A Case Study of the Effectiveness of Using English Songs Embedded Animation to Enhance students’ English Vocabulary Acquisition in Rural Primary School in Taiwan

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Abstract—Students in rural primary school face such obstacles of acquiring English vocabularies. Evidence indicates that the lack of environment and motivation is the leading factor to cause the failed English vocabulary acquisition. English songs are always regarded as a medium for English language learners to learn English. There are different types of songs such as Rock, Hip hop, Jazz, Lullabies and so on. However, songs just provide sounds without images. Therefore, the researcher chose English songs which embedded with animation on the Internet according to students’ level and preference. This study focused on two main points. One is students' learning motivation through English animation songs and the other is its effectiveness of enhancing their English vocabulary acquisition. The research found out that “motivation” is the most important component for learners while learning a new language and it is also widely accepted as a key to be successful. Furthermore, students’ vocabulary acquisition is increased once their motivation is triggered. Therefore, the researcher inferred that songs with animation have been adopted as a tool to trigger students’ motivation and improve students’ memory and English vocabulary acquisition.

Keywords—English Songs, English Vocabulary Acquisition, Motivation, Animation

I. INTRODUCTION

English has seen as a vehicle for international communication for majority of countries. Take Taiwan as an example, it is planning to become a bilingual country in 2030. That is, English is regarded as a second language in Taiwan. To achieve this goal, many primary schools in Taiwan have even established a set of English learning plans to promote students’ English ability. English vocabulary acquisition remains the basic ability during English learning. As Tozcu and Coady (2004) pointed out, a significant aspect of foreign language acquisition is vocabulary-learning. Besides, it is closely related to reading proficiency and comprehension.

Ellis (1994) described vocabulary acquisition as two types, an implicitly acquired skill and as an explicit learning process. The former focused on acquiring automatically and without conscious awareness, whereas the later focused on conscious observation and understanding. Learners had difficulties on vocabulary retention mainly due to the initial words-encoding (Hayakawa et al., 2020). However, without strong foundation, it is impossible for learners to construct a word, a sentence and let alone express ideas to others. In such cases, teachers continue to persuade students to memorize vocabularies to help them establish the concepts of vocabulary. To make this goal accomplished, students are required to memorize vocabularies every day by their teachers. However, listening to teachers’ instructions is dull and easy to lead frustrated because learners do not comprehend the input. Therefore, in the light of Sydorenko (2010), for language learners, a multiple of input modalities were more advantage rather than a distraction. Given that vocabulary acquisition occupies a vital place in language learning and songs are widely used as instructional materials. However, songs without images are hard for students to connect their meaning with words. Thus, this research examined the impact of using English animation songs on vocabulary acquisition and students’ motivation toward English songs embedded animation.

A. Background of The Study

This primary school which students studied are far away from the city. Students from the school are mostly aboriginals—Atayal. The school focus on their mother tongue language. Thus, English is an unfamiliar language for them. They never attended cram schools yet. That is, they didn’t have any experience of learning English until they’re 3rd grade students. Besides, students who are from this environment are passive learning learners and there is no one practicing English with them except at school.

To change their way of learning English and improve their English vocabulary acquisition, teacher would teach them from pronunciation to vocabulary. Poor pronunciation would cause problems in oral communication and even led to incorrect vocabulary acquisition. Pronunciation is a major element of speaking skill which also ensures the intelligibility of message intended to be conveyed; according to Jenkins (2000), wrong articulation of such core sounds of English as consonants and vowels frequently caused miscommunication when speakers interacted in the target language (TL). However, wrong articulation is unavoidable for English as second language (ESL) learners or English as foreign language (EFL) learners. How can teacher do to make students feel inspiring and then help them increase their motivation in language learning is significant. Using too much didactic instruction method in English teaching not only blunt students’ willingness but also inevitably kill their gift of learning the language. Therefore, to realize their background and their characteristic is important. Orlava (2003) stated that motivation and authentic materials are inseparable. Consequently, teachers should pay attention on seeking suitable materials and teaching methods.

B. Statement of the Problem

According to Chen and Tsai (2012), students’ English abilities demonstrated a total bimodal distribution in Taiwan. In formal education, there is an obvious phenomenon of low-score peak and high-score peak appearing within each stage of English learning. Due to the lack of qualified teachers and educational resources, urban and rural students showed big diverged in their learning performances. More importantly, the internal growth environment of students themselves and
external insufficient supporting toward English teaching were all recognized as ‘chaos in English education in Taiwan’.

Specifically, in Taiwan, most of students are passive learning learners, they receive information from instructors but seldom answer questions or participate in class discussions. They just sit there and let the day go by. What causes such problem like this in English class? (1.) English is not their mother tongue so they will be afraid of and refuse to learn it (2.) Taiwanese students are too shy to express and share their ideas or ask questions in the English class (3.) They feel frustrated or self-abasement because they fail the exam or leave behind their peers.

To improve the above conditions, the researcher determined to adopt the way of using English songs to pique students’ interests toward English learning. In addition, according to Setia et al (2012), songs were investigated to have positive possibility to arouse classroom atmosphere. A successful lesson should have inclusive of content, enjoyment, absorbing and students’ reflection. Jalongo and Bromley (1984) stated that using music in the classroom is a helpful way for students to succeed in EFL learning.

C. Objectives of the Study

i. To trigger primary school students’ motivation to learn English through English songs embedded animation.
ii. To use the appropriate English songs embedded animation help students enhance their English vocabulary acquisition.

II. METHODOLOGY

A. Research Approach

In this research, the researcher used the mix approach, qualitative description and quantitative information was collected from the existing participants. A qualitative approach studied the records about the researcher’s classroom observation and the interview of the participants’ point of view of teaching instruction. Besides, a quantitative approach studied the participants’ vocabulary acquisition progress. Through the qualitative approach, the researcher is able to give the interpretation and make sense of the English learning phenomenon in the classroom. Meanwhile, through the quantitative approach, the researcher is able to prove the effectiveness of using the teaching method. Consequently, it brings an understanding of using English songs as English teaching instruction and its value for Taiwanese English learners.

B. Research Participants

The target participants were eleven fourth grade students from a rural elementary school in central Taiwan. Taiwan is a country in East Asia where English assumes as a foreign language. Participants had got a simple knowledge about English for one year, and they didn’t have any experience of taking extra English courses in cram school. Besides, school focuses on much more on mother language and local culture courses. Thus, English for them is not a dispensable language. However, for primary school students in Taiwan, English is an essential and official recognized subject. English vocabulary acquisition earns mass advantages to the research participants. It includes not only better intelligibility of vocabulary but further reading comprehension.

C. Data Collection

Data was collected through the results of participants’ pretest and post-test of vocabulary acquisition and their response about the interview. The content of pretest and post-test was designed by the researcher. The content of pretest and post-test were the same. Content of the tests included 20 multiple choice questions and 5 points for each question. Each image had its corresponding English word, so students had to understand the meaning of every English word of the options or the English word meaning of the image. Students attended the songs embedded animation training course for 10 times and learned 5 English songs in total from the beginning to the end. In the beginning and the end of the courses, students were asked to attend pretest and post-test. Pretest and post-test, classroom observation, interviewed responses were recorded as data analysis and presented as a result finally.

III. RESULTS AND FINDINGS

i. Students’ motivation of learning English through English songs embedded animation

The main objectives of the study were to examine students’ motivation of learning English through English songs embedded in animation. According to Passerini & Granger (1999) stated that there are no additional learning effects caused by animation, but it assured that animation could catch attention. In other words, if other teaching instruments or medium added in animation, the learning achievement took effect. Furthermore, Internet technology nowadays is in vogue. Lots of English songs on the Internet provided music videos which embedded visual aids. Through the assistance of English songs embedded animation; students are easier immerse in the atmosphere of learning English. The evidence were showed from the responses of students’ interview.

ii. English songs embedded animation help students enhance their English vocabulary acquisition

To understand the effectiveness of using English songs embedded animation to enhance students’ English vocabulary acquisition, pretest and post-test were conducted. This figure shows the results of pretest and post-test. From the figure, it shows eleven students’ vocabulary acquisition enhanced through the English songs embedded animation except student 3 and student 10.

Figure 1: Results of pre-test and post-test

The chart of Average of the Class Results shows that eleven students’ progress of English vocabulary acquisition through English songs embedded animation. Eleven students average score improved from 33.1818 to 69.0909. It improved almost 36%.
CONCLUSION

In conclusion, based on the findings, English songs embedded animation involves a wide variety of elements. It attracts students’ eye contact successfully. Interdisciplinarity is not the only one element of a successful animation, how to cultivate students develop skills effectively and interaction is also significant (David & Dan, 2002). From the interview of students, the researcher concluded a conclusion from these five different songs, three are types of lullabies and two are top popular songs. More than half students enjoy the English songs embedded animation no matter what types of songs they are, but few of them think that lullabies are a little childish and boring. Therefore, they preferred top popular songs. It corresponded and supported with Metaxa’s (2013) and Kocaman’s (2016) point of views. Metaxa (2013) stated popular music and authentic songs occupy experiences of people’s daily lives. Kocaman (2016) illustrated that lullabies were just songs which were sung by mothers to induce baby fall asleep; however, lullabies nowadays are scientifically proved to be important to child development. To conclude, English songs embedded animation trigger students’ willingness of learning English and help vocabulary acquisition, but teacher should be careful while selecting English songs. Students’ age, preference, level, and types should be taken into consideration appropriately.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To improve students’ vocabulary acquisition, the researcher found it is effective to use English songs embedded animation in a rural Primary school in Taiwan. However, there are still limitations for few students. Thus, the researcher recommends teachers to find out failed reasons for few certain specific students and assist them.

References


