

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHOD

This chapter explains about methodology that is used in the study in order to answer these two questions: “How does theme-based teaching improve young learners’ English vocabulary?” and “What are the students’ responses towards the theme-based teaching that is implemented to improve their English vocabulary?”

Research Methodology consists of research design, research site and participant, data collection and data analysis.

3.1 Research Design

This research was conducted by using classroom action research since it is going to find out how the use of theme based teaching improves young learners’ English vocabulary. As Jean McNiff and Jack Whitehead (2002:17) states that the main purpose of action research is the use of knowledge which leads to improvement of understanding that will be beneficial for society.

There are some steps needed in order to conduct this action research: planning, acting, observing and reflecting. This theory is further described by Lewin (1946, as cited in McNiff and Whitehead, 2002:41) as:

a spiral of steps involving planning, fact-finding (or reconnaissance) and execution, and which later came generally to be understood as an action–reflection cycle of planning, acting, observing and reflecting.

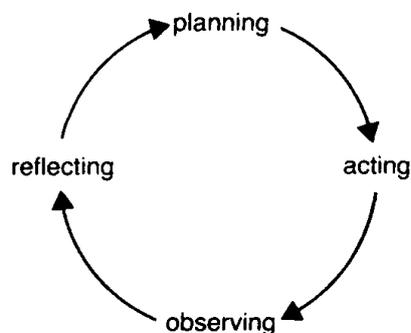


Figure 3.1 Action-reflection Cycle (*McNiff and Whitehead, 2002*)

In this research, the action-reflection cycle was used since it gives opportunities for the researchers to have apparent result for each cycle of the research that will be helpful to conduct the next cycle. It also has been proposed by Koshy (2005:9) who considered that in action research, there will be continuous learning process so that the knowledge that have been learned during the process of planning, acting, observing and reflecting can be learned and shared for the improvement of learning.

There were two cycles taken to answer the question problems of the research. In the first cycle, the first step was planning in which plan for some aspects that would be implemented in the acting step was made. After that, the acting, observing and reflecting step were done. Then, the data from the first cycle was used to conduct the second cycle. These four steps of the action-reflection cycle will be described more in the table below.

Table 3.1 Action-reflection Steps

No	Step	Activities
1	Planning	a. Choosing themes based on the text book used b. Developing lesson plans - Setting the objectives - Selecting materials - Arranging activities - Choosing the media
2	Acting	a. Setting up the video recorder at the back of the classroom b. Preparing the vocabulary assessment sheets c. Implementing the lesson plans
3	Observing	a. Observing the process of acting, especially the students' behavior through video recording. b. Recording the observation result in the field notes.
4	Reflecting	Reflecting the acting step based on the observation result and organizing how to conduct the next cycle.

There were four meetings for each cycle; three meetings for action and an assessment in the end of each cycle. The outline of the information in each cycle will be illustrated as follows.

Table 3.2 Cycle Information

Cycles	Topics	Meetings	Materials
1	Food and Drink	Meeting 1	Vocabulary <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Spicy, bitter, salty, sweet, fresh - Food (e.g: fried chicken, soup, etc) - Drink (e.g: coke, coffee, etc) Expression <p>“Do you like...?” “Yes, I like... It is...” “No, I don’t like... It is...”</p>
		Meeting 2	Vocabulary <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Food (e.g: fried rice, porridge, etc.) - Drink (e.g: coke, tea, milk, etc.) Expression <p>“Which one do you like?” “I like...better than...”</p>
		Meeting 3	Vocabulary <p>A bowl of soup, a plate of fried rice, a can of coke, etc.</p> Expression <p>“Can you give me...?” “Yes, of course.” “I’m sorry, I can’t”</p>
		Test	Assessing students’ vocabulary
2	Around the School	Meeting 1	Vocabulary <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Noun (e.g: classroom, library, etc.) - Verb (e.g: study, borrow, etc.) Expression <p>“What do you do in the...?” “I ... in the ...”</p>
		Meeting 2	Vocabulary <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Noun (e.g: classroom, library, etc.) - Verb (e.g: study, borrow, etc.) Expression <p>“What do you need to do?” “I need to...”</p>
		Meeting 3	Vocabulary <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Noun (e.g: door, window, etc.) - Verb (e.g: open, close, etc.) Expression <p>“Can you...the..., please?” “Yes, of course.”</p>
		Test	Assessing students’ vocabulary

3.2 Site and Participants

This research was conducted in SD X, Bandung. This site was chosen because of two reasons. First, the school is going to implement curriculum 2013 and adapt theme based teaching as their new method in learning process. Second, it was easy for the researcher to conduct the research there because of its accessibility.

The sample of this research involved a class of the fifth grade students. It consisted of 32 students, 16 of them were boys and 16 of them were girls. The students in the fifth grade in which were about 11 years old were chosen to conduct the research.

According to Nunan (2001:6), children around 11 years old have reached “The Concrete-operational stage” in which “*child begins developing the ability to separate the self from the environment and to think logically*”. They even have reached “The Formal-operational stage” in which “*abstract thinking develops and the child is now able to generalize beyond his/her immediate context from the instance to general*”.

This study focused on the students’ vocabulary mastery in which grammar also needs to be put together. As Pinter (2006) argues that vocabulary learning and grammar cannot be separated and should be learnt together since they are interdependent. However, younger children are not capable enough to learn grammar since it deals with language system which is abstract and needs logical thinking. Hence, the students from the fifth grade were chosen since they are considered to be ready enough with the language system that will be put together with vocabulary learning.

3.3 Data Collection

There are some data collection methods that can be used in a research. As Koshy (2005:87) says, “*there are many ways of gathering data; the most suitable method has to be chosen for the task in hand*”. In this research, the data was collected through vocabulary assessment, observation, and questionnaire. Those data collection method is described as follows:

1. Vocabulary Assessment

The vocabulary assessment was carried out to see the students' vocabulary improvement that was employed during the treatment and in the test section.

In this study, the criterion referencing (see Chapter II) was used. This approach was chosen since this is appropriate with the school policy that has Minimum Passing Criteria for each subject. Moreover, it seems more appropriate for children since it focuses on individual achievement rather than compares it with other students' achievement so it will be less-competitive. This also can encourage students to learn since their effort and achievement are valued.

Based on the dimension of vocabulary assessment (see Chapter II), the assessment was conducted by using embedded test, comprehensive measure and context dependent assessment. The vocabulary assessment was carried out in a spoken form since the oral vocabulary was chosen as the focus in this study. The students were expected to respond based on the contextual information given that was adjusted with the theme in each cycle.

The assessment was conducted through interview by using set of picture cards as the media. The interview was chosen since the students' vocabulary improvement was assessed in a spoken form, as it had been learned in the classroom. There were questions given based on the pictures and the students had to answer with a correct expression as they had the similar activities in the classroom. The set of cards was used in order to bring child-friendly atmosphere so they will be less-threatened and less-likely being assessed. The vocabulary assessment focuses on three criterions which are word identification, word meaning and word use.

Table 3.3 Rubric for Assessing Vocabulary

(Antonacci and O'Callaghan, 2012)

Criterion	5 ≥ 90%	4 75-89%	3 51-74%	2 26-50%	1 0-25%	Note
Word Identification	Proficient in saying the words	Has a little difficulty saying the words	Has some difficulty saying the words	Has a lot of difficulty saying the words	Are not capable in saying the words	
Word meaning	Knows the comprehensive meaning of the words	Knows more than partial meaning of the words	Knows the partial meaning of the words	Knows only a little meaning of the words	Doesn't know the meaning of the words	
Word use	Can use the words with a high degree of accuracy in the context of speaking	Can use the words with middle degree of accuracy in the context of speaking	Can use the words with some degree of accuracy in the context of speaking	Can use the words with a low degree of accuracy in the context of speaking	Cannot attempt to use the words within the context of speaking.	

2. Observation

Based on Koshy (2005), there are two types of observation; participant and non-participant observation. The participant observation was taken in this study since the researcher took part as a teacher. As it was also further described, "...participant observation involves the researcher living in the context and being a part of it" (p.98)

In this method, the students' progress in the process of the treatment and also their behavior during the process were observed. This observation was conducted through video recordings and field note.

1.1 Video recordings

Video recording was used in order to get more accurate data in the study. Koshy (2005) states that different aspect as well as some significant point can be analyzed more by viewing the recordings. Since the study needs to check students' progress during the lesson and also to find out students' participatory and attitudes,

this video recordings are needed to complete the information. It also has been seen as one advantage of using video recordings, as Koshy (2005:104) claimed that “*Students’ behaviors and attitudes can be captured with greater accuracy than by making observation notes*”.

1.2 Field note

This field note was used in order to see students’ behavior during the lesson. As Creswell (2009) mentions that field note was taken to record behaviors and activities in the research site. The field note focus on two aspects, which are learning skill and social skill that has been adapted from Moon (2000).

Table 3.4 Field Note (Moon, 2000)

No	Skills	+	-	Notes
1	Learning Skills			
	- Can work independently of the teacher			
	- Can carry out own work activities			
2	Social skills			
	- Show interest in learning English			
	- Are able to cooperate with others in pair/group work			

3. Questionnaire

Kohsy (2005:89) sees that “*questionnaires can help you to gather a reasonable amount of data in a short time*”. In this study, the questionnaire was conducted in the end of the research in order to find out students’ perception toward theme-based teaching as a method to improve their English vocabulary.

Pinter (2006) argues that children may easily misunderstand the question since the language use is too complex for them. Thus, the researches explained some terms

used before the students fill in their response and also made sure that all of the students understand the meaning of each question written. The smiley emoticon was also employed to avoid students' boredom since children may find it fun and interesting.

There are ten close questions provided in the questionnaire that is administered in Bahasa Indonesia. The open questions are avoided since it may be time-consuming and also tiring especially for children who inexperienced in writing (Pinter, 2006). In the questionnaire, the first two questions relate with the students' perception towards English learning. The third until the fifth are about the suitability of theme chosen with the students' interest, proficiency level and daily life. The sixth and seventh items relate with the students' perception towards the implementation of theme-based teaching in English learning. The next three items relate with the effect of theme-based teaching towards vocabulary learning. The last item relates with students' motivation in theme-based teaching for their future learning.

It was expected that the result of the questionnaire can provide further information that might be helpful for the study.

3.4 Data Analysis

Kohsy (2005) suggested two ways to be used in analyzing and presenting the data. There are quantifiable and descriptive data. He further states that "*a combination of the representations from the various models might also be used*" (p.110). In this study, the researcher combined those ways to analyze and present the data that have been collected.

The quantifiable data was used to represent the data from the questionnaire. Kohsy (2005) suggests that the data collection which involved questionnaires or quantifiable information through observations can be displayed by using tables and diagrams. He also further described that it can be helpful in two ways; first, a visual display makes it easier for the reader to understand information. Secondly, they break up continuous prose which can sometimes be tedious for a reader trying to make sense of the data.

The descriptive data was used to analyze and present the data from observation. Kohsy (2005) supports that qualitative data very suitable for action research as its ability to capture the 'richness' and 'holism' of a situation.

For analysing and interpreting qualitative data, Miles and Huberman (Kohsy, 2005) define data analysis as consisting of three concurrent flows of activity: data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing/verification.

1. Data Reduction

In this stage, the data that have been collected might be narrowed in order to provide precise analysis. Kohsy (2005) states that data reduction refers to the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting and transforming the data that appear in the written up field notes or transcriptions. He also further seen data reduction as a form of analysis that sharpens, sorts, focuses, discards and organises data in such a way that 'final conclusions' can be drawn and verified. The data that have been chosen in this point then will be further used in the final analysis.

2. Data Display

The data display can be adjusted with the instruments that have been chosen. As Kohsy (2005:113) proposed that "*data display can include different types of graphs, charts and networks.*" He further describe that data display is used to portray the information collected in a concise form so that the researcher will be able to move to further analysis and draw a conclusion based on the data illustrated before.

3. Conclusion Drawing/verification

The data conclusion was drawn in the end of the data analysis. In this stage, the information has to cover the whole areas of the data that lead to a comprehensible conclusion of the research. Kohsy (2005:114) defines this part as follow:

From the start, the researcher tries to decide what things mean and to note regularities, patterns and explanations. The researcher holds these conclusions lightly, maintaining scepticism until they are more explicit and grounded. Although final conclusions appear only when the analysis is over, the action researcher also draws conclusions as the project progresses.

In this research, the conclusion of the data analysis needs to cover the answer of these research problems: 1) How does the theme-based teaching improve young learners' English vocabulary, and 2) What are the students' responses towards the theme-based teaching that is implemented to improve their English vocabulary?

