

Understanding English Vocabulary on “Warning or Caution Signs” for Young Learners through *PORTEK* (Portable *Engklek*)

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Abstract: Understanding English vocabulary is the “soul” of the English learning itself. By getting this, the learners are not only able to learn and get information more, but also able to get the core concept the learning process which will help them and others in learning everything, including English. When someone sees or reads a sign in English around him and he understands well with the meaning of the sign, for example, he sees a sign of “cross P” which means “don’t park here”, he will know what he will do then by not parking on that area. There is no English lesson in Elementary level based on Curriculum 2013, because English is given on 7th grade. A material is chosen randomly; it is Chapter VIII “Attention Please!”. It is an Experimental Research study. The Experimental group is students (*santri*) of “TPQ Al Barokah”, while the Control Group is students of “TPQ Baitussalam”. Those TPQs are placed in Semarang. Those informal schools are chosen because *English* is being an extra material given among the main material they get in learning Al Qur’an. Previously, the writer conducted the similar research activity 2 years ago. Now, she wants to measure the effectiveness of *PORTEK* to teach vocabulary. The result of the research taken from the mean of Experimental Group which taught using *PORTEK* is increased 5.49% from 11.2% on 2012 to be 16.67% now. The writer concludes that *PORTEK* is still effective to use to increase students’ understanding of English vocabulary.

Key Words: *PORTEK*, English vocabulary, warning or caution signs

Introduction

2013 means something to educational field in Indonesia. That time is the time to apply “new concept” of education curriculum. The curriculum had been re-concept well. The government promises that this curriculum can make Indonesia better and brighter.

All education levels from elementary to high school level had been prepared to apply the curriculum since the government announced it. The preparations are included physical and unphysical sides. Preparing teacher and student book for making the teaching process running easier is the physical preparation; while giving workshop, training, or seminar is a part of unphysical preparation to the teachers and also the headmasters. They are trained to create lesson plan, steps of teaching process, teaching media, rubric of assessment, etc based on Curriculum 2013. The aims of those training materials are to make the teachers getting easier in teaching.

Those preparations seem so good. But when we see the content of the curriculum and the subject materials or lessons which are going to give to the students, we cannot find any English lesson on elementary school level of education. English is going to give to the 7th grade of students or at the 1st grade of Junior High School level. Why? Is it too difficult to the teachers to teach it to elementary school students? Or is it not really necessary lesson given to them?

As an essential connector, language should get priority. It is about English too. Most of foreigners use English as their connector to communicate with others. The younger they get it, the better they get then. Because of this reality, the writer assumes that English should give to young English learner as young as possible. The materials are given in simple, such as introducing words, vocabularies, simple sentences, simple utterances, etc. Listening and then followed by drilling the word or vocabulary is suggested. English must not give in formal teaching process in formal school. It can be given in informal teaching process too, for example in Al Qur'an centre courses (*Taman Pendidikan Al Qur'an-TPQ*), or another informal teaching process. It is being a "snack" among the students' (*santri*) daily activities in learning to read and write Al Qur'an. The *ustadz* or *ustadzah* teaches them daily vocabularies which are familiar to them.

Here the writer comes with a modifying media which can be an alternative teaching media to be used. Basically it can be used to teach everything. But because the writer is an English teacher, so she focuses the media to teach English. The media can be used as an indoor or outdoor teaching activity, depend on need. There is no anymore limit to study English. It is a semi-manual media, because the media are made manually but it is using computer and printer as the supporting tools.

It is PORTEK, stands from Portable Engklek. The media is developed by the writer herself. The idea comes from a traditional game named "engklek" (*Sundamanda* in Indonesian, hop-scotch in English, and *zondaag mandaag* in Dutch) which is usually play on ground by drawing line here and there to be a shape. It is then modify well being the portable media. PORTEK is called portable because the board can be brought wherever, can be played whenever, and it is durable too. It consists of a portable and foldable board, flash card pictures, and pebbles.

Previously, the writer has conducted the same research on 2012 to measure the effectiveness of *PORTEK* to teach English vocabulary to elementary students using School-based Curriculum (SBC or *KTSP*). The result was good. The students' marks increased 11.18 %. Now, the writer wants to measure the effectiveness of the media to teach English using Curriculum 2013.

Teaching English Based on Curriculum 2013

Everyone needs to make everything better. It happens on education field too. From time to time, centre government on education of Indonesia reforms the curriculum. The latest education curriculum use in Indonesia is Curriculum 2013. Some people call it National Curriculum (*Kurnas*, Bahasa Indonesia) 2013. The concept of this curriculum is claimed better than previous curriculums. There are 3 points of teaching process and assessment: Attitude, Skill, and Knowledge. For elementary school level, the focus of the teaching process in "attitude" is Accepting and Responding. Observing and Questioning are the goal of Skill. In Knowledge, the goals of the learning process are on Knowing (Remembering) and Understanding. Language is on Skill field, but it needs knowledge too. (Kemdikbud, 2014: 9).

The education government has prepared some supporting materials related to Curriculum 2013. Student Book and Teacher Book has arranged properly. But the physical books are still in waiting-list. Schools should queue to get their right to apply the book, to

give the book to the students. They should start the teaching process using the latest curriculum not from the beginning level (1st grade), but 4th grade. The next problem occurs when there is no English material for elementary students. The teacher can find it on the book for the 7th grade.

When we see the material on that book “When English Rings the Bell”, the content of materials are similar with the material given to elementary school students using KTSP (School-based Curriculum). The themes are simple, but close to students’ daily life. The themes of the student book are: Chapter I (How are You?), Chapter II (It’s My Birthday), Chapter III (I Love People around Me), Chapter IV (I Love Things around Me), Chapter V (I Love My Town), Chapter VI (She’s so Nice), Chapter VII (What do They Look Like?), and Chapter VIII (Attention Please!)

Teaching English Vocabulary to Young Learners

Teaching vocabulary means getting deeper understanding of its meaning. Landry (2003) states that vocabulary has to be attained and built upon. A learner needs to understand a new language and to communicate thoughts and ideas to others.

Teaching vocabulary is the entrance gate before teaching another’s skill of language. By conquering vocabularies as much as possible, the learners are easier to practice the skills. In another words, although they have powerful weapon but if there is no single ammunition, it does not work.

Evasanti (2009, in Yulianti 2012: 22) states in her research paper that it is important to introduce vocabulary to the students. Vocabulary is necessary in every stage of language learning. The learners need to master vocabulary first before learning a certain language, such as English.

By mastering vocabulary, everyone who learns English will be easier to study all skills in English. They will easy to catch the word in listening practice, they can produce dialogue much in speaking, they can easy to understand the story they read in reading activity, and also they can produce written work in writing activity.

The essential position of vocabulary makes everyone who cares with education in young age should think the best way to introduce, make understand, and ask to apply the vocabulary. Young does not mean early in age, but it can be meant by young in getting English lesson. It does not mean too that English should give in 1st grade. It is still difficult to them, because English is the third language they get. They in their young age (in real) must not learn foreign language before they understand well with their mother and national language. Chodidjah (2011: 15) states that in elementary students in several places in Indonesia still struggle with Bahasa Indonesia. It is because Bahasa Indonesia is the second language they get after their mother language.

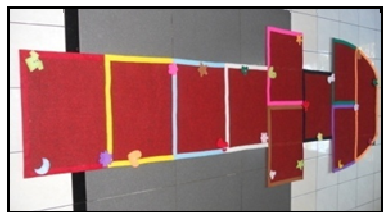
On their young age, the learners need something fun in their life. The teaching and learning process should follow their need in getting fun in everything too. So, the teaching media should be created in making the teaching atmosphere always be fun, relax, and enjoyable.

By these statements above, the writer concludes that teaching vocabulary to young English learners can be given on upper than 1st grade when the students get ready to learn foreign language. The teacher or parent should create teaching media which can make the

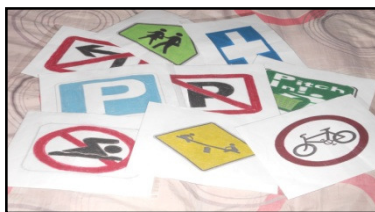
PORTEK (Portable Engklek)

PORTEK is a set of teaching media consist of a portable and foldable board, flash cards, and pebbles. *Engklek* actually is an outdoor activity. But here for *PORTEK*, the game can be played in indoor too. Tower shape of *engklek* is chosen as the *Portek* board because it has the most available sections of other shapes of *engklek* section. She--the writer--modifies one more rectangle, so the sections of *PORTEK* board are 10 sections.

Here is the set of *PORTEK*:



Picture 1:
PORTEK Board



Picture 2:
PORTEK Flash Cards



Picture 3:
PORTEK Pebbles

The board is made of red carpet. It is chosen for giving guarantee that the students are safe playing this, indoor or outdoor. Red is chosen to represent elementary students' uniform. To attract them, the writer puts colourful flannel-fabric, and then glued as well. Decorations are put there too to "beautify" it. The result is shown on Picture 1.

For the flash cards, the writer chooses a theme from students' book randomly. Chapter VIII "Attention Please!" which talks about introducing signs of warning or caution is chosen. She creates the flash cards herself. She downloads some signs of warning and caution as much as possible. Then, she remakes them into Microsoft Word. She prints them out in black and white mode. She colours the cards using pastel oil. The reason is so simple. She measures herself to do it. She pretends to be a teacher in isolated area which has not much sophisticated tools. How long does she make the card is the minimum standard for other to make them. She takes only 6 hours to prepare everything to make the cards. Colouring the cards take longest time. Finally at the end of the process, she covers the cards using transparent plastic. It will keep the cards durable and safe from water, oil, etc.

The last but not the least, she makes the pebbles. She puts broken tiles then covers them with colourful flannel-fabric. "Love" shape is chosen to make it attractive. She saws the flannel using treads and put 2 small eye-like ornaments. Those set of *PORTEK* are ready to use.

Teaching English Vocabulary on "Warnings or Cautions" to Young Learners through *PORTEK*

The media used to teach English vocabulary. The ways to apply this was:

1. Giving pre-test to The Experimental Groups before playing game. The same pre-test was given to the Control Group too.
2. The writer explained the materials of "Warning or Caution Signs" by showing flash cards and pronouncing the vocabulary well three times with no any writing activity or spelling

the letters of the flash cards. This activity was done in Control Group too, but the teacher or writer just stopped in this session only, and then moved on the post-test session.

3. Giving the rules on playing *PORTEK* game.
4. Discussing the consequence to the losers group.
5. Preparing the *PORTEK* set and taking the flash-cards in theme “warning or caution signs”. 1 board of *PORTEK* board got 1 flash-card.
6. Each team The Experiment groups consist of 3 people led by a captain.
7. The captains of all teams do *hom pim pa* to get the team turns.
8. All players start to play on their turns by throwing the pebbles on the first board, start from the lucky number 1 group.
9. While the first player was hopping and scotching from square to square on the *Portable* board, the player is saying the vocabularies mentioned on the flash-cards which the player stepping on, for example: “Don’t park in here”, “For pedestrian only”, “Turn left”, etc.
10. When a player failed to tell the vocabulary correctly, their friends in team should tell the correct answer to the player.
11. When the first player successfully does the job, the second player takes the next job. The second player was throwing the pebble on the second square. The player started to hop and scotch from the first square, then jump high to the third square ignoring second square where the pebble-placed. The next players did the similar action too.
12. When a player failed to throw the pebble on the correct square, the first player from the second team toke the job. They did it as what the first team did. The turn was moved when a player from a team was failed to be placed the pebble on the correct square.
13. In a session of this game, the students would hear and pronounce 10 vocabularies times as much as students who take place on this game. If there are 20 students in a class (TPQ), so they would hear those vocabularies 200 time (10 flash-cards x 20 students). It was so effective. If there were more students, so they would learn more. The teacher may add or replace some pictures to add the students’ vocabularies.
14. The game was ended when a team successfully reach the last square on the top of the *PORTEK* board fast.
15. The winner was the fastest and most correct team in doing the game, while the losers were the opposite. The loser teams had to get consequence as have been deal with before, for example carried away the winner from here to there.
16. The teacher evaluated the lesson by giving small test as the post test that was similar to the pre-test given before. The same post-test gave to the Control group.
17. The results of pre-test and post-test of 2 groups of research were compared to see the effectiveness of *PORTEK* to make students more understanding the vocabulary.
18. The writer concluded the result of this research activity.

The result of the teaching process above is not only about conquering knowledge and skill, but also attitude. By studying English using *PORTEK*, students do not realize that they actually have trained to be brave to make decision in answering question, brave to move (jump) from board to board, being honest to show their failure, to build good teamwork, and finally they want to accept the consequence if they are in the losers position. They are in their

children world which is fun, wonderful, free, but they remake themselves to be a better person then before.

Research Method

The method used in this research was Experimental Research. The population of this research was the students (*santri*) of TPQ (Al Qur'an Centre Courses) in Kalicari Village, Semarang. There were 5 TPQ in Kalicari Village. The samples were taken randomly, and there were taken 2 TPQs: "TPQ Baitussalam" (21 students) and "TPQ Al Barokah" (10 students). They were students of formal schools too but in different level, from kindergarten school to the 6th grade of elementary school. The instruments used in this research were test, documentation, and interview guideline. Those instruments were used to make the result of the research getting more valid.

There were two groups to be measured: Control Group and Experimental Group. The scheme of Experimental Research as follows

E1	X	E2
C1		C2

E1 is pre-test given to the Experimental Group
E2 is post-test given to the Experimental Group
X is the treatment given to the Experimental Group
C1 is pre-test given to the Control Group
C2 is post-test given to the Control Group

To measure their understanding in vocabulary on "warning or caution signs", the students of those 2 groups got the same pre-test and post-test with same questions. "Matching-Task" Test Type was chosen to measure it. The students should pulling line from box "A" to box "B" on the correct and match the question (picture) and the answer. To get the answer of the problems during the research activity, the writer asked some questions to the students. They were asked about the PORTEK itself, about their feeling during playing and studying English using it, about their difficulties in answering the task given, etc. The writer took some pictures and collected the students' answer sheets too as the research documentation.

Those groups were given different treatments in teaching vocabulary on "Warnings or Cautions" theme. Students of "TPQ Baitussalam" as the Control Group were taught with conventional teaching method. The ustadz named Najmie Zulfikar who was an English Education Department of University of PGRI Semarang explained the signs by showing the pictures of "warnings or cautions" several times. The activity did indoor.

In other part, students of "TPQ Al Barokah" as the Experimental Group were taught with PORTEK. The writer--helped by the ustadzah named Siti Aminah--taught them using the set of PORTEK. It was applied outdoor, so the students felt free and happy playing this.

Result and Discussion

Before discussing the result, the writer will show the result of those two groups research. Data gained from the tests, consist of pre-test and post-test shows the real result of

both ways of teaching vocabulary. The result of Experimental Group is the following:

Table 1 Result of Experimental Group

Sample	Pre-test Result	Post-test Result	Improvement (in number)	Improvement (in %)
1	4	7	3	75
2	5	8	3	60
3	3	4	1	33.3
4	2	4	2	100
5	5	7	2	40
6	3	2	-1	- 33.3
7	5	6	1	20
8	7	8	1	14.3
9	6	10	4	66.7
10	8	0	-8	- 100
MEAN (\bar{x})	48 : 10 = 4.8	56 : 10 = 5.6	8 : 10 = 0.8	(0.8 : 4.8) x 100 % = 16.67%

While the result of Control Group is as the following

Table 2 Result of Control Group

Sample	Pre-test Result	Post-test Result	Improvement (in number)	Improvement (in %)
1	8	8	0	0
2	7	10	3	42.6
3	4	10	6	150
4	8	7	-1	- 12.5
5	10	10	0	0
6	8	7	-1	- 12.5
7	8	8	0	0
8	8	10	2	25
9	2	6	4	200
10	3	3	0	0
11	10	10	0	0
12	7	10	3	42.9
13	10	8	-2	- 20
14	3	8	5	166.7
15	10	8	-2	- 20
16	10	10	0	0
17	10	10	0	0
18	6	7	1	16.7
19	4	4	0	0
20	7	6	-1	- 14.3
21	9	8	-1	- 11.1
MEAN (\bar{x})	152 : 21 = 7.24	168 : 21 = 8	8 - 7.24 = 0.76	(0.76 : 7.24) x 100 % = 10.5 %

From the tables above, we can conclude that teaching vocabulary using PORTEK to the Experimental Group is still better than teaching conventionally. The mean (\bar{x}) of improvement of Experimental Group was higher than the Control Group. Based on the data mentioned on the tables above, The Experimental group increased 0.8 point, while the Control Group increased 0.76. The percentage of the improvement of Experimental Group was 16.67 % (increased 5.49 % in two years from the previous research done by the writer herself), while the Control group was 10.5 %.

From an in-depth interview, the writer got answers from the samples. They said that learning English (the vocabulary) using PORTEK was fun and interesting. They really enjoyed playing this and learning the vocabulary. They felt that they are not studying, but playing. PORTEK was easy to play. It made them easier to catch, memorize, than understand the vocabulary, although some vocabularies (shown on picture board) were really new for them. They can play it in backyard or wherever they want.

The writer high-lighted some lines of those 2 tables as the sign to show that some of the samples cannot reach any improvement in their understanding of vocabulary. Some of the samples were getting the same mark on their pre-test and post-test. They were categorized as no any improvement or static. Some others got lower mark on post-test than on pre-test. When the writer asked them why they cannot answer the questions on post-test as well as they did it in pre-test, they answered that they forgot the words. Some others answered that they were confuse to give what answer should they gave.

The samples' marks on pre-test and post-test automatically gave effect the final mean of each test on each group of research. Higher marks they got caused higher mean (\bar{x}) they gave to their group. So, when a member of a group got low mark, it caused mean of group getting lower too. The case can be seen on the Experimental Group. Shown on Table 1, there were 2 students got lower mark on post-test then the post-test. Sample 6 decreased 1 point (-1) from 3 to be 2. The different case was shown on sample 10. She could not attend the post-test session, so automatically she got 0 point. She decreased 8 points (-8) from 8 to 0. These cases effected to the mean of Experimental Group.

The different case happened on the Control Group. We can see on Table 2 that there were 14 students failed to gain their mark on post-test. Sample 1, 7, 10, 11, 16, 17, and 19 were got the same mark on pre-test and post-test. Those categorized as "static" condition. Sample 4, 6, 20, and 21 decreased 1 point (-1) from their previous mark on pre-test to post-test mark. Sample 13 and 15 decreased 2 points (-2) from their pre-test marks. Unfortunately, those 2 samples decreased from the highest point, it was 10, to 8.

So many reasons were being the cause of these phenomena on the Control Group. The samples forgot the correct vocabulary should they answered was the most popular condition happened to them. Some other samples said that they actually remembered and understood the correct answer, but they made mistake in making line connector from box "A" (the pictures) and box "B (the answers). They understood well that this sign (for example: sign "P") means "Park in here". But when they gave the answer, they pulled the wrong line.

These problems are being the writer's next concern. She will create the better condition of teaching process using PORTEK by adding "writing" activity. The students' activities are not only listening, drilling with correct pronunciation, memorizing, and understanding, but

also they can apply the correct spelling of vocabulary with correct pronunciation. The aim of the writer's next study is powering students' understanding on spelling vocabulary. So, hopefully on the next research, she will conduct the study of teaching spelling vocabulary using PORTEK.



Pre-test of Experimental Group



Pre-test of Control Group



Teaching Process using *PORTEK*



Teaching Process using conventional way

Conclusion

Based on the result of the research, the writer can conclude:

1. PORTEK is still effective to use as the English vocabulary teaching media.
2. Teaching English vocabulary using PORTEK can improve students' (*santri*) understanding on "warning or caution signs".
3. PORTEK can be an alternative teaching media to teach everything, not only English.
4. Students or children feel happy during their "teaching process" using PORTEK. It makes them easy to memorize much new vocabularies.
5. There are some problems faced by the students in giving correct answer that make them difficult to get higher point than before.
6. PORTEK can help them being a better person who is brave, honest, responsive, cooperative, hard-work, etc.

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