

# PROMOTE YOUNG LEARNER'S VOCABULARY THROUGH SURVIVOR SPELLING GAME

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## Abstrak

Penulisan artikel ini bertujuan untuk memaparkan salah satu strategi pengajaran kosa kata di Sekolah Dasar (SD), *Survivor Spelling Game*. Di dalam permainan ini (1) guru membuat daftar sejumlah kosa kata yang telah dipelajari (2) meminta seluruh siswa untuk berdiri di tempat mereka masing-masing (3) menyebutkan satu kosa kata. Siswa pertama menyebutkan huruf pertama, siswa kedua menyebutkan huruf kedua, dan seterusnya hingga kata dieja dengan benar. Jika siswa membuat kesalahan maka siswa tersebut harus duduk dan tidak diizinkan untuk melanjutkan permainan. Siswa yang dapat bertahan hingga permainan selesai "Survivor", harus menyebutkan kata dengan benar dan memberi definisi kata tersebut.

**Kata kunci:** Strategi, pengajaran, kosa kata, survivor spelling game

## A. Introduction

Nowadays English has become an important language. It is not only as an international language that almost nations in the world apply it in variety activity, but also it has to be a requirement that a job applicant should mastery to enter a company. Thus, people try to learn it as soon as possible.

In Indonesia, English as a foreign language is an important subject that has been taught since Elementary school. This is the way to introduce English as early as possible to them in order they are be able to learn it easier in the next level. For the beginning of English teaching for young learners, it is very important to teach vocabulary. The purposes are to make the children understand and be able to communicate and state their ideas as clearly as they want. Based on the fact above, vocabulary as the element of the language cannot be separated with the four skills; listening, speaking, reading, and writing in order the young learners could be mastery the four skills well. Without knowing vocabulary, the young learners will not be able to mastery the English language. That is why teaching vocabulary is very important to learn since the elementary school.

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Unfortunately, elementary school students are less of attention and less of concentration while following the learning process in the classroom. They often get bored with the unvaried technique that is used by the teacher. They do many things when the teacher explains the lesson such as making a joke with their friends, drawing pictures, walking around the class and disturbing each other. It makes the learning process does not run well meanwhile the teacher has to lead the process to be a successful learning. In facing this situation, an English teacher not only has to find an interesting way to solve that problem. But she or he also has to be a creative teacher who can create an enjoyable classroom atmosphere where the learning process is full of fun. As we know, children love to play and learn best when they feel enjoy. So, if the English teacher can make the children feel enjoy and provide the variety techniques of learning, the students can be guided to learn the English more especially vocabulary.

Furthermore, there are many creative ways that teacher can be used in teaching vocabulary for young learners. Using variety of games can be a solution to handle this problem. It can help the teachers create contexts in which the language is useful and meaningful. It is also can make the students interested to follow the lesson because it can create a fun way and enjoyable classroom atmosphere. If the students are in a good classroom atmosphere, they can memorize the vocabulary given well. However, in the whole process of teaching and learning by games the students can take part widely and open-mindedly.

There are many elementary school students who get bored in learning English vocabulary. They think that English is a difficult thing. It happened because the teacher is still using the old way in teaching vocabulary. At first, the teacher explains the lesson while the students listening only. After that the teacher asks them to find some words that they do not know the meaning yet, find the meaning in the dictionary and memorize it. It is kind of a boring activity for young learners that make them will not be able to learn English vocabulary as good as possible.

Based on the problem above, to promote young learners' vocabulary in learning English, the teacher is expected to find a new technique of teaching that be able to make the students interested and enjoy the English learning process. In this case, this paper will offer the using of survivor spelling game to promote young learners vocabulary. It is the simplest game that the teacher can be used in teaching vocabulary. This game is able to use in any kind of school situation whether the school has a good facility or not, because to run this game the teacher does not need a lot of equipment. Not only that, but also by using survivor spelling game which full of fun is believed that able to attract the students interest in learning English especially in promoting young learners vocabulary.

In a language, it has been known that vocabulary is an important element. It needs to be learned in language especially in English language learning. It cannot be separated from the four skills; listening, speaking, reading and writing because it is a base of those four skills. Vocabulary becomes an important component in mastering language. Richard (2001: 4) said that vocabulary is one of the most obvious

component of language and one of the first thing applied linguists turned their attention to. By mastering the vocabulary, people will be easier to communicate with others. Not only that, but also when someone rich of vocabulary it will be easier for him or her to understand and comprehend any kind of text. Thus, no matter what skill that teacher will be taught, vocabulary will always take apart of it.

Some experts have their own opinion about the nature of vocabulary. According to Hartmann (1973: 250) who argues that vocabulary is the stock of words which are at the disposal of speaker. Another expert Burns (1974: 295) argues that vocabulary may be defined as the stock of words by a person, class or profession. It is support by Burrige (1981) vocabulary is a list of words in a lesson or book.

Hornby (2000: 1506) states that vocabulary is all the words that a person knows or uses. It is not far away with Nunan (2005) defines vocabulary as the collection of words for individual knows. It means that vocabulary is important to be learned. When people especially the students have limited vocabulary, they will not be able to express their ideas or communicate with others effectively. If the students do not know how to increase their vocabulary, they will lose their interest in learning English.

To introduce some difficult words the teachers can describe about the words. Nation (1981) states that vocabulary should be learning to understand the meaning of words. From side of how vocabulary is transferred, Cross (1991) defines that vocabulary can present by using sounds.

Based on the opinions above, it can be concluded that vocabulary is all the words that a person knows that has meaning which people use to understand a language. It is also an important element of language that should be taught at young foreign language learners in order they can express and communicate their ideas well. When people lack of vocabulary they may find many difficulties in mastering foreign language and communicate or express their ideas.

In learning English, the students should mastery active and passive vocabulary. As Haycraft (1984: 44) classifies vocabulary into two kinds, active and passive vocabulary. Active vocabulary means the words which the student can understand, pronounce correctly and uses constructively in speaking and writing. In the other hand, passive vocabulary is the words that the students recognize and understand when they encourage a context, but they cannot produce it correctly. Vocabulary first before going to four skills; listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

In the similar way, Donoghue (1985: 350) writes four classifications of vocabulary, as follows: (1) Listening or hearing vocabulary. Relates to all words that we recognize and understand when we hear in an oral context; (2) Speaking vocabulary. It means all words that we use in everyday speech; (3) Reading vocabulary. Relate to all the words that we recognize and understand in print; (4) Writing vocabulary. It means the words that we can use in writing.

From the experts above, it can be concluded that vocabulary a group of words that everybody knows that can make up a language. By learning vocabulary since the

early age, it will be good for the young learners when they enter the next level of their education.

In teaching vocabulary, a teacher should have to know the expert suggestions. A teacher should consider the function and the frequency of the words that is stated by Finocchiaro (1989)

Teaching vocabulary at the beginning level should concentrate on the function of words and the frequent used vocabulary items, which are needed to give practice in the basic structures and sounds of the language.

As a good teacher, the teacher should know how to differentiate the way to teach English for adult and for young learners. As Vygotsky states, although children may use the same words with adults, they may not hold the same meaning for those words. The acquisition of word meaning takes much longer than the acquisition of the spoken form of the words, and children use words in their speech long before they have a full understanding of them. Unfortunately, many teachers at Elementary School in Indonesia are still treating the young learner and adult learners in the same way.

Children have the ability to express themselves through other media in almost satisfactory manner. Because of that the teachers have to be creative in finding an appropriate media in teaching vocabulary for young learners.

It has been known that using media is more interesting in teaching English especially in teaching English vocabulary. However, teacher needs to know what the reasons are. Scott (1990: 6) children have an amazing ability to absorb language through play and other activities which they find enjoyable. It means that teacher can use several creative ways to make the students feel enjoy while the learning process. If the students feel enjoy, automatically the learning process will be able to run well.

The teacher should know how to choose the best game for the students. Based on Tyson (2000), he states that a game must be more than just fun, a game should involve “friendly” competition, a game should keep all of the students involved and interested, a game should encourage students to focus on the use of language rather than on the language itself, a game should give students a chance to learn, practice, or review specific language material.

One of the games that can be a better game for elementary school students to learn English vocabulary is survivor spelling game. Josie Saieva (2003) says that survivor spelling game is a game that uses instructions and a list of vocabulary covered in previous lessons where the students have to spell it well and give the definition at last until the teacher get the winner. This game helps the students to memorize the vocabulary well. It is a great way to practice the vocabulary.

For example, this is the vocabulary, “pencil”. For being a winner each student has to spell the each alphabet until it become a word. All students have to stand besides their own chair. The first student says the first alphabet, “P”; the second student says the second alphabet, “E”, the third student says the third alphabet, “N”, the fourth students says the fourth alphabet, “C” and so on until the word is spelled

successfully. The student who cannot spell the alphabet of the word correctly he/ she has to take a sit and does not allowed to continue the game anymore and the word should be spelling from the beginning. The students who can survive until the end should be spells all the word correctly and give the definition of that word by showing a pictures that had given by the teacher and he/ she is the “Spelling Survivor”.

Vinicius Lemos (2009) states that survivor spelling game can be used to review and practice the vocabulary. It brings fun and relaxing for a student that is help them learn words more easily. So, the students can pay attention and improve their vocabulary without noticing all the work involve than before.

## **B. Teaching Implementation**

### **1. Using Survivor Spelling Game to Promote Young Learners Vocabulary**

Practice makes perfect. That is an appropriate proverb that we can use in learning process especially in learning language. It is necessary for the learners to practice the language continuously especially in practicing vocabulary to improve their English language better. Without practice it is impossible to achieve the purpose of learning language or mastery that language successfully

Enjoyable has an important part in learning process. To attract students in practicing English vocabulary, the teacher should be able to present the material in an interesting way which can make the students enjoy the learning process. In the other word, the enjoyable that the students feels during the learning process is the key of the learning succeed. If they feel enjoy they will be able accept and remember the lesson material well.

In teaching vocabulary, there are many techniques and activities that teacher can be developed in promote young learners vocabulary. To get an effective and an efficient result in attract the interest of young learners in learning vocabulary by survivor spelling game, the teacher has to prepare the procedure of the teaching.

### **2. Preparation**

Preparation is an important needed in learning process which must be considered by the teacher. The learning activities will not success if the teacher does not have a good preparation before teaching. Such as, the teachers will not be able to master the lesson material which makes the students cannot understand the material they have learned. It means that without a good preparation before starting the activity in learning, the learning process will not run well. There are some preparations of media before teaching process:

#### **a. ‘Survivor’ spelling list**

The ‘survivor’ spelling list consists of concrete vocabulary, the way to spell and the pictures of the vocabulary which the teacher have been taught in the previous lesson. In creating a survivor spelling list, the

teacher should arrange it from the shortest to the longest concrete vocabulary to help the students be able to memorize it easier. The teacher can make the survivor spelling list by using power point in the laptop that will be connected to the projector. Using laptop and projector as a media will save the time, but if there is no laptop, the teacher can create it in a big paper that will be shown in the white board. This 'survivor spelling list' is the most important thing that the teacher should has. Without the list, the teacher will not run the game well because she or he needs to think first about what vocabulary that will be included in the game before the game started and it waste the time. (See appendix)

b. Laptop and Projector

This Laptop and projector has functioned as to show the list of the vocabulary one by one. It also uses to convey the correct spelling of each vocabulary after the last student finish to spell it. If there is no laptop and projector, the teacher can write down the word and the right spelling in the whiteboard.

c. Reward

After the game finished, the teacher will determine the winner. Then, the teacher will gives gifts to the winner. By giving the gifts, the students are expected to be more motivated and interested in learning English. These gifts can be utensils, snacks or other things that are considered exciting by the students. But if all of the students can spell all of the vocabulary well, it is better to celebrate it together such as held a small party on weekend.

**3. Procedure of Teaching Vocabulary by Using Survivor Spelling Game**

Before the class begins, the teacher has to prepare the procedure of teaching:

1. Pre-teaching activities

The pre-teaching activities are activities that should be done at the beginning of the class that is used to make the students ready to learn. In pre teaching activity, the teacher has to explore the students' background knowledge about what will be taught to them in order they could understand the real world context of the lesson. In these activities, the teacher can encourage the students' background knowledge not only by reminding the previous lesson to the students, but also by giving the context of new vocabulary through the pictures. The teacher may need 10 minutes to reminding the previous lesson and teaching the context of new vocabulary. For the rest of the time, the teacher can use the time for the game.

2. Whilst-teaching activities

In whiles-teaching activities the teacher has to teach the real world context to the students for about 20 minutes. After that, the teacher should lead the students toward the main activity by directing and modeling the students to the topic. Before the game begins, the teacher has to model the game to the students. The teacher gives an example how the survivor spelling

game works by showing a word which have been written in the laptop or on the white board including the picture. Then, the teacher explains to the students how to spell the word well. To make the students more understand about how to spell the word well, the teacher and the students should spell the word together. After that, the teacher asks the students that they understand or not. If the students have not understand yet with the explanation, the teacher should give one more example and discuss it together in order the students more understand how the game works.

Next, still as the example the teacher direct the students how to make the game works by ask the students to stand beside their own chair and start the game. The teacher says a word that have been taught before. Then, the teacher pointed the first students to say the first alphabet of the word, the second student says the second alphabet, the third student says the third alphabet and so on until the word spell correctly. If one of them cannot spell it correctly, he or she has to go out of the game. The students who failed during the game have to come back to their own chair and they do not allowed for continuing the game. The teacher asks the failed students to back to their sit in order they do not think that they are in punishing. This game is not a punishment game where the looser has to stand along the day and the winner sits in her or his chair. A student will be called as a winner if they could stand until the end of the game which means that she or he could spells all the words correctly and this way will makes her or him feel excited. The last student who can survive has to spell the word correctly and give the definition of the word by showing the picture. In the other word the 'survivor' of spelling game has been found and being the winner of this game and has a right for a reward. For rewards, teacher explains how to get the reward. The reward might be utensils; snack and another thing that could make the students fell excited. But it is possible to make them all being the winner by asks them to remind the previous lesson at home and tell them that these lesson would be competed in the class. By this game the English learning will easier and fun for them moreover when they could reach the reward.

3. Post-teaching activities

The post-teaching activities are the final activities of teaching learning process. This activity can help the students to remember the information about what they have learned. In this activity, the teacher shows the vocabulary again including the pictures by using the laptop and LCD, or writes it on the white board and shows the pictures that had been printed out to make the students know the right spelling and the definitions of the previous vocabulary that is used in the game. The students can write it on their note book.

**4. The Advantages of Using Survivor Spelling Game**

Using survivor spelling game offers some advantages, they are: (a) Survivor spelling game is a welcome break from the usual routine of the language. The students will excited and enjoy during learning process because they can go out of the boring activity. When they feel enjoy they will accept the lesson well. (b) Survivor spelling game motivating and challenging students to get involved and participate actively in the learning activities. This game could change a shy boy into an active student. Everybody want to be a winner, moreover this game is full of fun and reward, so that automatically all of the students want to involve in this game. (c) Survivor spelling game can help teachers easy to give explanation about meaning of words. The teacher has not to explain the meaning of vocabulary in a long way because indirectly by using this game the students will understand the vocabulary easier. (d) Survivor spelling game bring real world context into the classroom, and increase students' use of English in a flexible, meaningful and communicative way. When the teacher say "Cow", she or he may shows the miniature of a cow or the picture of cow. Thus, the students could understand what the meaning of "cow" easier. (e) Survivor spelling game can help the students learn and hang on to new words more easily. The old method the teacher usually used is not efficient and effective in learning process. The teacher asks them to collect new words and find the meaning of those words in the dictionary. It is not only brings the difficulties to the students in learning vocabulary, but also makes them bored during the learning process. By using survivor spelling game, the students will understand the new word easily not only use spelling bee but also the pictures.

### **C. Conclusion and Suggestion**

Based on discussion above, teaching a language includes teaching vocabulary because the vocabulary is the most important part of language. Without vocabulary a person cannot speak, read, or write and listen in English effectively. It is better to teach English vocabulary since the earlier age to make the students easier to learn in the next level of their study.

There are so many ways that the teacher can be used in teaching English vocabulary. One of them that have been written on this paper is by using survivor spelling game to promote young learners vocabulary. Survivor spelling game can attract the students' attention and concentration in learning process because while the teacher use the game the atmosphere of the class will change automatically into a fun and enjoyable atmosphere.

However, the students will be enjoy the learning process and keep focus with the materials that the teacher had given to them. It is a way to make the learning process run better and easier for both of teacher and students. By using survivor spelling game students can develop their vocabulary efficiently and effectively. But it is better if the teacher can develop the variety of teaching method to make the students more interest in learning.

Based on the conclusion above, there are some suggestions to the young learner's English teacher. First, the teacher has to use a media to make the students more understand about the lesson they have learned. Second, the teacher is expected being more creative in using new method in teaching vocabulary. Third, the teacher should prepare some ways in teaching English vocabulary to make the process of learning be running well. Fourth, the teacher should be use the different ways in teaching in order the students do not getting bored.

**Note:** This article was based on the writer's paper that was supervised by Drs. Sunaryo

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