



## Developing Big Book to Improve Young Learners' Vocabulary Acquisition

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### Abstract

Teaching vocabulary for EFL young learners always challenges the teacher. The researchers have investigated the condition of SD Islam Pojok 2 Kediri and found that the school only provided modules in the English class, so researchers aim to develop a medium called a big book. This study is research and development, adapted from Dick and Carey and modified by Sugiono into seven steps: need analysis, designing, expert validation, revision I, try-out, revision II, and evaluation. The researchers collected the data through observation, interview, and documentation, then analyzed it using content and narrative analysis techniques. The results of the study showed that there are four topics to assemble the big books, namely daily activity, jobs, tourism places, and food. The expert validation reveals that three big books have been eligible for use, and one needs to be revised. In the try-out process, it was found that the teacher and students liked the story and illustrations of the big books. It helps the students gain new vocabulary and strengthen their existing vocabulary. To sum up, developing big books to improve young learners' vocabulary acquisition has been successful.

**Keywords:** *Research and Development, Teaching Media, Vocabulary, Young learners.*

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## INTRODUCTION

Teaching Young learners always brings a challenging vibe for teachers, especially in EFL (English as a Foreign Language) classes. Young learners commonly have more energy to move and talk in class, which sometimes begs the teacher's attention. Besides, young learners can learn something rapidly and remember it for a long time. It provides an excellent opportunity to learn about various languages, particularly vocabulary essential for English communication (Rini, 2016). Young learners refer to children between the ages of six and thirteen. In language learning, they depend more mainly on rote memorization. Therefore, they tend to acquire a better vocabulary than adults (Oroji & Ghane, 2014). However, teaching vocabulary to EFL learners is always challenging, especially at young learners' level.

In general, vocabulary is a list of collections of words or words and phrases usually alphabetically arranged, explained, or defined. Essentially, vocabulary is every word that makes up a language (Merriam-Webster). It is known, used by the person, and related to a particular subject. According to Hornby (1995), vocabulary is the total number of words in a language; vocabulary is a list of terms and their meanings (Hornby, 1995). Likewise, Ur (1996) stated that vocabulary is described as the words we teach in another language. On the other hand, a new word may be more than a single word or phrase (e.g., new police station and bookstore), consisting of two or three words but communicating an idea. In addition, vocabulary is also defined as the bank of terms every language learner uses (Burns, 1999). It is possible to conclude that vocabulary is the total number of words needed to convey ideas and represent the meaning of speech. That's why it's so essential to master vocabulary (Kusumayati, 2010).

Some experts distinguish between active and passive vocabulary. Harmer (1998) differentiates between the two types of vocabulary. The first type of vocabulary is the one that learners have been taught or learned and are expected to use. Meanwhile, the second one refers to terms that learners will know when they encounter them but will most likely be unable to pronounce (Harmer, *The Practice of English Language Teaching*, 1998). Meanwhile, other experts stated that there are two types of vocabulary: receptive and productive. Receptive vocabulary refers to words the learner knows and understands when used in context but cannot be generated. It is a language that students recognize when they look at or find in a book but do not use in speaking or writing (Hatch & Brown, 1995).

On the other hand, productive vocabulary refers to terms that can be understood, spoken correctly, and applied productively in speech and writing. It is closely related to receptive vocabulary and the ability to speak or write at the right time. As a result, being productive can be an active process because learners can produce words to convey their views to others (Hatch & Brown, 1995).

Vocabulary is crucial in foreign language acquisition. However, vocabulary teaching and acquisition in TEFL appear to be underutilized. Most teachers and students are unfamiliar with learning techniques and vocabulary learning procedures. Teachers are oblivious to the significance of vocabulary and vocabulary learning methods (Asyiah, 2017).

An important factor in learning vocabulary is the choice of words the teacher wants to teach. When educating young people, starting with natural, more than abstract terms is more effortless. The frequency must also be taken into account by the teacher. The teacher can choose which words to teach based on the frequency or frequency students use these words. Then, the teacher must teach words already known to students at the age of children. Contextual themes and topics determine the frequency with which words are introduced. The subject provides many texts. For example, if the article is "daily activity," the teacher might use terms such as a verb, where to do it, or when to do it (Mahayanti & Asrina, 2017).

Vocabulary competence in primary school, particularly among third-grade pupils, is still receptive. They can identify words when they come across them but cannot generate or employ them while speaking or writing. There are several steps in vocabulary learning: (1) listening to the



word, (2) pronouncing the word, (3) understanding the meaning, (4) making illustrations in the form of sentences, (5) practicing expressing meaning, (6) saying the words loudly, and (7) spelling the words. Based on these hypotheses, young learners can understand vocabulary by listening to words, pronouncing words, and spelling words (Lado, 1979).

Knowing new vocabulary and understanding its meaning significantly impacts language learners' improvement. Concrete nouns like chair or dog are easier to remember than abstract vocabulary. Young learners often associate words with what they can figure out using their ordinary senses. However, as previously said, students must also understand other parts of the words they learn. Third-grade students could grasp vocabulary by listening to the words, pronouncing the words, and comprehending the meaning (Ur, 1996).

Young learners aged between five and twelve years old are in the first stage of the language teaching and learning process. Teaching vocabulary to young learners must be according to their context to be more effective. Teachers can give something to attract and help them concentrate, such as fun activities and exciting media (Indrasari, Novita, & Megawati, 2018).

Indrasari et al. (2018) mention that Teachers may use several vocabularies to be introduced via drawings or visuals. They also may use school-provided learning resources. They can also create their own visual aids or use magazine images. Visual aids assist students in comprehending the message and making the world more remembered. Meanwhile, there are three other strategies for learning vocabulary, namely (1) guessing from context, (2) remembering words using word components and mnemonic approaches, and (3) using vocabulary cards to memorize foreign language-first language word pairs (Schmitt & McCarthy, Vocabulary: Description, acquisition, and pedagogy., 1997).

The researchers have investigated young learners' needs in SD Islam Pojok 2 Kediri. According to the initial observation, the researchers found that the school provides a module for students. Unfortunately, the book is not interesting for the students. The teacher mentions that the students are interested in English; however, the textbook is tedious and less attractive. The book has pictures but no color; therefore, sometimes teachers need to find other supporting material on the internet. In addition, the teacher mentioned that the condition above really affects students' vocabulary acquisition. Therefore, the researchers purposely planned to conduct research and development. This research aims to produce a medium that meets students' need to study English effectively and is fun.

## METHOD

This research is a research and development (R&D) used to find or produce a particular product and test its effectiveness (Sa'adah & Wahyu, 2020). Sugiyono (2011) added that research and development refer to a scientific procedure identifying, designing, building, and testing (Sugiyono, 2011). There are some steps of research and development by Dick and Carey that Sugiyono has modified, namely Need analysis, Designing, Expert Validation, revision 1, try-out, and product revision 2 (Sa'adah & Wahyu, 2020).

This research employs 20 students of the 4th graders from SD Islam Pojok 2 Kediri as the respondents of the book. They participated in three meetings, the first meeting for collecting data, the second meeting for the first testing, and the last meeting for the second testing after product revision. Researchers also invited one teacher to be the representative of the English teacher in the school.

The data source was obtained by observing and interviewing the students and the teacher. After obtaining the data, the researchers analyzed the collected data using content and narrative analysis techniques. Both techniques are familiar for analyzing the data from observation, questionnaires, and respondents' interviews.



## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Findings

Developing big books to improve young learners' vocabulary acquisition at SD Islam Pojok 2 Kediri has passed six procedures that have been modified by Sugiyono (2011).

### Need Analysis

The first procedure is identifying the needs of students and the teacher through observing, interviewing, and document analysis. During the observation, the researchers found that the teacher only used a textbook and activity book or module during the classroom process. Students are enthusiastic when the teacher shows pictures and reads short text rather than offering a passage with or without illustration. Full text and fewer pictures commonly distract students' focus during the class. The teacher helped them write some new words on the whiteboard so students could memorize them. In interviewing the teacher, the researchers collect information that she teaches English according to the 2013 curriculum (K-13); she also uses a thematic syllabus containing some themes. The themes necessary to develop are Job, Daily activity, Food, and Tourism Places. She also confirmed that students should gain a minimum of new vocabulary from each theme.

According to the result of the interview above, students like reading English books with a story in short text. Besides, they are interested in colorful illustrations. They like pictures and colors a lot. The data support the intention of the researchers to develop a big book, a storybook with short text and colorful illustrations.

### Designing

The following procedure is designing the big books. There are four story themes in the book, and each consists of three parts, namely cover, content, and glossary. The cover presents the story's title, the writer, and the illustrator's names as follows.

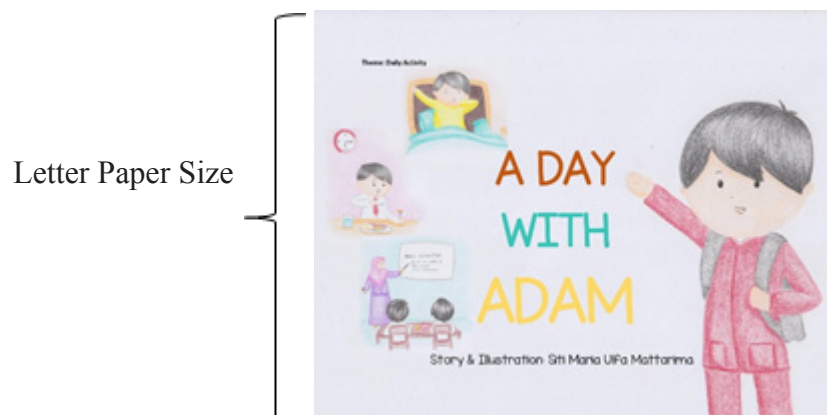


Figure 1. Cover of Theme 1

In the content of the first theme, a student called Adam shares his daily activity. The activities include what he does, from waking up to sleeping. The story has two supporting characters: the mother and the father. The researchers also put the main character into four settings: in the bedroom, dining room, on the road, and in the classroom. The illustration is shown as follows:



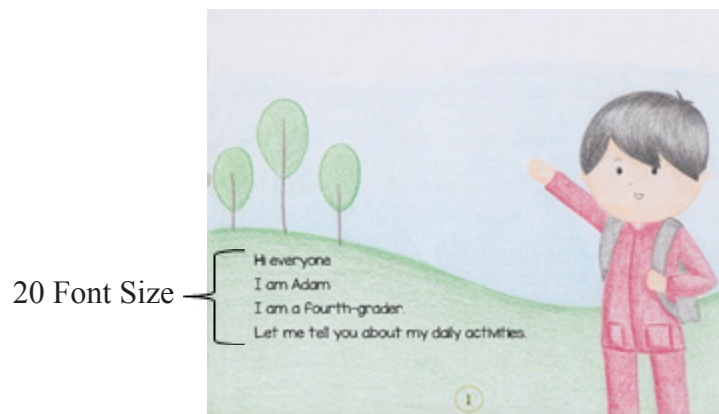


Figure 2. First Page of Book 1

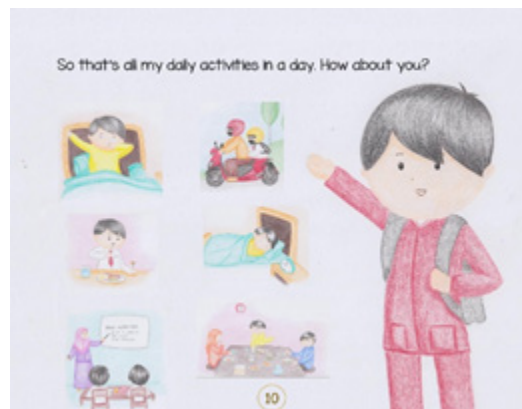


Figure 3. The Last Page of Book 1

In the glossary, the researchers put some vocabulary or phrases to assist the students if they do not know some meaning of them. The glossary is presented as follows.



Figure 4. Glossary of Book 1

### Expert Validation

After finishing the story and illustration draft for all themes, the researchers took experts' validation from two experts with much experience developing language teaching media. The total score from the validation questionnaire was processed according to the following formula:

$$\text{Eligibility percentage} = \frac{\text{The number of scores obtained} \times 100}{\text{Number of expected scores}}$$

The index of Eligibility/ Validation





Table 1. Experts' Validation of the book

| No | Percentage | Eligibility/ validation |
|----|------------|-------------------------|
| 1  | Below 70 % | Not Eligible / invalid  |
| 2  | above 70%  | Eligible/ valid         |

The validation section was conducted online via WhatsApp with the results as follow:

Table 2. Experts' Validation of the book

|                         | Questions   | Themes  |         |        |         |
|-------------------------|---|---------|---------|--------|---------|
|                         |   | 1       | 2       | 3      | 4       |
| 1. Appearance           | Is it interesting to read?                          | 10      | 8       | 9      | 10      |
|                         | Is the font readable?                               | 10      | 8       | 9      | 10      |
|                         | Is the illustration relatable to the storyline?     | 9       | 7       | 9      | 9       |
| 2. The Topic            | Is it related to the syllabus?                      | 8       | 8       | 5      | 8       |
|                         | Is it contextually related to the students?         | 9       | 8       | 4      | 9       |
| 3. The Story Line       | Is it relatable to the topic?                       | 10      | 9       | 5      | 10      |
|                         | Does it have a moral value at the end of the story? | 6       | 7       | 9      | 7       |
| 4. The Vocabulary Level | Is it according to students' level?                 | 8       | 4       | 2      | 8       |
|                         | Do students get to know the new vocabulary?         | 9       | 8       | 6      | 9       |
| Total Score             |   | 79      | 67      | 58     | 80      |
| Eligibility percentage  |   | 87.78 % | 74.44 % | 64.4 % | 88.89 % |

According to the experts' validations above. Theme one is categorized as eligible or valid, and from this section, one expert complimented that the book is fantastic, while the other experts commented that the researchers needed to explain some abbreviations, such as PE for Physical Education.

For the second theme, it is also categorized as eligible or valid. From the validation of theme 2, one expert mentioned that the illustration is impressive but needs more illustrations related to the job. Another expert also comments on some grammatical mistakes and inappropriate vocabulary levels.

On the other hand, theme 3 is 64.5 %, which is categorized as not eligible or invalid. For this theme, the experts suggested changing the text type to one that is more suitable for the students' level. This indicates that the researchers need to revise the text and the content significantly.



For theme 4, the researchers gained 80 total scores. which is categorized as eligible or valid. According to the experts, this section has already met the target. The expert said it was good enough, and expert two noted that it looked good.

### ***Revision 1***

Based on the result above, the researchers revised the big books. For the daily activity theme, the researchers changed it was into its and PE into Physical Education. For the jobs' theme, the researchers simplified the text without a prologue, as described on the first page, and added job illustrations to support pages 3, 4, and 6. For the tourism place theme, the researchers changed almost all parts of the story. It was recounted text and turned into descriptive text (See Appendix). After these revisions. The researchers confirmed the result with the expert before moving to the try-out section. The experts admitted that all was good.

### ***Tryout***

After passing the validation section, the researchers printed the text into four big books for each theme on A4 paper; then, the researchers tried the big books out at SD Islam Pojok 2 Kediri. For the first try-out, the teacher divided the students into four groups consisting of 5 students. She introduced the big books to the students. She shared the four books randomly with each group. After that, she allowed students to read the book for 15 minutes. After that. Students exchanged the book with another group and let them have the same chance to read it on different topics. This activity ended with all groups having read the books. After the reading section, the teacher allowed the researchers to interact with the students. The teacher also asked students for some vocabulary related to the book to test the students and help them correct their pronunciation. At the end of the try-out, the teacher asked the students about their satisfaction and criticism of the books.

On the second try-out, the books were presented in different ways. The teacher read two books or two stories for this meeting. Without grouping the students, the teacher read the book in front of the class. She opened the book and faced the students. While reading the story to the students, she repeated some words and asked the students to follow her. In some words, she also asked the students about the meaning. At the end of the reading, the teacher gave students a quiz, namely, mentioning vocabulary and the meaning they remember from the stories. She also wrote the mentioned words on the whiteboards to correct students' spelling.

According to the observation, students are more interested in the second try-out ways than letting them read the book in a group. The teacher is also interested in presenting the books. After the activity, the teacher gave some input regarding the mistyping and vocabulary in the glossary.

According to the observation on the first try-out, students checked the illustration before reading. When the researchers approached, she asked them some simple questions; they confirmed that they could read the book. They can imagine the first activity that the character does after waking up. Since they also did so. The picture of having breakfast, going to school by motorcycle, studying in class, having lunch and dinner, and going to bed makes it easy for them to recognize the word.

Students opened the pages during the observation to see the illustrations first. Afterward, they went back to the first page to read it together. When the researchers came and asked what the text was, they said it was about the job. However, some students did not know the meaning of business-woman and architect, which made the researchers open the glossary for them.

Students checked the book's illustration for the third book as a must. They started to read the book loud-out. When the researchers asked about what they were reading, they could give some points about the topic and some vocabulary they found. They also asked for some unfamiliar vocabulary for them.

Flipping all the pages is such a must for students. In the observation, students read the text well; they took a moment on the pages of the ingredients to recognize the ingredient picture and



match it with the words. Some of them got confused about some vocabulary, and the researchers approached them and showed them the glossary on the last page.

At the end of the try-out section, the researchers noted that the first book had met the standard. It has a simple text. In the revision section, researchers have improved the presentation of the book. During the try-out section, the teacher and students had high enthusiasm toward the book, but the researchers took some points, namely, the teacher didn't handle the class fully but involved the researchers when the researchers asked the students about their capability to read the book, most of them said "yes." However, when the researchers asked the students individually, most could barely recognize some words, and some students confirmed that their classmates didn't know how to read yet. On the first try-out, all students can read one book together in a small group. However, in the big group (whole class) on the second try-out, students sitting in the behind row could not read the text when the teacher faced the book on them

### **Revision 2**

The researchers extracted some input on the book's performance for further development. According to the previous finding, it is essential to recognize that the book should be printed larger than the A4 paper size, such as A3 Paper with about 40pt font size if used in a big class so all students can see the picture and the text. Meanwhile, students like the book according to the story and the illustration, shown in their expression when they read the books. The teacher is also interested in the books for illustration to help students' imaginations understand the story. Students find some problematic words that lead them to gain more new vocabulary. Also, the books help them to recall existing words in their mind. Lastly, students can relate the words according to the topic well. It is because the story is customized according to their context.

### **Discussion**

Media plays a crucial role in assisting the teaching and learning process in the running effectively (Mahayanti & Asrina, 2017). One media to use in teaching vocabulary is the big book because reading has a noticeable impact on students' vocabulary acquisition (Wesche & Paribakht, 1994). A big book is an exciting medium that potentially transfers the language's concept, such as vocabulary (Indrasari, Novita, & Megawati, 2018). Therefore, this research chose developing big books as a medium for teaching vocabulary.

According to the students' needs analysis, the teacher only used modules in the language learning process. Sometimes, it was hard to get students' attention because they felt bored with the module without color or attractive illustrations that could gain their enthusiasm. In the students' responses, they are more interested in visual material. It refers to media they can see, such as illustrations, colorful pictures, or anything that can help students imagine the words, especially when they find a text that mentions an abstract vocabulary (Gairns & Redman, 1986). Students must combine the current syllabus target with the four themes: daily activity, jobs, tourism places, and food.

The process of designing the media was based on the need analysis above. Creating the big books was challenging, especially in writing the stories, determining the text type, and drawing illustrations. The report should be related to its context. Telling the story in students' context can help them figure out the meanings of the words independently (Brewster, Jean, Gail, & Girard, 1992). Since the students are still in fourth grade, the text is supposed to be descriptive. Avoiding some word formation, such as present participle vocabulary or past participle vocabulary, is a must. It is the students who can avoid confusion during the reading process. When students can read the text with a good flow, they can read more. Much reading can lead students to more accidental vocabulary acquisition and rapid vocabulary growth (Wesche & Paribakht, 1994).

Students' vocabulary growth through reading big books is also supported by the existing il-





illustrations that the researchers put in each book. The images help students recognize the story's meaning when some words get more abstract (Gairns & Redman, 1986). Therefore, students can comprehensively understand the words' context by seeing the existing illustration.

After designing the big books, expert validation becomes the most significant point for media implementation. As a result, there is no significant problem for Theme 1 (daily activity) and Theme 4 (Food), but some mistyping. Two of them passed the validation test with a satisfying score. The second Theme (jobs) was also given the minimum score, but the researchers need to add more illustrations since it less supports the text about the job. As a revision, the researchers included three pictures of the jobs mentioned in the book.

Students' and teacher's response toward the media becomes an essential part of seeing how the book fills the subject's need. According to the first book, the teacher and students like the book. The teacher confirmed that the book is an innovative way to increase students' motivation to read. The illustration of Adam and his activities helps students to recognize the context. Susanti et al. (2019) claimed that by reading the Big Book, students can easily understand the words in some phrases (Susanti, Saragih, & Pulungan, 2019). No wonder most students have no difficulty in reading the book. Besides, students also found some new vocabulary such as take a prayer, breakfast, go to school, lunch, dinner, and go home by seeing the illustration.

The second book has the same comment from the teacher. The teacher agreed when the researchers put some visuals of jobs that the characters wanted to pursue. The exciting thing that came from students was that they found some problematic words, which became their new vocabulary (Susanto, 2017). The existence of the glossary in this book means a lot to them. Students can learn vocabulary such as drawing, architect, businesswoman, talented, dream, job, and confused by reading the story and using the glossary.

Meanwhile, students' reading through the context is also found in the third book. The book describes some places that some students have been there. They were enthusiasts to testify how beautiful and exciting the places are. The illustration helps the students to recognize areas and some vocabulary about them. Through this book, students can imagine the site by seeing the picture. This is supported by previous research showing that students learn the language using common sense (Harmer, 2007). The teacher also said students who had not visited the places could imagine the story through the illustrations and their friends' reviews. It proves that teaching vocabulary using images relates students' prior knowledge to a new story. When they process it, they can learn new vocabulary (Susanto, 2017). In the story of visiting Yogyakarta, students found some vocabulary words like near, busy, large, snack, temple, souvenirs, take a pray, famous, and along the way.

The teacher mentioned that the book is easier to understand than the last book because the illustration supports the story well. The image of ingredients became a new mini-game for students to guess the name correctly. Like the other books, students also use the glossary to check the meaning of unfamiliar words such as ingredient, peanut, palm sugar, tamarind, spinach, fridge, garlic, onion, ginger, and cucumber. Stories, illustrations, and glossaries are essential for students' vocabulary acquisition because they are parts of their needs. Vocabulary learning should cover many aspects such as meaning, word formation, and collocation that are not only gained from single words learning or even memorizing (Susanto, 2017). Sokarno (2008) also stated that considering students' needs is essential to reaching the target of learning.

Based on the discussion above, the book has passed the correct procedure and correct validation. The big book is ready to use because it fulfills the needs of the school, teachers, and students. Therefore, the researchers claimed that media development in this research was successful.



## CONCLUSION

The big book development reveals the possibility of using conventional media over the technology frequently used nowadays. The researchers chose a big book for research and development for this study because it can attract students' interest during the learning process. It is strongly believed that designing a medium for specific students is a complete solution for some cases, especially in SD Islam Pojok 2 Kediri. According to the findings, this research also proved that the product or the medium was successfully accepted by the subject.

The content of the big book is in line with the existing syllabus and the topic students learned in the current semester. Two experts have validated the big books as they are ready to use in the classroom. It confirmed that the book is appropriate for students' context and level words. At the same time, using the big book led them to gain new vocabulary accidentally. It is how the book improves students' vocabulary acquisition.

To sum up, the development of the big book to improve students' vocabulary acquisition has met the target of the first research question. The evaluation process followed the correct procedure, and the study's result, which investigated the teacher and students' responses, indicates that the book is eligible for the school as it fulfills students' and teachers' needs.

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