

Improving Student's English Vocabulary Using Duolingo Application

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ABSTRACT

This research was Classroom Action Research (CAR) which aimed to implement the use of the Duolingo Application to improve students' English vocabulary. It was conducted in two cycles by the researcher. The subject in this research was the students of 12th grade social 3 of SMA Negeri 1 Selakau in Academic Year 2021/2022 which consists of 15 students. The researcher found that the problem of this research was the students could not understand the vocabulary of the verb, then they had difficulty in understanding the English textbook and it was a big problem for the twelfth' grade students face the English examination. The data in this research were collected by using an observation checklist and test. The research showed the use of the Duolingo Application successfully could improve students' vocabulary of present and past verbs. As observed by the researcher, the improvement was indicated by aspects of students' active and passive in answering the vocabulary questions from the teacher. The results found through the process of using the Duolingo Application, students were likely to raise their hands to answer the translation of twenty list questions of vocabulary from the teacher. Then, the students have a better understanding of the vocabulary's meaning by a small number of students did not raise their hands, raise their hands, and answered correctly in a quick time. Therefore, this research was successful in improving the students' vocabulary of the verb by using Duolingo Application.

Keywords: Vocabulary, Verb, Application, Duolingo

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INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary is a basic component of learning a language and takes an important role in learning a language. In learning a language, vocabulary supports the students to understand the meaning of their English textbook. Particularly the vocabulary of the verb that always appears in the student's English textbook. The vocabulary of the verb is an important role in forming a sentence. Nothing sentences without a verb because a verb is always used in a sentence to describe a subject. Therefore, without a verb, a sentence is meaningless. This is the reason why learning the vocabulary of the verb is important. Since

verbs are considered important, students have to understand and study the verb to avoid misunderstanding the meaning of the text.

Knowing the importance of vocabulary in learning a language, the researcher was interested to know the competence of students' vocabulary, especially in the verb of students at twelfth grade social 3 of SMAN 1 Selakau. Based on the observation and interview result on 3rd August 2021 with a teacher and the students in that class, all students at twelfth grade social 3 of SMAN 1 Selakau had some problems. The researcher knew that all of the students in that class have that problems from interviewing all of the students. Then the researcher got the result, that vocabulary was the most problematic for students, especially the vocabulary of the verb. The students had difficulty understanding the translation of the changing verb present into a past verb when they read and could not have the capability to answer the multiple-choice questions from the textbook. It was because when the students would find the translation of the present verb in their dictionary they could find the direct translation, while if the students would find a past verb they could not find the direct translation. Then, the students at Twelfth grade social 3 of SMAN 1 Selakau lack an understanding of the English textbook they used in class. The students did not have a solution for learning the vocabulary of the verb and the students got difficulty remembering that vocabulary. Consequently, the researcher found that the problem of this research was the students could not understand the vocabulary of the verb, then they had difficulty in understanding the English textbook and it was a big problem for the twelfth' grade students face the English examination.

As mentioned in the curriculum 2013 that is used by SMAN 1 Selakau. The curriculum required the students regarding their skills or ability in English subject. Students are required to understand the meaning of the vocabulary in the textbook. The students can state the vocabulary correctly and understand the meaning contextually related to the social function, structure of the text, and linguistic elements of the textbook. Also, one of the materials that should be fulfilled by the students is about a verb. Based on the curriculum 2013, the English textbook for twelfth grade contains verbs in form of present and past. Therefore, this research focused on the verb present and past which is also required by the curriculum.

The researcher tried to overcome those problems. The researcher considered the problem experienced by students at twelfth grade social 3 of SMAN 1 Selakau could be solved by using Duolingo Application. The researcher believed that this Application could solve the problem of students at twelfth grade social 3 of SMAN 1 Selakau. Duolingo is better than regular assignments and media because of its easier use (Munday, 2016, p. 96). The researcher believed that the students were interested and enthusiastic about learning because learning involves technology and application which is like playing a game. Munday (2016) asserts that it will encourage and make students interested in learning with Duolingo.

Specifically, the Duolingo application has two aspects of advantages for improving a student's vocabulary that is the technical aspect and the pedagogic aspect. The technical aspect consists of using a translation system, providing various choices or themes of the

vocabulary, and using a repetition system. Firstly, the form of the question of Duolingo Application is using a translation system. Duolingo serves as the translation system for the learner. According to Krashen & Mason (2015), Duolingo is a web language teaching program that helps students with some exercises, largely based on the translation system. The translation in Duolingo Application is the translation of English to Indonesia and Indonesia to English. Then, the application provides various choices or themes of vocabulary and the users just need to click the theme of the vocabulary. The themes of the vocabulary in the Duolingo Application consist of the noun, adjective, verb, preposition, possessive pronoun, color, date, occupation, place, society, and question. In this research, the researcher had chosen the present and past verbs based on the students' problems that happened. Last, the vocabulary of the verb in this application is easy to remind because a vocabulary that is a verb repeats many times in the Duolingo exercise. In another word, the verb is same in some questions of the Duolingo exercise but has differences in the subjects, objects, and adverbs in a sentence. While, for the pedagogic aspect consists of the benefits for the teacher as the main material of teaching vocabulary also checks students' progress of the vocabulary, while for the students giving advantages to improve their self-confidence when answering the exercise of Duolingo Application.

Many of the researchers have used the Duolingo Application as a tool to improve students' English vocabulary. Duolingo is seen as a future in learning languages and world communication (Jaskova, 2014, p. 43). This research is in line with previous research according to a study by Siregar (Siregar, 2019, p. 61). It was found that Duolingo Application could improve students' vocabulary. The students were more active and interested to learn English. Another study by Hadi (Hadi, 2020, p. 48), found that the Duolingo Application can improve student vocabulary and increase students' understanding of vocabulary.

Some research had already been done about improving students' English vocabulary and all of the results showed that Duolingo can improve students' vocabulary. The researcher made the specific or limitation of the vocabulary because the students' problem in learning vocabulary was in a verb. This research tried to solve the students' problems and improve students' vocabulary of the present and past verbs. Then, to solve the problems the researcher designed this research using Classroom Action Research (CAR) to know the problems which occurred in the teaching-learning process and at once tried to offer the solution for the problem that happened.

METHOD

The researcher designed this research using Classroom Action Research (CAR). The researcher had chosen Classroom Action Research (CAR) to know the problems which occurred in the teaching-learning process and at once tried to offer the solution for the problem that happened. In this research, the researcher tried to explain one theory related to the definition of action research according to an expert. Action research is an element of a broad movement that has been happening in education usually for a few times. It is associated with the concepts of "reflective practice", and the researcher as an investigator (Burns, 2022, p. 290).

In this research, the researcher became an investigator and an English teacher who teaches in the class became a teacher in teaching vocabulary of the verb used the Duolingo. One of the main purposes of this research was to identify students' progress, activity, and improvement of the students. In the stages of doing CAR, the researcher started with arranging the planning, implementing the planning, doing observation, and doing a reflection on the results.

The cycle of this research depended on the criteria standard. In this research, the criteria standard could not be achieved in one cycle and the researcher continue to the second cycle. The first cycle was conducted based on the problems. The implementation principle of this research involved four steps: (1) plan, (2) act, (3) observe, (4) reflect. The procedure of this action research was taken from the design proposed by Kemmis and Mc Taggart (Kemmis et al., 2014, p. 9).

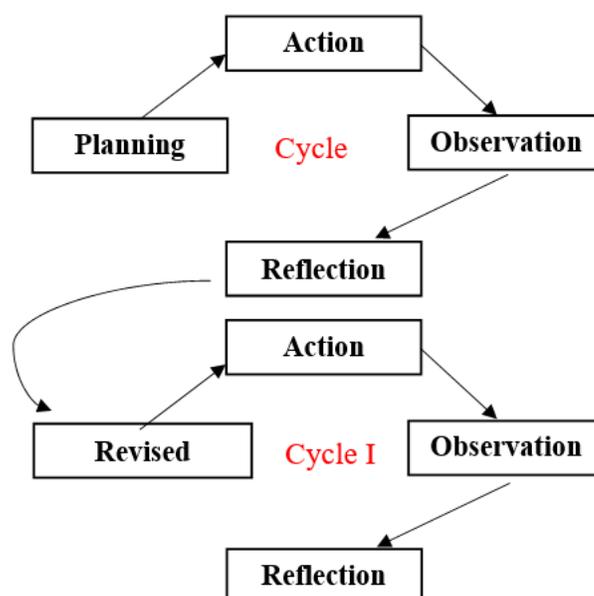


Figure 1. The Cycle of Classroom Action Research (CAR) by Kemmis, S., McTaggart,R (2014)

The first cycle consists of the planning where the researcher and the teacher that already made, did the acting, did the observation, and did reflection. In the planning stage, the researcher was prepared to introduce the research program to the teacher, prepare a learning strategy, design the lesson plans, preparing the achievement. The second stage was the acting where the researcher and the teacher implemented the plan. In implementing the acting, the students played with the Duolingo application individually and answered the twenty-list questions of the vocabulary from the teacher in a group way that consists of three members of students. In the first meeting, the teacher taught the students and worked on the exercises of a present verb in Duolingo. In the second meeting, the researcher asked the teacher to teach the student to use Duolingo Application and then worked on the exercises of a past verb in Duolingo. Then, in the third meeting, the teacher asked the students to do some exercises on present and past verbs in Duolingo. At the last

meeting or fourth meeting, the researcher gave a test to the students. The third stage was observing where the researcher observed the teacher when the teaching-learning process was being held and observe the students' results of the test at the end of the first cycle. The last stage was the reflection where the researcher reflected on whether the teaching-learning process was done successfully or not through the observation checklist and also a test. The results of the reflection were the students did not achieve the KKM or minimum accomplishment criteria (MAC) for English passing grade, which is 75. Then, the researcher discussed with the teacher to repair the lesson plan for the next cycle and concluded to continue the research into cycle II.

In the second cycle, the researcher repaired the lesson plan from the first cycle through a discussion with the English teacher. In the planning stage, the researcher and the teacher changed the plan where the students were more focused on learning individually for remembering the vocabulary. In the acting stage, the researcher and the teacher implemented the plan that had already been revised. The researcher and the teacher made the meeting of the teaching-learning process in this cycle more serious. In the teaching-learning process, the students worked individually when using Duolingo on their smartphones. Then, the students answered the questions from the teacher about the list vocabulary of the verb as individually not in a group again. In the first meeting, the teacher taught the students and worked on the exercises of a present verb in Duolingo. In the second meeting, the researcher asked the teacher to teach the student to use Duolingo Application and then worked on the exercises of a past verb in Duolingo. Then, in the third meeting, the teacher asked the students to do some exercises on present and past verbs in Duolingo. At the last meeting or fourth meeting, the researcher gave a test to the students. Then, in the third meeting, the teacher asked the students to do some exercises on present and past verbs in Duolingo. At the last meeting or fourth meeting, the researcher gave a test to the students. The third stage was observing where the researcher observed the teacher when the teaching-learning process was being held and observe the students' results of the test at the end of the first cycle. The last stage was the reflection where the researcher reflected on whether the teaching-learning process was done successfully or not through the observation checklist and also a test. In this phase, the researcher found that the revised plan also the acting of this cycle was a success. The researcher found that there was students' improvement in the teaching-learning process also from the test, the average score of the students achieved the KKM or minimum accomplishment criteria (MAC) for English passing grade, that is 75. Therefore, the researcher concluded that this research was successful in solving the students' problem, and the cycle was stopped in cycle II.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Based on the findings, it had been proven that Duolingo's Application could improve the students' teaching and learning of vocabulary, especially of the verb. By using Duolingo Application, the students became to understand the translation of the vocabulary of the verb. The students became understand the translation vocabulary, especially past verbs that became a big problem for students in twelfth grade social 3 of SMAN 1 Selakau. The students could understand the changed form of the verb from the present to the past and it still has the same translation. Then, the students also could answer the multiple-choice questions of the test. It meant that the students already understand the translation of the vocabulary, especially the verb.

The findings have related to some previous research findings which stated that the Duolingo Application could improve students' English vocabulary and increase students' understanding of vocabulary (Hadi, 2020, p. 48). Moreover, another study stated that improving students' English vocabulary through Duolingo Application was effective to improve students vocabulary (Siregar, 2019, p. 61). Therefore, Duolingo Application as the tool for teaching-learning vocabulary had relevant to the results of the previous study that improves students' English vocabulary.

Based on the results of the two cycles was found an improvement from cycle to cycle. The improvement can be seen from the observation checklist when the teaching-learning process was held and from the test at the end of each cycle. From the first meeting of the first cycle, 5 students were active and raised their hands to answer the teacher's questions about 20 list vocabulary of present verbs. Therefore, 3 students answered correctly in a long time to answer the questions, 2 students answered wrong, and 10 students were passive or did not raise their hands to answer the list of vocabulary questions from the teacher. Then, from the first meeting of the second cycle, 8 students were active and raised their hands to answer the teacher's questions about 20 list vocabulary of present verbs, all of the students who raised their hands answered correctly in quick time to answer the questions, and 7 students were passive or did not raise their hands to answer the list of vocabulary question from the teacher. It means that there are improvements in students' vocabulary of verbs present in meeting 1. The improvement from the first cycle to the second cycle of meeting 1 can be seen in diagram 1 as follows:

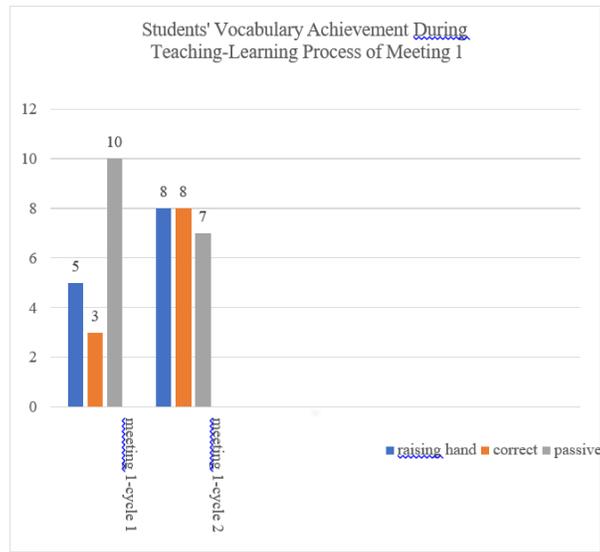


Figure 2: Students' achievement in meeting 1 (Cycle I & II)

The researcher also found from the second meeting of the first cycle, 2 students were active and raised their hands to answer the teacher's questions about 20 list vocabulary of past verbs, 1 student answered correctly in a long time to answer the questions, 1 student answered incorrectly, and 13 students were passive or did not raise their hands to answer the list of vocabulary question from the teacher. Then, from the second meeting of the second cycle, 13 students were active and raised their hands to answer the teacher's questions about 20 list vocabulary of past verbs, 12 students answered the questions was correct in quick time to answer the questions, 1 student answered incorrectly, and 2 students were passive or did not raise their hands to answer the list of vocabulary from the teacher. It means that there are improvements in students' vocabulary about verb past in meeting 2. The improvement from the first cycle to the second cycle of meeting 2 can be seen in diagram 2 as follows:

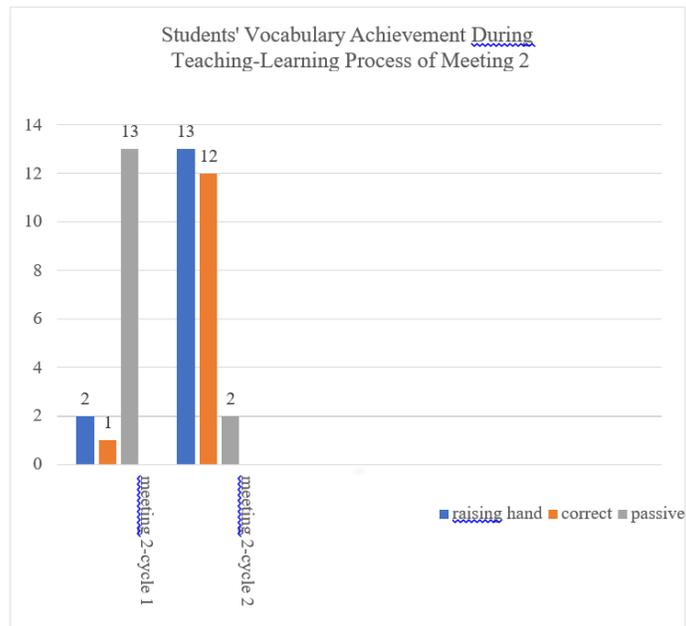


Figure 3: Students' achievement in meeting 2 (Cycle I & II)

Then, the researcher already found from the third meeting of the first cycle, that 9 students were active and raised their hands to answer the teacher's questions about 20 list vocabulary of present and past verbs, 8 students answered correctly in a long time to answer the questions, 1 student answered incorrectly, and 6 students were passive or did not raise their hands to answer the teacher's questions about 20 list vocabulary of present and past verbs. Then, from the second meeting of the second cycle, 14 students were active and raised their hands to answer the teacher's questions about 20 list vocabulary of present and past verbs, 12 students answered the questions correctly in quick time to answer the questions, 2 students answered incorrect, and 1 student was passive or did not raise their hands to answer the teacher's questions about 20 list vocabulary of present and past verbs. It means that there are improvements in students' vocabulary about verbs present and past in meeting 3. The improvement from the first cycle to the second cycle of meeting 3 can be seen in diagram 3 as follows:

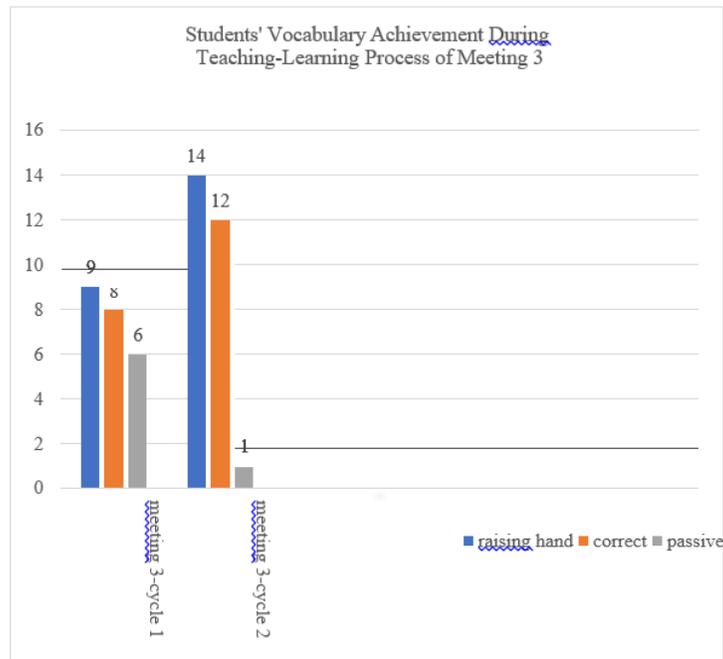


Figure 4: Students' achievement in meeting 3 (Cycle I & II)

Last, the researcher found the result of the test between the two cycles, it was found there was an improvement from cycle to cycle. The improvement from the first cycle to the second cycle can be seen in diagram 4 as follows:

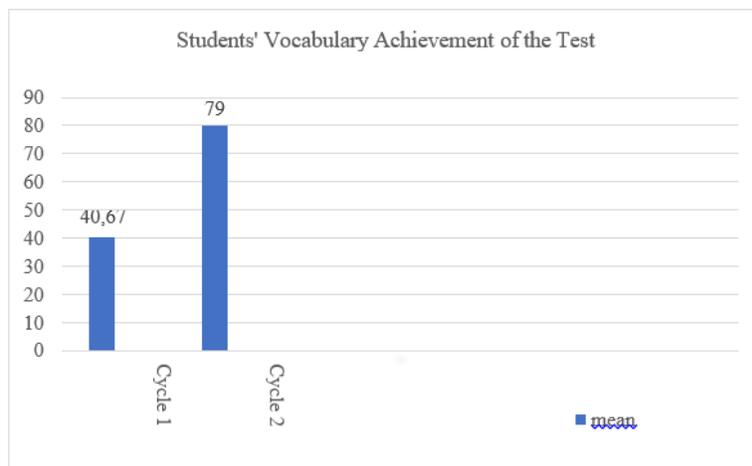


Figure 5: Students' achievement on the test (Cycle I & II)

In the first cycle, the results were not successful. The mean score of students was 40.67 and there were only 4 students from 15 students who passed the test as the KKM or minimum accomplishment criteria (MAC) for English Subject. It caused the students not to be responsible for remembering the vocabulary when using and working Duolingo Application. The students rely on other students in their group when answering list

questions from the teacher. Moreover, the teacher did not give questions about vocabulary that had already been learned to all students in the class at the end of the teaching-learning process to strengthen their memorization after using the Duolingo application. Therefore, the teaching-learning process became not effective in helping students learn the vocabulary of the verb. In the second cycle, the action was successful. The researcher and the teacher already had repaired the lesson plan for the teaching-learning process. The researcher and the teacher made the lesson plan individually to make the students responsible for remembering the vocabulary and not relying on others students again. Moreover, the researcher and the teacher also repaired the lesson plan about the repetition of vocabulary at the end of the teaching-learning process. The teacher asked all students in the class as individuals about the vocabulary that was already discussed in the teaching-learning process to strengthen students' memorization after using Duolingo. Therefore, based on the result of the test in cycle II the mean score was 79.00 and all of the students had passed the KKM or minimum accomplishment criteria (MAC) for English passing grade, which is 75.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research question and the research findings, there is a main point of conclusion that can be explained that is about the process of how the Duolingo Application improves students' English vocabulary.

Based on the explanation in the findings and discussion the students had passed a good process through the observation checklist. The process of the first cycle to the second cycle showed improvement. It can be seen from the first cycle of meeting 1 that learned about a present verb, the students still had a misunderstanding about the translation of the vocabulary. Then, from the second cycle of meeting 1 which also learned about a present verb, the students did not have a misunderstanding again about the translation of the vocabulary. Moreover, from the first cycle of meeting 2 that learned about a past verb, the students did not know about the translation of the vocabulary. Then, from the second cycle of meeting 2 which also learned about a past verb, the students had a good improvement because most of the students in the class could answer and know the translation of the vocabulary. Furthermore, from the first cycle of meeting 3 that learned about the present and past verbs, half of the students in the class knew about the translation of the vocabulary that they learned. Then, from the second cycle of meeting 2 that also learned about the present and past verbs, and almost all of the students in the class could know the translation of the vocabulary that they learned. Therefore, clearly that the results of the students' improvement after using the Duolingo Application could improve.

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