Developing a Framework of Media-Aided Descending-Ascending Repetition of Vocabulary Learning

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Abstract

Foreign language basic vocabulary learning for teenagers mostly belongs to verbal information learning, involving a lot of memorization and thus, necessary repetition. However, EFL teachers, particularly in the school observed, fail to pay attention to vocabulary learning at this stage due to limited time, which has resulted in low learning achievement. This action research was focused on developing a framework of media-aided fading repetition of vocabulary learning for purposes of mastery improvement. The research participants were two English language teachers, one teacher educator, and 32 students in a state junior secondary school of a medium ranking and size in Sleman District, Yogyakarta Special Territory, Indonesia. This school was selected considering the transferability of the findings. The study was conducted from January-May 2017 in three planning-action-observation-reflection cycles of repeating the learning of the target vocabulary in the process of developing an appropriate framework of media-aided fading repetition in the existing curriculum implementation. Data were collected through observation and testing. The results were of two types: (1) the intended framework, and (2) improvement in the following aspects: the increasing classroom atmosphere liveliness, students' greater participation, students' increasing scores, and the teacher's awareness of the importance of repetition and variations of activities in vocabulary learning.

Keywords: *vocabulary, EFL, media-aided descending-ascending repetition*

INTRODUCTION

The role of vocabulary in communication events are well recognized by Wilkins (1972) , a renowned applied linguist, whose statement is widely quoted, especially by those with a specialization of teaching vocabulary. Very few, if any at all, people deny the truth of Wilkins' (1972) statement "While without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed. (pp. 110-111). Wallace (1982) went beyond this point to note that "not being able to find the words you need to express yourself is the most frustrating experience in speaking another language" (p. 9). I myself experienced this when no other language than English was used in speaking to my teacher, who was a native speaker. My colleague witnessed a communication breakdown in a situation in which a customer mispronounced one of the words used to make an order. This is the story.

At the early 1980s, an Indonesian adult whose English belonged to a survival level tried to practise speaking English when he wanted to buy fried chicken for his lunch. In the middle of a city tour, he asked my colleague to let him buy some food for their lunch. He said he wanted to practice his English. My colleague stayed at a distance but still could hear what he was saying. He heard him saying "Can I buy one kitchen?" "Kitchen?" "Yes, kitchen." "Sorry, you cannot." "But why?" Seeing the communication breakdown, my colleague approached him, "Sorry, he meant to say chicken." "O my

god, I said the word wrongly," retorted the gentleman. "Don't worry, now it's okay." Everyone smiled and soon both gentlemen got one whole fried chicken they wanted. My colleague said, "Two French fries, please."

Not long afterwards, another Indonesian came and soon made an order. "I … chicken one," he said. "Do you want one piece of chicken?" asked the shop assistant. He immediately replied, "Yes, chicken … one…..one." "Okay, here you are. One dollar, please." "Em….. money… one….. five … dollar." The shop assistant replied and gave the change, "No problem. Here is the change."

From the story above it can be seen that perfect grammar does not guarantee effective communication, but broken grammar with correct vocabulary helped the communication to go well. According to Long and Richards (2007), vocabulary is 'the core component of all the language skills'. When students do not have enough vocabulary knowledge, they encounter problems in writing in a second language (Raims, 1985). Failure to gain an adequate vocabulary can give negative consequences to communication.

The role vocabulary is so important in communication that it is too risky to be left alone with students. Learning elementary vocabulary needs special attention since its success will lay the foundation for further learning. In the context of this research study, the success of teaching basic vocabulary to junior secondary school students will pave the way to the success of achieving the aim of teaching English in secondary school, which says as follows:

"…to develop the students' potentials to possess communicative competence to be realized in interpersonal, transactional, and functional discourses in the form of various English texts, both oral and written, which are coherent, accurate and acceptable, on various types of knowledge—factual, conceptual, procedural—and instilling noble national character values in the real life context in the family, school, and community environments (Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture).

From this statement, it is clear that the production of texts for various purposes as the realization of communicative competence. Such an aim can only be reached through consistent efforts from the very beginning of the secondary education to the end by paying attention to the learning of all components of communicative competence, of which the substantial core is the linguistic competence, part of which is vocabulary.

However, in practice very little attention, if any at all, is paid to the teaching of vocabulary. Vocabulary acquisition remains "a neglected aspect of language learning" (Meara, 1980). Reviewing various vocabulary learning techniques, Oxford and Crookall (1990) declared that "vocabulary is not explicitly taught in most language classes" (p. 9). Later, Oxford and Scarcella (1994: 231) added that "students are usually expected to learn vocabulary on their own without much guidance."

My preliminary observation in a school and some interview with teachers from different schools I conducted in December 2016 revealed the following problems: (1) The vocabulary items were introduced through reading using the provided e-books without any special efforts to help beginners learn it; (2) Very little effort was made to help students master the target vocabulary comprehensively in terms form, meaning, and use; (3) Students were not introduced to techniques of reviewing the already introduced vocabulary; (4) Students easily lost motivation but very little effort, if any at all, is made to arouse and maintain their motivation; (5) Students' self-confidence did not seem to develop but very little, if any at all, was made to help them build it; and (6) The teacher showed very little awareness, if ay

at all, of the importance of vocabulary as the foundation for building language ability. The question is: "What media-aided repetition framework helps Grade 7 students to learn English basic vocabulary?" I have answered this question by conducting an action research study focusing on developing an appropriate framework of fading repetitions. Through this paper I will share information on the results of this action research study.

Referring to Yalden (1983) whose proportional syllabus model pays greater attention to the learning of linguistic component of language competence at the lower level, I believe in the importance of explicit teaching of vocabulary to facilitate the beginner students' learning of the target vocabulary. In relation to this, research has shown that learning vocabulary needs a lot of repetitions. For junior secondary school students who have just left their childhood, repetitions may be very boring. Teachers should therefore make efforts to help them to repeat learning vocabulary with sustained motivation.

The nature of vocabulary

Language is represented as having three layers which occur simultaneously whenever language is used. The three layers start from expression or phonology or graphology, then at the above next layer lie lexicogrammar (words and structures), and meaning or discourse/semantics (texts). Learning vocabulary should then include learning how words are pronounced or written and how the words are ordered to create meaningful sentences. These two layers are prerequisite to the third layer, which also includes registers through which the language functions are carried out. The creative power and its complexity lies in the second layer, involving the learning of morphemes as the smallest unit of meaning, which will form words, and later on phrases and sentences (Eggins, 1994). It can be said then that the mastery of vocabulary is crucial in the

whole processes of language learning.

What is vocabulary then? Vocabulary is *"all the words known and used by a person"* or *"all the words which exist in a particular language"* (Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary). Vocabulary is also defined academically as *"a set of lexemes, including single words, compound words and idioms"* (Richards & Schmidt, 2002: 580). Learning English vocabulary then means learning English words, both single and compound, and idioms. This should be kept in mind by EFL teachers, wherever they teach.

In the framework of communicative competence, vocabulary is part of the linguistic competence, which has been the core component of communicative competence in all its frameworks, which have developed evolutionarily, starting from the notion of linguistic competence proposed by Chomsky (1957, 1965) and ending in Celce-Murcia (2007). In fact Littlewood (2011) also revised his earlier framework (1981), but Celce-Murcia's (2007) happens to be more operational for language teachers. Celce-Murcia's (2007) communicative competence framework consists of the following components: (1) socio-cultural competence; (2) linguistic competence; (3) discourse competence; (4) formulaic competence; (5) interactional competence; and (6) strategic competence. For purposes of this paper, only the linguistic competence will be elaborated since vocabulary is part of it, as has been mentioned above.

Linguistic competence refers to knowledge about the target language, consisting of the four following types of knowledge: phonological knowledge, lexical knowledge, morphological knowledge, and syntactic knowledge. The phonological knowledge includes the segmental (vowels, consonants, syllable types) and suprasegmental (prominence/stress, intonation, rhythm). The lexical knowledge includes the knowledge of both content words (nouns, adjectives,

verbs) and function words (pronouns, determiners, prepositions, verbal auxiliaries, etc.). The morphological knowledge includes parts of speech, grammatical inflections, productive derivational processes. Lastly the syntactic knowledge includes constituent/phrase structure, word order, basic sentence types, modifications, coordination, subordination, embedding (Celce-Murcia, 2007: 46-47). It should be noted, however, that knowing a word is going beyond the lexical knowledge. Knowing a word means knowing its form, its meaning, and its use (Nation, 2001) as illustrated in Figure 1. Knowing the word "table" as a word at the

beginner level means: (a) knowing that it is a countable noun and its plural form is "tables" and knowing that it is pronounced /ˈteɪbl/; (b) knowing that this word means refer to "a piece of furniture with a top and one or more legs, providing a level of surface for eating, writing, or working at"; and (c) knowing that this word can be used to create sentences either as "subject" like in *The table in my room is new* or as "object" *I want a new table*. It is clear then that knowing a word involves some phonological knowledge, morphological knowledge, and syntactical knowledge.
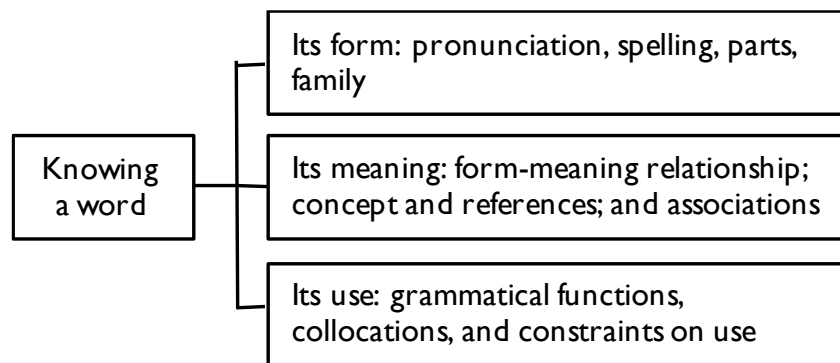

Figure 1. The Three Aspects of Knowing a Word

Vocabulary mastery may fall into two types: receptive and productive. The vocabulary items one masters receptively are "the set of words that he/she understands in listening or reading but not used in the spoken or written expressions." (Nation, 2001). The vocabulary items one masters productively are "the set of words that are not only understood, but also used

meaningfully when creating new sentences" (Nation, 2001). Each type of vocabulary mastery is supported by the mastery of micro skills which differ according to the mode. This is illustrated in Figure 2. The micro skills can guide teachers in helping their students in developmentally reach the mastery of the target words.
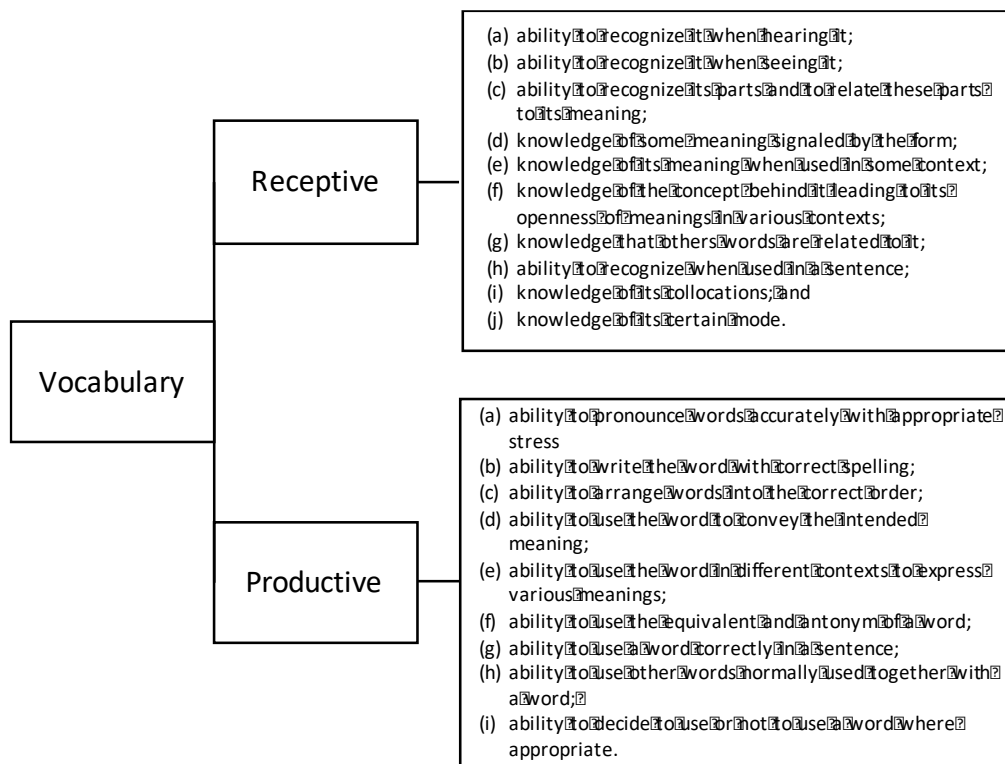
		(a) ability to recognize it when hearing it; (b) ability to recognize it when seeing it; (c) ability to recognize its parts and to relate these parts to its meaning; (d) knowledge of some meaning signaled by the form; (e) knowledge of its meaning when used in some context; (f) knowledge of the concept behind it leading to its openness of meanings in various contexts; (g) knowledge that others words are related to it; (h) ability to recognize when used in a sentence; (i) knowledge of its collocations; and (j) knowledge of its certain mode.
Vocabulary	**Receptive**	
	Productive	(a) ability to pronounce words accurately with appropriate stress (b) ability to write the word with correct spelling; (c) ability to arrange words into the correct order; (d) ability to use the word to convey the intended meaning; (e) ability to use the word in different contexts to express various meanings; (f) ability to use the equivalent and antonym of a word; (g) ability to use a word correctly in a sentence; (h) ability to use other words normally used together with a word; (i) ability to decide to use or not to use a word where appropriate.

Figure 2. Coverage of Micro Skills of Vocabulary Mastery

Levels of vocabulary

Levels of vocabulary may be determined in terms of frequency of use. The higher the frequency, the greater the need for its mastery. The vocabulary of 1000 level contributes significantly to the understanding of texts as follows: 84.3% of English use in conversations; 82.3% of English use in fictions; 75.6% of English use in newspapers; 73.5% of English use in academic texts (Nation, 2001). Teachers of beginner (elementary) English should therefore be committed to helping their students to master the first 1000 words. In this case, Brian Kelk's 1000 top English words for the elementary level can be used as the guide. If language proficiency levels are considered to be hierarchical in nature, students' mastery of basic English vocabulary will be the stepping stone for their success of learning English for communication purposes since with vocabulary, however limited, they can communicate something. The success of communicating in English at the early stage of learning will lay the foundation of their further learning. This should be taken seriously by any EFL teachers whose students learn basic English.

Seeing that the level of English taught formally during the junior secondary schooling as one of the compulsory subjects is the basic level, the first 1000 words are to be learned during junior secondary schooling (Grades 7-9). This might mean that Grade 7 students are to master the first 400 word level for the receptive skills.

The nature of learning vocabulary and the importance of repetitions

Considering the nature of vocabulary described above, the success of learning vocabulary will lead to the success of language learning. This is in line with Dellar and Hocking (….), who stated that "the improvement of language learning can be achieved by learning a lot of vocabulary." As has been touched upon before, one of the criteria for having

learned a word is understanding its meaning, which is usually presented in a definition. Defining a word is then one strategy to teach a new word, that can be done through (1) synonyms; (2) antonyms; (3) analysis definitions; (4) taxonomy definitions; (5) definitions through examples; (6) definitions through functions; (7) grammatical definitions; (8) definitions through associations; and (9) definitions through clarification (Richards and Taylor, 1991; Nunan, 2001).

To facilitate our students' vocabulary of learning through definitions, we can consider a guide suggested Nation (2001) that we can do the following: (1) give information on the meaning briefly, simply, and clearly; (2) direct learners' attention to the generalization of the meaning contained in a word; (3) give repeated attention to a word; (4) help learners to recognize definitions; (5) give priority on what to explain about a word; (6) help learners to recall what has been learned; and (7) avoid the disturbance of related words. We can certainly carry out these points as occasion demands.

In learning vocabulary, we can consider Gagne's (1977) learning taxonomy consisting of intellectual skills, cognitive strategies, verbal information, attitudes, and motor skills. For junior secondary school students, vocabulary learning can be said to belong to the verbal information learning because they already know the concepts referred to by the content words in their mother tongues. For them, learning vocabulary involves a lot of memorizing. In relation to this, repetition and review are necessary to reinforce the storage of information in the long-term memory. Review and repetition are best carried out in the nearest time to the time the information is introduced and the repetition is fading. Fading repetition should be conducted by applying the fading principles to ensure the success of recalling ad this success will motivate students to learn and learn (Davis, et al, 1974). Repetition

and imitation is the oldest methods of language teaching, which has been found to be an effective strategy in language learning, although it has received heavy criticism from cognitive psychologists due to its being mechanical and meaningless (Haycraft, 1978; Richards and Nunan, 1990; Cross, 1995; Larsen-Freeman and Anderson, 2013). Repetition has therefore been neglected in learning.

Recent developments, however, show the return of attention to repetition, especially its role in different types of learning (e.g., Bygate et al., 2013; Horst, 2013). Even for children with developmental disorders and adults suffering for aphasia after stroke or head trauma, repetition has been used and proven to be beneficial in language treatment (Kempler and Goral, 2011). In particular, repetition, imitation and drilling are popular among L2 teachers and learners, at least for word learning and accurate pronunciation, since they are helpful and can support language learners in achieving functional communication in daily life (Berthier and Lambon Ralph, 2014).

Other studies reviewed by Ghazi and Ansaldo (2017) revealed that the psychological processes of learning vocabulary involved repetition. After reviewing relevant studies, Ghazi and Alsando conducted an experimental study on repetition in vocabulary learning. This study indicated behavioral results which provide evidence of the efficacy of verbal repetition in L2 vocabulary learning, as shown by the significantly faster and more accurate performances obtained by both groups at the second learning phase. These observations are in line with previous works (e.g., Snedden, 1931; Bartels et al., 2010) on the efficacy of verbal repetition in novel vocabulary learning.

While adequate evidence on the effectiveness of repetition in vocabulary learning has been provided by a number of studies, very limited information is available on the alternative framework of

repetitions appropriate for Indonesian schools. One available framework of memory repetition is Pimsleur's, which involves 11 repetitions with the following intervals (from repetitions 1 to 11): 5 seconds, 25 seconds, 2 seconds, 10 seconds, 1 hour, 5 hours, 1 hour, 5 hours, 1 hour, 5 hours, 25 hours, 4 hours, 2 hours (Pimsleur, 1967). Pimsleur's framework is psychologically ideal because it offers the systematically fading repetition until the learned word is stored in the long-term memory and will be ready to be retrieved as occasion demands. However, this framework is too demanding in terms of timing in Indonesian state junior secondary schools in which the time schedule is hardly flexible for English with 4 teaching hours a week. Moreover, the framework implies that the vocabulary needs explicit attention, which can hardly be fulfilled if the schools use the e-books from the Government. This is then too challenging a framework for Indonesian schools. It this therefore necessary to create a different framework while still ensuring the adequate repetition without causing boredom. This will be taken up later in the discussion of the proposed framework, which has been developed through an action research study.

Assessing vocabulary learning

Assessment of vocabulary learning in EFL teaching has developed hand in hand with theories of language learning and teaching. At its earlier development vocabulary assessment relied on objective tests with a grammatical context at the sentence level. It then developed into test items with a situational context above the sentence level, which has been found to be more valid (Read, 2000). Examples of vocabulary test items can be found in Oller & Spolsky, 1979: 93), Read (2000: 141) and Pike (1979). The validity of contextual vocabulary test items has been researched by Henning (1991), and the findings have been used by ETS to develop

TOEFL test items which are more contextual. All of these should be considered in developing test items for assessment purposes.

Learning will be successful if students are motivated to learn and therefore willing to invest their time and energy for learning purposes (Brown, 2007). They will be motivated to learn if teaching is designed by considering their characteristics.

Characteristics of junior secondary school students as teenagers and principles of teaching them

Teenagers have the following characteristics: (a) They prefer interacting with their peers, and this can be fulfilled, for example, through exchange activities; (b) They are occupied by their own affairs, which necessitates teachers to relate instruction to their affairs; (c) They need approval and often easily lose courage, and this necessitates their teacher's acceptance and encouragement; (d) They need regular activities due to their increasing energy, which can be fulfilled by engaging them in different activities; (e) They make efforts to have more freedom, which can be provided through giving them choices; (f) They need to be part of the peer group and seek peer approval, and this can be fulfilled through involving them in group work; (g) They are able to imitate adults' behaviours, value other students and adults other than their parents in seeking their identity, thus the importance of model behaviours; and (h) They are very sensitive if being embarrassed or ridiculed, thus the importance of appreciation and rewards (Arnett, 2001; Caissy, 1994).

To ensure the effectiveness of teaching teenagers, the teaching should be guided by relevant principles. The principles presented by Richards (2015) are worth considering: (1) Select activities that motivate students; (2) Create a positive classroom atmosphere; (3) Make ap-

propriate rules for classroom behaviours; (4) Make learning experiences personal; (5) Give students opportunities to determine learning materials; (6) Let students show their achievements/talents; and (7) Select appropriate assessment forms (pp. 240-244).

All of these points need considering as far as possible in all aspects of teaching English to junior secondary school students, who are all at the puberty age. So, in teaching them English two areas need combining in consideration: the teaching substance and their characteristics as learners.

METHODS

This action research was conducted in a state junior secondary school located in a rural area but easily reached. It is a medium size of 12 classes, with each class consisting of 32 students, which is the Indonesian national standard of class size in at this level of education. This school is of a medium rank, though equipped with a computer lab with internet access (25 computer units, two LCD and Screens, but never utilized for learning purposes. Based on our informal interviews and classroom observation in January 2017, teachers of English in this school have a low level of competencies. For learning materials, these teachers fully rely on the E-books provided by the government and adopt one hundred percent the teaching and learning designed in the book. Very little effort has been made to help the students to improve their learning due to the teaching burden. All of this resulted in low English learning achievement, with very little vocabulary mastery.

From the question "What media-aided repetition framework helps Grade 7 students to learn English basic vocabulary?" were derived the following questions: "Can simple media be used to make learning more interesting?; and (2) What repetition framework can help students to master the target vocabulary?"

Considering the characteristics of students as teenagers, their learning experiences and learning results, and the importance of sustainable availability of media, we made the following decisions:

1. Cross-word puzzles (CWPs), semantic webs (SWs), word-search puzzles (WSPs), word-picture matching (WPMs), and flashcards (FCs) were chosen as media for facilitating the repetition of vocabulary learning and these simple media were chosen to ensure the continuity of using them in the school and other similar schools.

2. Some activities were chosen for creating variations for purposes of maintaining their learning motivation: *repeating after the teacher* (RA), *responding to pictures* (RTPs), *survey and report* (SR), *pair work* (PW), *quiz* (Q), *dictation* (D), and *listening and pictures* (LAP) as well as *Using words to describe own experiences* (*UWDOE*).

3. The activities were arranged with the following: CWP-SW-RA-SR; WS-MP-RTP-PW; SW-RA-Q-LAP; CWP-RTP-SR-D; WS-RA-PW-LAP; WS-RA-PW-LAP; CWP-RTP-SR-Q; WS-MP-PW-LAP; SW-RTP-Q-D; CWP-RA-SR-LAP; WS-MP-Q-D, (CWP = crossword puzzle; SW = semantic web; RA = Repeat After; SR = survey & report; WS= word search; MP = Matching Pictures; RTP= Responding to Pictures; PW =Pair Work; Q = Quizz; LAP = Listening and Pictures; D = Dictation).

4. The framework for effective repetition was searched through cycles of actions involving the above patterns of activities.

4. Class 7D was decided to be the class for our action research study because this class was of the average ability as shown from the national exam scores of their primary schools, which were used to determine their admission.

5. The additional teaching was agreed through negotiation with students and

the classroom teacher to be conducted on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday lasting for one hour each meeting, i.e. 06.00 – 07.00, from January to May 2017, while adapting to the existing schedule. It should be noted that the

words to be repeated had been introduced in the E-book mentioned above.

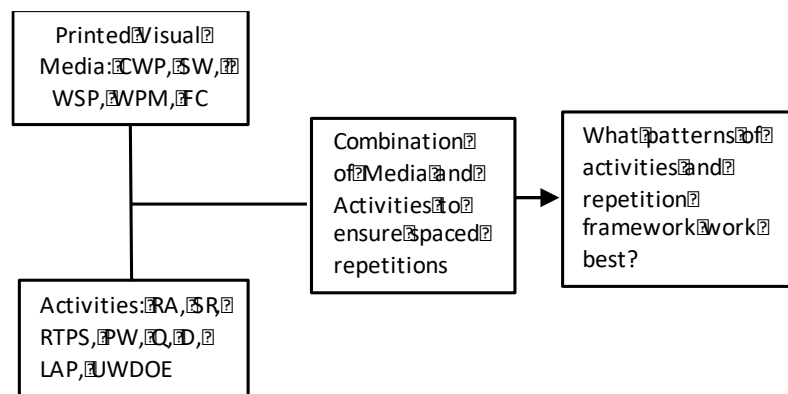The framework of thinking in this action research is illustrated in Figure 3.

Combination of Media and Activities to ensure spaced repetitions

Printed Visual Media: CWP, SW, WSP, WPM, FC

Activities: RA, SR, RTPS, PW, Q, D, LAP, UWDOE

What patterns of activities and repetition framework work best?

Figure 3. The Thinking Framework of Searching Effective Patterns of Activities and a Repetition Framework

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The positive changes in the students' learning through repetitions were gradually reached from in three Cycles of actions. The efforts made in Cycle 1 were much bigger than those in Cycles 2 and 3. In Cycle 1, the teacher had to make serious effort to arouse students' motivation to repeat learning the vocabulary items. At the beginning learning English seemed to be a burden for them, but their burden seemed to be relieved after being able to solve the puzzles and being involved in interesting activities. Their success in solving the puzzles and in pronouncing the owrds correctly followed by an appreciation expressed by the teracher seemed to be rewarding for them and this had help arouse their motivation. This is in line with Caissy (1994) and Davis et el. 1974). The following were some points observed in Cycle 1: (1) The students showed enjoyment and sometimes excitement when matching the specified words and their related pictures, doing the cross-word puzzles, word-search puzzles, and semantic web puzzles; (2) They showed little

response when flashcards were used for the first time with too high a speed for them, but when the speed was adjusted and these media were used after they had repeated learning the words through different activities, they began to respond though some still looked reluctant; (3) They did not show any interest when they were given pocket dictionaries to use, but later after being told about the benefits, they began to show interest; (4) At the beginning, they were reluctant to pronounce the words, but after hearing the good model of pronouncing the words and trying to pronounce them relatively successfully, they began to be show enthusiasm; and (5) The use of media combined with some activities were still casual (no framework).

Upon reflecting on the learning processes and results, we discussed ways of improving the processes to achieve the learning target, i.e. students' mastery of the target words. We agreed to apply the principle of combining the media and activities to maintain students' interest and make them enjoy learning the words. In-

dividual work, pair work and small group work were combined according to the situation. Below are presented the results.

In Cycle 2, media-activities were arranged in such a way that students were exposed to the same words repeatedly while they still enjoyed playing the puzzles. Through a number of meetings, finally we found the following activity combinations of media and activities: (1) CWP-SW-RA-SR; (2) WS-MP-RTP-PW; (3) SW-RA-Q-LAP; (4) CWP-RTP-SR-D; (5) WS-RA-PW-LAP; (6) CWP-RTP-SR-Q; (7) WS-MP-PW-LAP; (8) SW-RTP-Q-D; (9) CWP-RA-SR-LAP; (10) WS-MP-Q-D. Meanwhile, the repetition framework was still developing. Since in one week the action research class was held on, Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday, we had to make sure that students were willing to repeat doing the puzzles on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. With some reward being given to those who were willing to do so, they did the homework so that they were exposed for five times, with half of the time being independent exposure. So, the repetition framework was at the beginning stage.

During Cycle 2, the following points were observed occurring: (1) The students were still struggling in the learning process, but looked more interested and easily engaged; (2) They were doing the puzzles more enthusiastically when working in pairs than individually; (3) They admitted that the repetitions through puzzles had reduced the burden of learning as can be seen from what a student said, *"Lama-lama kok hafal sendiri ya? Tidak terasa.* (Gradually I can remember the words without feeling the burden of learning), and hearing this, other students express their agreement, *"Ya, saya juga gak terasa letih tapi tahu-tahu hafal."* Yes, I don't feel doing a lot to learn the words but in fact I have learned them; and (4) The repetition framework was still immature. All of this shows that repetition of word learning through puzzles and

games can be meaningful, not mechanical like what has been criticized (Haycraft, 1978; Richards and Nunan, 1990; Cross, 1995; Larsen-Freeman and Anderson, 2013). So repetition which is not mechanical can be a effective way of learning vocabulary.

Upon reflecting on the above results, we discussed ways of repeating the words more systematically. So, we agreed to spread the media in a week and make sure that one word is repeated adequately. We tried out different ways to establish the framework. The result will be presented below.

In Cycle 3, the students seemed to enjoy the process. Sometimes they preferred to work alone, sometimes in pairs, and at other times in groups of three or four. The whole process ran relatively smoothly. To ensure adequate repetitions of word exposure we decided to use a two-way table in which the rows are allocated for units, with each unit lasting for five days for CWP, WSP, SW, WPM, and FC respectively and the columns for numbers (Column 1), target words (Column2), and the twenty five columns for spreading the word exposure. All of this was to ensure that each word is repeated for 12 times. The words were clustered, with each cluster consisting of fourteen words, which could be repeated within a week. Each cluster of words were evenly divided into two groups. The first group of words were exposed in different arrangements in the table, leaving the same number of boxes for the other group of words. This can be clearly seen in Figure 4.

Following the patterns of repeated exposure, the students did the puzzles and the activities with the teacher supervising them. The students were enthusiastically involved in the whole processes of learning. This resulted in a more lively atmosphere in the classroom. The teacher then became aware of the need for arranging the activities and media use to avoid boredom. All of this facilitated the students'

learning, which was proved in the increas- ing scores.

No	TW	Unit 1					Unit 2					Unit 3					Unit 4					Unit 5				
		CWP	WSP	SW	WPM	FC	CWP	WSP	SW	WPM	FC	CWP	WSP	SW	WPM	FC	CWP	WSP	SW	WPM	FC	CWP	WSP	SW	WPM	FC
1		V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V						V	V	V									V
2		V	V	V	V	V		V	V	V		V				V		V							V	
3		V	V	V	V	V			V	V	V	V	V						V				V			
4		V	V	V	V	V	V			V	V		V	V					V			V				
5		V	V	V	V	V	V	V			V			V	V							V	V			
6		v	v	v	v	v					v			v	v										v	v
7		v	v	v	v	v					v			v	v							v	v		v	v
8									V	V	V	V	V					V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	
9							V				V		V		V			V		V	V	V	V	V	V		V
10							V	V						V	V	V	V	V		V			V		v	v
11								V	V			V			V	V	V	V	V		V	V		v	v	v
12									V	V	V	V			V	V	V	V	V			V	V	V	v
13							v	v	v	v		v	v				v	v	v	v			v	v		
14							v	v	v	v		v	v				v	v	v	v			v	v		

Figure 4. Patterns of media-aided descending-ascending repetitions of exposure

This research has shed light on the importance of media-aided descending-ascending repetitions of exposure. Such repetitions allow students to be more engaged in the learning as teachers become cognizant to the needs for better media and engaging activities to attract the students' attention. All of these aspects lead to better students' learning as reflected in their achievement scores. However, the results of this study need to be understood in the context of English as a Foreign Language which may differ from other contexts.

CONCLUSIONS

The findings of this action research study have led to the following conclusions. The learning of elementary vocabulary naturally needs repetition but repetition can be boring and stressful if it is done mechanistically. Simple puzzling media can be used to create the variations to avoid boredom, but the use of media need to be combined with appropriate activities to ensure enjoyable involvement of students. Such a combination has become a framework of vocabulary exposure repetitions through the combination of vocabulary puzzles and stimulating activities, which was found to help improve the students' vocabulary learning indicated through the changes in students' attitudes, engagement, and increasing scores. Other improvements were the increasing classroom atmosphere liveliness and the teacher's awareness of the importance of arranging the repetition and variations of activities in vocabulary learning. Since the framework of descending-ascending repetitions has been developed in a certain situation, its effectiveness need to be proved through an experimental studies.

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