Enriching English Vocabulary and Literacy of the Children through Digital Resources

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Children need exposure when they learn English vocabulary. The more exposure of the target language they receive, the more words they obtain. The rich vocabulary the children have will help them to do better English literacy which support them to convey the message that they read. Children need learning variation both at school and at home to diminish boredom and enhance their learning interest toward English. Learning English with their teachers at school using printed material, pictures, and objects surround them is a daily thing they do in the class. Children need different learning activity to experience something new which can refresh their mind so it can maintain their learning motivation. This article will elaborate how children can learn differently from the common thing they do in which learning through digital resources. Learning through digital tools and using digital resources is a distinct option nowadays. A lot of digital resources can be explored by English teachers as well as children's parent to be used as learning tool. Various kind of digital stories can be chosen to improve children's English literacy. Meanwhile, teachers and parent can also browse a lot of digital vocabulary learning activities such as digital video with various topics, memory vocabulary game, concentration vocabulary game, digital flashcard, vocabulary puzzles with various topics and other digital vocabulary learning activities. Those digital vocabulary resources having interesting visual, color and material which can create an enjoyable and playful leaning atmosphere. Therefore, using digital resources in the attempt to enrich English vocabulary and literacy of the children can be applied to make learning variation.

INTRODUCTION

Learning English should be supported by one of significant language components which is vocabulary. Vocabulary is set of words used to convey message from people's talk and to get the gist of written things read. It is stated by Clouston (2013:2), "vocabulary is the words of the language, including single items and phrases or chunks of several words which convey a particular meaning, the way individual words do". Vocabulary is the significant part in English learning because without sufficient vocabulary how can teachers deliver their teaching and how can students comprehend the message beyond the material taught. According to Clouston (2013:2) vocabulary is central to English language teaching because without sufficient vocabulary students cannot understand others or express their own ideas. Meanwhile, Neuman & Dwyer (2009:385) in Alqahtani (2015:24) state that vocabulary is the words we must know to communicate effectively, words in speaking (expressive vocabulary) and words in listening (receptive vocabulary). In addition, Hornby (1995) in Alqahtani (2015:24-25) explain that vocabulary is the total number of words in a language; it is a list of words with their meanings. Vocabulary should be acquired in order the children can learn how to listen, read, speak, and to write. Therefore, it is very urgent to be developed as early as possible.

Because vocabulary is very crucial in learning English, it is a good thing to introduce it to students from the early age. Children learn any language easier especially when they are in their critical period. A lot of exposure related to target language they try to master is meaningful. They learn by hearing, imitating, and by doing. A lot of new English words exposed to children will be stored in their memory. The better learning activities and exposure they receive, the longer the words stored in their long term memory. Vocabulary knowledge of the children can be shaped by introducing simple words commonly used in daily life. Teachers can use many pictures to make the learning easier. Besides, the visual context from the picture can help the children to relate the meaning with its referent. Other learning material can be used as learning resources such as printed books, flashcards, realia, and other things. At the higher stages of their learning, children can start to practice using the vocabulary they have by doing other kind of activity such as reading. Children can use the English words from their memory to comprehend the content of the material they read. As a good effect of their reading activity, children will gain a lot of new vocabulary. If they have better reading activity supported by various vocabulary, it will bring good influence toward their literacy too.

Vocabulary and literacy closely related one another. As stated previously that pictures, flashcard, realia, and printed books can be used as learning tool for the children to enrich their vocabulary. Stories from various printed books become interesting material to be read by children. The simple plot of the story completed by various daily words can engage the children to memorize the words easier. Their learning activity through story reading seem to be more relaxed and unconsciously they are building their new knowledge of vocabulary. According to Cameron (2005, 159) in Ameer (2016, 198) using stories in the classroom is a very effective way to improve and develop language skills in general , which in turn motivate students to be active learners developing within them a contrastive approach to English language learning. Stories read by the children are considered as good educational tool to promote language proficiency both in first and second language (Haven, 2005:75) in Ameer (2016, 198). Meanwhile, Brown (2001, 222) in Ameer (2016, 198) state that giving exposure to children in new words in story in language context can engage young learners to simple ways to internalize "these important blocks of language". Stories can attract the children to have more reading frequency which then stimulate them to be habitual to reading habit. As a result, the level of their literacy will be improved too.

In order to maximize the learning activity related to the process of enriching children English vocabulary and literacy, teachers can create different learning experience for the students in the classroom. Using different learning resources will offer something which can diminish their boredom using the same material regularly. Besides, it will become such kind of learning variation for the students. Considering that nowadays people need to be equipped with technological tools to access various information and knowledge easier, children can have new learning experience by using digital resources. It is a good thing to make the children to be

digitally literate. A lot of digital resources can be accessed by teachers as well as children's parent to be used as new form of learning material. Digital stories can help children to enrich their vocabulary knowledge as well as to improve their literacy. Meanwhile, a lot of digital flashcards, memory vocabulary game, concentration memory game, vocabulary puzzles, vocabulary quizzes can also become the other option. The interesting look, color and illustration of those digital resources can attract children's interest in learning. Therefore, in the next part of this article it will discussed further about how digital resources can enrich English vocabulary and literacy of the children along with how to diminish the possible negative side effect of use it.

DISCUSSION

A brief explanation about vocabulary and literacy and the different way of using learning resources have been explained previously. As a further discussion, the elaboration in this part will be preceded by the development of vocabulary, continued by the discussion of literacy and it will be ended by enriching vocabulary and literacy through digital resources.

Vocabulary Development

Vocabulary is the knowledge of words as well as its meaning. It is required not only knowing words of English but also having awareness of how to use and relate it to the target meaning of the language used. Kamil and Hiebert (2005) in National Reading Technical Assistance and Centre (NRTAC, 2010) defines vocabulary as the kind of words the students must know to read increasingly demanding text with comprehension. Meanwhile, Clouston (2013:2) states, "vocabulary as the words of a language, including single items and phrases or chunks of several words which convey a particular meaning, the way individual words do. By knowing the meaning of words can make us getting the gist of what we read, listen, and write easier. In other word, vocabulary having a really significant role in helping someone to acquire English including the important four skills in it.

Relating to the significance of vocabulary in English learning, Cameron (2001) in Alqahtani (2015) state that vocabulary as one of the significant things of knowledge area is very

influential for learners in acquiring a language. Meanwhile, Harmon, Wood & Keser (2009) as well as Linse (2005) in Alqahtani (2015) state, "learners' vocabulary development is an important aspect of their language development. The acquisition of a language is closely related to good vocabulary development. In addition to the importance of vocabulary development, Schmitt (2000) in Alqahtani (2015) states, "lexical knowledge is central to communicative competence and to the acquisition of a second language. In line with this case, Nation (2001) in Alizadeh (2016:23) emphasizes, "knowledge of vocabulary enables language use and, conversely, language use leads to an increase in vocabulary knowledge". Good vocabulary can engage someone to learn the four skills better because those skills will involve a lot vocabulary to be used when those skills learnt. Meanwhile, the process of learning those skills will automatically stimulate someone to have more vocabulary. For example, someone can read and convey the message from the texts read because of sufficient vocabulary. The new words will be obtained from the reading activity. Therefore, it is such a good thing to build vocabulary from early age considering that learning English will be more difficult when someone facing the higher level of learning. Because of that reason, introducing vocabulary since the early age will be very beneficial for the development of English skills and finally acquiring the language itself.

Many experts argued that it is good to start vocabulary development from the early age and many researchers have proved it practically and scientifically. Cameron (2007:77) in Ameer (2016) state that the initial foreign language teaching should be focused on vocabulary development. Nunan (2011) in Soto & Gutierrez (2019:180) state that the acquisition of a language will be done better if the learner is still young. Children have such kind of innate capacity which stimulate them to have effort to acquire one language or even more than one language through learning and exposure. Crain and Martin (1999:4) state, "children are born with innate knowledge which guides them in the language acquisition task". This knowledge known as Language Acquisition Device (LAD). LAD will help children to receive all language input including input about vocabulary knowledge whether from teachers, parents and others. Crain and Martin (1999:5) state, "the knowledge that a child brings to the task of language acquisition,

the LAD, is the means by which the child/learner analyzes the linguistic input (from parents and others)". The early stage is very crucial to the learning outcome of vocabulary, so teachers should really concern to how teaching children vocabulary in every stage of learning. Vocabulary development divided into some stages which are noticing, retrieval, and creative (generative) use (Nation, 2001) in Alizadeh (2016:23). Noticing means learner detect a given word and think it as unknown and try to familiarize with the words (Nation, 2001) in Alizadeh (2016:23). Meanwhile, retrieval direct the learner to learn the word and keep words meaning in learners' mind (Nation, 2001) in Alizadeh (2016: 24). The last stage is creative (generative) use. In this stage the learner use the words learnt in different way from the previous use (Nation, 2001) in Alizadeh (2016:24). The initial stage is important because it is the starting point in which the children should actively store as many as possible words in their memory. Therefore, giving exposure to children should be done regularly and intensively.

Children can be introduced to new vocabulary by giving them regular exposure through various learning activities. They tend to learn vocabulary through pictures, stories, flashcards, realia, and other interesting media. Using those media will make them memorize the words easier because they directly relate the context of meaning of the word and the real things represented by the words. One of tools used to learn vocabulary is story. Haven (2000:75) in Ameer (2016:198) state that stories considered as very influential educational tool to promote first and second language acquisition. Brown (2001:222) in Ameer (2016:198) state that introducing new words to young learners using the context of language learnt can avoid language block when learning. Cameron (2005:159) in Ameer (2016:198) state that children can learn effectively in the classroom by using stories and can develop their language skills in general, which then motivate the students to be active learners developing within them a contrastive approach to English language learning. Reading stories can be enjoyable for the children if the stories made to be simplified, using ordinary words used in daily life, containing simple theme and plot. Children pick up the new words they find during the reading as well as the words that they are not really familiar with. The pictures and illustration described in the stories will help them to understand the stories easier. The repeated activity of stories reading will stimulate the children to have reading habit which soon or later will influence them to have good literacy. Therefore, good vocabulary development will automatically give stimuli for the children to sharpen their literacy. Various words owned by children will help them to understand the content of the stories and it will make them to feel relaxed not to be stressful. Meanwhile, if the children have insufficient vocabulary, they will experience obstacle in conveying the message behind the stories. The National Reading Panel (NRP) in NRTAC (2010:1) states, "vocabulary plays an important role both in learning to read and in comprehending the text : readers cannot understand the text without knowing what most of the words mean". Meanwhile, Biemiller (2005) in NRTAC (2010:1) state that success in reading will not be guaranteed by teaching vocabulary just like learning to read words will not guarantee the success of reading. However, poor identification skill of adequate words or adequate vocabulary will result failure. From the elaboration before, vocabulary plays a very significant role in developing the four English skills. Because vocabulary development is very powerful to English learning, it is a good thing to vary the learning of it by using different way. Adapting to the era of technology in which everything can be equipped by technology, learning vocabulary can be made to be more interesting and fruitful through the use of digital resources. How digital resources can enrich vocabulary and literacy of the children will be elaborated further, but it will be preceded by the elaboration about literacy first.

Literacy Development

When children start to learn at school and they are able to read, speak, and write they considered as literate children. A lot of children began to know the alphabet with its different sounds and how to pronounce the syllable from kindergarten or even some of them began to know it at their pre-school period. Literate children can read things they should read based on the level they should read, getting the message from what they read. In other occasion, from the knowledge they have during reading process will help them to write something related to the material they learn from various subjects. After they do those activities in which they read and write everything related to the content of

their subjects, they will practice to communicate it in oral language. Literacy covers two important things which are the ability to read and to write. Kucer (2009) & Gee (1989) in Clark (2013) state, "a literate individual has the ability to read, write and speak with understanding and comprehension". Kern (2000) in Maureen, Meij & Jong (2018 : 4) literacy is the effort to interpret the meaning through text. To become literate, children should learn to read and write. To be able to read and to write, children should learn to read (Robinson et al. 2013) in Maureen, Meij & Jong (2018 : 4). After the children have the ability to read, they are able to communicate what they know, understand and comprehend through written things. They express their mind by interpret the meaning of written material they read into something that they write. These things are closely related one another. By reading, children figure out how language is used and words are structured. Children transfer this understanding to written language by looking for pattern and hypothesizing (Kucer, 2009: Goodman,1984; Otto, 2008) in Clark (2013:8). Connecting to that explanation, children need to learn how to read so that they can read and write. They will open their mind and getting a lot of knowledge and information if they can read well. Because literacy needs to be supported by the knowledge of word meaning and sound, there are two important things emphasized during literacy development which are code and meaning-related skills.

Code and meaning-related skills should be developed in the early stage of literacy. Owodally (2015) in Maureen, Meij, & Jong (2018:4) state that code related skills include print knowledge, alphabet knowledge, and phonological awareness, among other things. Meanwhile, meaning-related skills include vocabulary, grammatical ability, and oral narrative ability (Westerveld et al. 2015) in Maureen, Meij & Jong (2018:4). It is clear that literacy development of the children should be started by introducing them to various phonemes and alphabet which make them to be able to read it based on the proper phonetic transcription. Meanwhile, after they know the sound, they should know the meaning when those sounds combined into words and sentences.

How Digital Resources can Enrich Children Vocabulary and Literacy?

Stories can be means of developing not only vocabulary knowledge but also literacy. By reading stories children can sharpen their word storage to be broader. They will gain new vocabulary anytime they read stories with different topics and plot. Children will also learn how to read well by extracting the important point from the plot, understanding the content by connecting each meaning of the small chunks in the stories. Reading stories from printed have been done for years but as the emergence of technology use nowadays, digital stories can be the other option for the children to improve their vocabulary. Technology has made everything to be easier, effective, accessible and modern. Susila et al (2020: 6046) stated that almost all of the students have multiple supported devices in using technology, like mobile, computer or tablet. Moreover, technology can be integrated in learning activity and it can help teachers to have more skills to digital devices use, to be more digitally literate and have more professionalism. Foulger & Jimenez-Silva (2007) in Clark (2013:16) state that using technology and project based learning can support language growth, support the need for cultural and linguistic acceptance and appreciation. Druin (2005) in Clark (2013:18) state that the idea to access the diverse materials as a direct result of globalization and expansion of today's world. Furthermore Druin (2005:24) in Clark (2013:18) state that children need appropriate digital tool to access the information they are seeking, interpreting meaning of content knowledge and skills needed just like in printed literacy such as syntax, vocabulary knowledge and reading skill. Furthermore, based on their research, Voithofer & Winterwood (2010) in Clark (2013:18) found that the use of computer and information literacies along with available resources has good effect on students' ability to contextualize multiple literacies. Therefore, digital stories can be used for children reading activity instead of printed stories. Digital stories can be such complementary tool to learn since it is probably can not be used all the time considering the facilities and the cost of using it. Classical stories or printed stories use text, pictures and illustration with various colors. Similarly, digital stories have plot. As the opposite, the picture and illustration on printed stories replaced by moving visual from the video. Lankshear & Knobel (2006) in Clark (2013:9) state

that the similarity between new literacy and traditional literacy is on communicating meaning, however, new literacies use sound, text, video, hyperlink and other forms of technology. Using digital stories will change the form of literacy itself to be digital literacy.

Digital literacy related to the activity of extracting knowledge, information and other things using technological devices. Based on the 2011 Association of Colleges and Research Libraries, American Library Association (2011) in Osterman (2012) state that digital literacy is a process in which an individual trying to look for information from what he or she read though multiple media including graphical, aural, and textual. Meanwhile, Arietta & Montes (2011) in Soto & Gutierrez (2019:182) state that digital literacy is an ability of someone to read, produce, and recognize the meaning and information provided by a site. Digital literacy inspire teachers to be more technological literate so that they can create a variety in using material resources. Besides, by being technological literate teachers can broaden their knowledge of how teachers throughout the world improve their teaching by taking the advantage of various digital resources. For the students themselves especially the children, they will gain new experience learning using technological devices and digital resources. It is expected that it will increase their learning motivation and language development.

Relating to digital resources used to enrich vocabulary and literacy of the children, teachers can use various things such as ebooks, digital stories, educational video, educational games, digital puzzles, digital flashcards and other things. The access of those resources can be reached using internet connection and various technological communication tools such laptop, tablet, iPad, and smartphone. One of the site provides digital resources to learn vocabulary is ESL game which can be browsed in https://www.eslgamesplus.com/. This site provides various ESL games to develop children vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar and others. Specifically to vocabulary development, this site has various games such as sentence builder, word search game, memory game and the others. Colors vocabulary ESL memory game is very interesting because children can practice the vocabulary they have by playing this game. This game completed by audio, images, and text

which make it possible for the children to practice their spelling, reading, listening and word recognition. This game is easily played and can offer a new learning experience for the children which makes them relaxed so that the content of language learning behind the game will be understood effectively. This digital resource can be used in or outside of the class in which children should get the assistance from teachers as well as parents. If we try to look for other sites there will be a lot of other digital resources to enrich vocabulary.

Meanwhile, for digital resources to improve children literacy, teachers can access a lot interesting sites too. One of the sites is starfall which can be accessed in https://www.starfall.com/h/ltr-classic/. This site is very interesting to be used to enrich early English literacy of the children. There is an activity called *"learn to read"* in which children will be directed to have the ability to read by recognizing different English alphabet and its phonemes. This reading practice completed with audio, text and images. The text provided related to one phoneme mentioned by the speaker on the game. Children can hear the way the phoneme pronounced then they can read the sentence on the display and repeating the way the sentence read. It very engaging because children will like the childish visual used to teach them reading the sentence. Besides, the childish voice of the speaker can attract their interest to imitate the way each phoneme pronounced. Meanwhile, for older children, teachers can access www.learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org. This site provides many activities and one of which is reading activity. There are various topics suit to older children. The texts and stories offered for the children completed with visual and text. Teachers can help students to understand the possible new vocabulary the children find in the stories. This activity completed with exercises and reading task which are suitable to be used as learning activity in the classroom. Teachers should not create their own material, but they can only choose the appropriate reading topic with its exercise and reading task with the learning objective they want to achieve in the class. Furthermore, the exercise can enrich children vocabulary because there is an activity in which students should match the pictures with appropriate words mentioned in the text they read before. The answers for the exercise are available to be

printed so that it can be guidance for teachers as well as the parents when they check the children's answer.

There must be the other digital resources that can be accessed by teachers and also parents which can be used as new learning resources for the children. The sites explained previously are hoped can be the inspiring learning material that can make learning variation for the children. Findings from some research have proved that the use of technology and digital resources to enrich vocabulary and literacy of the children is beneficial. Baker (2010) in Soto & Gutierrez (2019:182) emphasize that the use of digital literacy in "young context" can promote the children about handling the computer as well as acquiring literacy and also improve children communicative abilities to this more innovative way of learning. Foulger & Jimenez-Silva, 2007; Proctor, Dalton, & Grisham, 2007; Voithofer & Winterwood, 2010; Ware, 2008) in Clark (2013:20) found that giving chance for children to use technological devices and access digital programs making the children to be familiar to information and technology and stimulate to acquire linguistically function. Meanwhile, Traore & Kyei-Blankson, 2011; Ware, 2008) in Clark (2013:21) found that technology and technological devices can be very beneficial for English language learners for the development of their literacy and language skills. Furthermore, Traoke & Kyei-Blankson (2011:565)) in Clark (2013:22) state that by using audio visual technology available, students get understanding and confidence instead of just reading book only. In addition, based on a research, Ware (2008) in Clark (2013:22) found that the use of multimedia literacy gave a better benefit in motivating the students than printed-based literacies. The other finding, Casey & Bruce (2011:77) state that digital literacy has power in the last few decades, it has changed from specialist literacy into every day literacy, teaching pupils using technological tools become pupils' preparation for their readiness of future participation in the society which closely linked to large variety use of multimedia. Using technology and digital resources can encourage children to be more digitally literate since in the next phase of their life they need to use technological tools with its beneficial sites to adapt with the wide use of technology.

A well-prepared learning activity equipped with technological tools and digital resources will result better learning outcome. Children need to be assisted not only how to operate the technological tools, but also how teachers can direct them to understand the content of material they learn from the technological tools. Explicit instruction is very beneficial for the children in which children can have interactive dialogue with their teachers to share their difficulties during the learning in the new way, how to understand the direction of the activities done, how to understand the meaning and context of the new vocabulary they read, and how to acquire other linguistic components they find in the material. Hickman, Pollard-Duradola, & Vaughn (2004) in Clark (2013:20) teaching vocabulary to ELLs using explicit teaching with high utility words is an effective way. Furthermore, Hickman, Pollard-Duradola, & Vaughn (2004:722) in Clark (2013:21) emphasized that using the words the students acquainted with to relate and understand the new words they find can enable the children to convey the meaning of the new vocabulary and relate it to daily experiences, generalize it to context. In addition, relating to the use of explicit teaching during vocabulary learning, Sibold (2011) in Clark (2013:21) emphasize that teachers can ask ELLs to associate the new words to the words they have familiar with, which help to bridge the gap between native language and second languages. Teachers' role in giving assistance during the learning using digital resources is very significant. Children will learn in a more confident manner if the teachers really concern to help the children in overcoming the learning obstacle during the learning. Therefore, the teaching instruction should be prepared well. The combination of effective explicit teaching with technological tools and digital resources are hoped can encourage and motivate the children to enrich their vocabulary and literacy.

CONCLUSION

Children have potential in learning everything including learning languages. Because they have innate capacity, they can easily learn one or even more than one language in their early age. Children learn English need optimal support from teachers, parents, environment, and all facilities to support the optimal development of their language development. Teachers should concern in applying the appropriate and effective instruction when they teach the children. In teaching vocabulary and developing children

literacy, teachers can make learning variation using technological tools and digital resources. Teachers can use the technological devices at the school and access a lot of digital resources which is interesting to be used. This new way of learning can engage and motivate the children to have more spirit and motivation to develop their language skills, one of which is vocabulary, as well as their literacy.

The use of technological tools and digital resources will not be optimal without a well organized teaching. Instruction should be made to be explicit so that it can diminish learning difficulties experienced by the children. Meanwhile, the choosing of technological tools used should consider the facilities provided by the schools. Therefore, choosing the appropriate technological tools should consider the cost and the capability of the teachers themselves to operate it. The schools can provide the training for the teachers to be more digitally literate and improve their professionalism. Meanwhile, the digital resources used should be in line with the learning objective that targeted in the class. The content of the material from the digital resources should be generally matched to all social cultural values, it does not have bad content which probably bring negative side effect for the children. In conclusion, being digitally literate is good for children to broaden their mind into various learning activities using audio, visual, and images which can make their learning to be easier and enjoyable. Besides, it is a good thing for the children to adapt to the use of technological tools in order to prepare their future participation in digital environment. For the teachers, using technological tools and digital resources will make them to have awareness of teaching in an up to date form. Digital teaching will make the teachers to have encouragement to improve their teaching quality and professionalism, to be not left behind from other teachers who also adapting to every new change in education for better learning outcome.

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