



The Effect of Picture Storytelling on English Vocabulary Knowledge of Seventh Grade Students at Phokiratseuksa School

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Abstract

The objective of this study was to study the effect of picture storytelling on students' English vocabulary knowledge. The samples were 44 secondary students of Phokiratseuksa School located in Khokpho of Pattani province. The students were in the seventh grade. The study was conducted during the academic year 2021, which was the researcher's teaching internship. The research instruments were pre-test and post-test. The data analysis was carried out through the use of statistics's Paired-Sample t-test, Mean and Standard Deviation. The result shows that: 1) the post-test's total mean score, 15.11, was higher than the pre-test's, 8.32. The difference between the total mean score of the pre-test and the post-test was 6.79. These findings indicate that there is a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test mean scores. The increasing score of the students test shows that the vocabulary knowledge of the Grade 7 students is improved significantly after applying vocabulary teaching using picture storytelling.

Keywords: Picture Storytelling, Vocabulary Knowledge

Introduction

As the heart of a language, vocabulary plays an important role both in ESL and EFL learning and teaching. It is the main part which supports learning English skills comprising listening, speaking, reading and writing. It is the most important element of language in a language learning, especially for non-native learners because without the knowledge of vocabulary or insufficient vocabulary they cannot express themselves or their ideas well enough (Alqahtani, 2015). The more vocabulary the learner knows, the more effectively they listen, speak, read or write the target language (Xiaofei, 2019). Therefore, vocabulary



learning and teaching is the most important part of a lesson for learners while learning a new language.

However, learning vocabulary in the second language is more difficult than the first language (Esteve, 2014). The same phenomenon applies also in Thai context as we are informed that the main obstacle to Thai students learning English well is a lack of English vocabulary knowledge (Saenpakdeejit, 2014). There is a notice regarding this issue in which for L2 learners, knowledge of vocabulary is the most important tool for the effective acquisition of the target language. Vocabulary knowledge includes the size of vocabulary and depth vocabulary known to an individual (Nation, 2001). The size of vocabulary knowledge refers to the number of words that the learners can recognize. The depth of vocabulary knowledge refers to the quality or depth of understanding in which words are known in terms of pronunciation, spelling, meaning, and appropriate usage in the context (Richards, 1976, p.p. 77-89). Therefore, if students want to master a foreign language, they should have the knowledge of vocabulary and learn a large number of words in order to easily listen, speak, read, and write in the language. Many researchers are trying to solve the problem and help the students master vocabulary knowledge in various ways, one of which is through picture storytelling.

Picture storytelling is one of the instructional methods to teach EFL learners. It is the use of language and gesture with pictures to create sequential scenes in the story. It is highly recommended as visual media to teach and motivate the learners to develop their vocabulary knowledge in EFL context (Fariyatul & Bandono, 2017). This strategy will support students not only learn how the stories operate, but also provide opportunities for them to develop their vocabulary knowledge (Kalantari & Hashemain, 2015).

Statement of the problem

Thai students' lack of English vocabulary knowledge is a big issue in Thailand. Surprisingly, Thai students have been taught since they were young but most of them fail to communicate in English. Saengpakdeejit (2014) reports that the main problem for Thai students struggling to learn English is the lack of vocabulary knowledge.

During my internship teaching at Phokiriratseuksa School, located in Pattani. I was assigned to teach five classes of grade seven students (Matthayom 1). They were arranged in one class with different learning achievements: high achievement and low achievement based on the students' admission score. The class started by saying the basic greeting.



They were very active in answering the questions. But when asked about the lesson, they tended to remain silent. However, when the question was translated to them in Thai, they could answer the question and understand what was said. Besides that, it was found during learning instruction that the students' English vocabulary knowledge appeared to be extremely limited. Most of them were unable to pronounce and recognize the meaning of English words. Moreover, they are unable to successfully compose their writing tasks.

The students' lack of English vocabulary knowledge affected them to struggle in learning English. Having an important role to facilitate the students while learning vocabulary in order to increase English vocabulary knowledge in learning English among the students, English teachers need to prepare and find the appropriate technique that can make students interested in learning, which will be implemented for the students (Alqahtani, 2015). Being encouraged by this fact, the researcher then was in need of conducting the study using picture storytelling in teaching English vocabulary to the students.

Objective

To study the effect of picture storytelling on English vocabulary Knowledge of seventh grade students at Phokiratseuksa School.

Research Question

Does picture storytelling affect the English vocabulary knowledge of seventh grade students at Phokiratseuksa School?

Literature Review

Concept of Vocabulary

Vocabulary can be defined as a word or list of target language words for a particular language. Astika (2016) states that vocabulary is all about words, the words in a language or a special set of words people are trying to use for getting to understand each other. According to Decarrico (2001), vocabulary is central to language. That means vocabulary is the main element of language. Language is the expression which is constructed by words or vocabulary. Words are the tools used to express ideas and to learn about the world.



Concept of Vocabulary Knowledge

Staehr (2008) defines that vocabulary knowledge is generally assumed to be a good predictor of language proficiency in the second or foreign language. To support this, Meara (1996) also states that vocabulary knowledge is a significant predictor of a learners' language proficiency (p.p. 35-53). Vocabulary knowledge includes the size of vocabulary and depth of vocabulary known to an individual. The size of vocabulary refers to the number of words that learners can recognize (Nation, 2001). To test vocabulary size or how many words that a person knows, the common vocabulary or the most frequently used words from the frequency word list are selected to test. It focused only on word-form and word-meaning relationships (Read, 2000, p.p. 178-187). The depth of vocabulary knowledge is considered to be the quality or depth of understanding in which how well words are known in terms of pronunciation, spelling, meaning, and appropriate usage in context (Richards, 1976, p.p. 77-89).

Picture storytelling

Picture storytelling is one of the instructional methods to teach language in EFL context. It is the use of pictures plus the words gathering into a story. It is highly recommended as visual media to teach and motivate learners to develop their vocabulary knowledge in the EFL context (Fariyatul & Bandono, 2017). Storytelling is telling a story by using the story to engage the learners. It is an effective strategy that facilitates teaching and learning vocabulary for EFL learners. The sentences in the story provide good examples of how the target words are used in the context. The students can engage in the storytelling activity if they pay attention to the story and use the context to capture the meaning. Then, to report the story, learners have to recall their comprehension of the words in order to assist the student in word retention (Abasi & Soori, 2014). Therefore, picture storytelling is more interesting to use in vocabulary instruction, in which learners learn language and gesture with pictures which create sequential scenes in a story. This strategy will support students not only to learn about how stories operate, but also provide opportunities for them to develop their vocabulary knowledge. It is used for vocabulary teaching in the current study. According to Kalantari & Hashemin (2015), the process of using picture storytelling is divided into three steps: pre-picture storytelling, while-picture storytelling, and post-picture storytelling.



The related studies of the previous research

In Indonesia, Hidayat (2017) conducted research to investigate the effect of using flash cards and picture story in vocabulary mastery to the seventh grader of Smp Pgri 1 Margatiga. The study revealed that picture story is more effective or equal to flash cards to use as a medium in instruction vocabulary for helping the students in Junior High School to recognize vocabulary meaning, even where there was a difference in achievement between students.

In Thailand, Xiaofei (2019) investigated the improvement of the seventh-grade students' vocabulary knowledge after attending English classes instructed using picture storytelling. The instruments used in the study were three lesson plans, pre-test, and post-test. The data from the pre-test and post-test were analyzed using a Paired-sample t-test in the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). The study found that grade 7 students' English vocabulary knowledge was improved.

Methodology

Participants

The population is focused on seventh grade students. The samples were 44 secondary students of Phokiriratseuksa School located in Khokpho of Pattani province. The students were in the seventh grade. The study was conducted during the academic year 2021, which was the researcher's teaching internship. Purposive sampling was used because the researcher had already taught them for one semester.

Research Instruments

The research instruments include:

1. Three lesson plans for teaching English vocabulary using picture storytelling

The lesson plans with 180 minutes per lesson, which included vocabulary teaching using the three steps: pre-picture storytelling, while-picture storytelling, and post- picture storytelling. The stages of using picture storytelling in teaching English vocabulary as follows:

In pre-picture storytelling, the researcher taught the key vocabulary via pictures to students and provided interesting input for students like games, to help students become familiar with the new vocabulary.

In while-picture storytelling, the researcher told stories through pictures to students. The researcher made comments, gestures and asked questions to assess students' prior knowledge while introducing stories using pictures with newly learned vocabulary. The researcher asked students to point to the new words and make connections between pictures, story and illustration while telling a story.

In post-picture storytelling, students used new words in vocabulary games, read the dialogues, and retold the story using phrases or dialogues heard. Students transfer the picture story to students' real-life experience.

The three lessons, with three picture stories, in this study included 'The Bicycle Thief,' 'GMO...In Space,' and 'No Free Rides,' which were adapted from Grade 7 English textbook, New Frontiers 1.

2. Pre-test and post-test

The pre-test and post-test were designed to evaluate the students' vocabulary knowledge learned from the lessons. There were two parts: Part A and Part B. Part A comprised 10 multiple-choice items to test the size of the vocabulary. Part B comprised 10 items to test the depth of vocabulary, which included 10 matching items to test understanding of meaning and spelling.

Data Collection

The data was mainly obtained through the use of pre-test and post- test. The pre-test given to the students was to evaluate their vocabulary knowledge before the implementation of picture storytelling. The picture storytelling was offered to the samples following three lesson plans with 180 minutes per lesson, in the total of nine hours. The post-test was to assess the students' English vocabulary knowledge after the implementation.

Data Analysis

After collecting the data from pre-test and post-test, the researcher analyzed these data through quantitative analysis by comparing the data from pre-test and post-test using a paired-sample t-test from the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) to find the mean (\bar{X}), standard deviation (S.D.) and a Paired-Sample t-test in order to see the effect of picture storytelling.

Results

The data analysis results are as follows:

Table 1: Paired-sample t-test between the total score of the pre-test and post-test

Test	N	Mean	S.D.			Paired-difference mean	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pre	44	8.32	2.143	Pair 1	Pre - Post	-6.795	-34.095	.000
Post	44	15.11	1.991					

As revealed in Table 1, the post-test's total mean score, 15.11, is higher than the pre-test's, 8.32. The standard deviation of the post-test, 1.99, is smaller than that of the pre-test, 2.14. Therefore, as the post-test score is better than that of the pre-test, it can be inferred that teaching vocabulary using picture storytelling could improve the students' vocabulary knowledge. In addition, the difference between the total mean score of the pre-test and the post-test is -6.795. The result of the t-test is -34.09. These findings indicate that there is a significant difference between the pre-test and the post-test mean scores (p); that is .000. The significance level (2-tailed) was less than 0.05 ($p < .05$). Therefore, it showed that there was a statistically significant difference between the mean of the pre-test and the post-test at .05. It meant that picture storytelling could improve students' English vocabulary knowledge of the Grade 7 students, in which the students' English vocabulary knowledge improved significantly after applying vocabulary teaching using picture storytelling.

In addition to the overall significant increase of the test scores, the scores from the vocabulary size part and depth part are shown in Tables 2 and 3 below.

Table 2: Paired-sample t-test between the pre-test and post-test for vocabulary size

Part A	N	Mean	S.D.			Paired-difference mean	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pre	44	4.27	1.264	Pair 1	Pre - Post	-3.045	-20.969	.000
Post	44	7.32	1.029					

As revealed in Table 2, the post-test's mean score, 7.32, is higher than the pre-test's, 4.27. The standard deviation of the post-test, 1.02, is smaller than the pre-test, 1.26. Therefore, as the post-test score of vocabulary size of the students is better than the pre-test, which means that teaching vocabulary using picture storytelling could improve the students' vocabulary size. In addition, the difference between the mean scores of the pre-test and the post-test for vocabulary size is -3.045. The result of the t-test is -20.96. These findings indicate that there is a significant difference between the vocabulary size pre-test and post-test mean scores (p); that is .000. The significance level (2-tailed) was less than 0.05 ($p < .05$). Therefore, it showed that there was a statistically significant difference between the vocabulary size pre-test and post-test mean scores at .05. It can be concluded that the vocabulary size of the students was significantly increased after applying vocabulary teaching using picture storytelling.

Table 3: Paired-sample t-test between the pre-test and post-test for vocabulary depth

Part A	N	Mean	S.D.			Paired-difference mean	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pre	44	4.02	1.548	Pair 1	Pre - Post	-3.818	-18.505	.000
Post	44	7.84	1.180					

As revealed in Table 3, the post-test's mean score, 7.84, is higher than the pre-test's, 4.02. The standard deviation of the post-test, 1.18, is smaller than the pre-test, 1.54. Therefore, as the post-test score of vocabulary depth of the students is better than the pre-test, which means that teaching vocabulary using picture storytelling could improve the students' vocabulary depth. In addition, the difference between the mean scores of the pre-test and the post-test for vocabulary depth is -3.818. The result of the t-test is -18.50. These findings indicate that there is a significant difference between the vocabulary depth pre-test and post-test mean scores (p); that is .000. The significance level (2-tailed) was less than 0.05 ($p < .05$). Therefore, the result revealed that there was a statistically significant difference between the vocabulary depth pre-test and post-test mean scores at .05. It can be concluded that the vocabulary depth of the students was increased after applying vocabulary teaching using picture storytelling.

Table 4: Hypothesis Test Result

The comparison point	Pre-test		Post-test		t	p
	\bar{X}	S.D.	\bar{X}	S.D.		
The students' English vocabulary knowledge	8.32	2.143	15.11	1.991	-34.095	.000

As revealed in Table 4, the mean of the pre-test and post-test are 8.32 and 15.11 respectively. The standard deviations of the pre-test and post-test are 2.14 and 1.99 respectively. The result of the t-test score is -34.09 and Sig. (2-tailed) is .000. The significance level (2-tailed) was less than 0.05 ($p < .05$). Therefore, it showed that there was a statistically significant difference between the mean of the pre-test and the post-test at 05. It meant that picture storytelling could improve students' English vocabulary knowledge and claimed the hypothesis that picture storytelling affected the vocabulary knowledge of the Grade 7 students, in which the students' English vocabulary knowledge improved significantly after applying vocabulary teaching using picture storytelling.

Conclusions and discussion

Based on the research findings, the findings of this study highlight the positive results of vocabulary teaching using picture storytelling in teaching English vocabulary knowledge. The result showed that the students' mean in English vocabulary knowledge of seventh grade students before applying picture storytelling (pre-test) was 8.32, while the students' mean in English vocabulary knowledge of seventh grade students after applying picture storytelling (post-test) was 15.11. It showed that picture storytelling could improve students' English vocabulary knowledge of the Grade 7 students at Phokiratseuksa School, in which the students' English vocabulary knowledge improved significantly after applying vocabulary teaching using picture storytelling. This finding is consistent with the study of Xiaofei (2019), who studied the use of picture storytelling to improve the students' English vocabulary knowledge of grade 7, in which he found that the students' English vocabulary knowledge was also improved after attending vocabulary teaching using picture storytelling. Moreover, the standard deviations of the pre-test and post-test for vocabulary size and depth were more closely distributed to indicate that picture storytelling is meaningful for both the high-achievement students and the low-



achievement students to recognize the word meaning and spelling. This finding is similar to the findings of Hidayat (2017), who found that a picture story was an effective tool helping all students to recognize vocabulary meaning and spelling, even where there was a difference in achievement between the students. Therefore, it can be suggested that using picture storytelling in teaching vocabulary has a positive effect on students' English vocabulary knowledge.

In conclusion, this research aimed to study the effect of picture storytelling on the English vocabulary knowledge of seventh grade students at Phokiratseuksa School. From the findings of the study, it could be concluded that picture storytelling has a positive effect on the English vocabulary knowledge of the Grade 7 students at Phokiratseuksa School. It showed that picture storytelling can afford valuable techniques in teaching English vocabulary knowledge. It can be seen from the assessment before and after using picture storytelling revealed that the total mean score of the post-test ($\bar{X} = 15.11$, S.D. = 1.99) was higher than the total mean score of the pre-test ($\bar{X} = 8.32$, S.D. = 2.14). The difference between the total mean score of the pre-test and the post-test was 6.79. In addition, the significant difference between the pre-test and post-test mean scores; that was .000 at a significant level ($p < .05$). It meant that picture storytelling could improve students' English vocabulary knowledge and claimed that picture storytelling affected the vocabulary knowledge of the Grade 7 students, in which the students' English vocabulary knowledge improved significantly after applying vocabulary teaching using picture storytelling. Therefore, it can be concluded that the answer of the research question was proven that there is a positive effect of picture storytelling on the English vocabulary knowledge of seventh grade students at Phokiratseuksa School in the second semester of the 2021 academic years.

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