

LEARNING VOCABULARY THROUGH COLOURFUL PUZZLE GAME

Oleh: Risca Dwiaryanti

(Graduate Student of Islamic University of Malang)

Abstract:

Vocabulary plays an important role because it links to the four skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Those aspects should be integrated in teaching and learning process of English. However, the students must be able to know the meaning of each word or vocabulary of English in order to master the four skills. It is as a mean to create a sentence in daily communication to show someone's feeling, opinion, idea, desire, etc. So that, both speakers understand what the other speaker mean. However, English as a second language in Indonesia seems very hard for the students to master vocabulary of English. It makes them not easy to be understood directly and speak fluently. The students, sometimes, get difficulties in understanding, memorizing the meaning of the vocabulary, and getting confused in using the new words. There must be an effective strategy to attract students' interest, break the boredom, and make the class more lively.

Based on the writer experience, Colourful Puzzle Game is able to make the students learn vocabulary quickly. It needs teacher's creativity to create the materials of this game based on the class condition. The teacher just need a game board made from colourful papers, write any command and prohibition words on it. A dice is a tool to decide where the player should stop based on the number. Some pins as counter as sign of each player.

Key words:

Learning, Vocabulary, Colourful Puzzle Game

INTRODUCTION

Teaching English aims at developing communicative competence in the language both oral and written form appropriately, fluently, and accurately. In Indonesian Education System, English is a compulsory subject since the students in Junior High School based on the curriculum 2013. English as an International language play an important role in education to train the students face the real world in global competition. Vocabulary plays an

important role because it links to the four skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Those aspects should be integrated in teaching and learning process of English. Furthermore, the students must be able to know the meaning of each word or vocabulary of English in order to master the four skills. It is as a mean to create a sentence in daily communication to show someone's feeling, opinion, idea, desire, etc. So that, both speakers understand what the other speaker mean.

However, English as a second language in Indonesia seems very hard for the students to master vocabulary of English. It makes them not easy to be understood directly and speak fluently. The students, sometimes, get difficulties in understanding, memorizing the meaning of the vocabulary, and getting confused in using the new words. This (forgetting and misusing) is due to many factors. The most important of which are¹:

- Words are not properly stored in students' mind.
- They are not practiced enough to be applied in sentences and the students are not trained about it.
- They are not related to students' experienced and interest.

Students only study in their school and get lesson from their teacher. It is not easy to acquire vocabulary without appropriate technique, method, or strategy. As cited by Decarrico (2001) in Thi Thanh Huyen and Thi Thu Nga² that words should not be learnt separately or by memorization without understanding.

Actually, vocabulary is not a particular subject for students to learn

but it is taught within listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Students usually feel bored learning vocabulary as usual such as writing words on paper, finding out difficult words in a text, or learning the teacher's explanation passively and they have nothing to do with it. There must be something to attract their attention in learning new vocabularies, enrich a lot of vocabularies in one step learning from many sources and give them long lasting memorization in order to make them easy to use those vocabularies in daily communication or apply them in the sentences of the written form.

Considering how important a teacher should make his or her classroom activity enjoyable, lively, and full of exposure to language input, then the teacher needs to develop his or her teaching strategies. Moreover, based on the problems faced by most of the students in a country that English as a second language, the writer thinks that "Colourful Puzzle Game" is suitable as a strategy in teaching vocabulary to solve the problems above. Based on the writer's experience in teaching English especially related to vocabulary, a game gives the students joyful learning experience and motivation to learn something new.

According to Philips (1997)³ games in the language classroom help children to see learning English as enjoyable and rewarding activity. Playing

¹Rohani, Maryam, & Pougharib, Behzad. 2013. *The Effect of Games on Learning Vocabulary*. IRJABS (International Research Journal of Applied and Basic Sciences). Vol 4, (11): 3540-3543. Retrieved on October 20, 2014 from <http://Games in Teaching English>.

²Thi Thanh Huyen, Nguyen, & Thi Thu Nga, Kuat. 2003. *Learning Vocabulary Through Games, The Effectiveness of Learning Vocabulary Through Games*. Asian EFL Journal. Retrieved on October 20, 2014 from <http://Games in Teaching English>.

³Philips, S. 1997. *Young Learner*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. P.85

games in the classroom develops the ability to cooperate, to complete without being aggressive, and to be a good loser.

Through this game, the students are expected to listen, observe what the player do, get the meaning of the words, and comprehend it because they also do total physical responds during this activity. So, the students are not asked to memorize some words but they get the meaning and comprehend it directly by doing something based on the puzzle instruction in a fun situation. It will make long lasting memorization for them after playing the game. They have to think critically to win the game.

Moreover, according to Rixon (1992)⁴ games help the students revise vocabulary and recalling something that happen in a game may help a student remember the language connected with it. Learning new words by playing in the game will help the students remember some new words without any forced. They learn it in enjoyable condition. Games really helpful for students in a country that English as a second or foreign language. It also gives new atmosphere for the students and teacher to break the boredom in the classroom. It also build a good relationship between teacher and students and friends within group. During the game a nice interaction created to make the students become active learners.

The elaborate explanation of games, kinds of games, colourful puzzle games, and roles of game in the teaching of English vocabulary can be read below.

GAMES

Games basically are the activity in the form of doing something joyful to solve a problem given in it to compete with someone else or another group to be a winner. There are many games suitable to be applied in vocabulary class of English lesson. Those games are able to attract students' interest and increase their motivation to learn English. There are many kinds of games in language teaching to increase the students' mastery of vocabulary that is able to choose by the teacher based on their language class condition.

Sometimes, teachers in language class need to use games as the variety of teaching and learning process. Here are some of reasons why use games in language learning especially in vocabulary according to Wright, Betteridge, & Buckby, 2005⁵:

1. Games add interest to what students might not find very interesting. Sustaining interest can mean sustaining effort. After all, learning a language involves long-term effort.
2. Games provide a context for meaningful communication. Even if the game involves discrete language

⁴Rixon, S. 1992. *How to Use Games in Language Teaching*. London: Modern English Publication. P. 82

⁵Wright, A., Betteridge, D., & Buckby, M. 2005. *Games for Language Learning (3rd ed.)*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

items, such as a spelling game, meaningful communication takes place as students seek to understand how to play the game and as they communicate about the game: before, during, and after the game.

Some teachers think that games just waste of time. They think that students just have fun without any purpose.

Conventionally, games are only the activity to fill the emptiness of time in the teaching and learning activity, such as: warm-up activity at the beginning of the class or fill-ins at the end of the class when there is extra time left. But now, games can be played as a part of the new curriculum with goals that written clearly.

Children often are very enthusiastic about games, but precisely for that reason, some older students may worry that games are too childish for them. Teachers need to explain the purpose of the game in order to reassure such students that there is such a phenomenon as "serious fun." Also, older students can be involved in modifying and even creating games.

As with other learning activities, teachers need to pay careful attention to the difficulty level of games. Part of the appeal of games lies in the challenge, but if the challenge is too great, some students may become discouraged. The challenge can be of two kinds: understanding how to play the game and understanding the language content.

Some suggestions for promoting both types, such as:

- a. Demonstrations of how the game is played. The teacher can demonstrate with a group of students or a group can demonstrate for the class.
- b. A kind of script of what people said as they played or a list of useful phrases. Similarly, key vocabulary and concepts may need to be explained.
- c. Clear directions. Demonstrations can accompany directions, and directions can be given when needed, rather than explaining all the steps and rules in one go. Also, some student-initiated modifications can be accepted.
- d. Games already known to students.
- e. Games used to revise and recycle previously studied content, rather than involving new content.
- f. Groups are heterogeneous in terms of current language proficiency, so that the more proficient members can help others.
- g. Resources, online or print, such as dictionaries and textbooks.

TYPES OF LANGUAGE GAMES

Classifying games into categories can be difficult, because categories often overlap. Hadfield (1999)⁶ explains two ways of classifying language games. First, she divides language games into two types:

⁶Hadfield, J. (1999). *Intermediate Vocabulary Games*. Harlow, Essex: Longman. Retrieve on October 25, 2014 from <http://Games for Language Teaching>.

linguistic games and communicative games. Linguistic games focus on accuracy, such as supplying the correct antonym. On the other hand, communicative games focus on successful exchange of information and ideas, such as two people identifying the differences between their two pictures which are similar to one another but not exactly alike. Correct language usage, though still important, is secondary to achieving the communicative goal.

The second taxonomy that Hadfield uses to classify language games has many more categories. As with the classification of games as linguistic games or communicative games, some games will contain elements of more than one type.

1. Sorting, ordering, or arranging games. For example, students have a set of cards with different products on them, and they sort the cards into products found at a grocery store and products found at a department store.
2. Information gap games. In such games, one or more people have information that other people need to complete a task. For instance, one person might have a drawing and their partner needs to create a similar drawing by listening to the information given by the person with the drawing. Information gap games can involve a one-way information gap, such as the drawing game just described, or a two-way information gap, in which each person has unique information, such as in a Spot-the-Difference task, where each person has a slightly different picture, and the task is to identify the differences.
3. Guessing games. These are a variation on information gap games. One of the best known examples of a guessing game is 20 Questions, in which one person thinks of a famous person, place, or thing. The other participants can ask 20 Yes/No questions to find clues in order to guess who or what the person is thinking of.
4. Search games. These games are yet another variant on two-way information gap games, with everyone giving and seeking information. Find Someone Who is a well known example. Students are given a grid. The task is to fill in all the cells in the grid with the name of a classmate who fits that cell, e.g., someone who is a vegetarian. Students circulate, asking and answering questions to complete their own grid and help classmates complete theirs.
5. Matching games. As the name implies, participants need to find a match for a word, picture, or card. For example, students place 30 cards of words, composed of 15 pairs, face down in random order. Each person turns over two cards at a time, with the goal of turning over a matching pair, by using their memory. This is also known as the Pelmanism principle, after Christopher Louis

Pelman, a British psychologist of the first half of the 20th century.

6. Labeling games. These are a form of matching, in that participants match labels and pictures.
7. Exchanging games. In these games, students barter cards, other objects, or ideas. Similar are exchanging and collecting games. Many card games fall into this category, such as the children's card game⁷. Board games. Scrabble is one of the most popular board games that specifically highlights language.
8. Role play games. The terms *role play*, *drama*, and *simulation* are sometimes used interchangeably but can be differentiated (Kodotchigova, 2002)⁸. Role play can involve students playing roles that they do not play in real life, such as dentist, while simulations can involve students performing roles that they already play in real life or might be likely to play, such as customer at a restaurant. Dramas are normally scripted performances, whereas in role plays and simulations, students come up with their own words, although preparation is often useful.

Research suggests that learning, as well as affective variables, are

enhanced by a cooperative environment (Johnson, Johnson, & Stanne; Slavin, 1995). Millis (2005) outlines a number of advantages of cooperative games, such as appropriate anxiety levels and more constructive feedback.

THE BENEFITS OF USING GAMES IN LANGUAGE LEARNING

Using games in language learning are able to give much contribution or benefits in the teaching and learning process. The main purpose of vocabulary games is giving many inputs of vocabulary to the students through learning by playing. They don't need to work hard to memorize some vocabularies without any strategies. The students are able to absorb many vocabularies in a time of game and in enjoyable atmosphere without any force or under pressure situation.

Generally, games also can connect to a variety of intelligences. According to Gardner⁹, there are other benefits of games in language teaching, such as:

- a. Games played with others involve interpersonal intelligence
- b. Games involving drawing connect with visual/spatial intelligence
- c. Games often have a hands-on element, such as cards, spinners, or pieces, which connect with bodily/kinesthetic intelligence.

⁷Go

Fish:

<http://www.pagat.com/quartet/gofish.html>.

⁸ Kodotchigova, M. A. 2002. Role play in Teaching Culture: Six Quick Steps for Classroom Implementation. *Internet TESL Journal*, 8(7). Retrieved February 13, 2006, from <http://iteslj.org/Techniques/Kodotchigova-RolePlay.html> in <http://Games for Language Teaching>.

⁹Gardner, H. (1999). *Intelligence Reframed: Multiple Intelligences for the 21st century*. New York, NY: Basic Books. Retrieve on October 25, 2014 from <http://Games for Language Teaching>.

QUICK LEARNING WITH COLOURFUL PUZZLE GAME

Based on the broad explanation about games above, the writer create Colourful Puzzle Game as a media in teaching English in her class. According to Gagne (1970) in Sadiman¹⁰ (1990:6) media is kinds of components that can stimulate the students to study in learning process. Through this games teacher is able to introduce command and prohibition sentences. The students will use total physical responds to play it. This game also emphasize to broaden their knowledge about vocabularies.

Colourful Puzzle Game is a simple game but give much benefits for the students. The teacher only need to create:

1. Colourful Game Board as the main center of this game. It could be 40 cm wide x 60 cm long or choose any size you like. It is made from some colourful papers and then arrange them on the the sterofom to make it easy when stick it on the white board. Write on each colourful paper command or prohibition words or sentences.

For examples:

- Start
- Move to number 5
- Point your nose
- Stay in this number

¹⁰ Sadiman, Arief. 1990. *Media Pendidikan*. Pustekom Dikbud dan C.V. Rajawali. P.6

- Open the door please
- Move backward 3 steps
- Clap your hands twice
- Sing a song entitle "Twinkle – Twinkle Little Star"
- Move forward two steps
- Go to number 10, please
- Finish
- etc.

2. A big dice as a tool to show what number the player should be stopped in. They have to take in turn roll the dice once. It can be made from wood or sterofom if the teacher like big size or buy it from plastics one in standard size.
3. Some pins as counters or sign where or in what number the players should stop. It can be made from needle with colourful head.

Colourful Puzzle Game is able to play in pairs, small groups or big groups, thereby providing a venue for students to develop their skills in working with others, such as the skill of disagreeing politely and the skill of asking for help (Jacobs & Kline Liu, 1996)¹¹. Other advantages of games played in groups include:

- a. The team aspect of many games can encourage cooperation and build team spirit (Ersoz, 2000)¹².

¹¹ Jacobs, G. M., & Kline Liu, K. 1996. Integrating Language Functions and Collaborative Skills in the Second Language Classroom. *TESL Reporter*, 29, 21-33. Retrieve on October 25, 2014 from <http://Games for Language Teaching>.

¹² Ersoz, A. 2000. Six Games for EFL/ESL Classroom. *The Internet TESL Journal*,

- b. Although many games involve competition, this is not necessarily the case (Orlick, 2006)¹³.
 - c. In most games, everyone has a turn, encouraging everyone to take a turn, rather than letting others do all the talking and other actions, and discouraging one or two people from shutting out others.
4. Asked the leader of the first group to roll the dice as the first player.
 5. Asked the player to comprehend the command or prohibition sentences as the instruction to do something on a certain square of the board. If he/she cannot understand yet, asked for help to the other members to find out the difficult word in dictionary.

Through this game the students are expected to learn vocabularies of English quickly with a great experience, train to work in team (teamwork) to build togetherness within friends in class, make the class more lively, and train to solve the problems.

HOW TO PLAY COLOURFUL PUZZLE GAME

It is very simple to play colourful puzzle game. Teacher can divide the students into pairs, small groups, or big groups to make all the students take part in the activity. Here are the steps in details:

1. Divide the students into some groups consist of three or four students.
2. Choose the leader of each group as controller.
3. Divide which group is going to take the first turn and so on by doing Hom Pim Pah¹⁴.

6(6), Retrieved February 11, 2005 from <http://iteslj.org/Lessons/Ersoz-Games.html>.

¹³ Orlick, T. (2006). *Cooperative games and Sports: Joyful Activities for Everyone*. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics. Retrieve on October 25, 2014 from <http://Games for Language Teaching>.

¹⁴ Hom Pim Pah usually done by some children when they play something with their

6. The other player wait for their turn to do and continue as the previous player.
7. A group who reach the last number at the first time is the winner.

Based on the writer experience, this game could motivate the students to learn English. They played the game enthusiastically. But don't forget to make your game board as interesting as possible.

CONCLUSION

In English vocabulary plays an important role because it links to the four skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

However, English as a second language in Indonesia seems very hard for the students to master vocabulary of English. It makes them not easy to be understood directly and speak fluently. The students, sometimes, get difficulties in understanding, memorizing the meaning of the vocabulary, and getting

friends by shaking hands together after they make circle. If one of them show the palm of the hand and the other show the back of the hand, so the one who shows the palm or the back is going to be the first, etc.

confused in using the new words in the sentences.

There must be an effective strategy to attract students' interest, break the boredom, and make the class more lively. Based on the writer experience, Colourful Puzzle Game is able to make the students learn vocabulary quickly. It needs teacher's creativity to create the materials of this game based on the class condition. The teacher just need a game board made from colourful papers by arranging them, write any command and prohibition words on it. A dice as a tool to decide where the player should stop based on the number.

Some pins as counter as signs of each player. Then, the steps are:

First, the teacher divide the students into some groups. Second, choose the leader of each group. Third, asked the leader to do Hom Pim Pah to decide which group play first. Fourth, asked the first player to roll the dice. Fifth, the player who roll the dice should comprehend the instruction on the board to do something.

Sixth, the other player wait for their turn. Seventh, the winner is the group who reach last number at the first time.

Colourful Puzzle Game is expected to give joyful atmosphere in the teaching and learning process. Based on that experience the students are easy to memorize the vocabularies and applied it in the daily conversation.

REFERENCES

- Ersoz, A. 2000. Six Games for EFL/ESL Classroom. *The Internet TESL Journal*, 6(6), Retrieved February 11, 2005 from <http://iteslj.org/Lessons/Ersoz-Games.html>.
- Gardner, H. (1999). *Intelligence Reframed: Multiple Intelligences for the 21st century*. New York, NY: Basic Books. Retrieve on October 25, 2014 from <http://Games for Language Teaching>.
- Go Fish: <http://www.pagat.com/quartet/qofish.html>.
- Hadfield, J. (1999). *Intermediate Vocabulary Games*. Harlow, Essex: Longman. Retrieve on October 25, 2014 from <http://Games for Language Teaching>.
- Jacobs, G. M., & Kline Liu, K. 1996. Integrating Language Functions and Collaborative Skills in the Second Language Classroom. *TESL Reporter*, 29, 21-33. Retrieve on October 25, 2014 from <http://Games for Language Teaching>.
- Kodotchigova, M. A. 2002. Role play in Teaching Culture: Six Quick Steps for Classroom Implementation. *Internet TESL Journal*, 8(7). Retrieved February 13, 2006, from <http://iteslj.org/Techniques/Kodotchigova-RolePlay.html> in

- <http://Games for Language Teaching>.
- Orlick, T. (2006). *Cooperative games and Sports: Joyful Activities for Everyone*. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics. Retrieved on October 25, 2014 from <http://Games for Language Teaching>.
- Philips, S. 1997. *Young Learner*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. P.85
- Rixon, S. 1992. *How to Use Games in Language Teaching*. London: Modern English Publication. P. 82
- Rohani, Maryam, & Pougharib, Behzad. 2013. *The Effect of Games on Learning Vocabulary*. IRJABS (International Research Journal of Applied and Basic Sciences). Vol 4, (11): 3540-3543. Retrieved on October 20, 2014 from <http://Games in Teaching English>.
- Sadiman, Arief. 1990. *Media Pendidikan*. Pustekkom Dikbud dan C.V. Rajawali. P.6
- Thi Thanh Huyen, Nguyen, & Thi Thu Nga, Kwat. 2003. *Learning Vocabulary Through Games, The Effectiveness of Learning Vocabulary Through Games*. Asian EFL Journal. Retrieved on October 20, 2014 from <http://Games in Teaching English>.
- Wright, A., Betteridge, D, & Buckby, M. 2005. *Games for Language Learning (3rd ed.)*. New York: Cambridge University Press.