

Using Games to Learn English for Young Learners in Darussalam Elementary school

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Received: August 28, 2023

Accepted: August 28, 2023

Published: August 29, 2023

Abstract

There are lots of schools in Indonesia still use conventional learning method in learning English. That is still using the book as a medium of learning. Learning English using games is still minimal and rarely uses technology as a learning medium. Using games can be used as an alternative learning media that can make the learning process more effective, engaging, and fun. This research aims to develop learning English by using games for young learners. The author uses a case study method to describe and analyze using games at a private school in Darussalam elementary school. The findings of this study are: (1) Students can improve their English skills by using games that have several values that are by student learning which make the game more suitable to be used as a medium for learning English in the classroom for students. With special needs; (2) There are some visible results through the game. First, learning styles suit students so that they feel interested in learning. Second, motivation and background affect each student's learning progress, especially in English.

Keywords: *Using games; Learning English; alternative learning; English*

1. Introduction

English is an international language that requires four abilities. Consists, listening, reading, speaking and writing at the same time. Students should complete the English course before being promoted to the next grade because English is an international language, it means that it is very important to learn English extensively (Lutfiatun, 2017). Learning English is the right of every student in general, regardless of whether the student is typical or a student with special needs. English is also one of the subjects that must be given to students, both in regular schools and special schools (Renandya, Hamied, & Joko, 2018). English is the most popular language learned in Indonesia. English is given in every stage of school in Indonesia. In order to make English be familiarized, it has to be taught in early age of children. And in order to help children learned English well, some teachers used games to teach English, especially to teach young learners. From the use of games, hopefully will help children understand the material better.

Competency standards and essential competencies of English in grade I there are two aspects; understanding the conversation and expressing the meaning of transactional conversation (to get things done) and interpersonal (socialize). Students must master some English vocabulary (Guritno, 2017). Each learning unit vocabulary can be defined as a collection of all the words the person understands to construct a new sentence. Vocabulary is a collection of lexemes that includes single words, compound words, and idioms. It is in line with Vocabulary is very important because it allows us to communicate where it means that mastering vocabulary can determine success in learning English. When students have a lot of Vocabulary, it will be easy to learn English (Perrotta, Featherstone, Aston, & Houghton, 2013). Teaching English for young learners must use vocabulary teaching in which words are in relevant situations to build relationships (Demircioğlu, 2010) among them. It can be concluded that Vocabulary must be studied and understood so that the acquired vocabularies can be used correctly and adequately in writing, reading and pronunciation. Because the more English Vocabulary the students master, the easier it will be and improve the English that students learn and understand In here, there are two factors why games should be used to teach English to young learners; there are benefits of using games for young learners, and the characteristic of children.

In the field of learning English as a foreign language, creative teachers use games as a method to get students excited about learning, especially for young learners. Bakhsh (2016) in his journal entitled "Using Games as a Tool in Teaching Vocabulary to Young Learners" said that young students refer to those who are 5 years old and have just entered kindergarten until 12 years old and attend elementary school. However, this opinion cannot be used as a benchmark, because of the influence of their environment, culture, and genetics. Ana (2018) argues that young students are students who learn English as a foreign language for the first six to seven years of elementary school level. Bakhsh (2016) described the younger generation of students as having difficulties in their virtual environment. They have imaginations that their teacher might misinterpret. They prefer to work in teams as well as in play. The younger generation likes to speak first without knowing the meaning. They learn not only from theory but through behavioral observations. Praise becomes motivation for those who make it very important in their development. These characteristics of young learners force English teachers to be more creative in designing instructions to keep them interested. Wright, Betteridge, and Buckby (2006) believe that games can help and encourage students to maintain their interest, assist English teachers in creating practical and meaningful language situations, and assist learners in understanding rather than learning the language in a one-way manner. So, the game is one of the strategies that can be used for motivating young learners to learn.

There are some benefits of using games to teach in classroom. The previous study conducted by Sigurðardóttir (2010, p. 28) mentioned that games are fun activities that helps students to be more interactive and active in the learning process. Games make the classroom environment become more comfortable and friendly. Games can encourage students to participate and express their idea, also provide a real-life situation which will be useful for students to give them a real-life problem which they can try to solve it. In an elementary school context, the researcher finds students to be less engaging when confronted to express their ideas. They just listen to the materials without any communication to the teacher. On the other hand, when games are involved in the teaching process, students become active and cooperative with the teaching process.

In this era, using games for teaching and learning vocabulary has been very popular for several decades. In the learning process, that encourage students' enthusiastic and participate to active during in the classroom (Helingo: 2022). It can indirectly increase students' vocabulary mastery. Syakir (2020) stated on his study of Developing Students Vocabulary at Elementary School by Using Words Game that can increase students' vocabulary skills. Next, Wibowo and Syarifah (2018) revealed at their study research that Go Fishing Game can escalate students' English vocabulary. Teaching English to children is different from teaching adults. The character possessed by children is different from adults. Children have the characteristic that they still like to play and get bored easily. They are also very easily distracted and sometimes feel uncomfortable in the learning process (Pike et al., 2020; Pransiska, 2017; Taylor et al., 2015). Therefore the teacher must create learning strategies and activities that make students understand the material well and not feel bored when studying (Habók & Magyar, 2018; Pereira et al., 2020). However, learning in Indonesia still has a lot of schools that use conventional learning methods. That is still using the book as a medium of learning. Learning media used in the 4.0 era is still minimal and rarely uses technology as a learning medium.

All the previous studies said positive statements about using game. And after seeing the problems that occur in Indonesia, especially in learning English, the research aims is to develop using games to learn English for young learners and improve their HOTS abilities.

Games

Many teachers believe that games can help them to make teaching and learning process understandable for students, especially for young learners. There are some explanations about the definition of games, which stated that games are activities with rules, a goal, and an element of fun. Game is typically involved several players; a game with only one player is usually called a decision problem. The formal definition lays out the players, their preferences, their information, the strategic actions available to them, and how these influence the outcome" (Turocy & Stengel, 2001). Another definition from Talak-Kiryk (2010, p. 11) define that games are fun activities that promote interaction, thinking, learning, and problem-solving strategies. Often, games have an aspect that permits the players to produce information in a short time period. Some games require the players to engage in a physical activity and/or complete a mental challenge.

I conclude that there are several points that should be in the games, there are: competition, rules, goal, and player. With game, people believe that it will make them happy because the aim of game is to make people happy. Games in language teaching is an activity that gives students opportunity to interact, think, and learning a language through physical or mental activity.

Kinds of Games for Teaching

Many students still believe that learning English must be difficult and boring. Here, teachers are demanded to be innovative and creative, so that students become proactive in participating the learning process of English. Because of that, teaching and learning English should be suit to the condition of psychological atmosphere of the students. With the use of games, students are expected to learn English in a fun and progressive way. According to Agustina (2012), games have a variety of techniques. Some of the techniques commonly used by the teachers are:

a. Gap information

Gap information is a simple game for two or more students. In this activity, students should look up for the information that the other students have. Each student or group should accomplish the task competitively.

b. Guessing game

In this game, a student will be given information of which the other students must guess.

c. Role-playing game

In this activity, the students are given a role to play based on a given card which describes a character that the students should play.

d. Puzzle

Puzzles are an activity where the students share information to solve a problem. The problem may be in the form of random words or alphabets.

e. Card game (Exchanging and Collecting Games)

This game can be play both individually and in a group. The goal of the game is to collect the required set of cards by exchanging the cards with another student or group so that the students may gather information to complete the game.

f. Matching game

This game has a basic different rule although it involves the same practice of exchanging information. In this game students match the same cards or pictures. This game can be played by the whole class where students move to find the match of their card or picture with other students.

Despite of the games listed above, Palanova (2010, p. 10) classify games in language teaching into 4 categories, there are:

a. Listening games

Listening is the most difficult skill of language. Teachers have to give the students interesting material in order to maintain the students' attention and interest. We can use many activities such as completing lyric of song or getting information from the video.

b. Speaking games

The aim of this game is to make the students speak and express their ideas. This is the teachers' job to make the students to interact because as we know that students are prefer to silent rather than express their ideas. It is the teachers' job to encourage the students talk enjoyable. Also, speaking games is useful to increase the students talking time. The common activity that usually used in speaking games is role play. It is an activity that make the students pretending to be someone or being part on something event.

a. Kinetic games

Kinetic games are useful to encourage the students when they are getting tired and difficult to concentrate. Kinetic game is an activity that contain of physical activity of the students. Kinetic games can be joined with another activity too, such as reading, listening, or speaking. The example activity of kinetic games is jumping onto sheet of paper. It's an activity to learn vocabulary. Teacher put some colored paper on the ground and students may jump on the colors that shout out by the teacher.

b. Experiential games

Experiential games are very interesting for the students because students can complete their task and they can experience the process of it. The real aim of this activity is not to decide the win or lose but to experience the process and students can learn from it. We can use this kind of games in explaining procedural text. Teacher gives the students a media or tool to make something. Then, teacher explains the step that should be done by the students.

From the explanation above about the classification of games in teaching, it seems that games can be used in teaching and learning process. There are a lot of games with their strength and weakness. Teacher will realize that not all the games can be effective for both learner and learning process itself. We have to select carefully which game that

appropriate to the students. Also, as it mentioned by Oblinger (2006, p. 4), we cannot merely make the student as the subject of learning. We have to consider that the use of games is to make the students understand the material well. So, we have to put the students in the game development itself. Student can critique to the specified games. At the end of this, students will choose whether which games that makes them comfortable and appropriate with their learning process.

Characteristic of Young Learners

Wibowo (2009) explain that Kindergarten and elementary school students are define as young learners. Children from the first years of formal schooling (5 or 6 years old) to eleven or twelve years of age is categorized as young learners. He also mentions two groups of young learners, there are:

1. The five to seven years old (beginning stage)

The characteristic of beginning stage of young learners, there are: they can talk about what they are doing, they can talk about what they have done, they can plan activities, they can use logical reasoning, and they can understand direct human interaction

2. The eight to ten years old

The characteristic of eight to ten years old, there are: they can understand abstract, they can understand symbol (beginning with words), and they can generalize and systematize.

As stated by Talak-Kiryk (2010, cited in Pivec and Dziabenko, 2010) in the learning process should be interesting and should be fun to learn. Also, he stated that activities that promote interacting, thinking, learning, and problem-solving are games. Talak-Kiryk (2010, p. 8) believes that games are effective tools for learning because they offer students an environment in which they can explore alternative decisions without the risk of failure. Ara (2009, p. 178) stated that the reason of using game is that although children have an innate ability to learn a language well, they do not learn properly if they find their lessons boring and unexciting. He mentioned some interesting activities such as songs, rhymes and games are very useful tools for teaching them a foreign language. Through these activities children will learn in an enjoyable environment without making them feel the pressure in learning foreign language. In elementary school context, games are used by the teacher when they feel that students are bored or the material has finished. It is expected that teachers do not provide game activities to the students in big amount to prevent interruption during the teaching and learning process.

Challenges faced by the teachers of using games in teaching English

Based on Ayu and Murdibjono (2012), the problems which were faced by the teacher were as follows:

- The management of time was not really good because of unprepared material and technical problem.
- It was difficult to find suitable material for playing games.
- The criteria of assessment were not clear.
- Sometimes there was not enough room for students to move around and the voice level could disturb other nearer classes.
- Some of students who were really lack of motivation often did not participate in the games, especially when the games were done in groups.

Another study conducted by Palánová (2010, p. 42) suggests that teachers should be aware of the use of game activities. Teachers should decide the „right time“ to use games in the learning process to make the teaching and learning process meaningful and effective for students. Teachers should consider the amount of time that should be spent for the learning process to avoid overtime and overuse with the use of games in the learning process. Moreover, this study believes that games can establish the teacher and students relationship. With a positive relation between a teacher and the students, it is expected to make the learning process effective. Related to this study, in elementary school context, games are used by the teacher when they feel that students are bored or the material has finished. It is expected that teachers do not provide game activities to the students in big amount to prevent interruption during the teaching and learning process.

2. Method

The research used is descriptive qualitative research under the case study procedure. This research focuses intensively on one particular object studied as a case. A case study is a model that focuses on exploring a limited system in a specific issue or, in some cases, in detail by extracting the data in depth. Various context-rich sources of information are carried out for data mining (Mahboob, 2008). The method used is a case study to explore in-depth programs, events, processes, activities regarding the effectiveness of educational games in teaching English to children with special needs at a Private School.

The object of this research is students at a private school in Darussalam elementary school. They are at different grade levels and have different boundaries, and the four of them are students with disabilities, visually impaired. Participants in this study were homeroom teachers and students of a private school in Darussalam elementary school who could source research information.

Instrument

Two instruments were employed to obtain the data; observation and interview. The observation was used to gain activities while the teaching process was running. At the same time, the interview was to ask the opinion, feeling, or clarification of unclear things during the observation. In this regard, a structured interview was used.

Data Collecting

Technique The data were gathered from observation and interviews. The observation was used to obtain data about students' abilities and reactions in learning English through educational games implemented and recorded through video recordings as evidence and reference material in research. Interviews were used for collecting the homeroom teacher's perspective on the effect of educational games on the students.

Another data collection technique used by the researcher was an interview. Interviews aim to reach opinions, feelings, emotions, and other things related to the individual in the interview. The technique of conducting interviews is structured interviews; what is meant by structured interviews are interviews conducted by first compiling an interview guide instrument. The researcher uses a double interview type where the researcher asks the informant about things that have been prepared in advance.

Data Analysis Technique

In this study, triangulation is used, which is defined as a data collection technique by combining several different data sources" (Moleong, 2006, p. 330). The purpose of triangulation is to increase one's understanding of what has been investigated. In this study, researchers used triangulation of data collection techniques. Researchers use several different methods in verifying data to obtain data from the same subject or source. The researchers interviewed teachers about educational games such as learning media in this study. Then we observed English lessons and documented or took pictures. Here, researchers get information from various ways, namely interviews, observations, and documentation. It emphasizes using different techniques to obtain data from the same informant.

Observation is preceded by observation and then recording systematically, logically, objectively, and rationally. Observation is a systematic description of events, behaviors, and artifacts (Mirhosseini, 2020). The observation led researchers to understand the state of a phenomenon as a reference in the research process, thus helping researchers to know the situation and systematics in the field. The purpose of observation is to describe, generate theories and hypotheses, or test theories and hypotheses. This observation indicates that educational games increase the motivation of students with special needs to want to learn English more and raise their curiosity because, of course, they like the educational games provided.

This research also uses structured interviews that were involved based on Esterberg. Structured interviews allow the interviewer to ask the same questions in the same way. A tightly structured question schedule is used, very similar to a questionnaire. The questions contained in the questionnaire will be planned with the help of a pilot study to refine the questions (Lacey & Luff, 2001). Structured interviews collect data when the researcher or data collector already knows about obtaining the information.

Therefore, data collectors have prepared research instruments in written questions that have prepared alternative answers in conducting interviews. Each respondent is asked the same question with this structured interview, and the data collector takes notes. The results of interviews conducted with classroom teachers show that educational games are very influential for students. Students become more active and excited even they want to try it first. The complete in-text citation and list of references employ a model Offline automatic system using Mendeley Desktop (Turmudi, 2020).

3. Findings and Discussion

The result of using games held twice on the same day with two different participants; the researcher will name the letters randomly. The students must guess each letter that has been mentioned and cross out the letters in question on the worksheet, where students spend 15 minutes. In the final result of the first game stage, ARZ managed to get 3 points, and AD got 4 points. For the second game stage, the Word (Charades) that played twice in 15 minutes was spent introducing the material and training students through the song "Head, Shoulders, Knee and Toes" to make it easier to remember through lyrics and movements. In the second game stage, ARZ, AD, YS, and HR students belong to children with learning styles that involve movement. It can be seen through the reactions during the game, such as imitating gestures and coordinating

their limbs to some vocabulary. The movement of holding the head to show the word "Head" and the movement of directing the hands and holding to the knees to show the word "Knee" in the word guessing game (charades) were among the examples. In doing the braille game, the researcher filled in the braille board to make letters to make a word. In the s game, the researcher makes the letters Apple, which means it is not too far from the Indonesian language, namely Apple. YS student can guess the word after he feels letter by letter on the braille board. The homeroom teacher's statement supports the statement that this educational game media effectively supports the learning process and students' willingness to learn through interviews.

In this research, using games to learn English have a significant influence in supporting students to learn English because of their curiosity. the effects that appear and are shown by students are good. It also shows an increase in students' willingness to learn from the bingo game; students also want to pay attention to the instructions to guess the word intended by the researcher. Not only that, but there is also an improvement in the way students pay attention to explanations and instructions through bingo games, such as making the class more conducive and making students more concentrated while playing. Likewise, in the Guess Word game (Charades), this game helps students understand the material through a process carried out repeatedly; the goal is for students to quickly understand and remember the Vocabulary taught by researchers and teachers. At the s stage, students can improve their ability to analyze and capture the movements they make and guess them. The Guess the Word game (Charades) is that students show an attitude that is ready to receive stimulation well, able to receive exposure to teaching materials by researchers. Then, the tense attitude towards friends is also one of the impacts formed through the effectiveness of this guessing game because students help each other in reminding each Vocabulary through gestures. Students can show the effect of using Braille that appears on aspects of material acceptance through good attention. It shows the willingness of students to learn that emerges from the bingo game. It can also be seen through a relatively conducive class situation, and students can also pay more attention to the material presented. Student t Reaction and Teacher's Opinion Homeroom teacher supports the effective use of educational games. The t teacher said, "So one of the factors that support the students' willingness from some of the games that have been given is the activity of each game that requires students to move to express themselves because the average student in this private school will indeed be faster. Remember and understand the material taught with movement and sound.

4. Conclusion

Using games are designed for learning but can still offer play and fun. Using games combine educational content, learning principles, and computer games. We concluded that Using games to learn English are practical learning media to help children learn. The using game with an explanation from the teacher can increase children's knowledge. There are various kinds of games, making this educational game more enjoyable. Based on the results of tests carried out directly on children, educational games can be accepted according to user needs.

As for the challenges teachers faced, the first one was class control. Since, young learners were a very active learner; teachers often found difficulties in how to control the class. The second challenge was the difficulties in encouraging students who did not interesting participate in the game. The last challenge was the difficulties in gaining students' understanding when the teacher should explain the rule of the game, since the students were still very young to understand the rule perfectly.

The findings of this study gave consideration for any English teachers to accompanied their teaching with games. Particularly, for those who teach young learners. It can be concluded from the findings of this study that games helped both the teacher and students in teaching learning process. Games provided a fun atmosphere that can avoid class boredom, increase students' motivation, and help students to improve their cognitive and motoric skills. The finding was similar to Yolageldili and Arikan (2011), who found that games used by Turkish EFL teachers in their English classes who consists of young learners' lower students' anxiety, since it encourages, entertains, and promotes fluency.

After evaluating the research and some input from the respondents, it is hoped that using game can be developed further to become even more perfect.

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