



THE STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF GAME IN VOCABULARY LEARNING

Fariska Wulandari

RiskaDiandra0212@gmail.com

Polytechnic of Tonggak Equator

Abstract

This research was aimed to find out the students' perception of game in vocabulary learning. This is a descriptive research that was conducted in Polytechnic of Tonggak Equator in August-October 2020. Ten students of the third semester students of English for Business and Professional Communication are the subjects of this research. Based on the interview, the students' perception about game are positive. It can be a media to make situation in class become fun, can be an ice-breaking in class, reduce stress and can be a mood booster. Game is a media that can be used to play and learn and it increase creativity, it makes mind relax and happy. Game is good and can be done by many people. All of the informants said that they like learning vocabulary by using game because it is more fun and it makes the brain fresh to get new vocabularies, it is fun and can be remembered, it makes the students easier to understand, more exciting, drill people in solving problem, it less stress so the informant can understand the learning material easily and because it happier and the learning situation become not monotonous. Game motivated all informants in learning vocabulary. Then, game is useful tool to be applied in vocabulary classes. Learning vocabulary by using game is effective. Game makes learning vocabulary become more interesting and enjoyable, reduce anxiety, increase positive feeling, self-confidence and number of vocabulary. It creates challenging atmosphere in the classroom.

Keywords: *students' perception, game, vocabulary learning*

Introduction

Vocabulary has an important role in all language skills. Vocabulary helps people to express their idea. Vocabulary helps people read and listen with more understanding. Vocabulary helps people to convey meaning. The linguist Wilkins (1972, p.111) states that "without grammar little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed." So that vocabulary plays more important role than grammar. Indeed, people need to use words in order to express themselves in any language, as well as students. In addition, "successful people usually have large vocabularies and a good word recognition skill that enable them to use the right word in the right place at the right time." (Hancock, 1987, p.1).

In doing communication to others, there are two basic ways of communication, they are speaking and writing such Hancock (1987, p.1) states that there are two basic ways of communication to others, they are speaking and writing. Vocabulary development is essential for both. If the students fail to understand what the instructor or lecturer say, one of the reasons could be because of the failure to understand the words that were used. In researcher experience as a lecturer, she noticed the fact that students usually find it really hard to speak English fluently and accurately. They usually consider that speaking activities are boring and exhausting because they keep on using the same expressions and words and immediately, their conversation is

interrupted due to missing words. And the main reason for such communication problems is the lack of vocabulary. That is why, vocabulary plays essential role in learning a language.

In a classroom, lecturer meets many characters of students. There are students who have high motivation to learn but there are also students who have low motivation to learn. In explaining the learning materials in the classroom, lecturer will deal with various reaction of students. There are students who respond the lecturers' explanation positively such as listen to the lecturer carefully, take note while the lecturer is explaining the learning material, discuss the learning materials to their friends but there also students who react or respond negatively such as do not pay attention to the lecturer's explanation, talk with friend beside him, busy with their smartphone or fall asleep. These situations require the lecturer to find out the best way to teach the students effectively and increase their motivation in learning.

There are various approaches, methods and techniques in teaching English. According to Bambang Setiadi, et al. (2008), there are some approaches in teaching a language, there are natural approach, communicative approach, content-based approach, literature-based approach, etc. In teaching method, there are audio-lingual method, direct method, total physical response method and grammar translation method. The various kinds of teaching approach, method, and technique make the teacher able to use it in their class but the teacher must be able to choose the most appropriate approach, method and technique that suit with the characteristics of their students.

Game is one the technique that can be used in language learning. Based on the researcher's observation in reading and speaking class, she found that game can increase the students' motivation in language learning. Game can create good atmosphere in language learning. That is why, the researcher would like to

investigate the students' perception about game in language learning with research entitled *The Students' Perception of Game in Vocabulary Learning (A Descriptive Qualitative Research in the Third Semester Students of English for Business and Professional Communication in the Academic Year of 2020-2021)*.

The problem formulation of this research is: What is the students' perception of game in vocabulary learning? Based on the problem formulated, the objective of this research is: To find out the students' perception of game in vocabulary learning.

Literature Review

Vocabulary plays an important role in language skill. It is the basis for the development of other language skills, they are reading comprehension, listening comprehension, speaking, writing, spelling and pronunciation such Harmer (2001, p. 4) stated that vocabulary is one of the most obvious components of language and one of the first things applied linguistics turned their attention. Moreover, Richard and Renandya (2002, p. 255) stated that vocabulary is a core component of language proficiency and provides much of the basis for how well learners speak, listen, read and write. It means that the role of vocabulary is really important in language learning since it is the basis of students to speak, listen, read and write well.

Vocabulary is very important because it is the starting point that people have to possess when they dealing with languages such Al-Hinnawi (2012, p. 62) stated "vocabulary is the starting point that people should possess when dealing with languages." Moreover, vocabulary is dominant in improving a person's communication skill like Beena Anil (2011, p.46) states that "vocabulary is predominant in improving one's communicative skill. Language is more powerful when it is being used perfectly".

Vocabulary is a set of words in oral and written and in productive and receptive which has meaning such Fran et al (2005, p.

2-3) define that vocabulary as knowledge of words and word meaning in both oral and written language and in productive and receptive forms. In other words, vocabulary is a combination of words which produce meaning.

Vocabulary is the focus of language with its sounds and intended meanings that interlock to allow students to communicate with one another (Nation, 2000: Pyles, 1970). In classroom implementation, vocabulary becomes the guidance that leads students to comprehend every piece of information both oral and written and to produce ideas.

Thornbury (2002, p. 24-25) and Nation (2001, p. 24) classified the types of vocabulary into two types, they are receptive and productive vocabulary. According to them, there are two types of vocabulary related to the language skills of reading, listening, speaking and writing they are receptive or passive vocabulary which refers to the words that native speakers and foreign learners recognize and understand but it hardly ever used, it is used passively in reading and listening, and productive vocabulary which is utilized actively either in speaking or writing. Productive vocabulary refers to the words which learners use when they speak or write and it called active vocabulary.

Approach, method and techniques are three terms which are important in teaching. According to Anthony (cited in Richards and Rogers, 2001, p.19), "approach, method, and technique have hierarchical arrangement. Approach is the level of theories, method is the plan of language teaching which is consistent with the theories, and techniques carry out a method. In other words, the arrangement of the three is that-approach is axiomatic, method is procedural and technique is implementation".

Game is one of the methods in teaching and learning a language. The use of game in teaching and learning is quite popular. Based on the researcher interview with the English lecturers and the

researcher observation in Polytechnic of Tonggak Equator, some lecturers use game to maintain the students' motivation in learning and create fun atmosphere in the classroom. Game is a well-organized activity that has objective, rules, competition and communication between players such as stated in The Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics in Richards, Platt, & Platt, (1995, p.89), games are defined as "an organized activity that usually has the following properties: a particular task or objective, a set of rules, competition between players, and communication between players by spoken or written language".

Game is activity that has rules and a goal but it creates fun as well such as Hadfield (1984) said, "game is an activity with rules, a goal and an element of fun". Game gives many advantages when it is used in the classroom, one of them is motivate learners to learn a language such as Ramadhaniarti (2016, p.383) states that "games provide language teachers with many advantages when they are used in classroom. One of these advantages is that learners are motivated to learn the language when they are in a game". Ramadhaniarti (2016, p.383) also states that "games are useful and effective tools that should be applied in vocabulary classes". The use of game is a way to make the lessons more interesting, enjoyable and effective but the teachers have to consider the best game for students".

Game if it is introduced properly, it can be one of the highest motivation techniques. It stimulates the students' interest such as McCallum (1980, p. ix) states that "games stimulate student interest, a properly introduced game can be one of the highest motivating techniques". Games are advantageous because it can reduce the students' anxiety. It can increase the students' positive feeling as well. It also can increase the students' self-confidence because the students do not afraid of punishment and criticism while they were

practicing the target language freely. This statements in line with Crookal (1990, p.112) states that “games are advantageous because they reduce anxiety, increase positive feeling and improve self-confidence because learners do not afraid of punishment or criticism while practicing the target language freely. In addition, game is a useful tool in improving children’s vocabulary acquisition in natural way as would be normally achieved through play (Angelova & Lekova, 1995; Atake, 2003; Deng, 2006).

Method

This research is a descriptive research which is conducted in Polytechnic of Tonggak Equator. This research was done in August-October 2020. The researcher chose third semester students of English for Business and Professional Communication as the subject of the research because these students had attended vocabulary subject and had experience of playing game in vocabulary learning in the classroom. The subject of the research consists of 10 students for interview with the criteria of willing of being informant of this research, have ever attended and finished vocabulary subject, have experienced learning vocabulary through game at least twice and elaborative in spoken.

In this research, the researcher used interview guideline as the instruments of data collection. Then, in this research, the researcher used unstructured interview to collect the data and the interviews were done by using video call.

In this research, the result of the interview was analyzed qualitatively.

Findings and Discussion

In this research, the researcher did interview with 10 informants and described the result of interview by the order of interview questions. Based on the interview, it can be known the informants think about game are it can be a media to

make situation in class become fun and can be an ice-breaking in class, game is fun thing to do in spare time, it can reduce stress and be a mood booster, game is strategy to make learning activity become fun, it is a media that can be used to play and learn and it increases creativity. So, game makes the informants not saturated in learning, it makes mind relax and happy. It can be done by many people. But game is something that can be good and can be bad, and the good and the bad of the game will be depend on us. From the positive side, game can increase intelligence and the negative one is it makes people addicted and forget about the time. What the students think about game is in line with what Hadfield (1984) said that, “game is an activity with rules, a goal and an element of fun”.

For the second question about whether the students like learning vocabulary by using game or no, all of the informants said that they like learning vocabulary by using game. Then, the reason they like learning vocabulary by using game are varied, they are because it is more fun and it makes the brain become fresher to get new vocabularies, it is fun and can be remembered, it makes the students easier to understand, more exciting, more curious, and drills people in solving problem. It less stress so students can understand the learning material easily and because it happier so the learning situation become more fresh and not monotonous. The reasons the students like learning vocabulary by using game are in line with what Hadfield (1984) said that, “game is an activity with rules, a goal and an element of fun”. The element of fun that consists in a game makes the students like learning vocabulary by using game. Then the third question about the name of the game that the students have ever played while learning vocabulary is the informant said hot seat and guessing words.

For the fourth question about “does game motivate you in learning vocabulary?”, all of the informants said yes, game motivated them in learning

vocabulary. So, it is in line with Ramadhaniarti (2016, p.383) states that “games provide language teachers with many advantages when they are used in classroom. One of these advantages is that learners are motivated to learn the language when they are in a game”. The reason game motivated informants in learning vocabulary are because the game has a point to increase the score, it makes the informant become more excited and even it does not feel like studying if the informant learn by using game but the informant still can understand the learning materials, it is challenging and the vocabulary gotten by the informant can be remember for a long time. The other reasons are because if the students can guess the word so they will get a point so it made them must learn more vocabulary, because there are some vocabularies that they do not know the meaning when they were playing game so playing game motivated them to know the meaning of the words, it less stress, and because the informants feel that they have to answer more questions and have to get more points and because by playing game, the informants get new vocabulary and become often searching meaning of vocabulary.

For the fifth question about according to the informants, “is it useful tools to be applied in vocabulary classes?”, nine from ten informants said that game is useful tool to be applied in vocabulary classes. So, it was suitable with Ramadhaniarti (2016, p.383) states that “games are useful and effective tools that should be applied in vocabulary classes”. The reasons are because it increases learning motivation and students’ score, makes the students enjoy to study in class, feels equal with other friends. None student who cleverer or dull even they help each other in a team. The students who were not really clever were helped by the clever one. The clever students were not patronizing as well. So, the students helped each other. It also strengthens relationship among students and lecturer so the lecturer did not only give

assignments, the words will be remembered for a long time if learning while playing game instead of just remembered and doing assignments. It would be tedious. Vocabulary is easier for students to learn if they enjoy it, people will understand the learning materials when they feel relax instead of being pressed. But, game would not really useful if it applies continually. Game can be useful if it applies once in a while or once in two weeks is enough to play a game.

For the sixth question about “based on your experience, is it effective learning vocabulary by using game?”, nine from ten informants said that learning vocabulary by using game is effective and the informants’ perceptions were in line with Ramadhaniarti (2016, p.383) states that “games are useful and effective tools that should be applied in vocabulary classes”. The reasons are because it makes the learning situation become fun and relax, the vocabularies that was gotten by playing can be remembered for a long time. It was not easy to forget. Game is challenging and make learning become not monotonous, feel of tired was disappear. It increases curiosity because there are some vocabularies that students rarely hears so it curious them to find out the meaning of the vocabularies and the words can be remembered for a long time. But game would be ineffective it plays continuously because there would be some learning materials that will be left if the class always plays a game but it will be effective if it is played once in a while in order to make the students relax.

For the seventh question that about “does game make learning vocabulary become more interesting?”, all informants said yes, that game make learning vocabulary become more interesting. The reasons are because it does not feel like learning but the informant still can achieve the learning materials, it makes learning materials become easy to understand, challenging, many vocabularies will be kept in our mind by playing game, if the

lesson is only learned monotonously so it would be stress. Vocabulary is easier for students to learn if they enjoy it. By playing game, learning become more fun. Those reasons also in line with what Hadfield (1984) said that, "game is an activity with rules, a goal and an element of fun". The fun element in game makes learning vocabulary become more interesting.

For the eighth question that about "does game make vocabulary learning become more enjoyable?" All the informants said yes that game make vocabulary learning become more enjoyable. The reasons are because it makes the students not stress and can forget assignments from other subjects for a while, it does not feel like learning and feel challenging to win the game, it is more relax but still can get the learning materials, instead of learning from the whiteboard and read the learning materials one by one, it get rid of boredom, it dare the students to answer the questions, the students can share and compete with friends so it is not only compete to get score but also compete in our intelligence, an then because vocabulary is easier for students to learn if they enjoy it, because the situation become happier and it can build togetherness with team and because there is no pressure in game. Students were only taught to make them more understand by playing game.

For the ninth question that about "does game reduce your anxiety?", nine from ten informants said yes that game reduce anxiety. With game, people can create competitive learning in the classroom so it can reduce anxiety because it is more fun to do. It can reduce the students' stress. The game encourages students to memorize what they have learned before. Then, when learning in the classroom, maybe there were some killer lecturers but when playing game, it can change the students' perspective about the lecturer. They will think that killer lecturer can be fun as well. Playing game makes students more relax. But there is also student who think that it depends on the

subject. If the subject and the learning materials are difficult, the lecturer is killer as well so it will make the student more worry if playing game because she will afraid if she cannot answer the questions and get mad by her lecturer.

For the tenth question about "does game increase your positive feeling while learning vocabulary?", all of informants said yes that game increase their positive feeling while learning vocabulary. The reasons are because the game was played with friends so it is fun, it is a mood booster, the game will not make the informant boring in learning vocabulary, it can change his perspective of killer lecturer. When the killer lecturer was playing game in class, it can make him think that the lecturer can be fun as well. Then, it is encouraging, game makes her not really stress, because the informant feel challenged to solve the problem, game is fun and enjoyable, game make him more interest in learning vocabulary. If lecturer only gives assignment, it will be boring but if the lecturer gives game, it will be fun.

For the eleventh question about "according to you, does game improve your self-confidence?" Eight from ten informants said yes that game improve their self-confidence because game makes the informant want to answer more questions so the informant can win the game, the students must memorize what they have learnt before, the equal rate of students, none students were smart and none students were stupid makes learning become more fun and students become confident. Then, because in the game that was played in vocabulary subject, the students have to come in front of the class. They have to be fast. The faster the student, the more opportunity for him/her to answer and to get a point. So, it makes her be more confident and competitive. Moreover, the game requires one of the members of the team to come in front of the class and her friends in her team have trust her to guess the words so her self-confidence was increased and because in this game, the members of the

team have to give clues by using gesture so she need to be expressive and that is why she must be confident with herself. But there is informant said it depends on the team. If he gets higher intelligent competitor so it can make him down but can share each other as well. According to him, mental will be upgraded because of playing game. There is also one informant said no because he thinks that he has already good with his self-confidence. He said that he has already confident with himself.

For the twelfth question about “does game increase your number of vocabularies in natural way?” All of informants said yes that game increase their number of vocabulary because by playing game, the informant got new vocabulary from friends and lecturer, and understood the words without looking dictionary, no longer need to memorize but with playing game he can remember the words for a long time. Then, when the informant heard the other team answered the question so she got new vocabularies. The number of informant’s vocabulary was increased also because the informant can learn from the words gotten by the other team that make the informant wanted to know the meaning of the vocabulary. The informant was directly open dictionary or searching the meaning of the words.

For the thirteenth question that about “What do you think about the class atmosphere when you learn vocabulary by playing a game?”, the informant said that it was fun and relax, the atmosphere of the class was noisy but more alive, on fire, more exciting and fun. Other informant said that the class atmosphere was more fun, interesting and enjoyable because the game can challenge the students and it was fun. The class become competitive, the situation of class became fun, not boring, more comfortable and not stress, not monotonous, exciting because everybody was enjoyed when they were playing game, more relax, students can show their own ability, noisy because they were excited. So noisy in positive way. Other informant also

said that the class became loud and noisy like in an amusement park but it was positive because the students talking about the lesson, happier, more fun. Students became less stress and excited.

For the fourteenth question that about “Do you think that learning vocabulary by playing game is recommended?”, nine from ten informants said that it was recommended. The reasons are because it is easier to understand, it is not burdensome the students and the lecturer not only give learning materials, it can reduce stress, it is fun, it makes the class not monotonous and practice speed so it makes the informant become more responsive. It is quite recommended because vocabulary must be understood not remembered. If we play a game so the vocabularies will be understood by us, it is fun, enjoyable and people are easier to understand the learning material by playing game instead of learn monotonously. But there is also informant who said so because game is time consuming so it is better if it is played when students feel bored. According to her, from 14 meeting for 1 semester, 4 times playing game is enough. Other 10 meetings can be used for studying seriously in order to get more vocabulary. The 10th informant said that game is recommended because it is fun, enjoyable and people are easier to understand the learning material by playing game instead of learn monotonously.

For the fifteenth question that about “What’s your expectation for your vocabulary lecturer when you learn vocabulary in the classroom?”, the informant expects to the vocabulary lecturer to play game by turns. He thinks that twice in a month is ideal to play a game. Then, the class must be more enjoyable, must apply games. The games that ever applied were not enough. The other informant expects that the vocabulary lesson to do more game to collect point. The other informants said that the lecturer was okay and has good already. She played game in the classroom so made the students enjoy, she did not make the students afraid

or nervous. The frequency of playing game was enough, it was not too often and not too seldom, the questions or words given on the game were challenging and she made the learning become more relax. The learning materials have completed and clear. The 10th informant expect that the vocabulary lecturer can compensate the time for studying seriously and time for learning with more relax and expect that the game that has ever played can be applied for the new semester students.

Conclusion

Based on the finding and discussion, the researcher could draw the conclusions as follow: Based on the interview, it can be known the students' perception about game are positive. The students' perception about game are game can be a media to make situation in class become fun, can be an ice-breaking in class, it can reduce stress and be a mood booster, game is a media that can be used to play and learn and it increase creativity, it makes mind relax and happy, game can increase intelligence but it makes people addicted and forget about the time as well. Game is good, it reduces stress and can be done by many people. All of the informants said that they like learning vocabulary by using game. Then, the reason they like learning vocabulary by using game are varied, they are because it is more fun and it makes the brain become fresher to get new vocabularies, it is fun and can be remembered, it makes the students more excited and easier to understand, game drill people in solving problem, it less stress so the informant can understand the learning materials easily and because it happier and the learning situation become more fresh and not monotonous. Game motivated all informants in learning vocabulary. Then, game is useful tool to be applied in vocabulary classes. Learning vocabulary by using game is effective. All informants said that game make learning vocabulary become more interesting. Moreover, all the informants said that game make vocabulary learning become more enjoyable. Game

reduce anxiety. All of informants said that game increase their positive feeling while learning vocabulary. Game improves their self-confidence and game increase the informants' number of vocabulary. Game create fun, relax, enjoyable and challenging atmosphere in the classroom. The informants said that game is recommended. The informants expect to the vocabulary lecturer to play game by turns. The informant thinks that twice in a month is ideal to play a game. Then, the class must be more enjoyable, must apply games. The games that ever applied were not enough. The other informant expects that the vocabulary lesson to do more game to collect point.

References

- Al-Hinnawi, A.N. (2012). The Effect of the Graphic Organizer Strategy on University Students English Vocabulary Building. *English Language Teaching*, 5 (12), 62-69.
- Anil, B. (2011). Teaching Vocabulary Through Games-A *Sanguine Step*, 5 (1), 46-50.
- Angelova, T.G., & Lekova, B.C. (1995). *A Model of Early Childhood Foreign Language Education through Playing Motoric Games*. ERIC Database. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED397957). Web. June 11, 2020
- Atake, K. (2003). *Using Games in Japanese Junior High School*. ERIC Database. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED479748). Web. June 11, 2020
- Bambang Setiadi, dkk (2008). *Telf 1*. Jakarta: Universitas Terbuka
- Crookal, D. (1990). *Stimulating, Gaming, and Language Learning*. New York: Newbury House.

- Deng, Q.H. (2006). *A Study of Using Games in Primary School English Teaching*. Shensi Province. Northwest Normal University
- Fran, L., Osborn, J., & E. H. Hiebert. (2005). *A Focus on Vocabulary*. USA: PERL.
- Hancock, O. (1987). *Reading Skills for College Students*. New Jersey: Prentice- Hall.
- Hadfield, J. (1984). *Elementary Communication Games*. London: Nelson.
- Harmer, J. (2001). *The Practice of English Language Teaching 3rd Edition*. Essex: England: Longman.
- McCallum, G. P. (1980). *101 Games: For Students of English as a Second or Foreign Language*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Nation, I.S.P., (2000) *Learning Vocabulary in Another Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Pyles, T. (1970). *English: An Introduction to Language*. San Diego: Harcourt College Pub.
- Ramadhaniarti, T. (2016). *Teaching English Vocabulary Through Game: Views From The Students. Proceeding of The Fourth International Seminar on English Language and Teaching (ISELT-4)*. University of Padang. (Accessed on May 2nd, 2020 from ejournal.unp.ac.id)
- Richards, J. C., & Renandya, W.A. (2002). *Methodology in Language Teaching: An Anthology of Current Practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Richards, J. C., & Rodgers, T.S., (2001). *Approaches and Method in Language Teaching (second edition)*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Richards, J.C., Platt, J., & Platt, H. (1995). *Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching & Applied Linguistics*. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research, Press.
- Thornbury, S. (2002). *How to Teach Vocabulary*. Harlow: Pearson Education Limited.
- Wilkins, D. (1972) *Teaching Vocabulary*. <https://www.tesol.org>