



Improving Students' Vocabulary Mastery through *Climbing Up A Ladder Game*

A Classroom Action Research of Eighth-Year Students in SMPN 5 Cilegon

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Abstract : The researcher described that climbing up a ladder game could be effective to increase vocabulary. The participant was in the eighth class in SMPN 5 Cilegon. The researcher applied the CAR method which consisted of two cycles and two meetings per cycle. Pre-test and post-test were used to collect quantitative data, coupled with observation sheets and documentation to collect qualitative data. Climbing up a ladder game could increase students' motivation, improve their vocabulary mastery, and establish the class to be more active. The researcher used a pretest before applying the game and a posttest after that to measure their ability. The result of the pretest showed that the average score was 68,00. Then the result of posttest 1 (cycle 1) was 77,69 and the result of post-test 2 (cycle 2) was 83,58. The researcher found improvement in vocabulary on the other hand students passed scores in school after being given the climbing up a ladder game. It can be concluded that students' vocabulary mastery could be improved by climbing up a ladder game.

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1. Introduction

English is the most commonly used language among foreign language speakers. People in the world with different languages come together with English to communicate. English is a language that is the connector to speaking with other countries. Many people want to improve their English skills.

Mastering vocabulary is not convenient. However, other parts of the language are considered sounds and structures. In English, vocabulary is one of the significant components and it is supported by (Hatch, Evelyn, Brown, & Cheryl, 1995, p. 1). They mentioned vocabulary is one of the important parts of the communication process. It showed mastery of vocabulary could make people convey their thoughts and grasp other fundamental abilities well.

Referring to the preliminary observation in the eighth grade of SMPN 5 Cilegon, as evidence of the obstacles to learning English that lack of vocabulary. In this case, the students must study hard in vocabulary, to make them easier to accept the teacher's explanation. There were some reasons that students had difficulties mastering vocabulary; students got less motivation in learning English, most students were reluctant to read some books so they have a little glossary, and then students were passive in class. Significantly the students got under the minimum score. It can be viewed from two indicators; vocabulary mastery and students' motivation during the teaching and learning process.

Importantly the teacher should be changed their teaching process. To support the students to become more active in class, teachers need games to implicate their teaching and learning process. Games are viewed as an activity in which students can have fun without anything they can learn from it. However, games can also be used as teaching aids. This statement is supported by (Byrne, 1995, p. 101) who stated that games are a form of play by rules which they should enjoy and have fun with. Not only to get knowledge but also to use the language in daily conversation. Moreover, (Hadfield, 1990, p. 190) specified games as, an activity with rules, a goal, and an element of fun.

From the explanation above, the researcher intends to find out reach new method to improve students' vocabulary mastery through climbing up a ladder game.

2. Methods

Classroom Action Research (CAR) was applied as the researcher methodology. It chose CAR as the methodology because it would be given the solution that comes from a case in this field. The facts, many students in Junior High School have lack vocabulary and need a solution to improve it. CAR is a medium for the teacher to find a better way in conducting a learning-teaching process. CAR is one of the ways to improve their practice in teaching-learning. Kemmis and MC. Taggart in (Arikunto, 2006, p. 92) was applied to develop a concept for action research. It was argued a spiral design consist: Planning, Action, Observation, and Evaluation. Considering the purpose of this study, this research had been designed based on the process, responses, and result described in the form of word and numbers. Therefore, the researcher and the teacher took the role of an observer in the research class for some cycles, thus the researcher followed and observed the teaching and learning process.

When collecting data, quantitative and qualitative research was conducted. The researcher picked the field notes technique for the observation which the researcher observed directly and take important notes during the English teaching and learning process in the eighth grade of SMPN 5 Cilegon 2015/2016. The researcher also interacted actively with the students as well as the teacher. Then again when in English class, the students observed their vocabulary and how many of the students could remember the vocabulary that has been taught by their teacher.

The comparison test was given before and after the treatment to measure the students' scores in strengthening their vocabulary. From the tests, students got the effect of the treatment. It can be seen that the researcher captures the process. Having said that data is collected to measure the researcher the problems using tests and observation.

Table 2.1

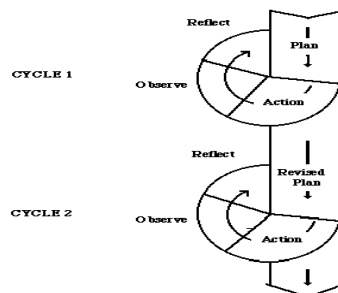
The Procedure of Data Collection

Research Question	Procedure	How to Analyze	Time Allocation
The process of research	Test Observation Documentation	Descriptive Analysis	While teaching learning
The responses from students	Pre-test	Mean: $X = \frac{\sum X}{N}$	Before teaching learning
Final research	Post-test		Ending Class

The researcher used Kemmis and Mc. Taggart CAR model (Arikunto, 2006, p. 92), since it was assumed as the simplest theory. They stated that research happens through a dynamic and completer process, which consists of four key steps The steps of this action research are as follows:

Picture 2.1

Kemmis & Mc. Taggart model



Then, the researcher applied CAR steps in each cycle as the following table:

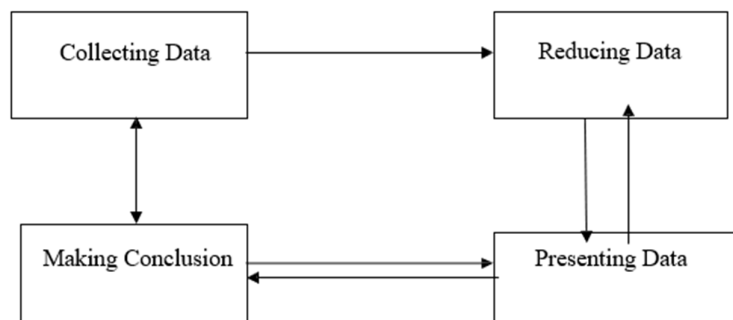
Table 2.2
Steps of CAR in each cycle

Cycle I	
1. Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Preparing lesson plan b) Preparing material about descriptive text c) Preparing pre-test d) Preparing climbing up ladder games e) Preparing research media f) Preparing posttest one
2. Acting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Teaching the material about descriptive text, the theme is places b) Giving examples c) Teaching vocabulary through climbing up ladder games d) Giving the instruments relates to the theme e) Giving the post-test one
3. Observing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Evaluating next meeting b) Evaluating the observation
4. Reflecting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Analyzing the students' result b) Evaluating cycle one
Cycle II	
1. Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Preparing the repair lesson plan b) Preparing material about descriptive text c) Preparing climbing up ladder games d) Preparing research media e) Preparing posttest two
2. Acting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Teaching the material about descriptive text, the theme is job b) Giving examples c) Teaching vocabulary through climbing up ladder games d) Giving the instruments relates to the theme e) Giving the post-test two

3. Observing	a) Evaluating next meeting b) Evaluating the observation
4. Reflecting	a) Analyzing the students' result b) Evaluation cycle two

Then analyze qualitative data including three elements; reduce data, present data, and conclude or verify. It was a process of attempting to reduce a large amount of data to a manageable category. From the reduction of data, data had been accounted into a percentage list. Then the data was presented and concluded to decide the next steps. The schema is as follows:

Table 3.2
The Steps of Data Analysis



The researcher chooses a formula to get data. The researcher did calculation the resulting test using the formula as follows (Sudjana, 2002, p. 67):

- a. To obtain the mean score of the test, the researcher focused on the average score by using the formula as follows:

$$X = \frac{\sum X}{N}$$

Where: X = mean score
 $\sum X$ = the sum of all score
 N = the total of number of subjects

(Sudjana, 2002, p. 67)

b. The researcher calculates the percentage of students' frequency by formulation below:

$$P = \frac{Fx 100\%}{N}$$

Where: P = percentage
F = frequency
N = total number of the students
(Sudjana, 2002, p. 67)

Score Interpretation:

Score 0% - 20%	= Very Low
Score 21% - 40%	= Low
Score 41% - 60%	= Average
Score 61% - 80%	= High Enough
Score 81% - 100%	= High

Most significantly if there was a higher score in the cycle so it means the hypothesis was accepted..

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Results

The research was started from 23rd March 2016 until 17th April 2016. The meetings were done twice a week on Wednesday and Thursday and conducted at VIII I SMPN 5 Cilegon which consisted of 39 students.

The researcher made the research in two cycles that consist of two applying the treatment per cycle. Based on observation before cycles, according to the researcher, the class was passive, it could be seen that there was less interaction and discussion.

3.1.1. Result of Cycle 1

Cycle 1 started on 30th March 2016 and 31st March 2016. It is described as follows:

A. Planning

The researcher gave a pretest at the first meeting of cycle 1. Then, the researcher made a lesson plan about vocabulary by media climbing up a ladder game as a technique of teaching and instruments for the researcher such as tests and observational field notes. The material was matched to the latest syllabus.

B. Acting

	1 st meeting (March 30 th 2016)	2 nd meeting (March 31 st 2016)
Pre Teaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The researcher came to class VIII-I where the teacher said that class was a passive class and observed how the class was going. Then, the researcher introduced herself and mentioned one by one of the students from the attendance list. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The researcher started the class alone and tried to control all situations. After that reviewed what they learn yesterday. Then researcher asked students to describe Eifel Tower as the researcher said in the last meeting. But the students were passive like they were confused about how to pronounce it and confused to choose the vocabulary itself.
While Teaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The researcher had a small conversation in full English but the students didn't respond well and told that they didn't like English. The research administrated the pre-test to measure the score of students' vocabulary mastery. After the students had finished the pre-test, the researcher explained descriptive text. Because of the limited time given by the school, the discussion of descriptive text was continued at the next meeting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The researcher explained deeper about the descriptive text. The researcher used PowerPoint to explain which included the meaning, function, and generic structure of the descriptive text. After all the point was shown, the researcher opened the question-answer session. The students were silent. After that, the researcher started explaining how the climbing up a ladder game be done and asked the students to form 4 groups. The researcher already prepared 2 wall pictures on the whiteboard; it was including a picture that has 8 ladders. The rules were very simple. Students had to make a word based on the last syllable They could finish the game quickly. Then the researcher asked the students about the meaning of words. They were still confused. They assumed that the words were not common. The researcher gave the meaning and then the researcher asked the students directly to make a simple

paragraph about that place. It followed up from this game. Students would easily make a short paragraph because they already knew the clue even still mixing in Indonesian.

Post Teaching

- After the first meeting, the researcher reflected students the result of this meeting and asked students to make a summary and self-reflection. The researcher asked some students to re-explain descriptive text.
 - At the end of cycle one, the researcher did a reflection on the teaching-learning process and asked students to make a summary and self-reflection. The students were more active than at the first meeting. They enjoyed the game. They said that it was new for them because their teacher never applied it.
 - In the last session, the researcher gave post-test 1 related to the material to measure the students' improvement.
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C. Observing

In the final analysis of 1st meeting, the researcher had difficulties in making a friendly situation, because it was a new meeting between the researcher and the students. There was a gap between students and the researcher because the researcher was their new teacher. It was affected by the teaching-learning process that was not running well. When the researcher tried to explain the descriptive text, there were no responses from the students. Most of the students paid attention but the students still did not understand well.

At that time, the observer noticed the uncontrolled situation in the classroom. The students were busy with their activities, such as making noise, chatting, and joking, and did not pay attention to the teaching and learning process. As a part of this meeting, the way the teacher explained was lecturing only. It made some students sleepy. Some of them looked uninterested in this lecturing activity. It might be needed something that could attract them as well.

In the final analysis of 2nd meeting, the learning process had been good enough. In this case, the researcher found students having a joyful situation. The researcher found them more enthusiastic than before because the students saw the real picture in the context. The students said that was never applied in class. It used games as a technique to deliver the material. At first, the students began to pay attention to the learning process; the students were passive like in the previous meeting because the material that the researcher used games so the students felt attracted. The classroom situation began more interesting and interactive.

D. Reflecting

The process of teaching descriptive text in this case about places in cycle 1 was good even though at the first meeting researcher found difficulties in making a friendly situation because some of them still chatted with each other. The weaknesses of cycle 1 were that the researcher could not control the class for the first meeting, but the situation changed at the second meeting when the games were given in the learning process to guess the meaning of the words.

3.1.2. Result of Cycle II

The research was implemented in two meetings on 13th April 2016 and 14th April 2016.

A. Planning

It can be seen in the result from cycle 1. After that researcher redesigned the lesson material.

B. Acting

	1 st meeting (April 13 th 2016)	2 nd meeting (April 14 th 2016)
Pre Teaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The researcher taught English and the classroom was under control. • Before starting the material, as usual, firstly the researcher mentioned the students based on the attendance list. • After a small talk with them, the researcher focused on the material. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The researcher had already known well names of the students. They were enthusiastic about learning process English. • The researcher tried to tell a story about her experience and the reasons why she liked English. It was like brainstorming.
While Teaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The researcher explained the previous material in the last meeting and also asked about the descriptive text. • The researcher asked five students to make a short paragraph to describe that word. • After that, the researcher explained about generic structure of the descriptive text itself. • Students were asked to make a group to be able to discuss 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The researcher asked the students to make the kind of jobs that they want in the future and asked them to collect them in front. • The researcher called 5 students randomly to read what they wrote. • After finish doing the task, the researcher focused on the material again, researcher told students to make a paragraph. • The next session was playing a game. The researcher re-explained the procedure of climbing up a ladder game.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After all, the researcher asked the students to make a group.
Post Teaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After the first meeting, the researcher reflected students the result of this meeting and asked students to make a summary and self-reflection • Some students are asked to re-explain descriptive text. • Before closing the meeting, the researcher asked students to write down what kind of job they wanted in the future and then described it in their sentences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the last meeting, the researcher reflected students the result of this meeting and asked students to make a summary and self-reflection. • The researcher asked students to always remember what they learn. • Before the closing session, the researcher gave post-test 2 to measure their vocabulary mastery itself in the last meeting.

C. Observing

The observer saw the researcher could make a friendly situation because the students were familiar with the materials. So, the teaching-learning process could run well and students started to focus on the teaching-learning process, too.

At that time, the observer saw a conducive and fun situation in the classroom. The situation was quiet when the researcher explained the material because the students did not pay attention in process of teaching. Sometimes, when the guessing activity began, the students were noisy to argue with each other but it was positive because they were not passive again. Students were clapping if they answered well; they complete each other to guess correctly. Some students looked so enthusiastic and the class became cheerful.

Actually, this activity was not only about guessing but also about comprehending the text itself which had been helped by climbing-up ladder games. So, the students could understand the content of the text very well.

D. Reflecting

In cycle 2, the process of teaching vocabulary to students by using climbing up a ladder ran very well. The strength of cycle 2 was the good response of students during the teaching and learning process. The students were more active and enthusiastic. Climbing up a ladder game could stimulate the students to think and make them active and competitive. It also could make the teaching and learning process fun. The students were able to enjoy the situation in the classroom. Meanwhile, for the weakness itself in cycle 2, the researcher had difficulties about manage of time. The researcher could not manage the time as in the lesson plan because students were asking for extra time when teaching using games.

3.2. Discussion

3.2.1. Evaluation

It should be noted that the researcher found difficulties in students because they had less motivation to learn English, most students unlike reading books so they have a little glossary, and lastly students were passive in class. The students thought that vocabulary was not an important thing. They assumed learning English was wasting time. (Fauziati, 2005, p. 155) stated that language learners need to know the vocabulary as the basic and critical importance of language. Furthermore, to communicate or express ideas effectively in both oral and written, someone needs vocabulary. As the expert's explanation above, the students had to learn vocabulary itself to communicate with other countries. Supported by (Wallace, 2002), vocabulary is the most important thing in communication which is the main component of language proficiency and provides much of the basis for how well learners speak, listen, write, and read.

As the problem stated above, the researcher used a new technique. Short warm-up activities such as games are often used when there is sometimes left at the end of a lesson. According to (Amato P., 1996, p. 192), despite the games are often associated with a fun activity, we should not lose sight of their pedagogical values, especially in second language teaching.

In the first meeting of cycle 1, the researcher gave the material using the conventional method. As the result, there was so limited interaction between the teacher and students. The situation was a little bit uncontrolled. Some students were busy with each other. The students did not pay attention very well to the learning process. After knowing the result of the pre-test, the researcher then decided to guess the meaning of the difficult words from climbing up a ladder game, so that it could help them in comprehending the text.

In the second meeting, the researcher chose the theme of the climbing up a ladder game about wonderful places. In the cycle, the process was better than the first meeting. At that time, the researcher could control the class and manage the students to have well participated. The students at that time paid attention to the teacher. The activities were running as planned that day. The situation could run well because students enjoyed the learning process. At the end of cycle 1, the students had participated well and the result of post-test 1 showed improvement.

In cycle 2, the researcher changed the theme of the text. At that time, the theme was my family's jobs. In the teaching process, the students paid attention very well because the theme was enough interesting. Most of the students were enthusiastic and could participate well in the learning process. The situation was under control. The students were active and conducive because climbing up a ladder game was attractive. Most of the students enjoyed it very much and took part in the learning process very well. Then, in the second meeting of cycle 2, before the researcher administered the post-test 2 at the end session of cycle 2, the researcher reviewed all materials that had been taught before explaining the generic structure.

In summary, there were some problems in improving the average score of vocabulary the first time, the problems students felt difficulty in memorizing the vocabulary, sometimes students forgot the vocabulary, and students felt bored when learning English vocabulary. After students used the climbing up a ladder game as a technique in learning vocabulary students could answer the question easily.

Finally, the process of teaching vocabulary by using climbing up a ladder game for students in eighth grade in SMPN 5 Cilegon was very fun for students, and students could enjoy learning vocabulary. The students showed participated actively during the teaching-learning process. The context of the given climbing up a ladder game could attract the student's attention and help the students to comprehend the text very well.

3.2.2. Using media

As a result of the student's score, the researcher calculated the average score form from cycle 1 to cycle 2. The researcher appealed the students' improvement in the following table:

Table 3.2.2.1

Students' Improvement

Test	Score	Percentage	Gain
Pre Test	68,00	51,28 %	-
Post Test 1	77,69	64,10 %	9,69 %
Post Test 2	83,58	92,30 %	5,89 %

The table above pointed out that students' average scores percentage increased by 15,58 % from the pre-test to post-test 2. It started from 68,00% in the pre-test, 77,69% in post-test 1, and 83,58% in post-test 2. In the pre-test, students' scores were in high enough categories because they reached 68,00%. In post-test 1, students' score got increased because they reached 77,69% and it more got increase the score when the students' scores in post-test 2, reached 83,58%.

Finally, the climbing up a ladder game could be implemented as a teaching vocabulary technique for the eighth-grade students of SMPN 5 Cilegon, and had been proven that there was an impact on their vocabulary mastery. As the effect of the climbing up a ladder game of improvement, it was shown that games are effective to increase the student's motivation, lowering the students' stress, and helping them to participate actively. It also allows the teacher to be more creative and original when presenting topics. Games also challenged the students to use their critical thinking in applying the information.

4. Conclusion

From the results and discussion above, this research has found out the process of climbing up a ladder game in improving the students' vocabulary mastery and the result of climbing up a ladder game to improve students' vocabulary mastery.

The researcher applied classroom action research (CAR) as a methodology, which consists of two cycles. There were two meetings per cycle. For each cycle, the researcher applied planning, action, observation, and reflection. The participant of this research was VIII-I at SMPN 5 Cilegon. Based on the syllabus at that school, the researcher applied descriptive text; for the first cycle, the theme focused on wonderful places, meanwhile for the second cycle the theme focused on kind of jobs.

According to the result of the research, teaching vocabulary by using the climbing up a ladder game help the students to enjoy the teaching learning process and could improve the score of the students in the eighth grade of SMPN 5 Cilegon. The technique had been implemented appropriately. Moreover, cycle 1 and cycle 2 had been implemented as proven by the test. The score of the post-test in cycle 1 was 77,69 and the score of the post-test in cycle 2 was 83,58. The students' scores got the improvement from the standard minimum score of 75.

In conclusion, the result of this research was not only about the score improvement of the test but also the process of teaching-learning students vocabulary by using the climbing up a ladder game that gives a fun situation in the teaching-learning process. Most of the students were enthusiastic and liked learning vocabulary using the climbing-up-a-ladder game. It could be concluded that climbing up a ladder game was an effective strategy to improve the students' vocabulary mastery.

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