



## **USING VOCABULARY DICE GAME IN TEACHING VOCABULARY TO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS**

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### **Abstract**

This article aimed to describe the use of *Vocabulary Dice Game* in teaching vocabulary to elementary school students. *Vocabulary Dice Game* is a versatile game that provides a variety of instruction and can be adjusted depending on the needs of the objectives in vocabulary learning. A versatile game means that a teacher can adjust what words the students need to learn, and create a set of rules or instruction depending on students' level. The versatility of this game can benefit the learning process, not only making the students play through learning, but a teacher will be able to create a strategy in teaching vocabulary that is suitable to students' characteristics and development. *Vocabulary Dice Game* as a teaching technique in the classroom provides a fun and enjoyable learning process. Learning vocabulary is not always about drilling or repeating words but it can be done by act, draw, or mime while playing a game. By using this game, the learning process is expected to be fun and enjoyable for the students and enhance their memory about the material that has been learned as it is obtained through an enjoyable way.

**Key words:** ELT, Vocabulary, Dice Game, Elementary School

### **A. INTRODUCTION**

Vocabulary is one of the basic important aspects in learning a language. Vocabulary such as nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, and etc. is seen as the foundation to build the languages. Moreover, vocabulary plays a fundamental role in communication, good mastery of vocabulary determines students' competency of the language. Considering the importance of vocabulary in language learning, Pinter (2006) suggests that that is very important for the learners in school, especially young learners. By having students to be exposed to vocabulary in an early stage, students are expected to master it before encountering the other basic skills in a higher education level.

Elementary school students could be considered as young learners since they are the children in the age range of seven to twelve years old. According to

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Scott and Ytreberg (1990) young learners are between five and ten or eleven years old. Different age has different needs, as the result, teaching vocabulary to young learner is not similar from teaching vocabulary to adult.

In teaching vocabulary to young learners, teacher must be aware of their basic needs. In the case of Indonesian young learner in elementary school, students learn vocabulary under two aims; first is to know the world around them, second as a first step to learn a new language. In order to provide the suitable instructions that meet their needs, teacher must know students characters by considering three things, they are students' cognitive developments, socio-emotional development and physical development.

The first point to consider before teaching vocabulary is students' cognitive development. According to Piaget in Syafei (2018) the children in the ages around 7 to 11 is in the phase of concrete operational stage. In this stage, they started to develop logical thought, think very concrete and tend to struggle with abstract and hypothetical concepts. Based on the Piaget theory above, it can be concluded, in teaching vocabulary to young learner, teacher must provide concrete objects such as animals, fruits and everything that is involved in their daily life. The second is students' socio-emotional development. According to Erickson's Socio-emotional development in Syafei (2018), elementary school students are in the stage of Industry vs Inferiority. In this stage children are able to play in team according to rules, take responsibility and tend to be full of enthusiasm. Well treated children tend to be more trusting, full of initiative and will learn easily enough to be industrious. In the other hand, mistreated children tend to doubt the future. For this reason, teacher needs to provide a learning process through group play that is structured by rules in order to promote sense responsibility and enhance students' confidence in the classroom.

The third point is students' physical development. According to Boyd and Bee in Ales (2014), during the preschool period children make an impressive gain in large muscles skills. In addition, Lee (2017) states children in school age are able to follow rules of a game or sport. In this stage, children in school age also improved their motor skills such as jumping, moving or doing basic dance moves. Moreover, Brown, (2001) states children need to have all five senses stimulated which can be accomplished by providing sensory aids and physical activity, such as role-play, games, and Total Physical Response activities. In the view of children character above, to stimulate their thinking during the learning process, it is necessary for teacher to provide activities that require physical movement that organized by rules to fully engaged the students to the learning process.

Based on the points mentioned above, young learner shows natural needs to play during this age. According to Kay (2005) young learners prefer to play and enjoy team games and love physical activities. As the result, providing the play in the classroom is believed will provide not only fun but also a better learning for young learner. In order to create better vocabulary learning, it is important to conduct learning by playing strategy in teaching vocabulary to young learner. There are several ways that can be used by teacher in teaching vocabulary through play, one of them is by using game.

Game is seen as a great strategy to teach English because by applying games, teacher engaged students in a conducive and exciting surrounding. According to Morfin & Campos (2007) Game gives students opportunity to use their language in enjoyable and fun situation. Ytreberg (1990) adds that playing with language is very natural in the first stages of foreign language learning. Furthermore, Using game that involves group work not only suit young learner character but also make vocabulary learning to be more enjoyable for students. By applying games in vocabulary learning, teacher can take advantage of the games to make the interesting vocabulary learning.

Based on the reasons above, the writer would like to apply The Vocabulary Dice Game in teaching vocabulary to young learners especially at elementary school. According to Lewis and Bedson (1999), dice game is versatile game that provides variety of instruction and can be adjusted depend on the needs of the objectives. Variety instructions in this game will allow students to perform basic physical activity and the use of their five basic sensory according to the instructions, this game also require group work that suitable to their characteristic. By applying The Vocabulary Dice game, the process of learning will not be monotonous. The Vocabulary Dice Game is expected to provide fun learning for young learner in vocabulary learning and create an attractive and meaningful learning process.

## B. DISCUSSION

### 1. The Implementation of Word Mapping to Activate Students' Verbal Participation in Teaching Speaking at Tour and Travel Department of Vocational High School

Vocabulary is one of most crucial part of the language, as Syaifei and Agus (2016) state that vocabulary is one of English language components is necessary to begin the vocabulary learning in early stage such as in elementary school. English becomes important to elementary school students because in elementary school, students learn the basic of the language, and it will affect their English language ability

Considering the importance of vocabulary in language learning, Pinter (2006) suggests that that is very important for the learners in school, especially young learners. However, Harmer (2001) states that difference age have different needs, competencies, and cognitive skills. In teaching vocabulary to young learners, teacher must be aware of their basic needs. In order to provide the suitable instructions that meet their needs, teacher must know students characters by considering three things, they are students' cognitive developments, socio-emotional development and physical development.

In teaching vocabulary to Elementary School Students, teacher needs to provide concrete objects and words to young learner, because young learners struggle to understand the ideas of abstracts things. According to Brumfit, Moon, and Tongue (1995) in this stage children respond the language well through concrete things (visual things) rather than abstract things. Furthermore, Elementary School Students tend to have short concentration span so teacher needs to present

an interesting way of learning, and get all the students fully engaged during the learning process and make sure the learning process is fun and enjoyable.

Vocabulary dice game is a finite game that have particular rule to play and have winner at the end of the play. The teacher will divide the students into several groups and ask them to roll the dice and perform the words and instructions. After that, the representatives of each group are asked to follow the instruction related to the words given before the play. If the students can answer the question correctly their team will gain the score depends on the dice number. At the end of the game, the group with the highest score will be the winner.

## **2. Teaching Procedures of Vocabulary Dice Game in Teaching Vocabulary to Elementary School Students**

In order to get a good result in teaching vocabulary to elementary school students, it suggested to use word mapping technique. This strategy can help students to learn vocabulary through play in group and stimulate them to be active in the classroom with the procedures in the sequential order. There are some procedures of teaching vocabulary by using Vocabulary Dice Game. The procedures include:

1. Teacher shows a clip or pictures of the vocabulary that will be taught today (e.g Daily Activity)
2. Then, Teacher asks some question to stimulate students' background knowledge about the topic and students answer based on what they know. The question can be one of these
  - What time do you usually wake up?
    - a. What do you do after breakfast?
    - b. What does mom usually do in the kitchen?
    - c. How does the sound of birds in morning?
3. Two flashcards will be given to each group. The groups are assisted to identify the card then describe and tell things they know from the animal printed in the card such as; the time of activity or the sound of the animal, how the people act.
4. The next stage is the teacher will stand in front of the class. Each group should send group representative to roll the dice. Once they get the number, they will take the card and return to the group to discuss the answer of the instruction.



5. After the last group got their instruction, group one will go to front and do the instruction based on the number of dice they got before. If the answer is right, they get the point. If the answer is not right, other group have right to answer on the spot and the point goes to the group that answer correctly.

### **3. The Reasons of Implementing Word Mapping to Activate Students' Verbal Participation in Teaching Speaking at Tour and Travel Department of Vocational High School**

Teacher needs to be creative and aware of students characteristics in teaching vocabulary to Elementary School Students. The reasons why this technique should be used in teaching vocabulary to Elementary School Students can be seen as follow.

1. Vocabulary Dice Game provides activities that suit Elementary Students cognitive, socio-emotional and physical development. Vocabulary Dice Game require students to work in group which train their socio emotional development to develop well. This game also provides physical movements through instruction.
2. Elementary Students cognitive level is in the stage of concrete operational stage. In this stage, students could not understand abstract ideas. In order to teach elementary students, teacher needs to provide concrete objects. Through pictures and clues in this game, teacher is providing concrete object of the vocabulary for the students.
3. The students got actively involved in teaching and learning process. Through the team work and certain instruction, teacher stimulates students to be actively involved in learning process trough learning by playing. This way is more meaningful compared to the conventional way of vocabulary teaching such as drilling or memorizing words.

According to the reasons above, it can be concluded that Vocabulary Dice Game is suitable technique to be used in teaching vocabulary to Elementary School Students. It is an effective and creative way to engage the students to learn vocabulary in fun way.

### **C. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS**

In teaching vocabulary effectively to the students, teacher should know students' characteristics such as students' cognitive development, students' socio-emotional development, and students' physical development. According to Piaget in Syafei (2017) Elementary students are in the age where learning will be more meaningful when they are exposed to concrete things such as pictures, photograph or physical movements or things around them. Moreover, based on Erickson Socio Emotional development in Syafei (2018), elementary school students are in the stage of industry vs inferiority stage where they need positive encouragement in mastering new knowledge. During this stage, students tend to be full of enthusiastic and show interest in group work. Physically, students show the nature and needs of playing and moving due to their rapid muscle growth. Due to reasons above, in order to provide suitable vocabulary learning to elementary students, teacher can apply *Vocabulary Dice Game*.

In order to be successful in implementing Vocabulary Dice Game in teaching vocabulary to elementary school students, teacher must consider the following point. Firstly, teacher must be able to manage the time as effective as possible so every student can get the chance to do discussion with group and prepare the act. Secondly, teacher also needs to provide enough vocabulary words and activity for the students, so everyone are actively involved in the game. Lastly, teacher have to make sure that there will be enough space for students to act the words such as

jumping, moving and etc so every group able to play and meet the purpose of the vocabulary learning

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