SOSIOHUMANIORA:
Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Sosial dan Humaniora

Jurnal Hompage: http://jurnal.ustjogja.ac.id/index.php/sosio

Recognizing The Children English Vocabulary Input Through Internet

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Info artikel

Article History

Naskah diterima:
2 Juli 2020

Naskah direvisi:
5 Juli 2020

Naskah disetujui:
5 Juli 2020

Kata kunci:

online game, instruction

Abstrak

It cannot be denied that children nowadays are very familiar with Internet. They mostly use internet connection for playing games rather than supporting their school assignments. Most online games the children play are imported from abroad so that language used is mostly English. As a result, children frequently pick up many English words from the game naturally. The present study is the continuous study of the vocabulary learning strategy mapping among 28 primary school students on grade 5 using the VOLSQUES survey. From the survey, the researcher found that 29% respondents chose internet as the source of their English vocabulary input. Started from this finding, the researcher continue the study by conducting descriptive qualitative research on those 29% respondents. The focus is on recognizing the Internet content commonly the respondents use and type of English vocabulary input they gain. All the respondents admit that they frequently play online games, especially the Mobile Legend game. The interesting result is that the participants are mostly unable to read and write the English words they recognize from the game correctly. This is understandable since the children listen from the game narrators. Besides, the typical English words they acquire are instructions.

INTRODUCTION

The government argues that Indonesian children must learn their national language first, i.e. Bahasa Indonesia, before they learn foreign language for building and increasing the children nationality awareness ("Mendikbud: Bahasa Inggris Tidak Wajib, Bukan Dihapus," 2013). As a result, in 2013, the government introduced the new national curriculum well-known as a *Kurikulum 2013.* In this curriculum, Bahasa is embedded into other subjects. In math exercises, for example, math case studies in story are dominantly presented in the text books. This certainly pushes students to acquire reading Bahasa first before they are able to solve the math exercises. Another example is that the students learn about social sciences through story written in Bahasa such as family life, social life or natural disasters. This government decision, of course, have invited various responses from both schools and parents.

Some schools and parents in Indonesia disagree with this policy, however, they must follow the government rules. English is, then, set as a local content subject which is scheduled in the very early morning classes, or as an extracurricular subject taught after school hours. Parents, who are really awared of the importance of English, spend more money for sending their children to English courses after school hours. Another is that they give more freedom to

children in accessing internet so that children may learn English naturally on internet. This phenomenon is also happened at Bogem 2 State Primary School.

English was introduced to students Grade 1 as a local content subject in 2015. Unfortunately, the program was stopped in 2018 due to the English teacher resignation. The students have never got any English input formally in the classroom since 2018.Started in January 2019, the students of Grade 5 have frequently communicated with the foreign tourists who have been invited by one of parents to the school. The goal is to motivate students in learning English. Besides having limites communication with the foreigners, the students mostly know English from various media such as book, advertisement, TV program, films, songs and internet. The latest is the popular one as known from one of findings on the previous research done on the participants.

The current research continues the previous research done on a descriptive quantitative research using a VOLSQUES questionnaire. The VOLSQUES is compiled 27 statements related to the vocabulary learning strategy for students of primary school. Due to some cultural backgrounds and the need of the present research, the researcher only chose 7 statements with 3 frequency scales, i.e. (1) *never*, (2) *sometimes*, and (3) *always*. The data of the vocabulary learning strategy used by primary school students was then analyzed and presented in percentage and mode. Widyastuti & Kusuma (2019) found that there were 50% respondents never gained input from English songs, 79 % respondents were sometimes got English words from films and TV they watched, and 29% respondents always picked up English from the Internet. This shows that the Internet does not significantly support the English input for the respondents of the research but the respondents frequently access internet.

Started from this finding, the researcher continued the research by doing an intensive interview with the 29% respondents who gave scale 3 (*always*) on the statement of getting English input from the Internet. The participants of the study were 8 students at Bogem 2 State Primary School. Thus, the current study aims to find out the Internet content type which the participants commonly browsed so that they could pick up English words.

THEORETICAL BASIS

Vocabulary is the first thing which generally language learners acquire. For gaining the vocabulary inventory, input from various ways and media becomes a must. Language input can be in the form of spoken communication, written communication, or even non verbal communication. Learners may pick up words directly from other people who speak in the target language. Learners also may get vocabulary through reading and listening. Even, learners may gain the meaning of words only through non verbal communication such as in symbols, sign, gestures and mimes. Though the non verbal communication do not produce spoken and written language, this still can conveys meaning and helps learners to understand the contexts. According to Matsumoto, Hwang, & Frank (2016), all communication which are not either spoken or written belong to the non verbal communication. This means that mime, gestures, symbols, and signs which are used by human to deliver messages or respond to the messages are included in non verbal communication. Non verbal communication hold four functions; 1) defining the communication backdrop, 2) providing comments during talking, 3) regulating during the communication such as smiling, laughing, nodding, and shaking head, and 4) bringing the communication message itself (Matsumoto et al., 2016). The non verbal communication is very common among children who are learning foreign or second language.

Some research find that language input from people surround the children especially family brings impact on the children vocabulary inventory (Branum-Martin, Mehta, Carlson,

Francis, & Goldenberg, 2014; Dixon, Zhao, Quiroz, & Shin, 2012). This means that the children' relatives play an important role in building and increasing the vocabulary storage of the children. For the bilingual children, they acquire a language which is used frequently at home than at school. Children spend more much time with family than teachers at school. When the children have evening or night routines such as playing, taking a bath, having dinner, watching TV programs, or having family picnics, they will often find new words they have not gained at school. On the previous research, the researcher observed on an Indonesian child who got English input from online game with the companion of their parents at home. In his age of five, the child was able to recall the English words introduced through online game when he was 2,5 years old (Widyastuti & Kumyai, 2019). This supports the belief that children are able to store and recall foreign language introduced to them in their early ages.

However, the school also contributes the language input which cannot be picked at home such as academic instructions in the classroom, structured learning procedure, or school day routines. Previously, the researcher has done studies on a child language acquisition. Based on the Processability Theory on English acquisition, an Indonesian child who got English exposures formally at school and from the English native country for a year showed a good communication but she was still on the category stage which refers to the lexical morphology (Zhang & Widyastuti, 2010). In this case, the participant frequently produces verb-ing structure such as Mommy cooking, and Daddy working. Structurally, the sentences compiled were wrong but communicatively, the participant succeeded in delivering the messages. Thus, though the child had got mass input from school and society, it did not guarantee the child's English acquisition. In other words, children have greater chances to get language input informally at home rather than at school.

Besides the children's surround, media also take a part on the children language input. Children may pick the language from various media such as television, songs, games, food wrapping, or even street signs. This is closely related to the nature of children who have high curiosity and love playing something. Through such kind of media, children have chances to learn how to write, pronounce or even guess the meaning (Freeman, Blumenfeld, & Marian, 2016). The media can support the children English input from both home and school.

RESEARCH METHOD

The present research belongs to the descriptive qualitative research in which the researcher describe the specific phenomenon without planned experiments leading to the flexible structure (Creswell, 2014). The research was done after the researcher got the vocabulary learning strategy mapping using the VOLSQUES questionnaire in which only 29% respondents always got vocabulary input from internet. For gaining the data, interviews were chosen to get mass information from the respondents.

The interviewed data was, then, analyzed in three steps; data reduction, data display, and conclusion (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 1994). On the data reduction step, the data taken were summarized and simplified into categories. Before doing so, the researcher firstly transcribed the interview data from the 8 participants of the present study. On the second step of the data analysis, the researcher presented the compressed data into table. The last step, i.e. conclusion, is for noting the most important final notes of the whole research process done. On this last step, the researcher also did a data verification by triangulating data taken from the interview and from the VOLSQUES data of the 8 participants of the study.

DISCUSSION

From the interviews with the respondents, the researcher gained data that the respondents got English input mostly from games. Here is the result:

Table 1
English Vocabulary Input from Internet

Participants	Soundtrack Song	Vocabulary Gained	
		Words	**Total**
AK	On My Way	crazy, booyah, noodle,	3
AR	On My Way	ego, block, chicken, book, truck, pen, welcome	7
BG	Faded	game, attack	2
FA	Faded	game, welcome, hungry, shop	4
KR	On My Way	and, crazy, attack, play, booyah, mask, gun,welcome	8
NU	On My Way	dog, claim, welcome, booyah	4
RO	On My Way	game, noob, gather, attack	4
SA	On My Way	welcome, play, gun, noob, claim, pause, attack, gather, retreat, mask	10

All respondents were able to sing some English soundtrack songs from the online games they played such as *On My Way, Lily, Faded, Boy with Love, Love Myself, Baby Shark,* however, only *On My Way* and *Faded* which they mostly chose to sing. Though the respondents were able to follow the lyrics and rhythm, they did not know the meaning. They were able to memorize the whole song lyrics as they listened the song frequently. Their first motivation to sing the song was not because they loved the song. Song in this case became an intermezzo in playing online games. The song also helped the children to gain their focus again in playing games. Sevik (2011) also found that songs were very essential for keeping the children's attention on something they were learning. This infers that the participants of the current study will gain more English vocabulary if they are encouraged to learn the meaning of the song. Unfortunately, this requires the adults' companion whether from family or school.

From the Table 1, it can be seen that the participants were able to mention between 2 to 10 English words they picked when they played *Mobile Legend* game. The choosing of the *Mobile Legend* game was because all the participants played this game together. In understanding the English words and expressions on the online games, the respondents mostly recognized the meaning by capturing images, character gestures and signs from the games they played. The word *shop*, for example, the respondents recognized it by looking at the icon of a shop building. Only two respondents, KR and SA who frequently asked adults to explain the meaning. Both respondents are familiar in listening English expressions uttered by their parents whose jobs as tour guides and English teacher. Besides, both have experienced learning English in their English preschool teachers. They gain input both English and Bahasa at home, however, due to the limited practice on English, they are still unable communicate in English actively. In other words, though they are bilingual children, they only acquire one language they mostly practice (Bridges & Hoff, 2014). Thus, it can be concluded that children who get more exposures from their parents have more knowledge in understanding the English vocabulary meaning as well as inventory.

Besides, KR and SA, AR experienced in learning English in his previous school. The different was that KR and SA had 3 years learning English in the preschool and kindergarten, while AR only spent 2 years in the preschool. Comparing to other participants, these three

participants recognized English words more. From the Table 1, it can be seen that they were on the first to third rank of the total number of English words gained while playing the *Mobile Legend* game. The English words which KR and SA produced were mostly instructions on the game, while AR included other words he saw on the game such as *truck, chicken, pen* and *book.* AR in this case was able to recall his memory on English words he learnt in the preschool.

The three participants, i.e. AR, KR, and SA were also able to pronounce and write English words correctly. The word *welcome* [wɛlkəm], for example, the other participants pronounce it wrongly such as [wɛlcom], and [wɛlkəme]. The interesting one is that most respondents failed in writing the English words they uttered. Only one respondent, SA, who was successful in writing all English words correctly. This is understandable as they recognized those words by listening to the game narrators. In other words, they only immitated what they listened while playing the games. For example, *welcome* was written variously such as *welcom, welkam, welcam,* and *welkame.*

CLOSING

One more evidence again that Internet brings effects on children. Popular online game which often brings bad impacts on the children, however, promotes the English vocabulary input. Most children memorize the game soundtrack songs while they are playing the game. They also imitate the English words pronounced by the game narrator. Unfortunately, most children failed in reading and writing the English words they listen to the narrator.

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