



## MODIFYING “HIDE AND SEEK” TRADITIONAL GAME TO TEACH VOCABULARY FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD STUDENTS

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### ABSTRACT

*As the importance of English in this globalization era, it is taught in all level of education program, including for early childhood education as extracurricular program. Meanwhile, the fastest spreading of technology also influences children, impacting on the overuse of gadget for children. The children nowadays are busy playing with their smartphone and avoid playing traditional games. Consequently, the nature of educative values on traditional games are decrease significantly. Dealing with such problem, the needs for a method of teaching English as well as giving students motivation to preserve the existence of traditional games is unavoidable. In this paper, the writer aimed to introduce a concept of teaching English vocabulary for early childhood students by using 'hide and seek' traditional games. The modification of the traditional game in teaching English is to give another way of creating an enjoyable teaching and learning process for early childhood students. Through games, the teachers are able to create a various context for students to learn and play as well. This paper is to bring another model for teachers to deal with the importance of English and the conservation of traditional games in teaching process.*

**Keywords:** *traditional games, hide and seek, English vocabulary, early childhood students.*

### INTRODUCTION

Early age is a very important period to stimulate the growth and development of children. Children are very sensitive to receive various stimuli provided by the environment. They have distinctive characteristics, active, have a great curiosity, are egocentric, unique and full of imagination. Children also experience the rapid development in all aspects and have the desire to learn and understand anything by using all five senses. Thus, education is to cope with all aspects of these developments process optimally.

The purpose of early childhood education is to assist in developing the potential of the child. Early childhood education contains some aspects that should be developed. The 2013 Indonesian ECE curriculum mentioned that developmental aspects that are to develop include moral, social-emotional, cognitive, language, physical-motoric, arts and creativity (Dirjen PAUD 2014).

In general the philosophy of education for early childhood is elaborated into two perspectives. The first perspective is the perspective of experiance and lesson. Early childhood education is a stimuli of important

and unique period for implementing the foundation for the next development period. The second one is the perspective of the nature of learning and developing. Early childhood education is a simultaneous process of learn and develop (Suyadi, 2015:22).

Early childhood education focuses more on laying the foundation for growth and development process of children. In the process of learning, the teacher plays a role as a facilitator and motivator to explore all the potential owned by the child. Teachers as a bridge to prepare children to enter further education in terms of academic, religious values and religious norms and good characters building.

One of the educational stimuli to achieve them is playing activities. Playing is one activity that can help children enjoy their golden period of development. Playing will be meaningful for the early childhood through the game. Games for early childhood are to stimulate creativity and support their development process. Games given to children do not have to be expensive, it is important to be safe and qualified by considering the child's age, interests, creativity and security.

In fact, the children nowadays are more enthusiastic playing with gadget. The childrens' real-life playing is replaced by virtual games available on gadget. The fastest spreading of the technology, on one hand, let the children get new information and see the world widely. On the other hand, despite of the fact that there are also many educative game online, the overuse of gadget could be harmful for their development period. The phenomena of the gadget addicted effects on the reducing of the implementation of traditional games in childrens' daily activities. The children, then, have less opportunity in actualizing their development period for the less interaction and

communication among children. Comparing with several years ago before the online games created, the children in the past are regarded as "real children" in which they have great opportunity to explore their world by playing traditional games with peers.

English as the global language is also introduced on early childhood education as extracurricular. Due to the importance of English, parents sometimes let their children have English course so that they can get better of English. Of course the level of language competence taught is different between children and adult. For children, the basic English given firstly is vocabulary. As Foreign Language, in which English is not used in daily activities, it will be difficult for children to familiarize with English. In ensuring the achievement of learning English, the teaching and learning process must be conducted in an attractive method. The teacher, then, should be able to apply the appropriate instructional materials and techniques in order to enhance students' learning motivation and interest, especially learning vocabulary.

From the issues presented above, it can be inferred that there are there major points here, they are: (1) the nature of early childhood education, (2) the problems of the reducement of traditional games played by children (3) English as foreign language which is introduced to children. In accordance with those issues, the need of method in teaching and learning English for early childhood students is unavoidable. The method is not only to compromise the issue of learning English for children, it also to reintroduce the value of playing traditional games. In this paper, the modification of applying hide and seek as traditional game to teach vocabulary for early childhood students is proposed to deals with such problems. The design is to accomodate the vocabulary

learning and playing traditional games for children altogether.

### **Traditional Games for Early Childhood Education**

Neuroscience implies that there are three phases of optimizing childrens' brain, they are: (1) catch and store the information; (2) change information into a new idea; and (3) apply the new idea to solve problem (Suyadi, 2015: 142). One of way to give stimuli for activating childrens' brain is by playing. As Montessori on Suyadi (2015:183) stated that playing for children is regarded as working for adult, in which the childrens' duty is playing. Or, in other words, childrens are learning while playing.

The significance of playing, particularly using games, is also revealed by some reasearches. As Huyen & Nga (2013) implies that games provides some advantages and effectiveness in learning vocabulary in various ways, i.e: (1) games bring in relaxation and help students learn and retain new words more easily, (2) games involve friendly competition and keep learners interested so that they can be motivated to get involved and participate actively in the learning activity, (3) vocabulary games bring real world context into the classroom, enhancing students to use of English communicatively

In achieving the advantages of using games in teaching, it is important for teacher to choose the appropriate games for early childhood education. The games are not only to let the students involving actively but also leading toward the goal of improving learners' communicative competence. Thus, the teacher are to take into account some aspect, i.e: whenever a game is to be conducted, the number of students, proficiency level, cultural context, timing, learning topic, and the classroom settings ( Huyen & Nga.2013).

Traditional games are games that are traditionally played by certain communities. They are different among communities portraying special characterics. There are three patterns of traditional games, i.e : (1) playing with songs or dialogues, (2) playing with thinking, (3) playing with phisical agility (Dharmamulya on Suhono. 2017).

Meanwhile, Ariani on Suhono (2017) suggestes the moral value of traditional games, as follows:

- 1) democracy values, in which the children have to discuss before deciding the kind of game;
- 2) education values which conveys education both physically and spiritually;
- 3) personality values which is related to the interaction of the various characteristics of children;
- 4) corage values to take decision of strategy in playing;
- 5) health values for the body movement as long as playing;
- 6) unity values in emphasizing the harmony of social life,
- 7) moral values which educate children to build their good characters.

Traditional games is regarded as one of the local wisdom as a bridge to educate the early childhood students considering that early age is the stage of development which game playing as the way to transfer the education values. However, the traditional games existence has been move aside due to modern games that truly not come from our local wisdom as heritage (Pranoto, et.al., 2014). As the spreading of the modern games, the notion of traditional games are demolished. Thus, it is necessary for teacher to apply traditional games during instructional process in order to accomodate the teaching and learning process and conserve the exitence of traditional games. Learning through playing traditional games

allows the students to understand the education values, moral values, and social norm as well. Childhood life is identical with playing, so the games is unconsciously used to determine the life path as well as forming their personality ( Purwaningsih, 2006 on Pranoto, 2016)

### **Teaching English Vocabulary for Early Childhood Students**

According to neuroscience perspective, the golden opportunity of children to learn spoken language occurs until the age of 5, then decreases on the first period of 5 year and the second period of 10-12. After passing that period, it will be difficult for children to learn language. Consequently, the language learning must be started on early childhood period (Suyadi, 2015:106). Meanwhile, the foreign language proficiency isn't rely on the length of the usage of the language. It, however, depends on the recognition of the language, whether it is introduced on the early period or not (Suyadi, 2015:210). Thus, English as global language, should also be introduced to children on their early period.

In understanding the language, vocabulary is crucial to be mastered (Alqahtani, 2015). For foreign language learners, vocabulary plays an important role in which it links the four skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing all together. In mastering English skills, students must know the vocabulary of the language i.e. a list of words with their meaning because it supports their skills' improvement (Linse, 2005 on Bakhs, 2016). Students should acquire an adequate number of words and should know how to use them accurately in order to communicate well in a foreign language (Huyen & Nga, 2003). In fact, English lesson is often delivered not in a meaningful way so that the language competence couldn't be achieved properly. Traditionally, children are

often asked to memorise sets of English vocabulary with Indonesian translation during the instructional process. Since there has been minimal focus on vocabulary instruction in English classroom, vocabulary teaching and learning is a constant challenge for teachers as well as students. An increased emphasis on vocabulary development is crucial for the English language learner in the process of language learning (Mukoroli, 2011).

The problems of students in learning a foreign language tend to forget or misuse new words. As the English teachers want students to remember new vocabulary, then it needs to be learnt, practised, and revised to prevent students from forgetting ( Alqahtani, 2015). For children, memorizing vocabulary might be boring and decreasing their interest in learning. A method of teaching while playing could be implemented in teaching early childhood. There are several approaches and methods that could be applied , one of them is playing games. By playing games, the children get the opportunity to learn the vocabulary in an enjoyable way. However, before presenting the meaning or form of vocabulary items, teachers need to notice some aspects, as follows: (1) the type of the vocabulary, (2) the students' level and characteristics, and (3) the value of the techniques for learners (Alqahtani, 2015).

### **Review of Previous Study**

In relation to the topic of this paper, there are several previous studies as the background of the study. The first study conducted by Huyen & Nga (2003) entitled "*Learning Vocabulary through Games, The Effectiveness of Learning Vocabulary Through Games*" revealed that games contributed to vocabulary learning in giving students a chance to learn, practice and to review the English language in a pleasant atmosphere. It also implied that games were effective in helping students to

improve their vocabulary building skills. Moreover, “*Young Children Character Development through Javanese Traditional Game*” conducted by Pranoto, et. al. (2014), found that the improvement of toddlers’ characters which was indicated by self-quality was the result of the innovative conceptual model through Javanese traditional games. The Javanese traditional games integrated through teaching and learning process were to develop good characters for early childhood students.

The next research was “*Teaching English to Young Learners through Traditional Games*” conducted by Rusiana & Nuraeningsih (2016). Using the quasi-experimental with one control group pre-test and post-test, the result showed that traditional games were effective for teaching English. However, there were also some things should be considered, for instance: the kind of game, the number of the students, the crowd that occurred while playing the game.

Another research was “*Retrofitting Javanese Traditional Games as Indonesia Culture Identity: Providing English Vocabulary*” conducted by Suhono, et.al. (2017). The research was to retrofit traditional Javanese games in improving the students’ motivation to learn English vocabulary. The findings showed that Javanese traditional games: learning alphabet was the result retrofitted from Sobyong game, learning days was the result retrofitted from Engklek game, learning colors was the result retrofitted from “Jamuran” game, and learning part of body was the result retrofitted from “Oyak-Oyakan”. The research also revealed that the modification games could be enjoyed in English vocabulary learning process.

Referring to some previous studies on using games, especially traditional games, in teaching above, this paper is concerned on developing a strategy of teaching English

vocabulary. The notion of traditional games might be applied widely in teaching learning process. However, this paper is to offer another way of using ‘hide and seek’ game to teach vocabulary for early childhood students. The design of the development of ‘hide and seek’ game is to bring an enjoyable way of teaching vocabulary.

### **Modifying ‘Hide and Seek’ Games to Teach Vocabulary**

Commonly, hide and seek is a traditional game which is easily to be played. It is played by some children, particularly in rural areas. In this game, a player closes his/her eyes for a brief period and counts while other players try to find spot to hide. Then, the seeker who closes his/ her eyes has to find another players or the hidiers one by one. The first one found is the next seeker, and the last is the winner of the round.

This paper is to offer another way of using hide and seek as teaching method for early childhood students. The technique presented is the elaboration of using pictures and hide and seek game to teach vocabulary. The pictures are selected based on the topic being presented and relevant to attract students’ interest. Picture is one of media which is to help the teacher draws the students’ interest and encourages their motivation. The modification of hide and seek game presented is to incorporate the strategy in fulfilling the lesson objectives and allowing the early childhood students to enjoy their playing period.

The first thing teacher needs to prepare is the appropriate pictures according to the topic discussed. The picture must be colorfull and in proper size so that the children can easily pay attention. For the introduction process, the poster-size pictures could be use to introduce vocabularies in general. Afterwards, for the following hide

and seek game, the smaller picture can be applied. The pictures can be modified through paper hat or simply stick the picture on childrens' chest. Then, there are two steps of applying hide and seek for instructional process:

a. Beginning Phase

It is the phase in which teacher introduces new vocabularies for students. First of all, the teacher should determine the topic of vocabulary being taught, e.g : animal. After giving the vocabulary by using picture of the animal for each student, the game could be started as follows:

- 1) The teacher prepares some simple hats made of paper to be used by the pupils on their head. In front of the forehead, a picture of animal is stuck. The teacher may also simply stick a picture on childrens' chest. The picture should be printed clearly and easily recognized what picture it is.
- 2) The pupils are to memory who they are based on the picture. If a pupil get a tiger picture, he/she should memory that "tiger" is his/her name.
- 3) One of the pupils then are chosen as the seeker, while the others are the hidiers.
- 4) The seeker closes his/ her eyes while counting. After that, he/ she has to find the hidiers.
- 5) Once the hider is found, the hider has to introduce his/ her name based on the picture on the head. The teacher will determine whether the name is correct or not.
- 6) After all the hidiers found, the teacher ask each pupil to introduce their name alternately.

All pupils pay attention to the vocabulary being mentioned by their classmates. In this phase, as the beginning process, the role of the seeker is only to find the hidiers.

Meanwhile, the hidiers who are found, are to mention the correct vocabulary.

b. Developing Phase

The rule of the deleloping step is nearly as same as the beginning step. They are differ on the process of mentioning the vocabulary. In the beginning process only the hidiers who mention the names of the seeker found. On the contrary, in the developing stage, once the hider is found, the seeker who mention the vocabulary. Then, the hider who determines whether the vocabulary is correct or not. This step allows both of the players to figure out what the correct vocabulary based on the picture on the head.

This hide and seek modification game could also be followed by the activity of mime or imitate the vocabulary by acting it out. Moreover, singing the song together based on the topic is also good. Of course, the aplication of this modification games could be improved by the teachers. Teachers are to enrich their creativity particularly in teaching English for early childhood students.

Games require all students' involvement and they promote friendly competition, therefore, it is very important that students have a cooperative attitude (Huyen & Nga 2003). Thus, the need of cooperative is undenied to avoid the failure of using games in teaching and learning process. The teacher are also to plan and organize the instructional design, the conducive learning atmosphere, and the attractive learning activities to stimulate the students in engaging themselves. It is the teacher task in bringing all the aspects to achieve the teaching and learning goals

## CONCLUSION

As the nature of early childhood students is playing while learning, it is important for teacher to apply appropriate

teaching method. Games is one of the strategies of instructional process which is suitable for early childhood students. Playing game, specially traditional games, are to lead the children to get more advantages during learning. They can get education and moral values as well. The modification of hide and seek game presented on this paper is to deal with the need of playing for children, introducing them with the traditional games, and allowing them to learn English in an enjoyable process. The hide and seek game is also to give children opportunity to interact with peers and build their characters through the moral values contained on the traditional games. And in addition, playing games is to enhance children motivation of learning.

There are alot of improvement should be done related to the use of games in teaching early childhood students. The teacher are also to plan and organize the instructional design, the conducive learning atmosphere, and the attractive learning activities to stimulate the students in engaging themselves to achieve the teaching and learning goals. The following-up research based on this paper is should be conducted to examine the effectiveness of using hide and seek game in teaching vocabulary for early childhood students. For the next researcher, the need of development of the teaching method is also unavoidable.

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