Vocabulary learning through video: Analysis of foster students’ difficulties

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ABSTRACT
Vocabulary is one of the fundamental things in forming a language so that language learners should master vocabulary in order to master the language. There are many ways that could be done in learning vocabulary, one of which is by using media. The media used should be able to facilitate students to learn and seize the vocabulary easily, yet enjoyable. Regardless, students may experience their own difficulties in the learning process. The present study focuses on difficulties confronted by foster students in learning English vocabulary through animated videos. Ten foster students of Al-Husna Orphanage, Bandar Lampung were interviewed to discover the difficulties they experienced during the process of learning English vocabulary by using animated videos. A semi-structured interview was employed to investigate the difficulties by developing several questions. The interview data were then analysed descriptively using a qualitative approach to get answers to the research question. It was revealed that the students encountered some difficulties, i.e., mispronunciation, misspelling, difficulties in understanding English words caused by the speakers’ speed; also, the students admitted that there was a lack of exposure to English.

KEYWORDS
Animated video; Difficulty; Foster student; Media; Vocabulary

Introduction
Mastery of vocabulary is necessary for everyday language. It is the primary for learning a language. Cameron (2001) stated that vocabulary is a base for the learning of a language at the initial stage as vocabulary is an arrangement of words that could be utilised in all language skills and is needed for expressing ideas, opinions, feelings, etc. Vocabulary mastery is one of the crucial factors for mastering English as a foreign or second language. That is, each individual has the ability to grasp and employ the words and their meaning contextually. Mukti (2012) explained that the mastery of vocabulary is the competence to occupy knowledge of words taught when learners learn a foreign language and not only understand the meaning of words, but also have no difficulty in pronouncing, spelling, and using the words in context. Knowing the weightiness of vocabulary, especially in learning English as a foreign language, makes academic practitioners need to know and apply vocabulary learning as effectively and efficiently as possible so that learning objectives could be achieved optimally. In the learning process, academic practitioners should be aware of what students need and what difficulties are experienced during the learning activity so as to enhance the quality of learning and maximise students’ potential.

The indicators for learners who have mastery of vocabulary, i.e., they understand exactly the meaning, pronunciation, spelling, and how to use the words in context (Suri, 2012). It means that the learners are considered to have proper mastery of vocabulary if they are able to identify not only the meaning, but also the word form, pronunciation, and spelling of the words. Mastery of a comprehensive vocabulary is necessary for foreign language learners since it could contribute to the development of the other language skills-reading, listening, writing, and speaking. Hence, to achieve mastery of English entails a proportional mastery of vocabulary.

Vocabulary has an important role in conveying expressions, Allen (1983) stated that learners will enact confusion in case they learn the meaning of words without learning how to use them in context. In other words, learning vocabulary cannot rely on using a dictionary, learners also need to be familiar with the actual context of the words. The importance of vocabulary as stated by Bromley (2004) is that an ample vocabulary is an asset for students. Therefore, vocabulary knowledge could build the self-esteem and self-confidence of students in communicating. Likewise, vocabulary knowledge could nurture fluency, strengthen comprehension, escalate achievement, as well as improve learners’ thinking and communication skills.

Thornbury (2002) revealed that there are difficulties in learning and teaching vocabulary, i.e., students find it difficult to memorise and grasp new vocabulary. Some of the new words cannot last long in their memory also...
sometimes they cannot recall the pronunciation of the words. During teaching and learning activities, the teacher usually acquaints students with new words they may have in the text; afterward, the teacher provides the meaning of the words in the students’ mother tongue. Consequently, many students assume that learning vocabulary is learning a list of new words accompanied by their meanings in their native language; thus, students lack awareness of how to apply these words in real contexts.

There are methods as well as media to teach vocabulary. Like the traditional method which only emphasises on students having to know the meaning of the words given without knowing the context of their use. Students who are taught in this way are inclined to be passive since they are only controlled by the teacher, and students’ innovation is less developed. Indeed, something that could establish pleasant conditions for students to be interested and motivated to participate in the learning process is required (Maulaya, 2008). Wiranata (2015) stated that English teachers should undertake to vary their teaching to increase students’ proficiency to learn English. Teachers must find ways that can be implemented to keep students interested in the teaching and learning process. Cameron (2001) revealed that student interest is the crucial factor to realise the objectives of learning outcomes.

Besides, there are various kinds of media that can be employed to teach and learn English vocabulary such as audio aid, visual aid, and audio-visual aid, e.g., radio, music, and others for audio aid; picture, poster, infographic, and others for visual aid; while video and movie as the audio-visual aid. It means that the selection of the right media greatly affects the effectiveness of learning vocabulary for students. Also, animated videos could address almost all of the students’ senses. At the same time, students will manage to comprehend the meaning of words related to the scenes they watch, they are also exposed to the pronunciation and the written form of words.

Lin (2010), Kabooha & Elyas (2015), and Sukriah (2020) conducted a study in investigating the influence of videos on EFL students’ vocabulary development. It was found that integrating videos into the vocabulary learning process provided positive and significant effects on students’ vocabulary mastery and could facilitate the acquisition of new vocabulary. Furthermore, the previous researchers affirmed that selecting the right video could increase students’ motivation in learning the target language. According to Ghasemi et al. (2011), some experts assert that integrating videos in language learning classes could minimise the level of stress that the students might perceive while learning a new language; inasmuch as, the students could regard it as an entertainment rather than scholastic exercise.

Based on the research findings of Kabooha & Elyas (2015), most of the students, 71% of them, revealed that the application of videos in the learning activities is said to be helpful and they could retain and remember new vocabulary easily. It is also supported by Koksal (2004), who talked about the students’ memories capacity to remember words that they acquire through videos by involving students’ auditory and visual connections when they watch the videos which can help them to store new information in their long-term memory.

According to Ghasemi et al. (2011) and Derewianka (2008), videos are not only able to support EFL learners by presenting authentic material, but also in relation to written and spoken English, by offering particular cultural dimensions and the utilization in real-life contexts.

Although the media used could be said to be effective in learning vocabulary, students are still likely to encounter difficulties during the learning process. Therefore, this study aims to explore the difficulties experienced by foster students while learning English vocabulary, specified for content words, using animated videos as the media. That way, students are aware of what they have gone through in the learning process and could realise their shortcomings which could later be relied on as a reference for improvement.

**Literature review**

**Learning Vocabulary**

Hatch & Brown (1995) described five important steps in learning vocabulary, namely: 1) have a source for finding new words; 2) get a clear picture, both visual and auditory, of new word forms; 3) learn the meaning of words; 4) produce a strong connection between the form and meaning of the word; 5) use the words contextually.

**Animated Video**

Animated video is a story of community and/or related to daily activities narrated in a video form in which drawings, models, or images of people and animals seem to move with slight progressive changes in each frame. The implementation of video could help learners to obtain vivid images of the stories. The learners could understand the narrative by means of animated video by their senses; also, animated videos could facilitate learners to conceive the message of the story in a more appealing way.
Factors Influencing Vocabulary Mastery

Rahman et al. (2007) identified several factors that make it difficult for students to master vocabulary. Those factors are students' interest in learning English, students' memory skills, difficulty in identifying words in different forms, as well as difficulty in pronouncing words.

Nurhanifah (2012) stated that students have their own difficulties in learning English as a foreign language. Amalia (2017) conducted a study and found the problems that arise, in which the students had difficulty in understanding what the speaker was saying, because for them, the speaker spoke too fast; also, they had problems in understanding difficult words or phrases.

Methods

This current study adopts a qualitative descriptive approach to identifying the difficulties faced by students in the process of learning vocabulary using animated videos. Students' notions were gathered through semi-structured interview.

Participants

Purposive sampling was employed to determine the sample of this study, in which the researchers determine a criterion in selecting the sample that is in accordance with the problems in this study. There were ten middle-school foster students at Al-Husna Orphanage in Bandar Lampung, consisting of 8 females and 2 males who took part in this study.

Instruments

Semi-structured interview was used to obtain the data. A list of questions had been compiled and was developed to obtain the indispensable data. The interviews were recorded using a mobile phone, then converted into a transcript of the interview.

Data analysis

The interpretation was used to make a description of the students' answers which were generalised as a source. Also, triangulation was used to collate the statements expressed by students in interviews related to the results of the exercises that students have done.

Results

The findings of this study include the difficulties encountered by learners during the learning process as well as the cause, how often the learners watch English videos and what platform is used to access the videos, also about the videos that the learners usually watch.

Ten students were interviewed to investigate the difficulties they faced during the learning process. Nine out of ten students experienced difficulties during the learning process. One student who did not face any significant problems admitted that she often watched English videos. Even though three students stated that they often watched English videos, however, two of them still had difficulties during the learning process. Five students admitted that they rarely watched English videos; furthermore, there were two students who stated that they had never watched an English video before, “It was my first time watching an English video”. Those two students revealed that they did not have a device that could be used to access the videos.

Moreover, based on the results of the data analysis that has been collected, it can be deduced that the students had difficulties in understanding English words, pronouncing, and writing or spelling; also, three of them stated that the speakers in the video spoke too fast as one of them stated, “The speakers in the video spoke too fast, I did not understand the meaning nor the writing. The language is also rarely heard.”
These difficulties occur because the students are less exposed to English itself. The lack of exposure to English in their lives makes it difficult for them to understand the words in English. Even though they have watched the video that has been played several times, the students still have difficulty pronouncing the words and there are still errors in writing the words.

In addition, some students found difficulties with certain words during the learning process. They had difficulty both in understanding the meaning and in using it—pronouncing and spelling. The words they find difficult are mostly verbs. The students have difficulty interpreting the meaning that they cannot see clearly in the video such as remind, try, and warn. They also have problems writing some words with double letters and those containing /h/ and /y/ such as shop, shrug, sleep, story, etc. The students were confused in writing /sh/ in a word, they wrote in the wrong form where the letter /h/ did not come after /s/, but after other letters, for example, sohp and srugh. Some students wrote the word sleep with inappropriate spelling, selep or slepp, because they did not know or forgot which letter should be doubled. Also, students more often write words that should use the letter /y/ but are written with /i/, for example, stori for the word story because the pronunciation of the letter /y/ in English is the same as the pronunciation of /i/ in Indonesian.

Table 1. Commonly used platforms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Platform</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>YouTube</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>TikTok</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Tv Program</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Preference videos

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Genre</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Animated</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Horror</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Action</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Romance</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Furthermore, based on Table 1 for the platforms they often use to watch videos, they revealed that they watch videos more often on YouTube followed by TikTok applications; for some students who stated that they did not have any electronic devices, they usually watch audio-visual inputs through Tv Programs. Aside from that, based on Table 2, 33% of the foster students have a preference for watching animated or cartoon and horror videos; meanwhile, 17% of them prefer to watch the action and romance videos.

Discussion

In the present study, it is undeniable that the students faced difficulties during the learning process, based on the results of the interview, although only one student admitted that she could follow the lesson well and there were no significant difficulties. The students stated that they had complications in conceiving the meaning of the words, pronouncing the words correctly, and writing the words with the correct spelling. This is due to the lack of exposure
to English in their daily lives, so that they are not familiar with the words. Not a few of them admitted that they had never watched an English video before, or only watched it once at school. This is also aggravated by the conditions in which they have to study online during the current pandemic, they are only given assignments by the teacher every week; consequently, they do not get optimal English learning.

These findings support the research findings by Nurhanifah (2012) in which students have their own difficulties in studying English as a foreign language; among others, problems in seizing what is said by the speaker, problems in understanding the meaning of what is said by the speaker, and problems related to the speaker’s speaking speed.

In line with the findings by Amalia (2017), the most common difficulty experienced by students in watching animated videos as the media to learn vocabulary was: difficulty in understanding difficult words or phrases; this was because students assume that the pronunciation of native speakers is different from what they often hear, as well as the speed rate of the native speakers. Words that students found difficult belong to the first three thousand words. Likewise, the findings of Rahmaawati (2012) and Wulandari (2020) revealed that the students experienced difficulties related to spelling words, seizing the meaning, pronunciation, and using the words in context, as well as their lack of motivation in learning English. Rohmatillah (2014) identified the factors that caused difficulties encountered by the students in English vocabulary class, one of which is the students were confused with idiomatic expressions, and the difference between the written form and spoken form in English is the main cause.

Moreover, Mukti (2012) revealed that there were several problems faced by students during vocabulary learning, which could then be handled better after being given the treatment. The students had difficulty pronouncing words correctly, memorizing the meaning of the words, and using the vocabulary in four language skills. In addition, the findings in this current study support Mukti’s findings, that is, the students could not use the vocabulary in written form with correct spelling. However, it happened at first, the students became accustomed to making sentences using the proper words and the correct spelling after doing some exercises. This proves that the lack of exposure to English makes it difficult for students to comprehend and use English vocabulary. But the good thing is that students could easily and quickly capture new vocabulary by using the right media, namely animated videos. The students could seize the meaning of the words facilely.

YouTube as a medium provides a multidimensional source of videos in all realms of knowledge that could be retrieved at any time. According to Kabooha & Elyas (2015), videos on YouTube are suitable for classroom use since the videos are limited in length. In addition, the research findings from Hanifer & Miller (2011) and Ghasemi et al. (2011) revealed that YouTube is a component in a learning system to bolster sovereign learning. YouTube videos could boost students’ motivation to actively participate in the classroom or even in their detached learning process as well as to address the students’ interests and needs since they are likely exposed to the contextual language by having the authentic discourse from YouTube videos.

Nejati (2010) and Lord (2009) explain the crucial role of YouTube specifically in its connection to further improve the quality of language learning; in practicing the target language, gaining an understanding of its cultures, and educating the learners for becoming self-sufficient learners. Moreover, Nejati is vigorous about YouTube videos in a language learning context in which the learners could learn a variety of spoken languages and genres, also different vocabularies contextually that could assist them in memorization and application. It is also emphasised by Alwehaibi (2015) that YouTube has the capability to increase the language learning process in diversified ways. YouTube provides various video and language genres that could help learners to explore the target language or culture for them to develop their skills (Alimemaj, 2010).

Conclusion

There are several difficulties faced by foster students during the process of learning English vocabulary through animated narrative videos. It could be seen from the findings of the interview. Based on the data, the researchers found that the most difficulties faced by students were: difficulties in understanding English words in the context of content words that are difficult for them to understand, either because the movements are less prominent or have abstract meanings such as in abstract nouns; pronunciation; and writing with the correct spelling. Repetition must be done so that students really understand how to pronounce the words correctly and write the words with the correct spelling. The researchers also found that the lack of exposure to English made them not aware of English. There are some words that are difficult for the foster students to pronounce because students are still accustomed to pronouncing each word with the pronunciation of the Indonesian alphabet.

Further research could find out more about the problems faced by students in orphanages in learning English, especially in mastering English vocabulary. How their motivations and opinions towards learning English could be explored more deeply with the appropriate approach. Also, further research could conduct studies on improving foster students’ speaking and writing skills as the findings in this study that most of the foster students have difficulty in speaking/pronunciation and writing. The researcher could implement the appropriate techniques or media also assisted by relevant exercises to minimise the difficulties that students may face.

Further implementations should prepare carefully about the length of time that will be given during treatments since many unexpected things could happen and their time is limited for other activities. Moreover, the researchers need to prepare materials and provide instructions bilingually.
Acknowledgements

The authors would like to express their deepest gratitude to all parties involved in this study so that the study could be carried out properly and the authors could conclude and publish this research report.

Funding

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

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