

# TEACHERS' STRATEGIES BASED INSTRUCTION TO USE HOT POTATOES IN TEACHING VOCABULARY

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## Abstract

*This research was conducted to find out the teacher's strategies in teaching vocabularies through Hot Potatoes Program and teacher's strategies to teach vocabularies through hot potatoes program. This research was conducted at SMAN 1 Palopo, and the subject was the English teacher of SMAN 1 Palopo. The subject of this research was selected through purposive sampling. This research applied qualitative study. The instrument used were observation field note and semi structured interview to collect the data. The observation was conducted for 7 meetings, and during the meetings the researcher observed the English teacher through observation field note to find out the implementation of teacher's strategies to teach vocabularies through Hot Potatoes Program, and the teacher's strategies to teach vocabularies through Hot Potatoes Program. Semi structured interviews were conducted to get more data about the teachers' strategies to teach vocabularies through Hot potatoes Program. This result of this study showed that the teacher focused on antonym, synonym, verbs, adjectives, and nouns. The teacher implement used three features of Hot Potatoes Program such as J-Match, J-close, and J-Cross. There were four kinds of strategies used to teach the vocabularies, such as Focus on vocabulary, Offer opportunity, Repeat and Recycle, and Provide opportunity to organize the vocabulary.*

**Key word:** Teaching strategies, Vocabulary, Hot Potatoes

## INTRODUCTION

The positive effect of computer based learning does not come automatically; it depends on how teachers use it in their language classrooms. Harmer (2007) and Gençlter (2015) emphasized that the teachers should encourage learners to find appropriate activities through using computer technology in order to be successful in language learning. In this case, students are possible to use computer from available software which offers to learn in their own pace or provided by the teacher for creating teaching material with authoring tools. An authoring tool is used to create electronic

material which can be distributed as web page for learning purpose (Dudeny&Hockly, 2007, p. 129).

Some of professional authoring tools have complex program and sometimes require a degree of expert and knowledge which most teachers will probably not have the time to do so. Teachers are supposed to function any useful software by deciding the use, the ease, and the availability for specific teaching purpose like the use of Hot potatoes software for creating vocabulary lesson. Hot Potatoes is an educational program innovated by Half-Baked Software, Inc. It was designed for educators to allow them to create and develop interactive web-based exercise. Moreover, Hot Potatoes was designed by the team at TESL Department in the University of Victoria. In this department, the developers build the best ESL teaching techniques which enable to use to develop interactive learning programs.

Hot Potatoes provides five programs including JClose, JQuiz, JCross, JMatch and JMix which possibly can be used for learning vocabulary (Arneil& Holmes, 2009, p. 4). JClose allows us to create exercise like gap-fill exercises. JQuiz enables to create exercises in form of a quiz like multiple-choice and short-answer quizzes. JCross is used to create in from of crossword puzzle which is appropriate for finding new words with some clues. JMatch is used to make exercise like matching words and there is also possibility to add pictures. JMix is used to form order exercise like jumbled-sentence or jumbled-word exercises where some words or sentences are arranged. There is an additional feature called The Masher which enables to export the created exercises into a group of folder and can be previewed in offline web site without internet connection. Hot Potatoes provides teacher some kinds of exercises and also enables teacher to make direct feedback in the exercises which makes students learn directly. A good software for learning always makes students learn a lesson instead of just giving score without considering feedback (Wharton & Race, 2005, p. 36) because the use of computer program is not merely used for testing students but Hot Potatoes provides teacher to give clues and feedback to every exercise after answering some questions.

Some studies have been done on the use of hot potatoes in English language teaching and learning. Setiawan (2016) has investigated the use of hot potatoes in teaching vocabulary. The result showed that the use of Hot Potatoes program can facilitate both students' learning process and their motivation in learning. Askin, Akib, and Azis (2018) have identified student's perception on the use of hot potatoes. The result of data analysis revealed that all participants had positive perception toward hot potatoes. Rodriguez (2010) has also investigated the use of hot potatoes to improve paragraph writing. The result showed that the use of hot potatoes in paragraph writing could provide students with activities to learn and reinforce the rhetorical structure.

Regarding those findings on the use of technology in English language teaching and learning, the study mostly focus on the students' improvement in English language learning. Besides, the researcher believes that it is important to know the teacher's strategy in using hot potatoes especially in teaching vocabulary. However, this research was not only focus on the teacher's strategy in using hot potatoes to teach vocabulary, but also the teacher's perception toward the use of hot potatoes.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### History of Hot Potatoes Software

Hot Potatoes is developed by the research and development team at the University of Victoria, Humanities Computing and Media Centre in Canada (Arneil& Holmes, 2009, p. 35). Hot Potatoes is used to create variety of interactive exercises then can be exported as web pages and launched in web browser. Students can correct their own work based on the clues and feedback set up in advance by the teacher and also automatic scoring is included in the exercises. To operate this program, teacher needs to create questions, answers and responds based on intended topic will be discussed.

Hot Potato is a fast-paced cooperative learning structure that promotes the contribution of a range of different ideas. According to Pinto, et all (2014: 37) this strategy include a big group and give a chance to the students to offer their knowledge or their opinion in front of their friends with the special topic from the teacher. So the students can get new information from their friends and also can enhance their confidents and force the students to be more critical in speaking. Vargan and Monge (2014: 319) Hot potatoes give immediately feedback to the students. The students will try to create new ideas in every each topic. It pushes the students keep digging or more divergently to create ideas.

This program can be used for any subjects of learning but it is specifically for language learning. As reviewed by Ghorbanpour, this software can be used to create language learning activities suitable for learners with varying levels of language proficiency. For example, at the beginner level, questions can be accompanied by pictures, while advanced level questions could be connected to complex reading passages. Hot Potatoes is used to create learning activity especially for vocabulary learning. Some programs are considered appropriate such as JCross is used to create exercise in from of crossword which is appropriate for finding new words with some clues. JMatch is used to make exercise like matching words with corresponding pictures. The Hot Potatoes program consists of five modules for creating different types of interactive exercises namely JQuiz , JCloze, JMatch, JCross, and JMix

(Arneil& Holmes, 2009, p. 4). The JQuiz program is used to create question-based quizzes. Questions can be four different types including multiple-choice and short-answer. Specific feedback can be provided both for right answers or wrong answers in short-answer and multiple-choice questions. The student can also ask for a hint in which help them to find the answers. The JCloze program is used to create gap-fill exercise.

### Strategies to Teach Vocabulary

A lot of words and knowledge of vocabulary needed by students are supposed to be presented with teaching principles. Teaching principles fundamentally helps students in learning vocabulary more effectively. There are few principles can be used as foundations in teaching vocabulary (McCarten, 2007, p. 19). McCarten states, when teaching vocabulary teacher not only presents vocabulary solely but also how words or phrases are presented with meanings that students don't know and how to use vocabulary in context. It is clearly defined that the way of teaching vocabulary should be based on learning context for example through reading. Schmitt (2000, p.150) explains based on a study, learning vocabulary through reading can lead significant improvement in term of providing a context of vocabulary instruction incidentally. Teachers need to make clear instruction, for instance, which word items should be learned, what item it is, and what purpose of presenting its items.

At the other hand, teacher should offer variety of vocabulary materials. Teacher can use different ways to present vocabulary including pictures, sounds, and different types of text such as stories, conversation, web pages, etc. The topics that will be presented should be relevant to student's interest and engage students with different level. Offering variety also means providing different learning styles and different learning situations for students. Each student may prefer to learn either by seeing, hearing and doing something or studying thoroughly.

### **METHODOLOGY**

This research applied qualitative design. According to Gay, Mills & Airasian (2006), the qualitative design deals with the collection, analysis and interpretation of comprehensive, narrative, and visual data in order to gain insight into a particular phenomenon of interest. In this research, the researcher collected the data totally in seven meetings through observation-field note and interview.

## Subject of the Research

This research was conducted in SMA Negeri 1 Palopo, academic year 2018/2019. The subject of this research was one teacher at grade XI of SMAN 1 Palopo. The teacher who used hot potatoes software in teaching vocabulary was observed to see the implementation of hot potatoes software and to find out the strategies in using hot potatoes to teach vocabulary to the students. The subject of this research was chosen deliberately in order to have easier access of inquiry. The subject was taken based on purposive sampling.

## Data Collection

### a. Observation Field Note

Observation Field Note is aimed to see the implementation of hot potatoes software to teaching vocabulary, and to find out the strategies that will be used during the teaching process. Cresswell (2012) confirms that observation is the process of gathering open-ended, firsthand information by observing people and places at a research site. The observation was described in accordance with specific domains such as the practicality and the functionality of media in facilitating learning process. The practicality of Hot Potatoes can be said appropriate in facilitating learning process as students can operate easily without getting any confused since the teacher explained how to use the program. On the other hand, some of exercises in the program facilitated students in learning because it provides direct feedback, clues of answer, and the evaluation.

### a. Semi Structured Interview

The researcher used semi-structured interviews to strengthen the data. The researcher asked specific question about the implementation of hot potatoes software and the strategies to teach vocabulary through hot potatoes. There will be six questions about teacher's strategy and six questions about teacher perception on the use of hot potatoes to teach vocabulary.

A semi-structured interview is one where the interviewer has a clear picture of the topics that need to be covered (and perhaps even a preferred order for these) but is prepared to allow the interview to develop in unexpected directions where these open up important new areas.

## Data Analysis

In analyzing the data from the observation and interview, the researcher will follow some steps which deal with the procedures in analyzing qualitative research data. According Virginia Braun, Thematic analysis is the process of identifying patterns or themes within qualitative data. Braun & Clarke (2006) suggest that it is the first qualitative method that should be learned as ‘..it provides core skills that will be useful for conducting many other kinds of analysis’ (p.78). Therefore, the researcher adopt and combine these steps in order to get the comprehensive and suitable procedures/steps in analyzing the data based on the objectives of the research.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

The implementation of Hot Potatoes Software to teach vocabulary

According to Erben (2008: 171) hot potatoes is exercise-building software that can be used to create interactive web-based quizzes quickly and easily. Based on the findings, the teacher implement Hot Potatoes through asking the students to organize their own quiz. It could be part of the exercise for the students because they did not only improve their vocabulary skill but also encouraging the students in learning process.

Hot potatoes provides some features such as J-Match, J-close, J-Cross, J-mix and J-quiz. The teacher decided to use only three features (J-Match, J-Close, and J-Cross) because it was appropriate with the lesson especially to teach vocabulary. During the learning process the teacher explained first about the material that they are going to learn and put the students into group to work using hot potatoes.

As Erben said that hot potatoes is exercise building, the teacher organize the lesson through hot potatoes to help the students be able to organize their own quiz. Organizing their own quiz helped the students to be more understand about the vocabulary use, and they can exercise using their own quiz. Furthermore, Hot Potatoes importantly enables students to facilitate their own learning. It has singular advantage of providing students to facilitate their own learning and get immediate feedback without needing the physical proximity of a teacher (Erben, Ban, & Castaneda: 2009:74).

Based on the observation class, the researcher found that the students were more independent because they were working in group and the teacher only helped them if they wanted to ask something. In other words, the using of program such as hot potatoes enabled the teacher to share the responsibility for learning with their students. It is along with what Brown (2001:146) noted that currently, most widely standardized tests are computer-based.

Sooner or later, most language students will need to perform such a test, designed to gauge the test-taker level's as the responses are made. During the early time right or wrong answers are electronically analyzed in order to present later items, from a bank of possible items that will be neither too easy nor too difficult and present an optimal challenge. It means that with the progress of this era, the teacher should be smart and creative to adapt this era, because along with progress of this era there are many newest technologies. It also demands the teacher or test-taker don't be blind with the progress of technology.

### Teacher strategies Used to teach Vocabularies

#### a. Provides opportunities to organize vocabularies

Giving the students assignment such as making their own quiz based on the vocabularies that they have learnt is one of the strategies that the teacher used in teaching vocabularies. Utilizing hot potatoes software makes the students more independent in organizing the vocabularies into quizzes, such as using J-match to make a quiz about synonym and antonym, using j-close to identify the verbs in a short story, and using J-cross to identify noun. All the activities provided by the teacher were intended to gain the students participation to learn vocabularies. It can be seen in the observation findings that the students organized their own work and also they were given a project to make a quiz using three features of hot potatoes based on the vocabularies that they have learnt during six meetings.

Based on the interview, the teacher said that *"Hot potatoes adalah salah satu media yang sangat membantu dalam pengajaran vocabulary karna fitur fiturnya yang mudah digunakan dan siswa juga senang mendapatkan pengetahuan baru dengan membuat quis sendiri"* (*Hot Potatoes is a media that is really helpful in teaching vocabulary because the features are easy to use and the students also happy because they get something new.*). The statement can be implied that using hot potatoes could increase students participation in learning vocabulary because the features of hot potatoes are easy to use and it can be a fun way to learn a vocabulary through making quiz from each features from hot potatoes

#### b. Repeat and recycle

Students can memorize vocabulary well by repeating or reviewing of what have learnt to use or recycle the later. According to Milton (2009) Multiple repetition

may not help the initial learning, but may help them stay in the memory after learning. Regarding with recycling later, Notion (1990) notes that if recycling is neglected, many partially-known words will be forgotten, wasting all the efforts already put into learning them. Also, Notion (2001) points out that the benefit of repetition is that it adds to the quality of knowledge and also the quantity of this knowledge.

Based on the observation, the researcher found that the teacher used repetition to help the students understand the vocabulary easily. Besides, it helps the students to be more familiar with the vocabulary because after repeating the words the teacher also reviewed the lesson in the next meeting. Moreover, the use of hot potatoes also keep the students to stay focus on the lesson because by making the quiz in group, they automatically repeating what they have learned and put them into a quiz through hot potatoes software. Furthermore, in repeat and recycle strategy the teacher more focus on the topic the they have learnt such as synonym, antonym, verbs, adjectives, and noun. In this case, at the end of the lesson, the students were hoped to be able to use and understand about the vocabularies.

Based on the interview, the teacher said that *“saya selalu menyebutkan vocabulary dan mengulanginya supaya siswa tetap ingat dengan apa yang mereka pelajari dan paham dengan pengucapannya juga”* (I always mention the vocabulary and repeat it so the students could remember what they have learnt and understand the pronunciation as well). The teacher wanted the students to really understand what they have learner by always repeating the words and make sure they know how to pronounce it as well. It can be implied that repeating and recycle strategy is one of the strategy that can improve students' vocabulary skill.

### c. Offer Variety

Giving some activities can be the best way to engage the students to learn vocabulary. Offering different materials gives the students a new knowledge especially in learning vocabulary. Based on the findings, the teacher gave the students different materials in every meeting, and give some activities to increase the students participation in the classroom. The students used hot potatoes as the media to teach the vocabularies. It helps the students during the learning process because the students can work on their group and organizing their own quiz through Hot Potatoes. Hedge (2000) highlights the ultimate role of the teacher, besides explaining new words to the students, is to build independence to the students. Giving time to the students to make a vocabulary quiz can help the students be more independent.



Offering some varieties in teaching and learning process create a positive impact for the students. The learning process become more effective and fun. The important thing is that the students can enjoy the learning process because once the students feel comfortable during learning process they will understand the lesson easily. Based on the findings, the teacher make sure that the students understand the material by offering some activities, and it is proven through the involvement of the students with their group to make a quiz using hot potatoes software.

Based on the interview, the teacher said that *“saya membagi siswa menjadi kelompok dan tiap kelompok terdiri dari lima orang siswa. Mereka akan disuruh mengerjakan latihan dalam kelompok agar mereka saling membantu”*(I divided the students into groups consisted of 5 students. They were asked to do an exercise in group so they can help each other). Based on the statement it can be seen that the teacher wanted that the students work in group so they can help each other. Besides, it also can be seen from the observation findings that the students work on a project in group. Working in group and using hot potatoes software are the variety that teacher used to engage the students in order to be more motivated in learning process.

#### d. Focus on Vocabulary

Focus on vocabulary means the students have to pay attention on the form, meaning, and usage. It is in line with Nation's (2001) that to know a word, we have to consider about the form, meaning and usage. Based on the findings of this research, the teacher considered to focus not only on the form of the word, but also the teacher focused on the meaning and usage. Considering those three aspects, the students can understand the lesson easily especially in learning vocabulary.

During the teaching process, the researcher observed that the teacher wrote down the vocabularies on the white board and explained the meaning and the usage of the word. For example, go (verb), beautiful (adjectives) and car (noun). The teacher introduce the form of the word first and then the meaning of the word. Besides, the teacher also explained the usage of the sentence by asking the students to make a quiz. For example, in the fifth meeting the students learned about adjectives, so the teacher showed some pictures about adjectives such as happy, sad, angry and so on. Then the teacher asked the students about the meaning of each words. After that the teacher explained that 'happy' is used when get something special, 'sad' is a word that describe someone who has problem and it makes him/her sad, and so on.

The teacher said that *“saya selalu mengajarkan vocabulary dengan artinya supaya siswa tidak hanya tau vobaularinya saja tapi juga paham apa arti dari*

*vocabulary tersebut*”(I always teach vocabularies with the meaning in order to help the students understand both of the vocabulary and the meaning). Based on the explanation it can be implied that the teacher wanted the students to understand both the vocabulary and the meaning as well.

The teacher used hot potatoes as the media to teach vocabulary to make the students more familiar with the words because it can help them to stay focus on what they have learnt. It is shown from the findings in observation that the teacher asked the students to make a quiz and work in group about the material that they are learning. It automatically help the students to be more familiar with the vocabulary because they can work on it as a quiz and it can be used to practice about the vocabulary.

### **CONCLUSION**

Based on the findings of this research, it can be concluded that the hot potatoes helps the students to engage in learning process and it can make the students to be more independent. There were three features that the teacher used during the six meetings, namely J-match which is used to match the words, J-close is a gap-filling exercise that can help students to identify words, and J-cross is used to find the correct answer through guessing the word. All those three features were implemented by the teacher during the teaching process. Moreover, during the teaching process the teacher said that the students participate actively and they were able to work in group to solve a problem especially in making quiz about vocabulary.

The researcher also found there were four strategies applied by the teacher, such as focus on vocabulary, that is more focus on the form, meaning, and the usage of the vocabulary. Offer variety, is about the activities offered during teaching vocabularies such as working in group. Repeat and recycle, is about the strategy that can help students to memorize the vocabularies easily. The last is about providing opportunities to organize the vocabulary, more refers to the way the teacher encourage the students to be more independent in learning process.

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