

## **THE DYNAMIC IMMERSION SOFTWARE: TEACHING ENGLISH VOCABULARY FOR YOUNG LEARNERS**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The ability in mastering vocabulary holds an important part in the process of learning a language including English. By analogy, English is a weapon whereas vocabulary is the bullet. It will be useless for someone who has a sophisticated weapon without having a great number of bullets. Hence, mastering vocabulary in a language is very important thus emerge techniques or method to master vocabulary. One of the teaching method is Dynamic Immersion Method (DIM). Therefore the purpose of this research is to analyze the process of mastering vocabulary using DIM applied in Rosetta Stone computer software, in one of Elementary schools in Cipatat, Kabupaten Bandung Barat and to know their perception toward the use of it. There are 21 students from the 4<sup>th</sup> grade who become the participants of this research. In the process of collecting data, the writer uses observations and interview to see the process of using DIM and the students' perception to the use of it and then analyzes elaborately based on the purpose of this research. . It was found that DIM in this study is considered successful because it enables students not only to memorize the words in English better but also to learn English vocabularies in meaningful context. The topic discussed in each slide is within the young learners' world. Thus, the teaching of vocabulary in Dynamic Immersion software into certain extent is successful because the material might be interesting, the learning environment seems enjoyable, the period is relatively short and the material could attract young learners to learn vocabulary better. In terms of young learners' perception, the data revealed that the students perceive positively.

**Keywords:** Vocabulary, Dynamic Immersion Method, Technology, Young Learners

## A. Introduction

The implementation of primary education in every single country sometimes differs from one another. It can be from the framework, general objectives, and so on. As the result, the implementation of English teaching is also started and frame-worked differently, especially in non-English speaking countries. In Indonesia, compulsory primary education is started at the age of six with English as an additional lesson. It is in line with a notion proposed by Pinter (2006) stating that the term *young learners* is applicable to students “*from five to 14 years of age*”.

Moreover, teaching English brings its own challenge and benefits. It is especially considering the characteristic of young learners that can either be a form of advantageous factor or shortcoming factor to the successful of language teaching. Considering Vygotsky’s notion (in Pinter, 2006) that children are active learners, the methodology used in English for Young Learners (EYL) class needs to be active allowing students to actively participate in the process of teaching and learning. Thus, the method chosen in class needs to accommodate their needs by allowing their senses to be involved during the process of teaching and learning.

Furthermore, the use of method as one of teaching elements that can engage both students’ receptive and productive senses is considered as one of the efforts that can be done by teachers in EYL class in delivering their material (see Brown, 2001; Harmer, 2001; Rodgers, 2001; Elizabeth, 2010; Mora, 2010). Dynamic Immersion Method, in addition, is a method that combines the use of images, text, and sound, with progressive difficult levels. Such arrangement is created in order to teach various vocabulary terms and grammatical functions intuitively, without drilling or translating. It is designed to teach foreign languages like the way first language is learned and it can provide the audio-visual need and exposure.

We all learned our mother tongue as children, before we ever went to school. The Dynamic Immersion method recreates this experience. The student is plunged into images and human voices in the context of daily life, so that he/she understands the meaning of new words and phrases (Skills Development Centre, 2010). In other words, The Dynamic Immersion foreign language software program attempts to mimic the setting of childhood. The idea behind this is that when immersed in an environment consisting of familiar situations, people, places and things, one can make the connection between images and verbal awareness. *Rosetta Stone* is a computer software that accommodates the Dynamic Immersion Method. It

can be used as one of the choices in delivering teaching material in mastering vocabularies in EYL class.

In addition, sophisticated method will not give any effect if it cannot engage the students' intrinsic motivation for they need to have their own "*self-determination and autonomy*" in internalizing the teaching material so that they can successfully achieve the desired learning outcomes.

As consequence, the relation between the students' perception in terms of their interest leading to their intrinsic motivation in learning English when audiovisual software like *Rosetta Stone Software* is used and their vocabulary mastery in certain linguistic focus is an interesting issue to observe. Besides being interesting, such observation can also be conducted in order to evaluate whether the software matches the characteristic of young learners especially when they have been in the formal stage (Pinter, 2006), at approximately the age of 11 or 12, when their awareness of linguistic elements has started to emerge (Pinter: 2006, Saville-Troike: 2006).

This research is aimed to answer the questions on how the Dynamic Immersion Method in a language learning software improve students' mastery of English vocabulary and the student's perception toward the use of Dynamic Immersion Method Software in their English class.

## **B. Methods**

This study adopted qualitative approach as it involved the collection and qualitative analysis of the data. It also allows the researcher to work with more than one of data collection methods, such as observation and interview. The research employs Dynamic Immersion Method in English learning software, named *Rosetta Stone*. As it is stated in its website, *Rosetta Stone* is a form of proprietary computer-assisted language learning (CALL) software developed by *Rosetta Stone Inc.* This software combines the use of images, text, and sound, with progressive difficult levels that get along with the student's progress. Such arrangement is created in order to teach various vocabulary terms and grammatical functions intuitively, without drilling or translating. The software method is designed to teach foreign languages like the way first language is learned.

In *Rosetta Stone Version 3*, instructions are arranged in language levels with 4 units in each level. Each unit is divided into four core lessons. Each core

lesson approximately takes 30 minutes followed by sub lessons. Sub lessons consist of Pronunciation, Writing, Vocabulary, Grammar, Listening, Reading, Speaking, and Reviews. At the end of each unit is a Milestone, which is an interactive activity that reviews the material covered in that unit. For this research, the sub lesson is only focused on Vocabulary. Since the research question of this paper relates to vocabulary, thus the material used in the observation is only sub lesson vocabulary of each core lesson. The vocabulary sub lesson consists of seven slides. Each slide consists of different material.

During the conduct of this research, *Rosetta Stone*, which accommodates Dynamic Immersion Method, was shown to 21 students of 4<sup>th</sup> grade. of elementary school in Cipatat, Kabupaten Bandung Barat became the participants of this research. The lack of using technology in the site was the main consideration of conducting this study there.

In this case, the data was collected through two steps; observing and interviewing. Meanwhile, the topics of the interview were related to the perception of teacher and students in teaching vocabulary using Rosetta Stone version 3. The semi-structured interview was conducted in schools where the students learn. Furthermore, during class observation, the researcher participated in the classroom as a teacher, observed the activities and took notes. The observation was recorded in video-formed so that, it is assumed, the observation could be done thoroughly and repeatedly.

## **C. Results and Discussions**

### **1. The Use of Dynamic Immersion Method in Young Learners' Vocabulary Mastery**

The findings from observation using field notes during the learning process showed that the students' mastery of English vocabulary relatively increased by using Dynamic Immersion Method implicated in Rosetta Stone language learning software and they showed positive behavior toward it based on the indicators as follows:

- Most students performed better after the teacher did as model and repeated on how to operate the software several times
- The students understood both the learning material and the instruction.

- The students looked enthusiastic and they participated happily to the class activity without any stress condition.
- The students were entertained and had fun.

The observation data revealed that the classroom atmosphere was increasingly positive during the implementation of Dynamic Immersion Method applied in Rosetta Stone learning software. This evidence was in line with Schultz (2006) who believes that a facilitator needs to be more conscious of time constraints on a students' ability to process information in clear, structures, and systematic format while viewing pictures. The effect of this method was indicated from students who took part actively and enthusiastically in doing the Dynamic Immersion Method in Rosetta Stone language learning software and following the instructions. They often smiled, laughed, responded to the conversation, and repeated the words. This was consistent with what was stated by Stempelski & Tomalin (1990) that children feel their interest quicken when a language is presented in a lively way, as it was in Rosetta Stone language learning software.

The students were also able to express themselves through their own experience by hearing and seeing the English words. Those could help young learners to be active and enjoy doing things in English. Most of them tried to follow the words. They were also curios to know the next material displayed in the monitor to be learned in every meeting. The observation was in line with the characteristics of young learner that they are naturally curios (Brown, 2001). In addition, the availability of slides greatly helped students' comprehension; for example, moods are often conveyed through expressions and other visual clues. Thus, children often observe how intonation can match facial expressions (Harmer, 2001).

Repeated words presented in Rosetta Stone language learning software became an effective vocabulary exercise because they were easy to follow, interesting and attractive. In this condition, the students were motivated to watch because they did not want to miss the opportunity to be engaged in the slides and activities. Those aspects support the theory that watching live picture increases the students' motivation and curiosity on learning because they show the eagerness to use and practice the language they have heard and seen (Harmer, 2002). This evidence also revealed when students were given the vocabulary exercise, most of them did the task well and they were able to recall better the content and gain more information to clarify thinking ideas, feeling, and event when the researcher gave a quiz.

Moreover, Rosetta Stone, as language learning software that applies Dynamic Immersion Method, was seen as something which helped young learners to relax and unwind. It kept them entertained without their having to make much effort. Particularly, Rosetta Stone had a particular role within children. They were presented short and easy, fun and funny. This coincided with Arthur (1999) in Canning (2000) who claims that pictures helps learner to give realistic materials, imitate models and increase awareness by teaching appropriateness and suitability. Overall, most display was relaxing and easy to follow as shown from the students' facial expression.

As children acquired more experience of audiovisual, the ability to comprehend the content increased. This statement goes to Cameron (2001), Ellis and Brewster (2002) point that the combination of sounds and pictures provide young learners with pleasant learning language. In line with those statements above, Phillipis (1993) as cited in Hakim (2009) also states that video is part of children's life nowadays and they are able to be useful tools in language teaching. Therefore, using language learning software in teaching vocabulary to young learners contributes a new and special feature in teaching English.

After involving in Rosetta Stone language learning software, the students were asked some questions related to the content. Most of them participated well and tried to give the right answers. This, as data from interview also revealed, some of students were proud and happy because they answered correctly. Regarding this evidence, Brown (2001) inserted that the application of audiovisual builds self-confidence. In general, the use of Rosetta Stone language learning software could improve students' engagement in learning process because learning circumstances more interesting, attractive, and dynamic and it facilitated the students to understand and go beyond the lesson better.

From the discussion above, it can be concluded that the Dynamic Immersion Method, which is applied in Rosetta Stone language learning software have a positive result in increasing students' engagement in learning new vocabularies and, as it is hoped, it facilitates the students' mastery of English vocabularies.

## **2. Analysis of Students' Perception on Dynamic Immersion Method**

Data from interviews supported data from observation. In that most students gave positive response to Dynamic Immersion software. They said that their feeling were happy, interested, and motivated to learn when learning English by using Dynamic Immersion software. The data from interviews also noted that the use of Dynamic Immersion software helped them improve their vocabulary mastery. S1, S3, S9, and S10 said that they could recognize and memorize the words better.

As it is mentioned earlier from all the data obtained, it was obvious that all students gave positive perception to Dynamic Immersion software. They actively took part in all activities presented in Rosetta Stone, such as watching, listening, repeating some words and expressions, pointing, clicking, and answering questions. Most respondents' favorite activity was repeating some words and expressions, and answering questions by clicking.

Regarding the evidence, young learners' favorite part in Dynamic Immersion software was presentation because the slides was attractive, good, fun, interesting, and cool (as said by S1, S3, S5, and S11). That proved what is stated by Canning (2000) that learners prefer action to language in the classroom because it might hold students' interest and comprehension. These referential connections are more easily built when both verbal and visual materials are presented simultaneously.

The students loved Dynamic Immersion software because they contained the lesson that attracts high levels of active attention with pointing, clicking, imitating behaviors, and responding back to the slides. Furthermore, young learners put themselves as sophisticated viewers, who are able to 'see through' the medium. Thus, as children acquired more experience of audiovisual, their ability to comprehend its content into learning increased.

Despite the positive responses given by the students to Dynamic Immersion software, the data from interview revealed that the students still face several difficulties related to computer technical use and long sentences or expressions in the slides.

It can be inferred from the above explanation that it cannot be avoided that there were parts that young learners less preferred. The less liked parts were long expression with unfamiliar words, repeating and technical using of computer. Although the students found hard to understand every single word, some of students understood what should be done even though they did not know all the expressions. The gesture and repetition actually helped them to catch the meaning of the expressions. However, they were aware that those three activities are useful to improve their to improve their English vocabulary because sample gesture and repetition given by Dynamic Immersion Method in Rosetta Stone language learning software helped them to understand and guess the meaning of new words.

#### **D. Conclusions**

In terms to the use of Dynamic Immersion Method that contained in a language learning software, called Rosetta Stone, it can be found that the slides were presented in relatively short time. They had specific topic and real-context pictures. Therefore, the benefit from the software, which was rich with language input, could help students improve their vocabulary mastery.

With the respect to young learners' perception, the data revealed that the students responded positively. It showed that the students could express themselves through their own experience by seeing and hearing English words in Rosetta Stone language learning software that applies Dynamic Immersion Method, therefore they were able to observe the intonation matches facial expressions. They were able to observe to accomplish the vocabulary tasks well, such as memorizing the words related to the topic. The use of Dynamic Immersion Method was able to motivate the students to perform better so they were eager to participate and give contribution in the classroom. Data from observation showed that some students subconsciously said or applied the words studied to their teacher and friends after involving in Rosetta Stone language learning software that applied Dynamic Immersion Method.

In relation to the success, data from interviews also revealed some positive perceptions to the use of Dynamic Immersion Method. The students felt that the slides gave them benefits. The students were interested and enthusiastic to follow the teaching and learning process because Rosetta Stone software that applied Dynamic Immersion Method bring happiness and motivate them

to be engage actively in teaching learning process. Moreover the students felt their vocabulary mastery got some improvement and they could recognize and memorize the English words better.

Finally, Rosetta Stone language learning software that applies Dynamic Immersion Method provide authentic and meaningful language. Based on the students' performance above, it can be concluded that the teaching vocabulary to young learners through Dynamic Immersion Method in this study is considered successful because it enables students not only to memorize the words in English better but also to learn English vocabularies in meaningful context. The topic discussed in each slide is within the young learners' world. Thus, the teaching of vocabulary through Rosetta Stone software that applies Dynamic Immersion Method into certain extent is successful because the material might be interesting, the learning environment seems enjoyable, the period is relatively short and the material could attract young learners to learn vocabulary better.

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