THE APPLICATION OF TIERS WORDS METHOD IN IMPROVING VOCABULARY MASTERY OF THE NINTH GRADE STUDENTS OF SMP SWASTA ANASTASIA

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ABSTRACT

This research was primarily conducted to prove that the application of Tiers Words method could improve the vocabulary mastery of the ninth grade students of SMP Swasta Anastasia and to describe their responses towards the application of Tiers Words method in the processes of learning vocabulary. This is Classroom Action Research which was performed in two cycles. Each cycle consisted of three meetings. The quantitative data analysis showed that the students' mean score increased continually from 29,44% in the pre-test, 62,27% in the formative test, and 78,30% in the post-test. The qualitative data analysis showed that the students gave good responses towards the application of Tiers Words method. They felt more enthusiastic and motivated to learn vocabulary after Tiers Words method was applied. To sum up, the application of Tiers Words method could improve the students' vocabulary mastery. It is advisable that English teachers implement Tiers Words method in order to teach vocabulary.

Key words: Vocabulary mastery, Tiers Words method, Classroom Action Research

INTRODUCTION

English as an international language is spoken almost all over the world. Nowadays, English takes an important role as communication language used in many sectors of life such as, trading, bilateral relationship, science, technology and many others. English has become the language used by many people all over the world to connect and share with another. Therefore, people should understand and master English in order to gain broader knowledge, information, and technology. In order to be successful in learning English language, a learner must have positive language attitude. It is in line with Fakeye's opinion (in Sari, 2016:38) who states that the matter of learner's attitude is acknowledged as one of the most important factors that impacts on learning a language. In learning a foreign language, vocabulary plays an important role. It is one element that links the four language skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing all together. Vocabulary is one component that can help one to speak easily. Vocabulary is all of the words known by people and they use those words to make up a language. Without a propotional amount of vocabulary anyone will get trouble in speaking, reading, listening, and writing.

Wilkins (in Thornbury, 2002:13) states, "Without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed". In other words, the first thing that has to be mastered by language learners in learning language is vocabulary. In listening, students' vocabulary mastery affects their understanding

toward the teacher's speech, class discussion, and other speeches. The words that they choose in speaking affect how well they deliver a message. In reading, students' vocabulary mastery affects their ability to understand and comprehend a text. In addition, dealing with writing, students' vocabulary mastery also affects how clear they convey their thought to the reader (s). In conclusion, vocabulary takes an important role in equipping students to be able to communicate in the English language.

When we just learn about grammar without learning vocabulary, we cannot express anything. It shows that vocabulary has a special place in the teaching of foreign language at school, especially at Junior High School. Sari and Pandiangan (2021:24) state that even though someone surpasses in sentence structure but if he/she does not excel in vocabulary mastery, he/she keeps being unable to say or write anything and the grammar knowledge will be futile. In addition, Sari and Br Sembiring (2019:508) state, "To be able to speak, a large amount of vocabulary is also important, because without adequate vocabulary, there is nothing to say". To sum up, vocabulary is a basic element in learning a language. Problems in learning and teaching the English language still exist at schools because English language is completely different from the Indonesian language in the system of the structure, pronunciation and vocabulary. Students have difficulties in differentiating the form of word grammatically, such as parts of speech. Furthermore, students tend to be bored and low participation in the English class. Those problems must be solved because it can be obstacles for the students to continue the next level or grade. They also have low motivation in learning the English language because they think English is difficult.

Based on the writers' observation towards the ninth grade students of SMP Swasta Anastasia in the Academic Year of 2020/2021, it was found that the students lack of vocabulary. Consequently, they cannot speak and write in the English language. Thus, the teacher's role is very influential to enchance the students' vocabulary mastery. The teacher should be wise in choosing an appropriate method or technique to be implemented when teaching. Teacher should bring the real situation in the classroom by giving activities that support students to practice English (Turnip, Rumapea, and Sari, 2017:103). A good teaching method makes students understand and master the learning material. There are many methods of language teaching that can be applied for teaching vocabulary. They are puzzle, word wall, pictures, tiers words, etc. In order to improve the vocabulary mastery of the ninth grade students of SMP Swasta Anastasia in the Academic Year of 2020/2021, the writers decided to implement Tiers Words method.

Beck, McKeown, and Kucan (in Calderan, 2007:30) state that Tiers Words method is a systematic method of selecting vocabulary to teach to students. Words are grouped into three tiers, and words in tier two are targeted for instruction. The approach to teaching the words in each tier is predicated on four dimensions, namely nature of the word, its cognate status, depth of word meaning and utility. In addition, Beck and McKeown (in Marschark, 2002:381) state that Tiers Word method incorporates the casual factors of scaffolding and communication into its procedures. Understanding the vocabulary tiers allows teachers or parents to determine which words should be instructed for the child's maximum benefit.

The use of Tiers Words method not only will change the dynamic of class but also help student study easily and help the brain to learn more effectively. Beck

and McKeown (in Calderan, 2007:102) state that vocabulary words are generally divided into three tiers. Thinking about three tiers, the organization of words into tiers seems to make a lot of sense to people. There is a research that shows the effectiveness of Tiers Words method to improve the students' vocabulary mastery. It was conducted by Gray and Harmon (2009) entitled The Effect of Tier 2 Intervention for Phonemic Awareness in a Response-to-Intervention Model in Low-Income Preschool Classrooms. The research finding showed that the application of Tiers Words method was successful for 71% of the children, as indicated by medium to large effect sizes. Comparisons between children who did and did not qualify for intervention suggest that Tier 2 intervention helped narrow the gap in beginning sound awareness that had begun to emerge before treatment. Although children receiving special education and those learning English as a second language were enrolled in the classrooms, they were not overrepresented in the group qualifying for Tier 2 intervention, and most who did qualify demonstrated a positive response to intervention.

The supporting information about Tiers can be found out in Reed's book (2015) entitled Handbook of Response to Intervention and Multi-Tiered Systems of Support. Despite effective Tier 1 instruction, approximately 20% of school's population will require more intensive support. In the elementary grades, this level of support is provided to students typically in small groups as part of Tiers - 2 type interventions. However, there may be reasons to move directly to more intensive interventions with students in secondary grades. Fuchs, et al (2010) state that it is important to address struggling readers' weaknesses in a way which is motivating, engaging, and responsive, especially since these factors may mediate the effectiveness of the intervention.

Tiers Words method allow students to work cooperatively, compete with other strategy in different way, work in stressful and more productive environment and allow students to have fun. Is the application of Tiers Words method able to improve the vocabulary mastery of the ninth grade students of SMP Swasta Anastasia in the Academic Year of 2020/2021? Will the students give good responses towards the application of Tiers Words method in the learning teaching processes of vocabulary? In order to find out the answers to the questions, the writers carried out a research entitled The Application of Tiers Words Method in Improving Vocabulary Mastery of the Ninth Grade Students of SMP Swasta Anastasia.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE
Vocabulary

Learning language cannot be separated from learning vocabulary. Vocabulary refers to the words we know to communicate effectively. Vocabulary supports the speaker to express their opinions, ideas, and feelings in communication. Vocabulary is the most important component language because it affects the four language skills, namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Manullang, Lumban Raja, and Sari (2018:128) state that communication will not flow if one has only a small number of vocabularies. Therefore, it is obligatory for him to develop his vocabulary for better communication. Vocabulary is the knowledge of meanings of words that a person knows or uses. The more words students know well and can use, the more meaning they can communicate in a wide

variety of circumstances. The definition about vocabulary is clear enough that is almost cases of human life, they use set of words. The use of words itself differentiated according to the field, person, class, or profession. It means that beggar use set of words to ask for some money to rich people, the teacher also use set of word when their students command.

The writer has opinion that vocabulary is one aspect of language which is important in learning language because vocabulary carries meaning which is use in communication. Graves, Dianne, and Jeannette (2013:4) state, "Vocabulary is most effective when learners are given both definitional and contextual information, when learners actively process the new word meanings, and when they experience multiple encounters with words". Vocabulary is most effective and most likely to influence students' comprehension when it is rich, deep, and extended. Vocabulary is very important to express the words that we will say when communicating. Thus, when we want to speak a foreign language but we do not master the vocabulary, we cannot communicate in that language. According to Elisabeth (2006:215), "Experiments have shown that vocabulary size is probably the best single index for predicting achievement in nearly all the other language skill". In addition, the listening vocabulary is the basis for the development of the other vocabularies. The words that they have heard and understand will be the basis of their speaking, writing and reading. Students will not often use words that they do not understand when speaking or writing.

Kinds of Vocabulary

There are many kinds of vocabulary according to some experts. Harmer (2001:150) states, "Distinguishes two kinds of vocabulary, the first kind of vocabulary refers to the stock of words and the second term refers to the words of which the students will recognize". Which vocabulary refers to the stock of words have been taught by the teacher or learnt by the students and which the second term refers to the words of which the students will recognize are expected to be able to use. While when they meet them, but of which they will probably not be able to pronounce.

According to Nation (2008:24), "There are two kinds of vocabulary. They are receptive and productive vocabulary". Receptive vocabulary refers to the words which native speakers and foreign learners recognize and understand but hardly ever use. It is used passively in either listening or reading. Productive vocabulary is utilized actively either in speaking or writing. Listening vocabulary is generally larger than speaking vocabulary while reading vocabulary is relatively larger than writing vocabulary. Therefore, it can be concluded that vocabulary can be presented in four units. They are listening vocabulary, reading vocabulary, speaking vocabulary, and writing vocabulary. Reading vocabulary consists of the word found by people when they are reading.

While listening, vocabulary is the words that people hear and understand when they are talking to others or listening to radio and television. Speaking vocabulary includes the words people used in their daily life and conversation. The last is writing vocabulary that consists of the word people use in writing essays, reports, letter, etc. In relation to kinds of vocabulary, Nation (2008:59) divides vocabulary into four categories namely, high-frequency words, academic words, technical words, and low-frequency words. High-frequency words are vocabulary

that appears in daily use of language conversation. Academic words are the vocabulary that mostly used in academic terms. Technical words are special words that are only shown in a specific type of study while low frequency words are vocabulary that rarely appears in daily English language use even by the native speakers.

1. High-frequency words
   These words are almost 80% of the running words in the text.
2. Academic words
   Typically, these words make up about 9% of the running words in the text.
3. Technical words
   These words make up about 5% of the running words in the text.
4. Low-frequency words
   These are the words of moderate frequency that did not manage to get into the high frequency list. They make up over 5% of the words in an academic text.

Learning Vocabulary

Vocabulary mastery is an important thing in order to master four major skills such as speaking, reading, writing, and listening. Learning vocabulary of foreign language presents the learner with several challenges. Harmer (2001:58) states, "The challenges are making the correct connections, understanding the foreign language between the form and the meaning of words, and discriminating the meanings of closely related words". Learning vocabulary needs a process, in order to make an effective process, the learner should be in the effective condition of acquiring vocabulary mastery. Furthermore, Thornbury (2002:135) states, "The condition should help learners to acquire a critical mass of words to use in both understanding and producing language". Moreover, it will enable them to remember word over time and be able to recall them readily. In addition, it can develop strategies for coping with gaps in word, including coping with unknown words, or unfamiliar uses of unknownwords.

Marzano and Simms (2013:158) state, "One of the most crucial components of direct vocabulary instruction involves selecting appropriate terms to teach". For example, most native English speakers do not need to be taught basic words like clock, happy, and baby. They learn these from the oral conversation and from day-to-day interactions with adults and other children. However, non-native English speakers often lack those experiences and require instructions in basic words. To facilitate conversations about different kinds of vocabulary terms. Basic words like clock, happy, and baby are in Tier 1. More advanced general academic or literary words like coincidence, absurd, imaginative, commercial, muscular, duplicate, and restrictare in Tier 2, and domain-specific words such as pronoun, algebra, isthmus, and quark are in Tier 3.

Tiers Words Method

As to nature of the instruction, at the time of the first edition, our review of the early commercial basal readers in the early 2000s. Revealed approaches to vocabulary instruction in the form of traditional dictionary definitions and short exercises, such as a cloze paragraph or matching words with definitions or synonyms. Beck, McKeown, and Kucan (20013:48) state, "Tiers words vocabulary is an organizational framework for categorizing words. It consists of three different

word levels or tiers, and each level has its own implications for instruction. Word levels are based on frequency, complexity, and meaning". As teachers, we know that a robust vocabulary supports reading comprehension and reinforces understanding of new and difficult texts. Using tiered approach to vocabulary instruction assists in the grade levels and content areas. Marzano and Simms (2013:20) state, "Tier Two words are not only words that are important for students to know, they are also words that can be worked with in a variety of ways". Furthermore, students have opportunities to build rich representations of them and of their connections to other words and concepts.

Different Levels of Tiers Words Method

There are different levels of Tiers Words method according to Beck, McKeown and Kucan (2002). They are:

1. Tier 1

Tier one words are high frequency words, used over and over again in the course of general conversation. Because tier one words are basic everyday words, most of them are learned through oral communication with family members, peers, or teachers. There is no need for specific instruction with tier one words. Examples of tier one words include table, happy, baby, and clock.

2. Tier 2

Tier two words are also referred to as academic vocabulary. They are cross curricular words, appearing frequently across topics and content areas. Tier two words are not common words used in conversation, making them ideal candidates for direct instruction. Examples of tier two words include complex, analyze, restrict, ultimate, and foundation. In addition to being cross curricular, tier two words often have multiple meanings, making them an integral component of reading comprehension. The more students learn high utility (tier two) words, the better they will be able to comprehend text that contains those words.

3. Tier 3

Tier three words consists of low frequency words that occur in specific domains. Tier three words are central to understanding concepts within various academic subjects and should be integrated into content instruction. Examples of tier three words include molecule, tundra, and legislature.There is no specific formula for placing words into tiers or choosing words for direct instruction. Teachers should consider the following when choosing vocabulary words:

1) How useful is the word? Is it a word that students are likely to meet often in other texts?
2) How does the word relate to other words or ideas in the curriculum? Does it directly relate to a specific topic of study What does the word bring to a text or situation?
3) What role does the word play in understanding the overall meaning?

Words can also fall into more than one tier. For example, a word like pinnacle has multiple definitions, making it applicable as a tier two and tier three word. Calderón and Rowe (2004:100) state, "A student's maximum level of reading comprehension is determined by his or her knowledge of words". This word knowledge allows students to comprehend text. Therefore, it is vitally important to teach key words that children will need to comprehend texts, learn the content in those texts, and pass tests. Words are taught through direct instruction of word

meanings as well as through discussions about words (including prefixes, suffixes, and roots) – all combined with a lot of reading. The selection of vocabulary words can be grouped into three tiers:

1. Tiers 1 Words

Tier 1 words are words that ELLs typically know the concept of in their primary language, but not the label in English. For example, a Tier 1 word might be butterfly. This is a word that English language learners may not know, but it can be easily taught by pointing to a picture of a butterfly during text discussion.Another Tier 1 word might be march (move like a soldier). A word like march can be easily instructed during text discussion by marching in place. But because this word has multiple meanings, it also merits further instruction. This can be accomplished through oral language activities that follow the text discussion.

2. Tiers 2 Words

Tier 2 words are more complex than Tier 1 words. They may also be more abstract, these include:
   a. Words that are important and useful to understanding the text, such as: character, setting, plot, even numbers, and country.
   b. Words that have connections to other words and concepts, such as: between, among, by, combine, and estimate.
   c. Words for which students understand the general concept, but need greater precision and specificity in describing a concept or a person, such as: sets, tables (for math or science, or for a table of contents), shy, ashamed, and stubborn.

3. Tier 3 Words

These are low-frequency words that are found mostly in content books in the upper grades. Examples include witticism, isotope, procrastinate, amoeba, or words that are not demonstrable or cognates. These words are rarely encountered in the early grades, but if they do appear, you can translate them or briefly explain them in either English or in the ELLs first language.Is advisable at all grade levels to have bilingual dictionaries available in the classroom. If you do not know the translation for a vocabulary word into students native language, it is an easy reference and clarification tool. Also, when reading texts on their own, students can look up unknown words and ensure their own comprehension.

The Procedure of Applying Tiers Words Method

The first tier consists of the most basic words. Words in this tier rarely require instruction for most students. The second tier contains words that are of high frequency for mature language users and are found across a variety of content areas. The third tier is made up of words whose frequency is quite low and often limited to specific content areas. The following is the procedure of Tiers Words explained by Beck, Kucan, and Mckeown (2002).

Type	Definition	Examples	Instruction
Common Words (Tier 1)	Basic word used often in everyday conversation	Dog Go Happy Drink Phone Play Afraid	These words do not need to be explicitly taught, especially in upper grades with native English speakers.

Type	Definition	Examples	Instruction
Sophisticated Language-use words (Tier 2)	More complex, frequently occurring words in academic settings	Compare Neutral Contrast Admire Plead Represent Environment Collaborate	Teach these words. Students will see and use these words often as sophisticated language users.
Content-specific words (Tier 3)	Highly specialized words that are related to a specific discipline.	Program Quagmire Locution Polyglot Sonata Isosceles	Teach these words when a specific lesson requires knowledge of the word and underlying concept.

RESEARCH METHOD
Research Design

This is Classroom Action Research (henceforth, CAR). CAR directs toward an action or cycle of action that a writer wants to take to address situation in the classroom. According to Kemmis, McTaggart & Nixon (2014:18), "CAR as a term of cycle from the step of change is conduct to putting plans into action observing what happened, and reformulate the plan of what has happened". CAR was focused on or asseses the things that happen in the classroom. Action research involves taking a self reflective, critical, and systematic approach to exploring your own teaching contexts. In CAR, a teacher becomes an investigator or exploler of his or her personal teaching context, while at the same thing being one of the participants in it. Based on the definition, the writers conclude that CAR is the form of research in which an idea in a social or educational situation is applied in order to exchange something to be better, or to get real effect on the situations.

The Procedure of Classroom Action Research

The writers used CAR model which was developed by Kemmis and McTaggart. Kemmis and McTaggart (in Burns, 2010:34) state, "CAR was performed into two cycles, namely cycle one and cycle two. CAR typically involves four broad phases in a cycle of research, namely: (1) planning, (2) action, (3) observation, and (4) reflection". It can be seen in the figure 1.
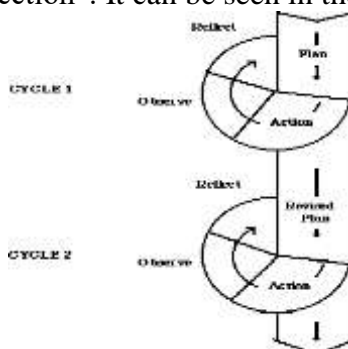

Figure 1 The Classroom Action Research (CAR) Model Developed by Kemmis and McTaggart

The four phases are elaborated as follows:

Cycle 1

Cycle 1 consists of four steps: planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. They are described as follows:

1. Planning

In this phase, the writers made a plan that was done from the beginning of the study to completion. They identified all the problems and made a plan of action to overcome the problems. They made lesson plans, provided learning materials, the pre-test, formative test, and post-test.

2. Action

In this phase, Tiers Words method was implemented in the learning teaching processes of vocabulary mastery. The first writer who acted as the teacher asked the students to choose their partners. Then teacher dictated a text, but the text still had missing words and the students' task was to fill in the missing words by listening to the teacher. After that, the students looked for the meaning of the missing words in Indonesian language.

3. Observation

Observation is done at the same time with action. The second and the tird writers observed the students' activities and took notes of the situation in the classroom activities, including the students' activeness when the activity was in progress. They also noted the problems which happened during the learning teaching process. The entire note was used as consideration for the next cycle. The first writer (the teacher) also acted as a facilitator and helped the students overcome the problems they faced during the classroom activities.

4. Reflection

Reflection is the final phase of CAR. After completing three phases of CAR, all the writers made a reflection to know what took place during the research and evaluated the results of the action and observation. After that, they made decision whether to stop the research or to continue to the next cycle. Finally, they decided to continue the CAR to the second cycle with the same procedures and some adaptations.

Cycle 2

After completing the entire phase in cycle one, the writers conducted cycle 2 to make some improvement for better results. Cycle two was focused on solving the problems that were found in cycle 1. The second cycle also has four steps. They are planning, action, observation, and reflection. The second cycle was revised from the first cycle.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Tiers Words method was applied to improve the vocabulary mastery of the ninth grade students of SMP Swasta Anastasia. The writers analyzed the quantitative and qualitative data. They concluded that the use of Tiers Words method could be an effective way to help students improve their vocabulary mastery. It was shown from the results of the pre-test, formative test, and post-test. The mean of the pre-test is 29,44, the mean of the formative tmest is 62,27 and the mean of the post-test is 78,30. The students' score in the first cycle is better than in

the second cycle. Besides that, the analysis of qualitative data gotten from observation sheet, field notes and questionnaire shows that the students gave good responses towards the application of Tiers Words method in the learning teaching processes of vocabulary. Most of the students are more active and enthusiastic in mastering vocabulary taught by the first writer (the teacher).

The first writer faced some problems in applying Tiers Words method. She found that this method is inappropriate to be applied in a big class. When she tried to approach some students, other students made noise during learning teaching process. Fortunately, she was able to manage the class well. She motivated the students to study hard and learn the English language as well as possible because English language plays a crucial role in the globalization era.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS
Conclusions

After analyzing the quantitative and qualitative data, the writers made the following conclusions.

1) Tiers Words method could improve the students' vocabulary mastery. It was seen from the students' mean which increased continually from the pre-test, formative test, and post-test. The students' mean in the pre-test is 29,44, 62,27 in the formative test, and 78,30 in the post-test. Meanwhile, the students' score percentage who passed Mastery Minimum Criteria *(Kriteria Ketuntasan Minimum)* from the pre-test is 0%, the formative test is 13,88%, and the post-test is 86,11%.

2) Based on the analysis of qualitative data, it was found that the students' response towards the application of Tiers Words method to improve their vocabulary mastery is very positive. They found that Tiers Words method helped them improve their vocabulary mastery.

Suggestions

Based on the research findings, the writers would like to give some suggestions to be considered as follows:

1. For the students
   Students should be more active in mastering vocabulary. The more vocabulary they have, the better they express their ideas both spoken and written.
2. For the teachers
   In order to make English language teaching and learning as joyful, fun, and interesting as possible, a teacher must be able to create an enjoyable, fun, and interesting learning atmosphere. The teachers may apply Tiers Words method to create an enjoyable, fun, and interesting learning teaching process of vocabulary in order to improve their students' vocabulary mastery.
3. For other researchers
   The expectation for other researchers is they could use this research for their academic needs to conduct further research concerning Tiers Words method and vocabulary mastery.

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