

USING HANGMOUSE ONLINE GAME TO INTRODUCE NEW VOCABULARY TO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

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Abstrak

Artikel ini ditulis bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan salah satu strategi pengajaran kosa kata bahasa Inggris di Sekolah Dasar dengan menggunakan Hang Mouse online game yang terdapat pada www.Spellingcity.com. Permainan ini merupakan jenis permainan tebak kata yang dikhususkan untuk anak-anak yang baru memulai belajar bahasa Inggris. Melalui permainan ini guru dapat mengajarkan kosa kata bahasa Inggris berdasarkan topik-topik yang telah disediakan yang mana penerapannya akan mendasari seluruh tahapan mengajar: elaborasi, eksplorasi dan konfirmasi. Dengan menggunakan permainan ini sebagai media untuk mengajarkan kosa kata bahasa Inggris akan membuat siswa lebih tertarik untuk belajar karena belajar melalui permainan adalah salah satu kriteria belajar yang sangat dibutuhkan oleh siswa.

Key Words: Elementary school students, game, HangMouse online game, vocabulary

A. Introduction

In teaching English to elementary school students, the first one that must be taught for them is the basic of English itself. It is because they are still in the beginning level in learning English. As Zhihong (2000:15) says that vocabulary is a basic unit of language form and it has an important role in expressing our ideas. He also adds that someone cannot communicate effectively if they only have limited vocabulary. It is supported by Cameron (2001:12) that states the building up a useful vocabulary is central to the learning of foreign language at primary level.

Unfortunately, learning English is one of the most difficult subjects to be learnt by many elementary school students. There are some factors that can cause this problem. One of them can be looked from the English subject itself. In Indonesia, according to curriculum, English can start to be taught to the fourth grade elementary school students. So, it means that English is a new and foreign language for them. Therefore, Cameron (2001: 72) suggests that children are clearly capable of learning foreign language words through participating in the

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discourse of classroom activities; thus, vocabulary teaching has a centre stage in foreign language teaching.

Besides, many elementary school students are less of attention in the classroom. They feel bored with the technique that is used by the teacher. It makes them to do other activities while learning process, like drawing pictures, making a joke with other students, and etc. It causes the learning process does not run well. To solve that problem, English teachers must find an interesting way that can change the situation in the classroom become an enjoyable classroom atmosphere.

Moreover, there are many elementary school students who are not interested and get bored in learning English vocabulary. It happens because they think that the teachers use uninteresting way to teach English vocabulary. The teachers start the lesson by writing the words in whiteboard, and then ask the students to write it in their book. After that, the teachers ask them to find the meaning of those words in dictionary. For them, it is a kind of a boring activity that makes them uninterested to learn the English vocabulary. According to Nation (1974:23) good vocabulary teaching technique should interest the learner, should makes the learners give to the form, meaning, or use of a word and gives a chance for a certain amount of repetition. He also proposes some ways to present new vocabulary. The ways can be by demonstration, pictures and explanation.

Finocchiaro (1974:73) suggests that teaching vocabulary to the beginning level should concentrate on the function words and the more frequently used vocabulary item, which are needed to give practice in the basic structures and sounds of that language. Besides, he also suggests that in teaching vocabulary to the beginning level, whenever possible, the vocabulary items should be centered about one topic. On the other words, it can be said that at early stage, the teacher should introduce simple words in one topic that are commonly used and try to encourage them to practice them.

Generally, children prefer to play than to learn, but they will learn if they are good feeling and the situation supports them to learn. Therefore, provide the variety techniques in learning and create the activity that can make them feeling good, it can help in learning English more especially vocabulary. Besides, there are many interesting ways that can be used in teaching vocabulary for elementary school students. One of them is by using many kinds of games. As Ur (1991: 288) says that there are three very important sources that can make children interest to learning in the classroom. They are pictures, stories, and games.

Besides, Hadfield (1990) says that a game as an activity with rules, a goal, and elements of fun. Therefore, the function of a game in teaching English is to make the students enjoys in learning process. Not only that, it can help them in order to use English when they communicate with other people. Ur (1991: 289) adds that the games are essentially recreational “time out” activities whose main purpose is enjoyment. It means that teacher can use several creative ways to make the students feel enjoy while the learning process.

Moreover, by applying games in teaching vocabulary, it can take the elementary school students’ attention to learn and make them interested to follow the lesson because it can make them fun and create an enjoyable classroom atmosphere. As a result, they can understand and memorize the vocabulary that is

given well. On the other hand, if the teachers use games in teaching vocabulary, it will increase participation of the students because in applying the games in teaching vocabulary will require the students to take a part.

Based on the explanation above, to introduce new English vocabulary to elementary school students, the teachers are expected to find the new technique that can change their opinion that say learning English is difficult and can make the students interested in learning English vocabulary. In this case, this article will offer the use of “ Hang Mouse online game “ to introduce new vocabulary to elementary school students.

Hang Mouse online game is one of free online vocabulary game on www.spellingcity.com. This game is proprietary game owned by Vkiz Inc. The procedure in playing this game is quite similar to the old fashioned game that asks the player to guess the letters in a word. The player gets only a limited number of guesses before the stick man is revealed and the game is over. (<http://www.spellingcity.com/hangmouse-kids-hangman-online.html>). In this game, there are some word lists such as colors word list, pets, zoo, etc. Each of the word lists will provide 8-10 words, but each of the words will appear after the player guess the letters from a word. Besides, this game also involves mouse, cheese, and cat that will play if the player begins to guess the words and it will be followed by music background for each of guessing. That mouse, cheese, and cat will make this game more interesting to be played by the elementary school students. Therefore, Hang Mouse online game is considered to be used in introducing a new vocabulary to elementary school students.

B. Implementation Of Using Hang Mouse Online Game To Introduce New Vocabulary

1. Preparation

In using Hang Mouse online game to introduce new vocabulary to elementary school students, the teacher needs to make some preparations before he/she begins to teach the students. It is needed in order to make the teaching and learning process run well. It also helps the teacher to be more confident in teaching process. The preparations are:

- a. The teacher chooses one topic that will be taught to the students, for example, the topic is about the animal. So, the teachers can choose pets word list and zoo word list in Hang Mouse online game to introduce the vocabulary about the animal to the students. Then, the teacher has to see what are the vocabulary that is provided in pets word list and zoo word list.
- b. The teacher prepares flash cards or pictures related to the vocabulary that will be taught to the students based on the vocabulary that is provided in both of the list in Hang Mouse game that have been chosen before. The words list in the pets and zoo words list are: hamster, cat, pig, rabbit, gerbil, lizard, fish, parakeet, ferret rhino, lion, bear, giraffe, hippo, panther, tiger, monkey, kangaroo and elephant. So, the teacher has to prepare flash cards or pictures for all of those words. Besides, the teacher must prepare in-focus, laptop and speaker in the classroom. If there is no free WiFi/wireless in the school, so the teacher has to prepare a modem in order to play the Hang Mouse online game.

- c. The teacher makes lesson plan which include the activity and step in using Hang Mouse online game as a media to introduce new vocabulary to the students.
- d. The teacher prepares some realia of stars that made by carton paper. These stars will be given to the group that can guess the words in the game. Guessing one word, it means that group will get one star.
- e. The teacher needs to prepare reward such as gifts that will be given to the winner who get more stars than others group at the end of the game. The gifts can be writing utensils, snacks or other things that are considered interesting for the students.

2. Implementation

There are three activities that should be done in applying Hang Mouse online game. First activity is pre-teaching activities. In pre-teaching activities, the teacher has to activate the students' background knowledge and after that, divide them into several groups. Then, for the second activity is whilst teaching activities. In whilst teaching activities, the teacher plays the game with the students. The third is post-teaching activity. In post teaching activities, the teachers remind the students about the vocabulary that has been learnt and make a conclusion for the lesson that have been taught to the students.

a. Pre-teaching activities

Pre-teaching activities should be done at the beginning of the class in order to make the students ready to learn. For the first, the teacher can greet the students. Greeting the students is important to know how the students are. Besides, the teacher has to make sure that the students are ready to study or not, by taking their attendance list.

In pre teaching activities, the teacher has to activate the students' background knowledge about what will be taught to them. Therefore, the teacher can give them some questions related to the topic of vocabulary that will be taught to them to activate their background knowledge. For example, the teacher will teach about the animal. In the Hang Mouse online game, there are two topics that related to the animal: pets word list and zoo word list. So, the vocabulary that will be taught are hamster, cat, pig, rabbit, gerbil, lizard, fish, dog, parakeet and ferret for the pets word list and rhino, lion, bear, giraffe, hippo, panther, tiger, monkey, kangaroo and elephant for the zoo word list.

Related to that vocabulary that will be taught, the teacher can ask the some questions. The questions are:

1. Do you have pets in your house?
2. What pets that you have?
3. Have you ever visited a zoo?
4. What kinds of animals that you see there?

If necessary, the teacher can translate all of the questions to Indonesian Language in order to make them understand with the questions. After doing that activity, the teacher can tell to the students that they will learn vocabulary about the animal by using Hang Mouse online game and it will

be played by dividing them into groups. So, the teacher divides them into several groups. Each group consists of three or four students.

b. Whilst-teaching activities

1. Exploration

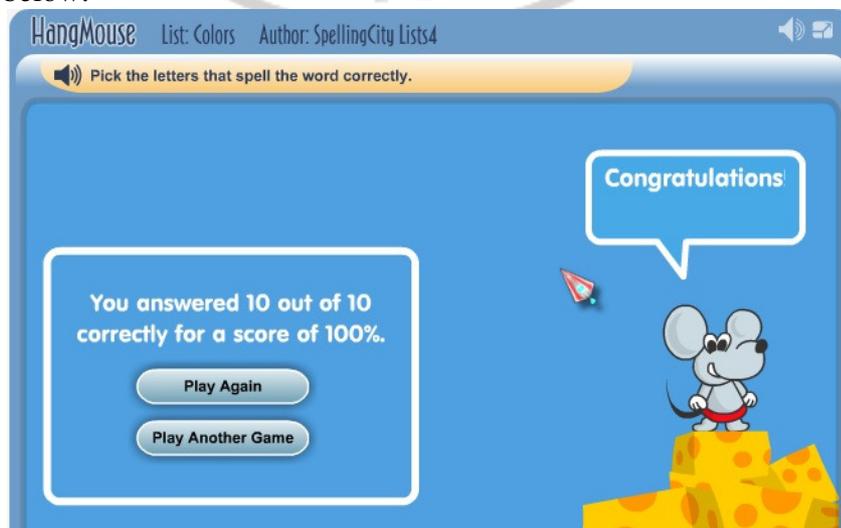
In this step, the teacher explains and gives example to the students how to play it. The teacher opens the Hang Mouse online game, then chooses one of the word list and plays that game by guessing one or two words and also explains to them about the rule in playing this game, what happen with the mouse and cat if the player guess wrong or true letter.

Then, he/she tells to the students that the player will be given seven opportunities for wrong guessing. For the first, the player will guess a letter, then the little mouse will try to get the cheese that are kept by a cat that still sleep. If the player success to guess the word, the mouse gets a piece of cheese without disturb the cat and followed by music instrument.

But, if the player fails to guess the letter for the first, it will disturb the cat and make it do a little movement without open its eyes. If the player still make the wrong guessing for the second chance, third chance, fourth chance, fifth chance, sixth chance until the last chance, it will disturb the cat and make it do some different expression and movement to catch the mouse.

If the last chance cannot be used as good as possible by the player, so it will make the cat wake up from its sleep and it will catch the mouse. After the cat catches the mouse, the right word will be appeared and to continue the guessing for other words, the player should click the word 'next' that placed under the right side of that picture. After that, the next word will appear after the player guesses the letters from that word like he do before. These activities will be continued until ten words can be finished by the player.

In the final of this game, if the player can guess all of the words that are provided, so the player will get word 'Congratulation' and followed by music. After that, the mouse will get all of the cheese, like the picture below.



On the other hand, if the players only can guess some of the words, as a result, he/she only will get word ‘Good Job! Keep it Up!’ from that game like the picture below.



After the teacher explains how to play this game to the students, the teacher explains how this game will be applied in groups. Similarly with the example before, the topic of vocabulary that will be taught is about animal. So, there are about twenty new words will be taught to the students that are provided by this game. This game will be applied like a quiz that will be present in the classroom and the winner group will get a gift.

Then, the teacher asks the students to sit based on their groups that have been divided before. Each group has to find their group name and its name must be taken from the animals' names in Indonesian language or the teacher can offer some animals' names that will be taught to them, but still in Indonesian language. Their group name must be in Indonesian language because one of the goals of this game is to make them know what their group names are in English language. For example, the teacher can offer the option like *singa*, *harimau*, *beruang*, *gajah* or others, and then ask them to choose it.

2. Elaboration

In this step, the teacher presents the Hang Mouse online game and chooses the word list pets or zoo for the first. After that, he/she chooses one group to guess the first word that provided in that game. Every student in that group is given one chance to guess one letter. If they can complete the first word, so they will get additional chance to guess the second word. but, if all of the students in that group cannot guess the word until their last chance, so the chance to guess letter will be given to another groups until the seven chance that given to the player to guess wrong letter have been used.

The group that can complete the word will be given one star. Then, the group has to write the word that has been completed on that star. Besides, the teacher also has to write that word in the whiteboard. Then, he/she spells and reads it loudly and asks the students to repeat after him/her. After that, the teacher shows the picture or flash card of that word in order to make them know and understand with the meaning of that word. This activity is done until all of the words answered correctly.

3. Confirmation

At the end of the game, the teacher collects the stars from each group. Then, he/she tries to find the group that has more stars than other groups. After that, he/she gives a gift/reward to the winner group. Besides, in order to check the understanding of the students about the vocabulary that has been learnt before, the teacher can click option 'teach me' in the Hang Mouse game, and shows to the students how the native speaker spells and reads the words that have been learnt before by click one by one the words that are provided. Then, the teacher asks the students who can take and show the flash card of that word to all of the students in front of the class.

c. Post-teaching activities

In the post-teaching activities, the teacher makes a conclusion of the lesson that has been taught to the students. After that, the teacher asks the students to write all of the vocabulary on their note book.

d. Advantages of Using Hang Mouse Online Game

There are some benefits in using hang mouse online game to introduce new vocabulary to elementary school students. First, it is an interesting media for elementary school students and can make them enjoy in learning process. In this game, there are animations of a cat and a mouse, and there is also attractive and funny music sounds for each guessing of the player. By presenting all of them, the elementary school students will pay more attention to that game because they will want to know what are going to do by the mouse and the cat when they guess the right letter and the wrong letter. Then, what happened with the mouse and the cat if the player can guess all of the words correctly. Moreover, it looks like they as the player who is doing a challenge or a mission to help the mouse in order to get the cheese from the cat. This is can be called almost same with a video game that students like to play in this moment. The learning process will run more effective if the lesson is presented by considering the students' like.

Next, this game provides some vocabulary based on the topics. The teachers can choose the topic easily based on the vocabulary that can be taught to their students. So, the teachers do not need to separate the vocabulary that they want to teach to their students.

Then, this game is appropriate to be used to introduce new vocabulary to the elementary school students because it provides many words list that consist of simple and easy word. In the other word, it can be said that the words that provide in this game are near from their environment and appropriate with their level in learning English as a foreign language.

Besides, in this game, there is option "teach me" that can be used to check spelling and pronunciation of the words that are given in that game. If the player clicks the word, a female narrator will reads and spells the words one by one while it is spelled out on the screen. She also reads a sentence using the spelling word.

The last, this game is very easy to be used. Moreover, it is also not difficult to search it in the internet. Then, another important thing that should be known from this game is: it is free to access this game or it can be called as a free online game.

In conclusion, there are several advantages in using Hang Mouse online game. They are: it is an interesting media for teaching vocabulary to elementary school students; it provides some vocabulary based on the topics; it is appropriate to be used to introduce new vocabulary to the elementary school students because the words are simple and easy to be understood; it provides the option “teach me” that can be used to check spelling and pronunciation of the words that are given in that game and the last, it is easy to be used and free to be accessed.

C. Conclusion and Suggestion

Based on previous discussion, it can be concluded that there are three steps to apply HangMouse online game in teaching vocabulary. The first step is pre-teaching activities. In this step, the teacher has to activate students’ background knowledge by giving some questions and then, divide them into several groups. The second step is whilst-teaching activities. This step consists of exploration, elaboration and confirmation. In exploration, the teacher gives example to the students about how to play the game and apply it in the groups. Then, in elaboration, the teacher starts the game and asks each of the group to take apart during the game process. At the end of the game, for the confirmation, the teacher gives a gift or reward to the winner group and check the students understanding about the vocabulary that has been learnt before. The last step is post-teaching activities. In this step, the teacher concludes the lesson and asks the students to write it in their note book.

Besides, the teachers have to encourage themselves to create interesting and creative ways in teaching by using various material and media. Therefore, it is suggested to the teachers to use hang mouse online game as one of media that provide appropriate material to the elementary school students to teach new vocabulary. Besides, in this game, there is animation of the cat and the mouse that can make the elementary school students interested to play it. Hopefully, the teacher will use this game to arousing the student’s interest, attention and motivation in learning English vocabulary.

Note: This article is compiled based on the writer’s paper with her advisor Drs. Sunaryo

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