definition of vocabulary is that vocabulary is the knowledge of words and word meanings. Stahl (2005: 3) has stated that vocabulary knowledge is knowledge of words that not only implies definition, but also implies how each word fits into the world. Vocabulary knowledge is not something that can ever be fully mastered; it is something that expands and deepens over the course of a lifetime. Instruction in vocabulary involves far more than looking up words in a dictionary and using the words in sentences. Vocabulary is acquired incidentally through indirect exposure to words and intentionally through explicit instruction and learning about specific words and strategies for learning about words and collocations.

Teaching Vocabulary

Vocabulary plays an important role in helping students develop their ability in mastering reading comprehension. Because vocabulary knowledge is critical to reading comprehension, it is important that those working with young readers help each young reader foster the development of a large “word bank” and also help them practice effective vocabulary learning strategies. There are several effective explicit (intentional, planned instructions) and implicit (spontaneous instruction as a student comes to new words in a text) strategies that adults can employ with readers of any age. There are several strategies on how vocabulary can be taught; they are explicit vocabulary learning instructions, pre teaching vocabulary words, vocabulary maps, root analysis, repeated exposure to words, etc.

One of the most effective ways of helping students learn new vocabulary is to teach vocabulary in context; for instance in a reading context. Stahl (2005) has mentioned that adults (either alone or with the students should preview reading materials to determine which words are unfamiliar. Then, these words should be defined and discussed. It is important for the adults to not only tell the students what the words mean, but also to discuss their meanings and collocations using them. This allows the students to develop an understanding of the word's connotations as well as its denotation. Also, discussion provides the adults with feedback about how well the students understand the words. After pre-teaching vocabulary words, the students should then read their texts.

In addition, Pavicic (2003: 7) dealt with a way to improve students' abilities to explore, store, and use vocabulary items. He determined the role of vocabulary teaching and how a teacher could help their learners. He emphasized on self-initiated independent learning with strategies, in which formal practices, functional practices and memorizing could be included. He pointed out that the teacher should create activities and tasks to help students build their vocabulary and develop strategies to learn vocabulary on their own. In other words, instead of just the teacher, the learners themselves have responsibilities to improve their vocabularies while the teacher should provide suitable activities and tasks for the students to do.

It may seem common sense that the more times students are exposed to a word, the stronger their understanding becomes (Stahl, 2005). However, repeated exposure to new vocabulary words is often ignored. Teachers often forget a person (especially a student) needs to

hear and use a word several times before it truly becomes a part of her vocabulary. Pavicic (2003: 5) has claimed that providing multiple opportunities to use a new word in its written and spoken form will help students solidify their understanding of it.

The Nature of Make A Match Technique

Make a Match techniques is one of the co-operative learning methods developed and introduced by Curran in 1994. The basic principle of Make a Match is that the students find or match a partner while they are learning a concept or a particular topic in an interesting classroom atmosphere (Curran, 1994). To provide more understanding about the technique, some information is provided as follows.

According to Arifah and Kusumarasdyati (2013: 10), Make a Match is one of the teaching techniques which can be used in co-operative learning. The Make a match technique is a kind of game where students have to find their partner. In this technique, the students are divided into two groups, group A and group B. Each of the students in each group get one card. The students in group A get the topic cards while the students in group B get the simple description cards. After they find their matches, they have to report it to the teacher and the last step is the teacher asks them to compose sentences based on the words they got on their cards. Istarani (2011: 63) suggests that if a teacher wants to teach the students using the Make a match technique, he should prepare some cards, each with a question related to a topic and some other cards each one with an answer to one of the questions. Istarani adds that the Make a Match technique has several advantages as follows:

1. Each student can be directly involved in answering a question given to them in the form of a card.
2. It can increase the students' creativity through matching the cards.
3. It can help avoid students being bored during the teaching-learning process.
4. It can create a more interesting classroom atmosphere.

In line with the above advantages, Suprijono (2010: 97) clarifies that by using the Make a Match technique teachers can motivate and encourage their students to be more interested and enthusiastic in learning English. In teaching English to junior high school students, teachers can use the Make a Match technique to make teaching-learning easier. When the students are more interested in learning, they will concentrate and participate more actively in the class. In teaching vocabulary, the Make a match technique is considered as one very

appropriate technique. Suprijono (2010: 98) has stated that by using the Make a Match technique, the students will get more attracted and pay more attention to their teacher. They will not feel so bored nor be afraid of making a mistake in pronouncing a word. Moreover, the teacher can minimize the difficulties they have in leading their students to learn once the technique is applied.

Teaching Vocabulary through the Make a Match Technique

Teachers can play an important role in helping students enrich their vocabulary. According to Harmer (2007: 229) there are various ways a teacher can explain the meaning of words when teaching vocabulary and this should be a major part of the teaching performance. Students need to see and hear words in context and see and hear how the words are used. Accordingly, the best way, perhaps, of introducing new words is for students to read texts and/or listen to audio tracks to see and/or listen to new words in action.

In order to encourage students to get more interested in learning English especially EFL vocabulary, teachers can introduce and develop the teaching technique called Make a Match. The application of the Make a Match technique needs good preparation. Suprijono (2010: 94) has suggested several steps in preparing learning activities using the Make a Match technique. The first step is preparing the cards with the questions and the other cards with the answers to the questions. The second step is grouping. The teacher divides the class into three groups. The first group is the group which is given the question cards, the second group is those who are given the answer cards, while the third group is some students as an assessor group. Then, the groups are positioned in forms of a U letter in which the first and the second groups face each other. When each group is already in position, the teacher blows a whistle or gives some other sign that the matching activities can start. Students in the first and the second group move around and meet the members of the opposite group to match their cards and find the answers. The results are identified by pairs formed from both groups. When the pairs have been formed, they should show their cards to one of the assessor group. This group, then reads them to make sure that they got the correct answers. When this activity has been done, the teacher changes the role of the assessor group to take the role of either the first or the second group and issues new cards. At the end, the teacher gives feedback and facilitates class discussions to

ensure the correct answers and understanding of the meaning and the use of all the new words by the students.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

This study was an experimental research study which used a true experimental research design. Surachmad (1990: 64) has said that the aim of true experimental research is not only to collect and to describe the data but also to find out the cause and effect of the treatment. In addition, Margono (2005: 10) has added that the aim of experimental research is to provoke the data needed to answer the research problem. One group, the experimental group (EG) is given a certain treatment and another group is a control group (CG) whose purpose is to be a standard of comparison. The differences in the results measured from the EG and those from the CG will be the measurement of the effect of the treatment which was given to the EG.

Thus two groups were chosen for this research, an EG and a CG. Borg (1987: 8) has said that the EG consists of subjects who are given the treatment, that is the program or experience which the researcher wants to study whilst the other group, the CG consists of subjects who are not given the treatment in the research. Furthermore, the purpose of choosing the EG is to measure the effect of the treatment (the independent variable) upon the dependent variable while the purpose of the CG is to control for the treatment that could affect the EG.

In this case, the Make a Match technique was the independent variable while improving student's vocabulary was the dependent variable. Indeed, the Make a Match technique as the independent variable was manipulated to see the change or possible improvement in the students' vocabulary mastery as the dependent variable.

The Population and the Sample

According to Arikunto (2006: 130) the population is the totality of the research subjects, while the sample is that portion of the population that is studied in the research. Indeed, the population of this study was all of the second grade, year VIII, students at Junior High School Number 18 (SMPN 18) Banda Aceh in the 2013/2014 academic year that consisted of 180 students divided into seven classes. The sample for this research was randomly chosen from the seven eighth grade

(second year) classes. Class VIII-2, with 29 students, was chosen as the CG while class VIII-3, also with 29 students, was chosen as the EG.

The sample was homogeneous in that the participant groups chosen were alike. Based on reports from their English teacher, they both had almost the same quality of performance in English.

Research Instrument

In order to collect the data for this study, research instruments were needed. The instruments used in this study to collect data were a pre-test and a post-test. The pre-test and the post-test had already been tried out before they were administered to both the CG (VIII-2) and the EG (VIII-3). The try out was given to another group of students from the same level at the school, via: class VIII-1. There were four reading texts given as the context for the vocabulary exercises. All texts were taken from the English text book for Junior High School. The tests consisted of 20 questions about synonyms, antonyms, and the meaning of words used in the lessons.

The Pre-test

The pre-test was given at the first meetings of both groups which was used to see the initial performance of the students in vocabulary mastery. The students of both groups the EG and the CG were each given the some matching exercises about word definitions, synonyms, and antonyms. The total number of questions in the pre-test was 20 about different parts of speech; verbs, adjectives, and nouns. The model of the test was adapted from vocabulary exercises introduced by Sammis (2001).

The Post-tests

The post-tests was given at the end of the last meeting in order to see whether or not the EG students' vocabulary had improved after using the Make a Match technique. The questions in the post-test were in the same form and the same number as in the pre-test. There were 20 questions about word definitions, synonyms and antonyms.

The Test of Validity

According to Brown (2004: 22), there are three methods of testing the validity of a test, they are; content validity, criterion-related validity and construct-related validity. Here, the researcher used content

validity which means that the test should representatively contain the items that are supposed to be measured.

The validity of the tests can be seen where we find the relationship between the consistency of the test and its objectives. The objectives of the study here was that the students must be able to understand the meaning of vocabulary used in passages that they have to read. During the research, the students will be assigned to do various vocabulary exercises related to the reading topics and they will also be tested to use the same kinds of vocabulary tests in the post-test. This means that the test will be considered valid based on the content.

Test Reliability

Beside the validity, reliability is one of the criteria that makes a test qualified. Brown (2004: 23) has explained that a reliable test is consistent and dependable. If you give the same test to the same students or to matched students on two different occasions, the test should yield similar results.

Brown has also added that there are several factors that may contribute to the unreliability of a test; they are student-related reliability, rater reliability, test administration reliability, and test reliability. The pre-test was tried out on another class of students before it was administered to the CG and the EG and the result was consistent. In other words, the test used in this study was reliable.

Procedure of Data Collection

Before the experiment was carried out, the students in both the CG and the EG were given the pre-test. The pre-test was about matching exercises with word definitions, synonyms and antonyms. The vocabulary which was used in the test was from different parts of speech, via: verbs, nouns and adjectives.

After the pre-test, the treatment was started with the EG. They were taught vocabulary through the Make a Match technique while the CG was taught using the technique the teacher commonly used. In this experiment, the researcher designed three kinds of vocabulary exercises based on words taken from the reading passages. From each text, she designed three kinds of exercises with verbs, nouns and adjectives. For the post-test, the researcher repeated the exercises which had been given before as the pre-test.

The method used in this study was an experiment where the researcher herself taught the experimental class and observed directly

the aspects which were expected to support the English teaching process. Before the treatment was given, the researcher told the EG students that they were going to learn English using a new way that they had never experienced before called the Make a Match technique.

Before the experiment was carried out, the materials were prepared by the researcher herself. Certain teaching steps which had been prepared in advance were followed in order to help the students learn seriously and comprehend the exercises and/or tests more easily. As stated previously, the materials were mostly taken from the English text book which was considered most appropriate with the students' background knowledge. In teaching vocabulary for this experiment, the researcher set up quite a different procedure from her ordinary teaching since she wanted to create a more interesting classroom atmosphere. The teaching procedure was as follows.

1. The teacher prepared 20 cards comprised of 10 question cards and 10 answer cards. The questions were about the meaning or the definition of a word or words such as adjectives and verbs. For example, "what is the meaning of great?".
2. The teacher then divided the class into 3 groups; group A got the question cards, group B got the answer cards while group C was the assessor group to assess the results of the discussions.
3. Then, the groups were positioned in a letter U so that Group A and Group B faced each other with the Assessors in between.
4. The teacher explained the procedure of how the Make a Match technique was to be played out. Then, the teacher gave a sign to start the activities of matching the cards.
5. Each student in group A moved to find the student from group B that held the correct definition of her word(s). They could ask and discuss with their partner about the correct answer.
6. If they were certain about the answer, they would then report to the assessor group and show them their cards.
7. The assessor group would then read the pair of cards to make sure they had a correct match.
8. Next, the teacher changed the role of the three groups. Groups C and B became the groups that held the question and the answer cards while group A became the assessor group.
9. Finally, the teacher led a class discussion to ensure the Groups had got the correct answers for all of their cards.

Data Analysis

The data analysis was conducted by organizing the collected data systematically. The data was classified based on the research questions. The data from the pre-tests and the post-tests were analyzed using SPSS 15.0 for windows. This was done to help the researcher for the purpose of interpretation.

Even though the data was analyzed through SPSS 15.0 for windows, some statistical procedures were done to test the validity and the reliability of the results. Hence, the data inserted into the SPSS followed some steps in accordance with the research processes for an experimental study.

T-test

To see if there was a significant difference between the means of each of the two groups, the t-test was used. T-test is used to check the difference in the means for small samples that are under 30. The following formula is used for the t-test:

$$t = \frac{\bar{x}_1 - \bar{x}_2}{\sqrt{\frac{S_1^2}{n_1} + \frac{S_2^2}{n_2}}}$$

In which:

t is the difference between the two means

$\bar{x}_1$ and $\bar{x}_2$ are the mean scores of the two groups

S_1 and S_2 are the standard deviations of the two groups

n_1 and n_2 are the number of students in each group

The t result must be compared with t – table to determine if it is significant.

Percentage of Students Mastering the Different Parts of Speech

The improvement of the students in mastery of vocabulary was also measured for improvement in the three main parts of speech; via: nouns, adjectives and verbs. The percentage of the parts of speech that the students got correct was calculated by using the following formula:

$$P = \frac{F}{N} \times 100\%$$

In which:

P is percentage,

F is the number that got the right answer,

N is the number of students in class.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Results from Pre-tests and Post-Tests

The pre-tests were given at the start of the first meetings for both the EG and the CG and the post-tests were given at the end of the last meetings. The pre-tests were done to find out the students' ability in vocabulary mastery before the treatment was given while the post-tests were given to see if the application of the Make a Match technique made a significant different in the results of the students' achievement. The data from the pre-test and the post-test are shown in the table and the diagram that follow:

Table 1. Means of Pre-Tests and Post-Tests of the EG and the CG.

Pre-Test		Post-Test	
EG	CG	EG	CG
39	39	49	42

The difference between the two groups can also be seen in the following Figure 1.

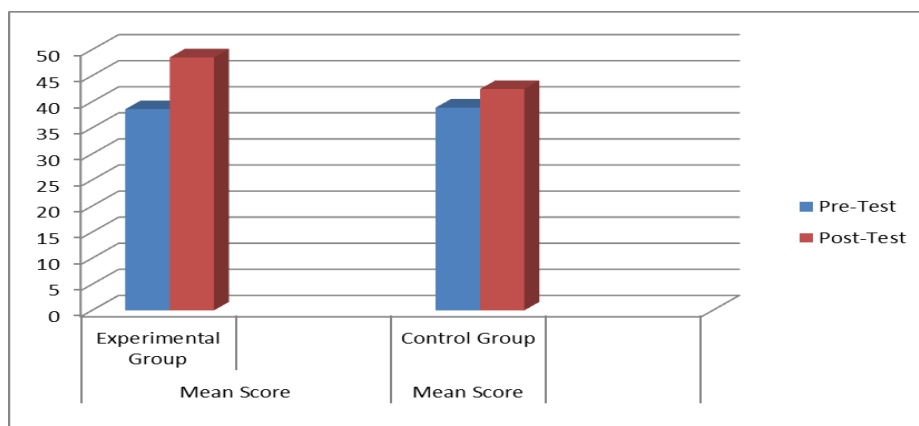


Figure 1. Means of Pre-Tests and Post-Tests of the EG and the CG.

Figure 1 shows the mean of the pre-test and post-test of both the EG and the CG. From the above chart, it can be seen that for the EG, the

mean score of the pre-test was 39. For the control group, the mean of the pre-test was also 39.

The above chart also presents the mean of the post-tests of both the EG and the CG. It reveals that for the EG, the mean score of the post-test was 49 while the mean score of the post test of the CG was 42. Based on the above, it can be seen that the mean of the post-tests of the EG was 6 points higher than that of the CG.

The Percentage of Students' Correct Answers for Parts of Speech

Figure 2 that follows shows the percentage of students' correct answers in vocabulary exercises for nouns, adjectives and verbs.

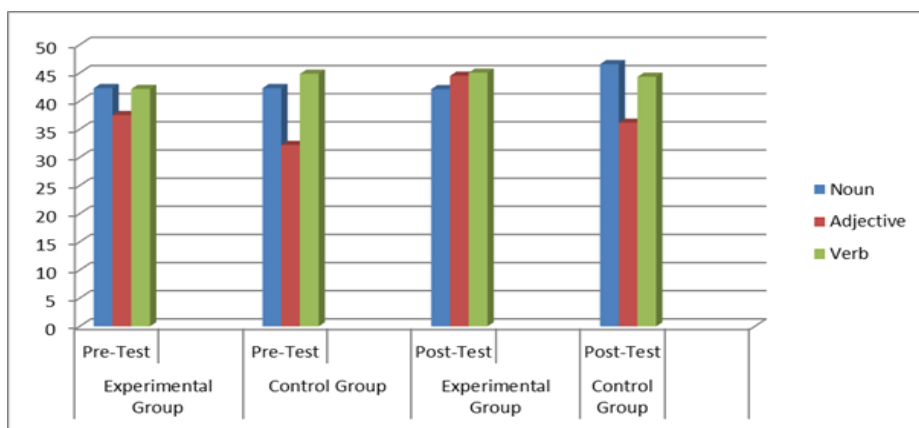


Figure 2. The Percentage of Students' Correct Answer in Parts of Speech.

Figure 2 shows the result from the pre-tests and post-tests given to the EG and the CG. There were four meetings carried out during this experimental study. In the above chart, it can be seen that there are three colors; blue, red and green. The colors indicate that there are three kinds of deletions according to parts of speech. The blue one is noun deletion, the red one refers to adjective deletions, and the green one refers to verbal parts of speech. In the pre-tests, the EG get the most correct answers with verbs that was 45% followed by nouns which was 42% and adjectives at 38%. In the post-test; the EG again got the most correct answers with verbs which was 45, followed by adjectives with 44%, and nouns with 42%.

For the CG, the most correct answers they can get in the pre-tests was with verbs with 45% (same as the EG), followed by nouns 42%

(same as EG) and adjectives with 32% (less than EG). In the post-tests, the students of the CG got the most correct answers with nouns that was 47% (more than the EG) followed by verbs 44% (same as EG) and adjectives with only 36% (less than EG).

CONCLUSIONS

The conclusions basically cover the answers to the questions raised in the problem of the study. Based on the findings and the discussion presented above, some conclusions are drawn in relation to teaching vocabulary by using the Make a Match technique. They are: (1) there was a significant difference in vocabulary mastery between the students who were taught by using the Make a Match technique and those who were taught through the technique the teacher commonly used, (2) the students who were taught by using the Make a Match technique achieved higher scores than those who were taught through the technique the teacher commonly used, (3) the null hypotheses was rejected and the alternative hypothesis was accepted, (4) the Make a Match technique did not significantly improve the students' mastery of the parts of vocabulary via: nouns, adjectives and verbs.

The first conclusion is drawn based on examining the t-scores of the post-tests from both the EG and the CG, which indicated that after the treatment there was a significant difference in reading comprehension between the EG and the CG.

The second conclusion is proved by comparing the mean scores of the EG and the CG. The EG where the Make a match technique was applied achieved a mean score in the post-tests of 48 which was higher than the mean score of the post-tests from the CG which was 37. This result leads to the conclusion that the students who were taught by using the Make a match technique achieved higher scores than those who were not.

The third conclusion is defined based on the criteria statistically stated in the hypothesis in which the alternative hypothesis (H_a) would be accepted if there was a significant difference in students' vocabulary mastery between the students who are taught using the Make a Match technique and the students who are taught through the technique the teacher commonly used. As mentioned in the first conclusion that there was a significant difference in vocabulary mastery between the students who were taught by using the Make a Match technique and the students who were taught by using the technique the teacher commonly used.

Therefore, the alternative hypothesis (H_a) was accepted and the null hypothesis (H_o) was rejected.

The fourth conclusion was drawn based on the results from the students' pre-tests and post-tests for both the EG and the CG. The students' progression in mastery of the parts of vocabulary in the post-tests of the EG did not increase much more after the third meeting than that from the post-tests of the CG. Thus, the Make a Match technique may be a good technique for improving the students' mastery of vocabulary but needs further studies.

SUGGESTIONS

Based on these conclusions, some suggestions are made for teaching reading using the Make a Match technique as contributions for teachers and for further studies.

First, the Make a Match technique should be considered as an alternative technique to be used by English teachers in teaching vocabulary in the classroom since it may be effective to increase the students' vocabulary development. Indeed, this research was focused on teaching vocabulary. This does not mean that the Make a Match technique can only be used in teaching these materials but it may also be used in teaching other materials. Therefore, English teachers are suggested to try using the Make a Match technique in teaching all types of texts. Second, English teachers applying this technique should follow the steps suggested in the Make a Match technique in teaching vocabulary to increase the students' participation and maximum scores, possibly the Make a Match technique needs to be used many times not just a couple of times as in this study to really make a significant improvement in the vocabulary of the students.

For further studies, the Make a Match technique can be considered for teaching vocabulary in reading. It is recommended that more research be done after referring to the findings from this research.

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