Using Story Reading Technique
to Improve EFL Young Learners' Vocabulary

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Abstract

This study was conducted to improve young leaners' English vocabulary. To attain the objective, a three-cycled action research, taught vocabularies by using the story reading technique, was conducted to the 10 students of the K-1 grade in Grace Kids Preschool, Jakarta. The quantitative data collected using tests were analyzed using SPSS, and the qualitative data collected using observation and interview techniques were analyzed descriptively. The results indicated that the story reading techniques improved the participants' vocabulary mastery, as shown by the increase of the mean scores of the tests conducted, i.e. 42 (in the pre-test) to 62 (post-test of cycle I) to 80 (post-test of cycle II), and to 92 (post-test of cycle III); the use of stories significantly increased the students' vocabulary mastery. Based on the findings, it could be concluded that the use of story reading technique was effective to improve kindergarten students' vocabulary mastery.

Keywords: story reading, vocabulary, young learner, kindergarten.

Introduction

Teaching English to young learners, including in kindergarten, is now a common phenomenon in most big cities in Indonesia. Although the practice was under serious attacks, bilingual education (using Indonesian and English as the medium of teaching and learning) keeps on flourishing in Indonesia. It is even admired and popular, and parents are enthusiastic to send their children to bilingual schools (Sugiharto, 2006).

Despite their parents' enthusiasm, many students, especially those attending kindergarten, face some problems. Based on the researcher's observation, the biggest problem the students face is their lack of vocabulary. This often causes them to lose focus and motivation, unable to express what they want to communicate, and find English difficult to master. This is natural because vocabulary is very essential for comprehension and communication. If students do not know the meaning of many of the words that they listen to in a conversation or encounter in a text, their comprehension is likely to be compromised. On the other hand, the more vocabulary someone masters in English the easier it is for him to communicate and understand English itself. Flohr (2010, p. 2) accentuated that students need to learn vocabulary because otherwise they will not be able to express and articulate themselves in a way that other students or native speakers of English can understand them.

Based on the explanation above, it is obvious that to increase the learners' vocabulary mastery should be made the first priority. Literature on vocabulary instruction asserts the significant role of vocabulary in both native and non-native language acquisition (Gass, 1999). Research evidence supports the effectiveness of rich vocabulary instruction in language learning (Beck & McKeown, 2007). The growth of vocabulary knowledge is an essential pre-requisite for language acquisition, because a teaching-learning process will not run well if the learners lack of vocabulary, which makes them unable to comprehend English.

Vocabulary teaching is possibly one of the areas in ELT that provide the most diverse strategies and techniques. These strategies and techniques could be classified into direct and indirect approaches. Some of the most popular ways of the direct approach is having students look words up in a dictionary, analyze the word root and affixes, find synonyms or antonyms, write definitions, and use words in a sentence. The indirect approach is conducted by letting the learners incidentally acquire vocabulary through the act of reading. Brown, Collins, and Duguid (cited in Gu & Johnson, 1996) suggest that both direct and indirect approaches to vocabulary learning can be useful. However, to decide which approach to use, teachers should keep into consideration the learners' linguistic background, learning abilities, and learning styles. In addition, vocabulary learning should be made enjoyable and meaningful to the students.

Reading stories is one of the most effective ways teachers can use to design interesting and meaningful situations to teach EFL vocabulary to young learners. This technique is motivating to young learners because they are generally eager to learn new vocabulary from short stories. Reading stories can improve both EFL learners' listening and comprehension skills; therefore, enabling them to obtain vocabulary. Ellis and Brewster (2002, p. 2) emphasized that "... stories allows the teacher to introduce or revise new vocabulary and sentence structures by exposing the children to language in varied, memorable and familiar contexts.

Realizing the effectiveness of reading stories to develop young learners' vocabulary, the researcher in this current study would like to see whether story reading technique as a complementary teaching activity significantly improve her K-1 grade students' EFL vocabulary. During the study, the researcher selected stories that were combined with the students' textbooks. The stories were regarded as complementary learning materials. Specifically, the study addressed the following research questions: (1) How does the use of reading story technique affect the K-1 grade students' EFL vocabulary learning? (2) Does the use of reading stories technique improve the K-1 grade students' EFL vocabulary mastery? It is hoped that this action research will shed light on the way and the benefits of using stories in young learners' EFL classrooms.

Action Hypothesis
In line with the research questions above, the action hypothesis of this study is stated as follow: "If the reading stories technique is used, the K-1 grade students' EFL vocabulary mastery will increase."

Literature Review
Vocabulary, defined by Hiebert and Kamil (2009) as the knowledge of meaning of words, is a component of a particular language that maintains all information about meaning used by people in expressing ideas and learning about new concepts. McCharthy (2003) stated that the biggest component of any language course is vocabulary. It is also the most important element to study. No matter how well the students learns grammar, no matter how successfully the sound are mastered, without words to express a wide range of meaning, communication cannot take place in any meaningful way. That is why vocabulary has an important role in all aspects of language skills. Without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed. Someone cannot express his idea and learn about new concepts without having enough vocabulary.

Realizing its great importance in communication and learning, vocabulary enrichment is important, whether it is through language learning process or development capability in a language which has been mastered. The more vocabulary someone mastered, his skill in a language will be increasing

also. That is why vocabulary teaching itself is also a most important because students' language is related to the mastery of vocabulary that will affect the quality and quantity of language. Thus, improving and teaching vocabulary needs to have more attention since earlier stage (kindergarten).

A story, which is defined by Simmons (2006) as "a narrative account of an event or events –true or fictional" (p. 31), is an effective means of education because it is believable, rememberable, and entertaining Gonzales (2010, p. 97). The believability stems from the fact that stories deal with human-like experience that we tend to perceive as an authentic and credible source of knowledge. Stories make information more rememberable because they involve in action of the characters. In so doing, stories invite active meaning making. Language learners can benefit from storytelling because stories help them to develop the ability to understand spoken language and engage in thinking skills. Besides, with the stories children develop learning strategies such as listening for general meaning, predicting, guessing meaning and hypothesizing.

Children love to hear stories; a story told well can communicate morals and important lessons, or afford a medium for your children to explore feelings. They like listening to it over and over again and this repetition allows them to acquire certain language items and reinforce others unconsciously. Moreover children love it because the language used to tell them is usually simple and easy to understand. Storytelling is not just a nice extra in life, but a necessity, especially for young children if they are to reach their full potential.

The effectiveness of using story reading to develop children's vocabulary relies on active engagement in the reading by both adults and children (Shed and Duke, 2008). To make sure that both teachers and students are really engaged, based on their reviews on research findings, Shed and Duke suggested teachers to involve the following four factors: (1) careful selection of high-quality texts; (2) open-ended questions asked by adults and children; (3) discussions about the book, building from what children already know; (4) predictions by children of what they think might happen or come next in the book; and (5) talk that ties the book to life beyond the classroom or the here and now. This fifth element is called using *decontextualized language*. It can mean, for example, relating the book to something that might happen in the future or something that happened in the past.

In order to maximize the students' engagement, Shed and Duke recommended teachers to consider the followings. First, the teacher should sit or stand quite close to the students so that all of them can see the book. Second, the teacher should minimize distractions so each student can focus during the read-aloud. Students can sit cross-legged with hands in laps, or each can sit on their desk or own pillow or carpet square. Third, the teacher should plan ways to alter her tone of voice. For example, if the book has multiple characters, she must consider the various voices she will use as well as intonations and

inflections for each character to make it interesting and interactive for children. By changing the tone of her voice, she helps children better understand the characters and thus better participate in conversations about them.

Many studies on the use of story reading to develop learners' vocabulary have been carried out. Most of them revealed that reading aloud positively affects students' vocabulary acquisition and comprehension (Cunningham, 2005). Combined with text-based discussions facilitating about words, reading aloud provide contexts and opportunities for children to learn new words before they have the reading skills necessary to acquire vocabulary independently (Biemiller, 2001). Elley (1989) found there was a considerable increase in the word knowledge by reading a single story three times without any teacher explanation for words. Wasi's (2011) experimental study on the teaching of vocabulary to the fourth grade students revealed that the use of big story book seemed significantly to be effective in improving students's vocabulary mastery.

Methodology

This study is a three-cycled action research which was conducted in two month (May to June 2012) in Grace Kids Preschool, Kelapa Gading, Jakarta. The participants of the research were the 10 K-I students taught by the researcher. Their English vocabulary mastery was approximately of the same level.

The data was collected using test and non-test instruments. The test technique was used to collect quantitative data derived from the participants' vocabulary achievement. Non-test techniques were used to collect qualitative data, including: observation, documentation, and interview. Tests were carried out four times; the pre-test, post test I, post test II, and post test III. The non-test techniques were carried out using observation sheet, documentation and interview guide. To analyze the quantitative data obtained from the tests, t-test was employed by using SPSS version 17. To analyze the qualitative data, the descriptive analysis technique was employed.

To guarantee the validity of the qualitative data obtained in this study, methodological, theoretical, and time triangulations were employed. The methodological triangulation was administered by using more than one method for data collection, i.e. observations, interviews, and tests. The theoretical triangulation was carried out by using more than one theoretical scheme in the interpretation of the phenomenon. The time triangulation was conducted by collecting data in different times (three cycles) and from different sources (students, observer, and tests). The success indicator used in this study was the minimum passing standard at Grace Kids Preschool, i.e. the score of ≥ 65.0.

Findings

In addition to the students' lack of vocabulary, this action research was also triggered by the fact that most of the students had low motivation and was not excited to follow the lessons. Their initial poor vocabulary was reflected by the scores they obtained in the pre-test conducted before t Cycle I was carried out. (See table 1 below)

Table 1: Participants' Pre-Test Scores

No	Range of Score	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	85—100	Good	0	0
2	65—84	Making steady progress	1	10
3	45—64	Need Improvement	3	30
4	20—44	Having Difficulty	6	60
		Total	10	100

This table shows only 1 student (10%) had attained the minimum standard. The scores obtained by the other 90% were below the minimum passing standard. The mean score of the whole students in this pre-test was 42.

Report of Cycle 1
1. Plan

The first cycle was planned to overcome the problems identified during the initial observation, i.e. (1) students lacked of vocabulary which made them difficult to understand what the teacher explained; (2) students got bored easily; (3) students couldn't focus; and (4) students found it difficult to memorize vocabularies. To solve the problems, the researcher planned to provide interesting learning atmosphere by using story reading activity.

2. Action

The actions of Cycle I were conducted in four meetings on May 23, May 25, May 28, and May 31, 2012. The short stories read in these sessions were *Cock–a–doodle–hooooo, Opi's House, Bedtime for Little Bears–I,* and *Bedtime for Little Bears–II,* respectively, The first meeting was started by introducing students about the story book and why it was used in their learning. After warming up, the researcher started to read the story. While reading the story the researcher did stress the words that students should learn. After reading the story, students were assigned to do some items of exercise. In the end of the learning, the researcher reviewed the taught vocabularies and evaluated students" answers. The same procedure was done in the next meetings. It was shown that students were very excited to follow the lesson using story, they loved listening to the story, although during the first meeting

some students still liked to talk one to another. In the forth meeting the researcher gave the last exercise which was also used as the post test of Cycle I.

3. Observing

During the implementation of the actions in the first cycle, a colleague of the researcher was asked to observe the process, especially the students' activity. Table 2 below recapitulates the result of observations in every meeting in Cycle I. As shown by the table, in the first session 50% students showed positive attitudes towards stories learning in improving vocabulary. The same took place in the second session. These positive attitudes increased to83.3% in the third sessions, and remained the same in the fourth session.

In addition to the observation conducted by the researcher's colleague, the process of teaching was also assessed using interview. This technique was conducted to assess the students' perception on the employment of reading story. Table 3 below recapitulates the results of the interview conducted after the fourth session of action in Cycle I.

Table 2: Observation Results of Cycle I

No	Students' Activity	Sessions			
		I	II	III	IV
1	Students greet teacher	✓	✓	✓	✓
2	Students are excited to follow the lesson	✓	✓	✓	✓
3	Students listen to the story being read	✓	✓	✓	✓
4	Students ask some questions	x	x	✓	✓
5	Students do the worksheet properly and enthusiastically	x	x	x	✓
6	Students follow the lesson orderly without talking with friends during study time	x	x	x	x
	Total	3	3	4	5
	Percentage	50%	50%	67%	83%

The responses of the students indicated that all of them love story and love story with the picture. However, only 40% of them love to learn vocabulary using story. All of them did not understand a story containing unfamiliar words. Finally, all of them felt that their vocabulary mastery had not increased yet.

Based on the scores they obtained in post test I, only 30% students passed pass the minimum passing standard and the other 70% achieved below it. However, while in the pre-test there were 60% students got the scores categorized in "having difficulty", in the post test I only 20% of them got the scores categorized in this level. The mean score obtained by students in post-test I was 62 (see Table 4).

Table 3: Interview Result of Cycle I

No	Questions	Yes		No	
		f	%	f	%
1	Do you love story?	10	100	-	-
2	Do you love story with pictures?	10	100	-	-
3	Do you love to learn vocabulary using stories?	4	40	6	60
4	Do you understand the story when facing strange words?	-	-	10	100
5	Does your vocabulary mastery increase using story reading?	-	-	10	100

Table 4: Participants' Post-Test Scores of Cycle I

No	Range of Score	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	85—100	Good	0	0
2	65—84	Making steady progress	3	30
3	45—64	Need Improvement	5	50
4	20—44	Having Difficulty	2	20
		Total	10	100

4. Reflecting

After observing the implementation of the learning cycle I, the researcher conducted further analysis and reflection on all activities undertaken. It was found in cycle I that students loved listening stories and stories with pictures. This was confirmed by the result of the interview and observation. They had a good attention when researcher read the stories. The increase of the mean scores (from 42 in the pre-test to 62 in the post test I) also indicated that the use of story reading technique was quite effective to develop the students' vocabulary.

However, since 7 out of 10 students still got the score below the passing grade the results were not yet satisfactorily. The students who still found it difficult to concentrate and liked "to talk" with others during the study time should be made aware that they need to participate more. Therefore, in the next cycle, the researcher tried to make a personal approach and reminded them to have more focus in order to achieve better achievement. The researcher also planned to perform better classroom management by providing better attention to every individual in the class.

Report of Cycle II

1. Plan

Based on the reflection result in Cycle I, in Cycle II the researcher made a plan to provide more lively and interesting presentation of story reading and paying greater attention to each individual in the classroom. Each student would

be given more opportunity to look at the pictures accompanying the story before and during the story is being read.

2. Action

The actions of Cycle I were conducted in four meetings on June 1, June 4, June 5, and June 6, 2012. The short stories read in these sessions were *The Lion and the Slave, My Dad and Me, I'm special, I'm me! (Part 1),* and *I'm special, I'm me! (Part 2),* respectively. The first meeting was started by repeating explanation about story book and why it was used in their learning to the students. The students were also stimulated to pay more attention by emphasizing that the storie they would listen are very interesting. In each session, the researcher read the story and did stress the words that they should learn. Then, the researcher retold the story briefly to students. After that, students did the exercise. In the end of the learning, the researcher reviewed the taught vocabularies and evaluated students' answer.

3. Observing

Just like in Cycle I, during the implementation of the actions in the second cycle, a colleague helped the researcher to observe the process, especially the students' activity. The result of observations in every meeting in Cycle II is recapitulated in Table 5.

Table 5: Observation Results of Cycle II

No	Students' Activity	Sessions			
		I	II	III	IV
1	Students greet teacher	✓	✓	✓	✓
2	Students are excited to follow the lesson	✓	✓	✓	✓
3	Students listen to the story being read	✓	✓	✓	✓
4	Students ask some questions	x	✓	✓	✓
5	Students do the worksheet properly and enthusiastically	x	✓	x	✓
6	Students follow the lesson orderly without talking with friends during study time	x	✓	✓	✓
	Total	3	3	4	5
	Percentage	50%	100%	83%	100%

As shown in the table, in the first session all students showed the positive attitudes towards stories learning in improving vocabulary. However, they were not active in the whole learning process. However, in the second to the fourth sessions, all students were in total involvement in the process, except in the third session—the students did not ask question.

Table 6: Interview Result of Cycle II

No	Questions	Yes		No	
		f	%	f	%
1	Do you love story?	10	100	-	-
2	Do you love story with pictures?	10	100	-	-
3	Do you love to learn vocabulary using stories?	6	60	4	40
4	Do you understand the story when facing strange words?	2	20	8	80
5	Does your vocabulary mastery increase using story reading?	8	80	2	20

The responses of the students obtained through the interview conducted at the end of session IV indicated that all of them love story and love story with the picture. However, only 60% of them love to learn vocabulary using story, 80% did not understand a story due to the existence of the unfamiliar words, but 80% had realized their vocabulary increase (see Table 6).

Based on the scores they obtained in post test II, 20% of the students had achieved good category and 60% attained the "making steady progress" category. This means that only 20% of them who had not passed the minimum passing standard (see Table 7). The mean score of post test II was 80.

Table 7: Participants' Post-Test Scores of Cycle II

No	Range of Score	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	85—100	Good	2	20
2	65—84	Making steady progress	6	60
3	45—64	Need Improvement	2	20
4	20—44	Having Difficulty	0	0
		Total	10	100

4. Reflecting

Based on the reflection made on the data obtained in the observing stage in this cycle, the researcher realized that the class had made a good progress. However, since 2 out of 10 students still got the score below the passing grade, the results were not yet satisfactorily. It was obvious that these 2 students should be helped to raise their interest, enthusiasm and concentration. This would be done by paying special attention to them but not ignoring the other 8 students.

Report of Cycle III

1. Plan

Since Cycle II had not yet given satisfactorily results, the researcher planned to carry out another cycle. Based on the reflection result in Cycle II, in Cycle III the researcher made a plan to provide more interesting presentation of story reading and paying special attention to the two individual who had not achieved scores above the passing grade.

2. Action

The actions of Cycle I were conducted in four meetings on June 8, June 11, June 13, June 14, 2012. The short stories read in these sessions were *The Crunching Munching Caterpillar, Clumsy Crab, One Magical Day (Part I)* and *One Magical Day (Part II),* respectively. The first meeting was started by repeating explanation about story book and why it was used in their learning to the students. The students were also stimulated to pay more attention by emphasizing that the storie they would listen are very interesting. In each session, the researcher read the story and did stress the words that they should learn. Then, the researcher retold the story briefly to students. After that, students did the exercise. In the end of the learning, the researcher reviewed the taught vocabularies and evaluated students' answer.

Table 8: Observation Results of Cycle III

No	Students' Activity	Sessions			
		I	II	III	IV
1	Students greet teacher	✓	✓	✓	✓
2	Students are excited to follow the lesson	✓	✓	✓	✓
3	Students listen to the story being read	✓	✓	✓	✓
4	Students ask some questions	✓	x	✓	✓
5	Students do the worksheet properly and enthusiastically	✓	✓	✓	✓
6	Students follow the lesson orderly without talking with friends during study time	x	✓	x	✓
	Total	5	5	5	6
	Percentage	83.3%	83.3%	83.3%	100%

3. Observing

During the implementation of the actions in the third cycle, a colleague also helped the researcher to observe the process, especially the students' activity. The following is the result of observations in every meeting in Cycle III

Table 8 revealed that in the first session all students showed the positive attitudes towards stories learning in improving vocabulary. They were also active in almost the whole learning process, except in following the lessons in session 1 and 3 and asking questions in session2. This indicated that most students had enthusiastically involved in the learning process.

Table 9: Interview Result of Cycle III

No	Questions	Yes		No	
		f	%	f	%
1	Do you love story?	10	100	-	-
2	Do you love story with pictures?	10	100	-	-
3	Do you love to learn vocabulary using stories?	10	100	-	-
4	Do you understand the story when facing strange words?	6	60	4	40
5	Does your vocabulary mastery increase using story reading?	10	100	-	-

The responses of the students obtained through the interview conducted at the end of session IV indicated that all of them love story and love story with the picture, and like to learn vocabulary using stories. All of them had also realized their vocabulary increase However, there were 40% who did not understand a story due to the existence of the unfamiliar words (see Table 9 above).

Based on the scores they obtained in post test II, 60% of the students had achieved good category and the other 40% attained the "making steady progress" category. This means that all of them had passed the minimum passing standard (see Table 10). The mean score of post test II was 92.

Table 10: Participants' Post-Test Scores of Cycle III

No	Range of Score	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	85—100	Good	6	60
2	65—84	Making steady progress	4	40
3	45—64	Need Improvement	0	0
4	20—44	Having Difficulty	0	0
	Total		10	100

4. Reflecting

Based on the reflection made on the data obtained in the observing stage in this cycle, the researcher saw that the class had attained the target, i.e. every student passed the minimum passing standard. Thus, the researcher did not continue to next cycle.

Hypothesis Test

To compare the students' achievement in vocabulary learning before and after Cycle I was conducted, a paired-samples t-test was administered using the SPSS version 17 program. The result is presented in Table 11 below.

Table 11: t-test result of the Pre-Test and Post-Test I

Paired Samples Test

	Paired Differences				
	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
	Lower	Upper	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pair 1 Post Test I - Pre Test	8.31827	31.68173	3.873	9	.004

Table 11 above reveals that the t-count is 3.873 with the significant sig. (2-tailed) 0.004. Whereas the t-table with the significant level 0.05 and degrees of freedom (df) = n-1 = 9 is 2.262. Since t-count (3.873) > t-table (2.262), we can say there was a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test I. Specifically, this result suggests that when students are taught vocabularies using story reading technique, their achievement increases.

Using the SPSS version 17 program, a paired-samples t-test was administered to compare the students' achievement in vocabulary learning before and after Cycle II was conducted. The result is presented in Table 12 below.

Table 12: t-test result of the Post-Test I and Post Test II

Paired Samples Test

	Paired Differences				
	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
	Lower	Upper	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pair 1 Post Test 2 - Post Test 1	13.47569	22.52431	9.000	9	.000

Table 12 above reveals that the t-count is 9.000 with the significant sig. (2-tailed) 0.000. Whereas the t-table with the significant level 0.05 and degrees of freedom (df) = n-1 = 9 is 2.262. Since t-count (9.000) > t-table (2.262), we can say there was a significant difference between the score of post-test I and post-test I. This suggests that use of story reading technique for teaching vocabularies in Cycle II had significantly increased their achievement.

Another paired-samples t-test was administered to compare the students' achievement in vocabulary learning before and after Cycle III was conducted. The result is presented in Table 13.

Table 13: t-test result of the Pre-Test and Post-Test I

Paired Samples Test

		Paired Differences				
		95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
		Lower	Upper	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pair 1	Post Test 3 - Post Test 2	4.61183	19.38817	3.674	9	.005

Table 13 above reveals that the t-count is 3.674 with the significant sig. (2-tailed) 0.005. Whereas the t-table with the significant level 0.05 and degrees of freedom (df) = n-1 = 9 is 2.262. Since t-count (3.674) > t-table (2.262), we can say there was a significant difference between the score of post-test II and post-test II. This suggests that use of story reading technique for teaching vocabularies in Cycle III had significantly increased their achievement.

All three paired-samples t-tests above disclose that the use of story reading technique significantly increased the students' vocabulary mastery in each cycle. Therefore, the action hypothesis "If the reading stories technique is used, the K-1 grade students' EFL vocabulary mastery will increase" is accepted.

Discussion

The data obtained in cycle I revealed that although all participants loved stories and stories with pictures, only 40% of them loved learning vocabulary using stories. All of them could not understand the story read to them if it contains unfamiliar words. The whole participants also had no idea whether their vocabulary increased after listening to the story. These findings indicate that they were not yet able to use their interest in listening to stories to enhance their learning. As a consequence, they were not engaged in the learning process. This is quite natural indeed due to the fact that this was the first time for them to learn English by listening to stories.

The students' disengagement in the learning process is supported by the findings through the observer's sheet. In almost all sessions of the first cycle, the students were excited to listen to the stories, but they were not active in asking questions or doing the worksheets. This is also consistent with the score of the post test administered at the end of session IV. None of the students achieved 'good' score, and only 30% got the scores in the category of "making steady improvement".

Along with the increase of frequency of listening to stories to develop vocabulary and teacher's improvement in class management and performance in the story reading as well, the students' enthusiasm and involvement keep on increasing. In Cycle II, 60% of the students had been interested to learn

vocabulary using stories, 20% managed to understand the story though they faced strange words, and 80% had realized their vocabulary mastery increased after listening to the stories. In Cycle III, the improvement even went further. All of the students were now interested to learn vocabulary using stories, 60% managed to understand the story though they faced strange words, and 100% had realized their vocabulary mastery increased after listening to the stories.

Chart 1: Participants' Tests Mean Score
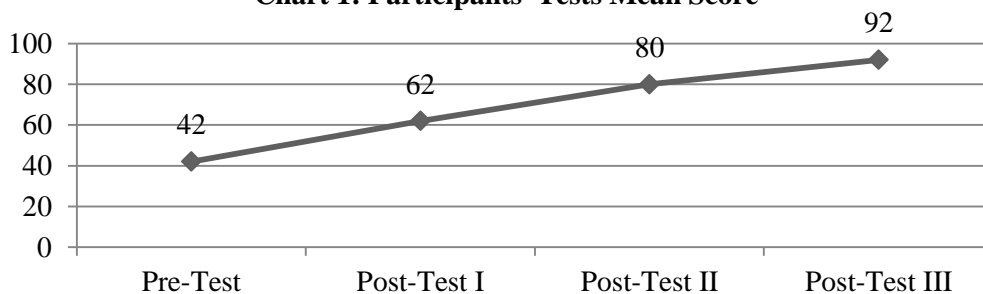
This improvement of students' perception positively affected their engagement in the learning process. In Cycle II, the majority of students began to be active in asking questions or doing the worksheets. In Cycle III, their activeness was even higher. And a consequence of the increase of their engagement, the scores they achieved keeps on increasing. In the post test of Cycle II, only 20% of the students got "good" score, and 20% still got the scores below the minimum passing standard. But in the post test of Cycle III, 60% had got "good" score, and no more students got the scores below the minimum passing standard. This continuous improvement of students' achievement is clearly illustrated by Chart 1.

These findings are consistent with the results of the three paired-samples t-tests which reveal the action hypothesis "If the reading stories technique is used, the K-1 grade students' EFL vocabulary mastery will increase" is accepted.

Conclusion

Along with the improvement in class management, attention to every individual, and performance in the story reading, the students' enthusiasm and involvement kept on increasing from cycle to cycle. This increase of engagement then increased their achievement, as shown by the results of post-tests conducted at the end of every cycle. This indicates that using story reading to increase children's vocabulary is very effective.

Realizing its high effectiveness, kindergarten EFL teachers are recommended to use story reading technique as an advantageous alternative to boost young learners' vocabulary development. While implementing the technique, teachers should make sure that students do not listen to the stories

only "for stories". The students should fully be engaged in open-ended questions, discussion and other relevant activities carried out after the session of listening to the stories. To maximize the students' engagement, putting Shed and Duke's (2008) suggestions is highly recommended.

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