

**ENRICHING VOCABULARY MASTERY USING SHORT STORIES**  
*(A Classroom Action Research in the Second Year of SMP N 5 Sukoharjo in the Academic Year of 2009/2010)*

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**ABSTRACT**

This study is based on the problems of the low vocabulary mastery of the second year students of SMP N 5 Sukoharjo in the academic year of 2009/2010. It focuses on knowing whether using short stories can enrich the students' vocabulary. It also focuses on the improvement of the students' achievement in teaching learning process using short stories.

The materials implemented in this research were short stories. The procedure of the research consisted of identifying the problems, planning the action, implementing the action, observing or monitoring the action, reflecting the result of the observation, and research findings. The research was conducted in a cycle. The cycle consisted of four meetings. Techniques in collecting the data were qualitative and quantitative method. In the qualitative method, the researcher used observations, field notes, photographs, and document analysis. The results of the observation were in the form of field notes and photographs. In the quantitative method, the researcher used tests. The test consisted of the pre-test and post-test. The technique to analyze the test result was by comparing the mean score of pre-test and post-test. Besides that, this research also used descriptive statistics and the t-test of non-independent.

The results of this research show that short stories can improve the students' vocabulary mastery. The improvement can be seen in the form of students' achievements. They can be seen from the aspects of vocabulary mastery and the students' motivation. First, from the aspect of the vocabulary mastery, the students could understand, grasp, remember, pronounce, write about 75 until 80 % of the words correctly and also use the words in context appropriately. Then, the improvement of students' score can be seen from the differences between the pre-test and post-test. The mean score of the pre-test improves from 4.07 to 7.36 in post-test. Then, the scores of the pre-test and post-test show that there is also an improvement of students who achieve the minimum standard score, that is 60. They are from 2.8% to 94.3% of students. The test result shows that there is a significant improvement of the students' vocabulary after the researcher conducted the research. The difference between the pre-test and post-test scores is 3.30; while the coefficient of the t-test between the pre-test and post-test is 19.29. Meanwhile, the *t-table* ( $t_r$ ) for 35 students is 2.04. Since ( $t_o$ ) is higher than ( $t_r$ ), it means that there is a significant difference between pre-test and post-test score. Second, from the students' motivation, the students are more active and enthusiastic during teaching learning process. Next, they have more concentration to do the exercises. Then, they do not do something useless during teaching learning process. At last, they also like having discussion with their friends.

*Key words: vocabulary mastery, short stories, Junior high school students.*

**A. Introduction**

Mastering English means that as the learners must be able to master four language skills and their elements, such as grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. These all items have been taught and learned as one of the main subjects from junior high school until university.

Actually, teaching English at junior high school is extremely important because it is still the basis for the higher level. Brewster, Ellis, and Girard (1992: 23-24) define some reasons for starting to learn a foreign language earlier. First, teaching English to young learner is aimed to increase the total

number of years spent learning language. Second, the indisputable fact those young learners have a greater facility for understanding and imitating what they hear than adult.

Third, the aim of early foreign language learning is to prepare young learner linguistically, psychologically, and culturally for language learning. There are many kinds of students' characteristic. First, young learners forget something quickly. Second, young learners get bored easily. Third, young learners still like playing.

After having pre research by interviewing the teacher and observing teaching learning process of mastering vocabulary at the second year of SMP N 5 Sukoharjo, the researcher finds out that the students' vocabulary mastery is still low. It can be seen from some indicators that are shown by the students' acts as follows: firstly, the students are less interested in teaching learning process. Secondly, the students get difficulties to remember and grasp the meaning of words when the teacher gives them some English words. Thirdly, the students get difficulties in writing words or group of words correctly.

Due to the facts above, the researcher tries to enrich vocabulary mastery of the students using short stories. Based on the description above, the researcher would like to conduct a research to solve the problem and also enrich students' vocabulary mastery by using short stories entitled "ENRICHING VOCABULARY MASTERY USING SHORT STORIES" (A Classroom Action Research in the Second Year of SMP N 5 Sukoharjo in the Academic Year of 2009/2010). The researcher also limits the problem on how to enrich the students' vocabulary mastery using short stories of the second year of SMP N 5 Sukoharjo in the academic year of 2009/2010.

The problems of the study can be formulated as follows: 1) Can short stories enrich vocabulary mastery of the second year of SMP N 5 Sukoharjo in the academic year of 2009/2010?; 2) How to improve students ability in vocabulary mastery by using short stories of the second year of SMP N 5 Sukoharjo in the academic year of 2009/2010?

There are various ways to improve vocabulary mastery. Lewis and Hill (1992: 102-103) mention some ways to teach vocabulary. They are: 1) Demonstrate; 2) Use the real thing; 3) Draw or sketch; 4) Use

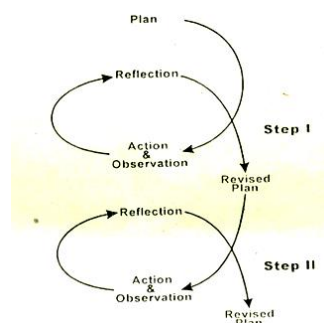
the blackboard to show scales or grades; 5) Antonyms; 6) Synonyms; 7) The dictionary; 8) Verbal explanation; 9) Translation. Furthermore, Gairns (1991: 73-75) says that there are some techniques used in presenting new vocabulary. They are: 1) Visual; 2) Mime and gesture; 3) Use illustrative situation (oral or written); 4) Use of synonymy and definition; 5) Contrast and opposites; 6) Scales.

Story is account of past events, incidents, or account of invented or imagined events, etc (Hornby: 1995: 94). Taylor (2000: 16) says that story is relating tale to one or more listener through voice and gesture. It is clear that vocabulary in a story should be presented in clear context; the amusing situations can make the vocabulary easy to remember.

## B. Research Methodology

This research was done in SMP Negeri 5 Sukoharjo, Sukoharjo Regency. This school is located at Bulakan, Sukoharjo. This research held on minimum a cycle on second semester in the academic year of 2009/2010. The subject of this research is the second grade class of SMP Negeri 5 Sukoharjo in the academic year of 2009/2010. There are 35 students for class A, consist of 11 boys and 24 girls.

Based on Hopkins' point of views (1993: 48) this model can be illustrated as follow.



There are some steps that should be done by the researcher in this action research. Here is the diagram of the steps.

Tabel 1. The steps in Action Research

Step of action	Participant	Technique	Data
Pre action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students</li> <li>Researcher</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interview</li> <li>Observation</li> <li>Test (Pre-test)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Result of the interview</li> <li>Result of observation</li> <li>Result of pre-test</li> </ul>
The action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students</li> <li>Researcher</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Planning</li> <li>Implementing</li> <li>Observing and monitoring</li> <li>Reflecting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Result of observation</li> <li>Field notes</li> </ul>
Post action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students</li> <li>Researcher</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Test (Post-test)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Result of post-test</li> </ul>

The technique of data analysis in this research consists of two kinds; they are qualitative descriptive analysis and also quantitative descriptive analysis.

1. Qualitative descriptive
2. Quantitative descriptive analysis

In quantitative descriptive analysis, this research uses descriptive statistics. This step uses a simple formula that is called as t-test of non-independent. It makes clearer the data and the characteristic of the data (Nurgiantoro, 2001:8).

In this formula, the pre-test is compared with the post-test to know whether teaching vocabulary using short stories can improve the students' vocabulary mastery.

The formula of t-test of non-independent is as follows:

$$t = \frac{\bar{D}}{\sqrt{\frac{\sum D^2 - \frac{(\sum D)^2}{n}}{n(n-1)}}$$

where t is the result of t-test non-independent

Finally, when the difference between the values of t-obtained and the value of t-table is significant, the effectiveness of using short stories to improve students' vocabulary mastery will be known.

The measurement that is used in checking vocabulary mastery is test. The indicators are: (1) there is increasing number of students that have minimal criterion at least 75 % from the total number of students. (2) There is increasing average mark of the class based on the criteria in the curriculum that is used in that school.

## C. RESEARCH FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The implementation of the action planned in this research was held in a cycle. The researcher divided the cycle into four meetings. Each meeting took 80 minutes. It was conducted from April, 5<sup>th</sup> 2010 until April, 15<sup>th</sup> 2010. In this cycle, the researcher used short stories as the teaching materials. The cycle in this research also consisted of series of steps as follows:

### 1. Planning the action

The action plan was made based on the problems that were mentioned in the introduction above. To overcome those problems, the researcher planned and chose interesting learning materials to solve the problems and improve students' behavior during teaching learning process. The researcher chose short stories as the teaching materials. Before implementing the action, the researcher conducted a pre-test on the first meeting.

### 2. Research Implementation

The action plan was implemented by the researcher with the help from the teacher as the observer. This cycle was conducted in four meetings. Each meeting was divided into three terms, namely: opening, main activity, and closing.

#### a. First meeting

1) Opening. A pre test was conducted on April, 5<sup>th</sup> 2010. The test started at 10.25 a.m. The bell rang. The researcher came to the class on time and greeted the students.

2) Main activity. After getting test worksheet, the students did the test individually.

- 3) Closing. After the bell rang, the researcher asked the students to collect the test worksheet on the desk. After that, the researcher gave the information that the students would get the materials in the next meeting and closed the meeting on that day.
- b. Second meeting
- 1) Opening. The second meeting was conducted on April, 7<sup>th</sup> 2010. The researcher and the observer came to the class at 10.25 am and then greeted the students. After greeting the students, the researcher checked the students' attendance.
  - 2) Main Activity. To open the lesson, she asked the students whether they ever read or heard short stories or not. The students answered "yes, Mam". Then, the researcher asked the students to mention some short stories that they ever read or heard. After introducing the materials that would be used, the researcher began the lesson of the day by asking the students to find the meaning of some words. Then, the researcher and the students checked the answer together. Next, the researcher gave a chance to the students to read the story on their own worksheet. The title was "*The Flowers from the Moon*". The researcher also asked them to find out the idea of the story using words that they ever had before. Next, the researcher drilled the students' pronunciation with the guiding words on the worksheet. The researcher pronounced every word once and the students pronounced every word three times. Next, to check the students understanding about new vocabulary, the researcher asked the students to write down some words and find the meaning of each word. After the students finished doing the task, the researcher asked the students to pronounce the words together. Some students were shy and afraid to speak loudly. They were afraid if they made a mistake. The researcher advised them that it was only a practice.
- c. Third meeting
- 1) Opening. The third meeting was conducted on April, 8<sup>th</sup> 2010. The researcher and the observer came to the class at 08.05 am. The researcher began the material by reviewing the last lesson and asked the students some questions dealing with the material that had been given in the second meeting.
  - 2) Main Activity. In this meeting, the students started the main activity by finding the correct words and their meaning. After five minutes, the researcher checked the answered with the students together. Then, the researcher asked some of students to read the story. The title was "*Rainbow*". There were some pronunciation mistakes done by the students. The researcher checked the students' pronunciation. After that, the students and the researcher discussed the story to get the main idea. The students felt easily to grasp the main idea of the text because they have translated some difficult words before. Next, the researcher asked the students to arrange the letters into a good word. Then, they were also asked to find the meaning of the words. In the middle of the activity, the researcher changed the technique in introducing the new words to the students. The researcher used the synonym to

introduce the words. The students looked very interested in the new task. The students tried to find the synonymy of the words by using their dictionary. After that, the researcher asked the students to fill in the blanks in some sentences with the words that were mentioned on the students' worksheet. The title was "*The Caliph and the Clown*". Then, the students tried to grasp the main point of the story with the researcher. The students were enthusiastic in answering the question from the researcher. Some of them were very busy to remember some of the new words that they heard before and the other discussed with their friends to find the main idea of the story. On the last task of the third meeting, the researcher asked the students to discuss some of phrases from the story before.

### 3) Closing

In the end section, the researcher reviewed and did the reflection from the material from the beginning. The researcher mentioned some difficult words and the students tried to guess the right pronunciation and the right meaning. The students pronounced every word three to four times. Then, the researcher closed the lesson because the time was up.

### d. Fourth meeting

1) Opening. The fourth meeting was conducted on April, 12<sup>th</sup> 2010. The researcher and the observer came to the class at 10.25 am. To prepare the class, the researcher said "*good morning*" to the students then checked the students' attendance. No one was absent.

2) Main activity. Then, the researcher began the lesson by reading a story. The title was "*The Magic Seeds*". The students listened

curiously to the researcher's story. Sometimes they made an underline for some difficult words. Then, the researcher asked the students to make a pair of discussion. The researcher asked the students to discuss the story that they heard. Next, the researcher asked the students to match the words with their antonyms. The students worked in pairs. Then, the students wrote the answers in the whiteboard. The researcher checked the answers. Next, the researcher asked some of the students to read the story. The story's title was "*The Owl and the Nightingale*". The researcher also asked the students to find some difficult words on the story. After five minutes, the researcher addressed some of the students to retell the story by their own words. The students already knew some words so it made the students easy to retell the story. For the last task, the researcher asked the students to answer some questions about the story. The students discussed with their friends. After 5 minutes, the researcher asked some students to write the students' answers and then checked the answers.

3) Closing. After finishing the task, the researcher reviewed the material and had reflection toward all activities. The researcher showed all the words to the students. Then, the students pronounced and mentioned the meaning of the words three or four times. The last, the researcher closed the lesson because the time was up.

### e. Fifth meeting

1) Opening. The fifth meeting was conducted on April, 14<sup>th</sup> 2010. The researcher and the observer came to the class at 10.25 am. In the fifth meeting the researcher continued teaching the material



by using short stories. To prepare the class, the researcher said “*good morning*” to the students. Then the teacher checked the students’ attendance.

- 2) Main activity. For the first activity, the researcher asked the students to listen what the researcher *pronounced* and then write the answer on the students’ worksheet. After that, the researcher asked the students to write the answers on the white board and discuss the answers together. Next, the students had to find the synonym of some words by matching the words in the column A to the column B. Some of the students tried to get the answer from the dictionary and the others were discussed. After that, the researcher asked some students to read the story and the other paid attention to their friends. The title of the *story* was “*Why Bears Hibernate in the Winter*”. The researcher also asked the students to write the difficult words that they found. After the students read the story, the researcher guided the students to find the meaning from the difficult words that they found. Then, the students tried to grasp the main idea of the story. The students felt happy because the story was very funny. For next material, the students were asked to read the story. The title was “*The Necklace*”. They had to grasp the main idea of the story individually then retold the story in their own words. All of the students were silent and did the instruction well. After 10 minutes, the researcher asked three of the students to retell the story. Then, the researcher discussed with the students about the story that they heard. They felt happy with this teaching way. The last task, the researcher asked the students to discuss some of the phrases from

the text. They worked in groups. After 5 minutes, the students wrote the answer on the whiteboard.

- 3) Closing. After finishing the task, the researcher reviewed the material. The researcher repeated some difficult words to the students. Then, the students pronounced and mentioned the meaning of the words three or four times. Next, the researcher had some reflection towards all the activities that had been done that day by asking the students’ feeling and comment. Then, the researcher closed the lesson because the time was up.
- f. Sixth meeting
- 1) Opening. A post-test was conducted on April, 15<sup>th</sup> 2010. The bell rang at 08.05 a.m. The *researcher* came to the class on time and greeted the students. After greeting the students, the researcher checked the students’ attendance list. The researcher also asked about the students’ preparation to face the post-test that would be done on that day.
  - 2) Main Activity. The students did the test individually. They were not allowed to cheat in doing the test or to look for the answer on the dictionary. The test was the same with the pre test that was done before. The materials were such as understanding meaning of words, pronunciation of words, the use of words in context and spelling.
  - 3) Closing. After the test finished, the researcher discussed the answers of test with the students. All students were very active in discussing the answers with the researcher. All students paid attention with the discussion. Then, the researcher closed the discussion because the bell rang.

### 3. Observing and Monitoring the Action

In monitoring the implementation of this cycle, the researcher used observation to see the effects of conducting the cycle. The observation was conducted simultaneously when teaching learning process took place.

Besides the explanation of implementing the actions above, the results of the observation of the teaching and learning process were also supported by the interviews with the students about the use of short stories in teaching vocabulary. From the observation results, it was known that there were some improvements on students' vocabulary. They were the mastery of meaning, spelling, pronunciation, and using words in context. Beside the students' improvements on vocabulary, the observation results

explained the students' motivation and activities in teaching-learning process and student's motivation from the second to the fifth meeting.

Although the students' motivation increased, some students were still passive. Some students were silent when the researcher asked the question to the students. Beside passive, most students were shy to speak loudly. They were afraid if their answers were wrong. To solve this problem, the researcher gave advice to the students that it was only a practice.

#### **4. Reflecting the Result of the Observation**

The improvement of students' achievements in teaching learning process using short stories can be seen in the table 2.



Table 2. Improvement of the Students' Achievement in Teaching Learning Process Using Short Stories

Source of the data	before implementing the action	after implementing the action
Observation and Interview	Vocabulary mastery	Vocabulary mastery
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The students got difficulties to understand and grasp the meaning of words. They forgot words and their meanings easily. They also got difficulties when they had to translate the words from Indonesian into English or vice versa.</li> <li>2. The students could not pronounce the words correctly. They still made mistakes to pronounce the words.</li> <li>3. The students still made mistakes when they wrote words. For example when the students found a word which has double letters. Most of the students forgot to write the second letter. Most of the students also made mistakes when they did the exercises in arranging some letters into a correct word.</li> <li>4. The students could only pronounce, understand, remember, grasp and use words in context about 25 % of them.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The students understood and grasped the meaning of words easily. They also remembered the words easily. They translated words from Indonesian into English or vice versa easily.</li> <li>2. The students could pronounce most of the words correctly.</li> <li>3. The students could write the words correctly. They also could arrange the letters into a correct word. There were no mistakes in writing the words</li> <li>4. The students could pronounce, understand remember, grasp and use words in context about 75-80 % of them.</li> </ol>
	Students' motivation	Students' motivation
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The students were less interested during teaching learning process</li> <li>2. The students did not have full concentration during teaching learning process.</li> <li>3. The students liked doing something useless during teaching learning process</li> <li>4. The students did the exercises individually.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The students were more active and enthusiastic during teaching learning process. They started to ask and answer the questions.</li> <li>2. The students had more concentration to do the exercises.</li> <li>3. They did not do something useless during teaching learning process.</li> <li>4. The students liked having discussion with their friends.</li> </ol>
Test	The mean score of pre-test : 4.07	The mean score of post-test : 7.36

## 5. Discussion

From the table above, the students' improvement could be seen. The improvements were students' vocabulary mastery and also students' motivation. From the vocabulary aspects, the students understood and grasped the meaning of words easily; they could pronounce and write the words correctly. They could pronounce, understand, remember, grasp and use the words in context about 75 until 80 % of them. The examples were prince, daughter, dream, different, quarrel, sky, sea, chuckled, purple, captured, reason, freedom, etc. Then, the improvement also could be seen on the students' scores of test. There was an improvement of the mean score between the pre-test and post-test, from 4.07 to 7.36. Besides that, there was also an improvement of students who had scored more than the minimum standard score, in this case 60. The data of the students' score of pre-test and post-test showed that there was an improvement of students who achieved the minimum standard score, from 2.8 % of students became 94.3 % of students. It proved that there was a significant improvement of the students' scores. Then the difference between the pre-test and post-test scores was 3.30; while the coefficient of the t-test between the pre-test and post-test was 19.29. Meanwhile, the *t-table* ( $t_r$ ) for 35 students is 2.04. Since ( $t_o$ ) is higher than ( $t_r$ ), it means that there is a significant difference between pre-test and post-test score.

Next, the students' motivation increased when the short stories were used. The indicators showed that they were more active and enthusiastic during the teaching learning process. They asked more questions than before. They also raised their hands to answer the questions. Next, they had more concentration to do the exercises. They did not do something useless during teaching learning process and like having discussion with their friends.

Considering the facts of some improvements dealing with teaching vocabulary by using short stories above, finally, the researcher decided to stop the

cycle. There were some reasons for stopping this research only in one cycle. They were as follows:

- a) The aspects of vocabulary mastery were completed. The students understood and grasped the meaning of the words easily, they could pronounce the words correctly, they could write the words correctly, and they also could use the words in context appropriately.
- b) There was an improvement of the mean score between the pre-test and post-test, from 4.07 to 7.36. From the pre-test and post-test score, there was also an improvement of students who had scored more than the minimum standard score, in this case 60, from 2.8 % became 94.3 %.
- c) The researcher only had limited time to conduct the research. The school gave two weeks to finish the implementation of the research. It was because the school would hold a mid-term test for all the students.

## D. Conclusion and Suggestion

The researcher comes to a conclusion that teaching vocabulary by using short stories can improve the students' vocabulary. Based on the analysis of the result of the implementation of the actions which had been conducted to improve the students' vocabulary, it can be seen that the implementation of teaching vocabulary by using short stories can effectively improve students' vocabulary. It could be seen from the aspects of vocabulary which are completed. First, the students could understand and grasp the meaning easily. They also could remember the meaning of the words easily. Second, the students could pronounce the words correctly. Third, the students also could write the words correctly. Fourth, the students could pronounce, understand, remember, grasp and use the words in context about 75-80 % of them correctly. Next, there was an improvement of the mean score between the pre-test and post-test, from 4.07 to 7.36. Besides that, there was an improvement of students who had scored more than the minimum standard score, in this case 60.

The data of the students' score of pre-test and post-test showed that there were more students who achieved the minimum standard score, from 2.8 % became 94.3 % of students. It proved that there was a significant improvement of the students' scores. The difference between the pre-test and post-test scores was 3.30; while the coefficient of the t-test between the pre-test and post-test was 19.29. Meanwhile, the *t*-table ( $t_r$ ) for 35 students is 2.04. Since ( $t_o$ ) is higher than ( $t_r$ ), it means that there is a significant difference between pre-test and post-test score.

While the students' motivation, the researcher found a good atmosphere in the class. The students were more active and enthusiastic during teaching learning process. There were so many students who raised their hands to answer the question on the whiteboard or oral answer. Most of the students gave more attention than before. Next, they had more concentration to do the exercises. They did not do something useless during teaching learning process. They also liked having discussion with their friends.

After carrying out the researcher and obtaining the conclusion, the researcher would like to propose some suggestion directed to the English teacher, students, other researcher, and for school. The English teachers should learn the characteristics of the students in order to know exactly what they need and what problems they faced on their development. An instructional process will not be successful if students are not maximally involved in it. The students have to be more active and motivated to learn English. This study is just one of efforts in improving students' vocabulary. It is expected that the finding of this study will be used as a starting point of the future research on similar problems. The institution should state a policy in improving the quality of the teaching English for children. It should encourage the English teacher to be creative to use various method, techniques or materials. It should also be facilitated with various media supporting the teaching activity.

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