The Effect of Contextual Learning Strategy on the Basis of Language Exposure Ecology and Learning Motivation on the Matery of English Vocabulary

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Abstract: Students' English achievement in schools in general is still low. There are many factors affecting this. One of the factors lays on the strategies that English teachers use in class. Most teachers still apply conventional strategies, including direct learning strategy which is teacher-centered and product-oriented. English language exposure which is very important in foreign language learning is limited. Then, it is necessary to find a strategy which is potential to provide more English language exposure and motivation for students. This study aimed to examine: (1) the difference in the mastery of English vocabulary between students taught with contextual learning strategy on the basis of language exposure ecology and those taught with direct learning strategy; (2) the difference in the mastery of vocabulary between students having high motivation and those having low motivation; (3) interaction effect of the learning strategies and motivation to students' mastery of English vocabulary. This study used a quasi-experimental research design. In particular, it employed factorial 2x2 version non-equivalent control group. The subjects were the seventh grade students of SMP Negeri 11 Kupang, Indonesia. Of eight classes, two classes were randomly chosen, one as experimental group and the other as control group. Contextual learning strategy on the basis of language exposure ecology was applied in experimental class whereas direct learning strategy was used in control class. Data taken from both classes were then descriptively and statistically analyzed (ANOVA) using SPSS version 16.0 for windows. Results showed that (1) there was a significant difference in the mastery of English vocabulary between students in experimental group and control group. Contextual learning strategy on the basis of language exposure ecology was more effective; (2) there was a significant difference in the mastery of vocabulary between students in high motivation group and those low motivation group. High motivation students were more successful; (3) there was no interaction effect of learning strategies and motivation to students' mastery of English vocabulary. Based on these results, teachers of English in general and those teaching at SMP level in particular are recommended to use learning strategies that provide more language exposure and motivation for students.

Keywords: contextual learning strategies, language exposure ecology, motivation to learn, vocabulary

The quality of education in Indonesia is considered low. There are many factors affecting this. One of the main causes lies in the way teachers organize the learning process. Most teachers only apply conventional learning strategies, including direct learning strategies. In general English learning strategies in schools tend to have the following characteristics: (1) the learning tends to be product-oriented so that it becomes less attractive; (2) the interaction in class is teacher-centered, which makes the students not active, not creative, and even tend to be lazy to learn; (3) the teachers in the learning process do not give enough time for students to express and demonstrate their ability and achievement; (4) lack of variety in learning strategies which

results in lack of motivation for students to learn; (5) English language exposure to students is limited.

More specifically, Kolo (2013) says there are two classic problems often found, namely (1) the lack of English language exposure after school time, and (2) the distortion on the interaction among related components, e.g., the inadequate competence and dedication of English teachers. Furthermore, he says, students are practically no longer in touch or make contact with English language both directly and indirectly after English lesson. English teachers use English only when teaching or when preparing lessons. Thus, language acquisition only occurs during learning process in class. In fact, various studies show that learning English in classes which only takes a few hours a week can only enable students to master between 30% -50% of the target set out in the learning curriculum (Barrows and Tamblyn, 1980). Therefore, it is necessary to find learning strategies which provide more English language exposure to the students. One of the strategies is contextual learning strategy on the basis of language exposure ecology.

According to Blanchard, Bern and Erickson in Komalasari (2013: 6), contextual learning is a learning strategy that links the learning material learned to the real life context that the students deal with in family, society, surroundings, and work field on daily basis. In that way they are able to link their knowledge to the events in the real life. There are seven main components of contextual learning namely: constructivism, questioning, inquiry, learning community, modeling, reflection, and authentic assessment.

Constructivism is the basic philosophy of contextual learning (Glasersfeld, 1989, Bandura, 1971) which states that knowledge cannot be transferred from the teacher to the students like filling empty bottles. It is because the students' brains are not "empty" but already filled up with their prior knowledge. Students do not just "accept" knowledge, but "construct" their own knowledge through the process of intra-individual (assimilation and accommodation) and the inter-individual (social interaction). Contextual learning is not actually an entirely new approach. The basis of contextual learning has been developed by John Dewey since 1916.

Contextual learning strategy on the basis of language exposure ecology is a learning process that takes place in exposed arenas which is carried out structurally and sustainably in one cycle activity by the students. An active, extended, and continuous contact with English is believed to help students improve their language skills both in receptive skills (listening and reading) and productive skills (speaking and writing). This learning strategy has three components namely teachers, exposure field/arena, and learning process, and that all three are in one ecology. The power of language exposure in these three components determines the level of English language acquisition. Students learn in free, contextual and constructive atmosphere so that they are more creative, innovative and daring to express and demonstrate the ability acquired.

On the contrary, in direct learning, the teacher transfers information or skills directly to students to achieve the goals previously stated. Students' active participation and their learning environment receive less attention. Language exposure is very limited. There is no display board in classrooms where students can display their work, there is no 'English Corner' where students can read stories/ comics, play games, or search for difficult words in the dictionary.

Learning motivation is also one of the factors that affect students' learning outcomes. Heckausen (in Djaali, 2000) suggests that learning motivation is an impulse from the students that they try or struggle to improve their ability in every way they can. While Atkinson (in Djaali, 2000) says that a person who has high expectations of learning motivation for success always overcomes the fear of failure. He is always optimistic that in every moment he is always motivated to succeed. Learning motivation is the inner psychic force to trigger learning activities of the students.

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This research was conducted in SMP Negeri 11 Kupang, with the aims to examine: 1) the difference in the mastery of English vocabulary between students taught with contextual learning strategy on the basis of language exposure ecology and those taught with direct learning strategy; 2) the difference in the mastery of English vocabulary between students having high motivation to learn and those having low learning motivation; 3) the interaction effect of between learning strategies (language exposure ecology and direct learning) and learning motivation to students' mastery of English vocabulary.

RESEARCH METHOD

The study used a Quasi-experimental research design in the form of factorial 2 x 2 version non-equivalent control group (Tukman, 1999). The procedure started with giving pre-test, treatment, posttest after 8 time class meetings. The variables of this study consist of three types, namely independent variable, moderatig variable and dependent variable. Learning strategies as independent variables has two dimensions, contextual learning strategy on the basis of language exposure ecology and direct learning strategy. This variable was manipulated and predicted to affect the dependent variable. Moderating variable in this study is the learning motivation to learn (high and low). Students' learning achievement (vocabulary mastery) becomes the dependent variable. The seventh grade students of SMP Negeri 11 Kupang were the subjects of the research. Of the eight classes, two classes were randomly chosen, class A as experimental group, while class F as control group.

Instruments used in the study were classified into 2 (two) types, namely: (1) instruments to measure English learning achievement, namely the mastery of vocabulary (pretest and posttest) and (2) instrument (questionnaire) to measure the level of learning motivation. Before using them, all instruments were firstly validated, both in the content and the test items. The collected data were then analyzed descriptively and statistically (ANOVA, using SPSS 16.0 windows version.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

Table 1: Summary of ANOVA testing result

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects					
Dependent Variable: Achievement test (English vocabulary mastery)					
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	5995.151[a]	3	1998.384	65.398	.000
Intercept	199467.581	1	199467.581	6.528E3	.000
Strategy	393.749	1	393.749	12.886	.001
Motivation	5614.495	1	5614.495	183.738	.000
Strategy * Motivation	68.768	1	68.768	2.250	.141
Error	1313.956	43	30.557		
Total	235096.000	47			
Corrected Total	7309.106	46			
a. R Squared = .820 (Adjusted R Squared = .808)					

The result showed: 1) there was a significant difference in the mastery of English vocabulary between students taught with contextual learning strategy on the basis of language exposure ecology and those taught with direct learning strategy. It can be seen from the calculated F ratio of 12.886 and the significance probability value of 0.001. The significance value was lower than 0.05 (p <0.05), so that Ho was rejected and H1 was accepted. 2) There was a significant difference in the mastery of English vocabulary between students having high motivation and those with low motivation. This is indicated by F ratio of 183.738 and significance probability value of 0.000. The significance value was lower than 0.05 (p <0.05) so that Ho was rejected and H1 was accepted. 3) The ratio of F for the interaction between these two variables was 2.250 with a probability value of 0.141. The significance level was greater than 0.05, and it can therefore be concluded that there was no interaction between learning strategies (contextual learning strategy on the basis of language exposure ecology and direct learning) and the learning motivation (high-low) to students' mastery of English vocabulary

Discussion

First, the descriptive and statistical analysis of the collected data proves that there ia a differences in the mastery of English vocabulary between students taught with contextual learning strategy on the basis of language exposure ecology and those taught with direct learning strategy. Students learning achievement in the contextual learning strategy on the basis of language exposure ecology classroom (mean = 72, 17) is better than those taught in direct learning classroom (mean = 67, 17). This means, the contextual learning strategy on the basis of language exposure ecology has more influence on English vocabulary mastery than the direct learning strategy. In other words, the contextual learning strategy on the basis of language exposure ecology is more effective in learning English than direct learning strategy.

Increasing mastery of the English vocabulary through the contextual learning strategy on the basis of language exposure as shown in this study is theoretically possible because this learning strategy always holds the principles and contextual characteristics that emphasize students' involvement in the learning process. Through the contextual principle, the teachers always associate the learning materials with real life context that the students deal with on daily basis, within the family, school, community, or with the natural surroundings. Thus, the student should be able to link their knowledge to what happens in their daily activities. This is consistent with what Sanjaya (2007: 253) said, Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) is a learning strategy that emphasizes students' full involvement that make them able to find the material studied and relate them to real life situations.

As described in the previous section, contextual learning strategy on the basis of language exposure consists of several components; (1) teacher, including pedagogical and professional ability; (2) exposure field, which includes class meeting, ornaments, enrichment, and assessments; (3) process, which includes introducing new material, making summaries, giving independent tasks, and giving assessments. These components work together in a harmonious ecology (ecological language exposure) which can provide a positive influence on the mastery of English vocabulary. The results of this study prove that the improvement and expansion of language exposure have a significant effect on the mastery of English vocabulary.

The process of contextual learning strategy on the basis of language exposure ecology emphasizes the diversity and creativity. Students learn differently, competing to display their work in the display board. The situation is different with what happens in most schools today, where students sit orderly and politely hear what the teacher says. Degeng (2014) says that if the learning process still emphasizes on maintaining uniformity, then there will never be a place to develop creativity and learning enthusiasm.

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Previous theoretical and empirical data strengthen these results, particularly regarding the role of language exposure in language learning. Briere (1978) found that "the amount of exposure to the target language in the formal and informal situations influence second language acquisition". In a very similar view, Carrol (1972) says "the more the exposure to the target language, the greater the success of students in proficiency test". Krashen (1985) in his research found that meaningful exposure to the language being studied is very important. These views confirm that the exposure to the language being learned, formally and informally, greatly affect the outcome of one's language learning. The more numerous and broader the exposure to English, the greater the success in studying the language will be.

On the other hand, direct learning has less influence on the mastery of English vocabulary. This is because the learning strategy is more teacher-centered. The English language exposure is very limited. Although the same teacher teaches both groups, the teacher has different learning scenarios. In the class taught with direct learning strategy, the teacher tends to use more Indonesian as the language of instruction. The classroom is not equipped with display boards and English Corner. Thus, the amount of English language learned is limited.

Second, both descriptive and statistical analysis proves that there is a differences in the mastery of English vocabulary between students who have high learning motivation with those having low learning motivation. Learning outcome of students who have high motivation (mean = 78, 20) to learn is better than that of students who have low learning motivation (55, 77).

The results of this study strengthen the results of previous studies conducted by Sheeraz (2016), and Tella (2007). Sheeraz' research results (2016) prove that the category of motivation to learn has an impact or influence on a student's academic ability, where the academic ability has increased according to the category of motivation to learn. Tella (2007) proves that students who have high motivation to learn obtain better learning outcomes than students who have low learning motivation.

Kitjaroonchai (2013) in his study at junior secondary schools in Saraburi province, Thailand, found that there was a positive correlation between English language learning outcomes with the level of motivation of the students. Students with high motivation to learn are more successful than students who have low motivation. Furthermore, research conducted by Gardner and Lambert (in Hamayan, 1977: 227) confirms that there is a significant relationship between learning outcomes and levels of student motivation in second/foreign language learning programs. Students who get high grades also have high motivation to learn a second language.

The results of this study strengthen the results of previous studies as described above, in the sense that there is a correlation between the level of learning motivation and success of a student. The higher the learning motivation of a student, the higher the results obtained.

Based on theoretical and empirical data stated above, regardless of differences in the fields of science, it can be concluded that motivation plays an important role in learning. In learning English as a foreign language, the role of motivation becomes even more crucial. When facing students who are actually less interested in learning English as a foreign language, which is considered very difficult to learn, teachers must find ways to establish, improve, and maintain students' motivation. Again, in a constructivist view, the teacher's task is not to teach, but to facilitate and to motivate.

Third, the results of the data analysis proved that there is no interaction between learning strategies (contextual learning strategy on the basis of language exposure and direct learning strategy) and learning motivation on English vocabulary mastery of the seventh grade students of SMP Negeri 11 Kupang. This indicates that the two variables (learning strategy and learning motivation) give the same strong influence separately. Hair et al (1995) says that the main influence of learning strategy and learning motivation to the learning outcomes have an impact

on the weak influence of the interaction between the two variables on the learning outcomes. This was reaffirmed by DeCaro et al (2013) who found that the main effect would weaken the influence of the strong interaction. Furthermore, even in different topics and fields, Ifamuyiwa et al (2012) who conducted research on the effect of problem-based strategies on high school students' achievement in math subject found that there was no interaction effect between learning strategies and gender on learning outcomes.

The results of this study were also supported by other previous studies. Billing (2013) proved that there was no interaction between learning strategy and learning motivation. Furthermore, research conducted by Tan (2011) states that learning strategies do not have a strong interaction with the learning motivation towards the acquisition of learning outcomes. While the research results of Sujarwo (2013) indicates that there is no interaction between learning strategies and learning motivation on learning outcomes. Prayekti (2015) revealed that there is no interaction between the learning model of problem-based learning versus direct learning and achievement motivation on learning outcomes.

However, there are also studies that show different results. Harahap (2009) in his research indicates that there was an interaction between web-based learning with learning activity in affecting learning outcomes in Chemistry subject. Hadi (2015) in his research concluded that there was an interaction between the learning strategies and motivation for learning outcomes of concept understanding.

CONCLUSION

Contextual learning strategy on the basis of language exposure proves to give a significant effect on the mastery of English vocabulary. Similarly, students' motivation also affects mastery of English vocabulary. However, when these two variables interact, it is proved that there is no effect on the results of learning English vocabulary. It is suggested that English teachers apply contextual learning strategy on the basis of language exposure that has been proved to provide more exposure of English which ultimately increase the results of learning English. In addition, English teachers need to improve their roles as motivators for students, particularly in learning English as a foreign language; a language which is considered difficult by most students.

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