Using Picture Cards to Improve Vocabularies of the Seventh-grade Students at Kobkarn Suksa Foundation School, Thailand

Sumontha Wongngam[1], Phremruthai Kaewdee[1], Thitiphong Ketamon[1*], Hakim Sudinpreeda[1], Piyada Jingwangsa[1] and Anchalee Watcharajinda[1]

[1] Didyasarin International College, Hatyai University, Songkhla 90110, Thailand.
[*]Corresponding author, E-mail: k_thitiphong@hu.ac.th

Abstract

The objective of this classroom research was to investigate the effectiveness of the employment of picture cards to improve the spelling skill and word meaning of the 7th grade students at Kobkarn suksa Foundation School. The sample was 65 students who registered for the second semester on English II (E21102). They were selected by the purposive sampling technique. The research instruments were 1) the pre-test and post-test designed, 2) lesson plans, and 3) class activities of picture cards. The data was statistically analyzed by the SPSS software to find out the mean, the percentage, and the standard deviation. The findings of the study indicated that students' spelling and meanings in using vocabularies were rebounded after using picture cards for teaching and learning activities in the English classes with the mean from the pre-test at 5 (50%) for both the spelling and meaning to the post-test at 8 (80%) for the spelling and 8.5 (85%) for the meaning, respectively.

Keywords: Picture Cards, Vocabularies, Spelling and Meaning

Introduction

There are many factors to have the achievement in learning the English language. To have many vocabularies is probably one of the most important factors in either teaching or learning a language, stated Nanthaboot (2012). Many studies have been carried out to see how the power of words plays a very significant role in learning the English language; and there are still many areas for more researchers to study the importance of vocabularies as the means to have the requisite for a new language (Folse, 2004). It should not have any conditions to learn English as well. Generally, we could mention that the

knowledge about words in a language will pave the for us to understand what a speaker intends to communicate in a conversation. It might not be too exaggerated to say that if one masters enough vocabularies, she or he will presumably have a fluency of other skills of a language such as writing and reading.

Based on the researcher's observation and teaching experiences in school, it is usually found that most of the students in an English class have low number of vocabularies -- as a general problem -- because some teachers perceive that teaching vocabularies could be easily done with a simple method. For example, a teachers might provide students with a list of English words and ask them to memorize for a period of a week without using any other materials or media. Such teaching method could cause the negative attitude towards English among the students because of boredom, lacking activities and participation. Therefore, the right method for each kind of language skills must be considered. For learning vocabularies separately, one of many ways that could make a learner to learn vocabularies faster is to conduct a class through a simple teaching material like using picture cards or flashcards, known as a mnemonic strategy and used for a very long time (Repetto, Pedroli, & Macedonia, 2017). Insisted by Retno (2012), when using picture cards, the lesson will be made easier for learners. It could be said that picture cards will enable a teacher to deliver the key message of the lesson easily because both a word and picture are functioning at the same time. When a teacher shows the picture of a bicycle, students will see both the picture (meaning) and spelling. This teaching technique, by using picture cards, in fact, is a field of Direct Method (Ayuningrum, 2012). This is because a picture on a card will provide the meaning without any translation.

As the description of the uniqueness of using a picture card in teaching a language is detailed above, the researcher is interested in studying the use picture cards in the English classes in order to provide a proof that whether or not the use of picture cards could really enhance the students' spelling and knowing the meaning of new vocabularies by designing and providing picture cards activities along with the well-planned lesson plans in two English classes of junior high school students at Kobkarn Suksa Foundation School, Songkhla, Thailand.

Research Question

Can the employment of picture cards really enhance the students' spelling and knowing the meaning of new vocabularies?

Hypothesis

The implementation of picture cards activities in English classes can really enhance the students' spelling and knowing the meaning of new vocabularies.

Literature Review

The Importance of Vocabulary

Vocabulary is an essential part of language that all speakers need to master. Rohmatillah (2020) stated that when a learner of a language does not have enough vocabulary, she or he will not be able to effectively communicate no matter in form of spoken or written skill. The vocabulary proficiency of a person can be defined as many ways as possible; for example, the ability to use words that make people understand in a conversation or when a sentence is created in a piece of writing in terms of both the quality and quantity (Veronica, 2016). In teaching a foreign language, words that a teacher uses in either a written or spoken formats will symbolize concepts or ideas in that language for students (Ur, 1998). This can be clarified that the words of a language that are being used by a speaker simply mean the language is being used. Therefore, it could be concluded that the knowledge of lexicon plays a major role in learning a language because the lexicon contributes the meaning more than the grammar can function (Viera, 2020). Indeed, vocabularies carry out the meaning used in a specific context.

Characteristics of Picture Cards media

In both the teaching and learning processes, "visual aids arouse the interest of learners and help the teachers to explain the concepts easily," (Shabiralyani, Hasan, Hamad, & Iqbal, 2015, P. 227). Visual aids are defined as the teaching materials that are made up in a format of charts, normal pictures, symbolic objects etc (Shabiralyani, Hasan, Hamad, & Iqbal, 2015). Picture cards are a typical teaching or learning material called as a visual aid. Using picture cards serves several functions in teaching such as providing interesting visual illustrations for learners, describing something concretely, motivating students' participation (Gelfgren, 2012). Picture cards as visual aids are potentially important for all teachers to teach a language because they can be employed via many appropriate methods. Considering the simple characteristics of a picture card, Wikipedia, (2020) described that it can be directly used in a format of virtual and flexible composition.

Indeed, using a picture card in teaching could be probably said that it is more valuable than a thousand words or its price is far beyond a ruby.

Related Research

A series of studies concerning about using picture cards in teaching the English language have been conducted. Chichertaree (2017) carried out a study in order to find out the accuracy of word spelling and ability to memorize the meaning of a word through picture cards teaching activities for two classes of primary school students at Piboonbumpen Demonstration School, Burapha University, Thailand. From the study, it reveals that students' scores of word spelling and understanding of word meaning are dramatically increased after they are taught by picture cards activities. Similarly, Sholihat, Suparman & Huzairin (2020), who conducted a study on using flashcards in two English classes of Indonesian grade 2 students through a pre-test and post-test, insisted that the students had higher vocabulary achievement from the pre-test at 55.65 to 74.04 in the post-test. The study concludes that picture cards or flashcards are the effective teaching material for teaching vocabularies. At the same time, Leonardo & Carrión (2015) did the study on 26 of grade 7 students, who were between 11 and 12 years old, of a basic education school in Ecuador for the English classes by using flashcards as the key teaching material and pointed out that the use of flashcards become a very effective way to enhance students' English vocabularies. Finally, Amalia & Zainuddin (2012) conducted the study on 30 the 7th Grade Indonesian students' achievement in English vocabularies through flashcards at SMA Prayatna Medan School by providing the three consecutive tests. The study concludes that students' scores are increasingly improved from 40.33 for the first test, 64 for the second test, and 83 for the third test, respectively.

Research Methodology

The action research provides the pre-test and post-test, with 10 scores each, to compare the outcomes as to find out the results of using picture cards teaching activities to increase the proficiency of English words in junior high school students.

Study design

Purposive sampling	Two classes of 65 students	Providing Pre- test	Conducting teaching activities	Providing Post - test	Data analysis and discussion of results

Population and sample

The population of the research is the two classes of 65 the 7th grade students (Junior Highschool), studying at Kobkarn Suksa Foundation School, Songkhla, Thailand. The sample is all students who enroll the fundamental English II (E21102) in the second semester of the academic year 2020.

Research Instruments

The research is conducted with three instruments a long one semester: 1) the pre-test and post-test designed by Jareewan (2017), 2) 10 lesson plans, 3) 10 picture cards activities.

Data Collection

Both the pre-test and post-test are used to collect the data.

Data Analysis

The obtained data from the pre-test and post-test are analyzed by using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) to find the mean (X), percentage (%), and standard deviation (S.D.). The results, therefore, will be used to determine whether the picture card activities are significant for improving English vocabularies of the 7th grade students at Kobkarn Suksa Foundation School.

Results

The results of vocabulary improvement of the 7th grade students at Kobkarn Suksa Foundation School after learning through picture cards activities are shown and described below.

Table 1 Students' pre-test scores

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Percentage	Std. Deviation
Spelling	65	2	8	**5**	**50**	1.56
Meaning	65	2	8	**5**	**50**	1.56
Valid N (listwise)	65					

As the pre-test is administered before the implementation of picture cards, the outcomes of the pre-test averagely are not seen outstanding. According to the data on table 1, it shows that the mean score of both spelling and meaning is equal at 5 (50%) with the equal minimum at 2 and maximum at 8. The minimum scores of both spelling and meaning of the pre-test are obviously poor, while the minimum scores are far more acceptable.

Table 2 Students' post- test scores

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Percentage	Std. Deviation
Spelling	65	6	10	**8**	**80**	1.28
Meaning	65	7	10	**8.5**	**85**	1.21
Valid N (listwise)	65					

After the picture cards teaching activities are employed and the post-test is distributed, the data on table 2 shows that the mean score of both spelling and meaning is increased at 8 (50%) and 8.5 (85%). The minimum and maximum scores for spelling proficiency are at 6 and 10, while the meaning turn at 7 and 10. Apparently, the minimum scores of both spelling and meaning of the post-test are increased from 2 and 2 (which are poor in the pre-test) to 6 and 7 respectively; while the minimum scores are also lifted up from 8 and 8 to 10 and 10. The reason is because the students known their mistakes and learn from the mistakes to improve themselves from learning vocabularies though picture cards.

Discussion and Conclusion

After the picture cards activities are in troduced into the English classes of 65 the 7th grade students at Kobkarn suksa Foundation School, Thailand, the results of the research indicate that students' proficiency in using spelling and meaning of English vocabularies are significantly better. They show that using the picture cards is the real essence of teaching vocabularies because of their unique characteristics. The students have better the learning achievement in English vocabularies through the learning activities that make their lessons easier. This will certainly enable students to accumulate more

English vocabularies. The results of this study are prominent, and they are accorded with several studies on using flashcards or picture cards in teaching vocabularies. For instance, "the students' difficulties in vocabulary comprehension can be effectively improved by using flashcard," mentioned Supriatin & Rizkilillah (2018, p.484), who studied the use of flashcards in teaching vocabularies on 29 students of the sixth-grade Indonesian students of SDN Rengasdengklok Selatan 2 School in Indonesia. At the same time, Pimadaa, Tobab, & Rasyidic (2020) also conducted a study on 56 Indonesian students at Elementary School Normal Islam, Indonesia, in a writing class of the Arabic language by using flashcards as the teaching media; and they revealed some outstanding roles of such media such as enabling students to recall the meaning of words and creating relaxed atmosphere in the teaching and learning process, which make the class easier to be conducted.

In summary, flashcards or picture cards play a significant role as a kind of most effective teaching and learning materials that can be widely utilized to increase a learner's language skills, especially vocabularies. The statistical analysis of this study reaffirms that using flashcards in teaching can truly enhance learners' vocabularies, as so many pieces of studies above and the studies in the literature review. Insisted from the empirical data (from the mean score of the pre-test at 5 (50%) for both the spelling and meaning to the post-test at 8 (80%) for the spelling and 8.5 (85%) for the meaning respectively), using flashcards still prolongs and accounts for the effectiveness in language teaching.

References

Amalia, M. & Zainuddin, Z. (2012). "Improving Students' Achievement In Vocabulary By Using Flashcard." *Transform Journal of English Language Teaching and Learning*, 1(2).

Ayuningrum, D. P. (2012). Teaching Vocabulary Using Picture. Retrieved from http://ayudewiputri.blogspot.com/2012/01/teaching-vocabulary-using-

Chichertaree, J. (2017). Improvement of Spelling Word and Remember the Word Meaning By Using Picture Cards. Retrieved from http://stm.st.buu.ac.th/dataup/project_153414551450320000.pdf

Folse, K. S. (2004). Vocabulary myths. Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press.

Gelfgren, V. (2012. *FUN WITH FLASHCARDS 150+ ideas for using flashcards in the classroom*. Svenska Kulturfonden: Lerningmore Project.

Leonardo, P., & Carrión, H. (2015). THE USE OF FLASHCARDS AS DIDACTIC MATERIAL
TO IMPROVE THE ENGLISH VOCABULARY AMONG 7TH YEAR STUDENTS OF BASIC
EDUCATION, IN PARALLEL "A" AT "TENIENTE HUGO ORTIZ" SCHOOL,
DURING THE SCHOOL YEAR 2013-2014. Retrieved from
https://dspace.unl.edu.ec/jspui/bitstream/123456789/12196/1/Pablo%20Leonar
do%20Hidalgo%20Carri%c3%b3n.pdf

Nanthaboot, P. (2012). *Using Communicative Activities to Develop English Speaking
Ability of Matthayomsuksa Three Students*. (Master's thesis). Srinakharinwirot
University, Thailand.

Pimadaa, L. H., Tobab, R., & Rasyidic, A.W. (2020). Learning of Imla' Using Flashcards on
Writing Skill at Islamic Elementary School Level in Samarinda.Izdihar : Journal of
Arabic Language Teaching, Linguistics, and Literature, 3(1), 1-16.

Repetto, C., Pedroli, E.,& Macedonia, M. (2017). Enrichment Effects of Gestures and
Pictures on Abstract Words in a Second Language, Frontiers in Psychology, 8
(2136).

Retno, S, (2012). *Using Cue Cards Technique in Improving the Speaking Skill of
the Eight Grade Students at SMPN 3 Balikpapan*. (Unpublished Thesis).
Mulawarman University.

Rohmatillah. (2020). A STUDY ON DIFFICULTIES IN LEARNING VOCABULARY. Retrieved
from https://media.neliti.com/media/publications/178083-EN-none.pdf
picture.html

Shabiralyani, H., Hasan, k. S., Hamad, N., Iqbal, N. (2015). Impact of Visual Aids in
Enhancing the Learning Process Case Research: District Dera Ghazi Khan. *Journal
of Education and Practice*, 6(19), 226-234.

Sholihat, E.S., Suparman, U., & Huzairin. (2020). THE USE OF FLASHCARD TO IMPROVE THE
VOCABULARY ACHIEVEMENT. Retrieved from
https://media.neliti.com/media/publications/194449-EN-the-use-of-flashcard-to-
improve-the-stud.pdf

Supriatin, T., & Rizkilillah, P.V. (2018). TEACHING VOCABULARY USING FLASHCARD.PROJECT
(PROFESSIONAL JOURNAL OF ENGLISH EDUCATION), 1(4), 479-485.

Ur, P. (1998). A Course in Language Teaching Trainee. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Veronica, B. (2016). Vocabulary targets and language proficiency. Retrieved from
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/309321390_Vocabulary_targets_and_la
nguage_proficiency

Viera, R. T. (2020). Vocabulary knowledge in the production of written texts: a
case study on EFL language learners. Retrieved from
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/309321390_Vocabulary_targets_and_l
anguage_proficiency

Wikipedia. (2020). Flashcard. Retrieved from
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flashcard#:~:text=Each%20flashcard%20bears%20a
%20question,flashcard%20software)%2C%20or%20physical