

Improving ESL Primary Students' Vocabulary Proficiency Using Authentic Listening Materials

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Abstract - The objectives of this study were to examine the use of authentic listening materials in enhancing English vocabulary in the classroom among ESL primary students and to examine their attitudes toward the use of such materials in the English language classroom. The participants in this study were 35 students who studied in Grade 2 at one of the famous school in Bangkok, Thailand.

They were divided into two groups: control and experimental. The teacher in the control group only used textbooks to teach English vocabulary and in the experimental group, the teacher used a combination of textbooks and authentic listening materials which are animated movies, songs, audio taped stories, and cartoons. The findings revealed that both control and experimental groups gained better vocabulary. The difference of the mean scores of pre and posttests in the control group was 2.10 and that experimental group was 2, so there was no significant difference between both groups. It can be concluded that authentic listening materials are not effective in developing vocabulary of Grade 2 students in the study. However, the students in the experimental group had positive views toward the use of authentic listening materials in their vocabulary classes. They enjoyed the classes and looked forward to the next classes.

Keywords - ESL Primary Students, Listening Materials

I. INTRODUCTION

In Thailand, there is a wide recognition and acceptance of the significance of English as an international language in facilitating foreign trade and investments, economics, sciences, businesses, technologies, education, and communication (Kitjaroonchai and Kitjaroonchai, 2012). To enhance the country's competitiveness in relation to the trend of globalization and internationalization, the Thai government has made the study of English language a compulsory subject for students in the primary level onwards.

In the context of language learning, listening and vocabulary are very important because the understanding of vocabulary is a beginning step in excelling knowledge of a language and gaining competencies in both writing and speaking of such language (Shabunts, 2011).

Many research confirm the positive relationships between successful language learning and listening through authentic listening materials (Cross, 2009; Abraham & Williams, 2009; House, 2014; Hayati & Mohmedi, 2011).

Authentic materials are the language materials that have not been specifically produced for the purposes of language teaching and are close to the form, structure, and usage of the language in everyday life outside of the classrooms (Martinez & Peñamaría, 2008, p: 56-57).

It is, therefore, possible for students to learn and communicate in a second language much quicker and more confidently when authentic

listening materials are used.

II. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

There are two specific research questions in this study:

1) Are authentic listening materials effective in developing EFL primary students' vocabulary learning?

2) What are the EFL primary students' attitudes toward the use of authentic listening materials in English classroom?

III. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1) To examine the effectiveness of authentic listening materials in enhancing English vocabulary learning in the classroom among EFL primary students.

2) To examine the attitudes of EFL primary students toward the use of authentic listening materials in the English language classroom.

IV. LITERATURE REVIEW

Vocabulary helps students with language production. Hubbard (1983) states that the more words a student know, the more precisely that student can express the exact meaning he/she wants to. Based on this view, to communicate effectively students need to know a large number of word meanings.

There are many types of authentic materials that can be used inside the classrooms to promote student's learning and help them expose to the real context, so teachers have to consider and choose such materials to match the students' needs.

In this study, the researcher intends to focus on authentic listening materials which are cartoons, animated movies, audio short stories, and songs. The reason of selecting these materials is that they are suitable and interesting for the young kids.

V. DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

In order to investigate whether the students' vocabulary had increased after the use of authentic listening materials throughout the 8 weeks, the data were analyzed by using SPSS Program in order to obtain descriptive statistics; mean and standard deviations as well as the data from the semi-structured interview was analyzed via content analysis.

The quantitative analysis revealed that both control and experimental groups gained better vocabulary, so there was no significance between the scores of both groups. This is to say that authentic listening materials are not effective in developing vocabulary of Grade 1 students in the study. However, the students held positive views toward the use of authentic listening materials in their vocabulary classrooms.

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