USING *SCATTERGORIES* GAME IN TEACHING VOCABULARY TO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

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Abstract

This article aims to describe the use of *Scattergories* game in teaching vocabulary to elementary school students. Vocabulary is a basic component in mastering the four language skills; listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Therefore, vocabulary must be taught to children from elementary education. Elementary school students or called "young learner" have different characteristics with adults. They think concretely, act very actively and are very curious. Therefore, it is necessary to use the suitable vocabulary teaching techniques to compensate for the characteristics of the elementary school students, namely by using games, one of them is *Scattergories* game. By using Scattergories games, students can be active in the learning process and learn in a fun way.

Key words: ELT, Vocabulary, *Scattergories* game, Elementary School Students

A. INTRODUCTION

In learning language, vocabulary is one of the crucial components. Vocabulary takes important role in building the language to communicate. Ur (2009) claims that vocabulary can be established as the words we teach in the foreign language. It emphasizes how important it is to master vocabulary. If the learners want to learn a foreign language, they should know the basic thing that is the knowledge of the words before mastering the four skills; listening, speaking, reading, and writing in a new foreign language.

Building up a useful vocabulary is important to the learning of a foreign language at beginning level (Cameron, 2009). In other words, vocabulary can be seen as the basic component in language learning that help learners develop their ability of listening, speaking, reading and writing. If learners do not master vocabulary well, it will be difficult for them in listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

In the case of Indonesian young learners, they learn vocabulary under two aims. The first one is to know the world around them. The point of learning

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English for Indonesian young learners is to know the English vocabulary related to their surroundings. By learning English, learners can say things around them in English. The second aim in learning English is as a start to learn a new language. By understanding English vocabulary, learners will easily develop the other skills of English later. As young learners in Indonesia learn English as a first step to learn a new language, they only learn the basic vocabularies such as noun, verb, and adjective.

According to Philips (2010), young learners mean children from the first year of formal schooling (five or six years old) to eleven or twelve years of age. Teaching young learners could be different from teaching adults. In teaching vocabulary to young learners, three things must be considered: cognitive development, socio-emotional development, and physical development.

Based on the cognitive development, Piaget in Syafei and Defi (2017) categorize young learners at the age 6-11 into the concrete operational stage. This means that young learners can easily understand concrete aspects rather than abstract ones. Consequently, they can understand the meaning of the words whose meaning can be deduced with an action, body language, photographs and other objects.

Based on the socio-emotional development, according to Erikson in Huitt (2008), "the children in the ages around 6 to 11 are in the industry vs. inferiority stage". In this stage, children are very enthusiastic about learning and they direct their energy toward mastering knowledge and intellectual skills (Syafei, 2018). Also, McLeod (2018) supports that the child feels the need to be admitted by showing specific competencies valued by society and begin to develop a sense of pride in their accomplishments. If children are encouraged and reinforced for their initiative, they begin to feel industrious (competent) and feel confident in their ability to achieve goals.

In the industry vs. inferiority stage, the primary relationships that young learners have are with those people he or she interacts with in school. This is where the learners learn how to complete a task correctly, and in comparison to other children, or a specific learning standard. If this stage is successful, the child develops a sense of industry and accomplishment; if it is unsuccessful, the child feels inferior, which can impact his or her life indefinitely. Therefore, learners need a learning situation in which learners are encouraged and motivated to complete a task and can interact with their classmates.

Based on their physical development, Clark (2014) suggests that learners at the age of six to twelve can work well with direct instruction. At that age, they are ready to learn more complex skills. School age children still develop their physics by having the opportunity to explore and challenge themselves, learning about what their bodies can do. In addition, Llach and Gomez (2007) mention that young learners are physically very active. They like playing, running or just moving.

Therefore, by considering these characteristics of young learners, teachers can use game in teaching vocabulary. Game can be a means by which children develop the skills and capabilities to be effective learning. The physical activity in game can support learners' physical development. According to Byrne in Darfilal

(2014), a game is a form of play governed by rules that should be enjoyed and fun. Kirkland and O'Riordan (2010) also claim that games can satisfy the learning needs of active learners. Games are popular among children because they like to play. Through games, young learners could interact, discover, and experiment with their surroundings (Bakhsh, 2016).

Some experts have also figured out characteristics of games that make vocabulary learning more effectively. Ersoz (2000) claims that games are highly appreciated because of the benefits and the fun environment that games create. Teachers can use games to help their students practice more their skills of communication. In addition, Uberman (1998) also affirms the helpful role of games in vocabulary teaching. From her own teaching experiences, Uberman observed the enthusiasm of her students in learning through games. She considers games as a way to help students not only enjoy and entertain with the language they learn, but also practice it incidentally.

Furthermore, one game that can be used by teachers is *Scattergories* game. *Scattergories* game is a board game for two to six players in which players try to list as many words as they can that start with a specific letter and fall within a list of categories (Mills, 2016). Through this game, teachers can see how well the students have known the vocabulary and then teach the vocabularies based on each categories. Therefore, students are attracted to memorize the vocabulary that they have learned and to complete the game task with their classmates in which the students will enjoy the vocabulary learning and review.

In conclusion, teachers can use *Scattergories* game in teaching vocabulary to young learners because it provides fun activity for them. As supported by Philiphs (2010) if an activity is enjoyable, it will be memorable; the language involved will be stick in mind, and the children will have a sense of achievement which will develop motivation for further learning.

B. DISCUSSION
1. Vocabulary for Elementary School Students

Vocabulary for elementary school students consists of several parts of speech such as noun, verb, adjective, and adverb. The teaching of vocabulary based on those parts of speech to elementary school students is determined by students' level of class: beginner, intermediate, and advanced (Zikriyati and Syafei, 2017).

a. Beginner Level (Grade 1-2)

Students who are in grade one and two of elementary school range from seven to eight years old. They will learn the basic part of vocabulary. Since the first kind of vocabulary is noun, students in this grade will learn about the vocabulary of Noun (N).

Seaton and Mew (2007) suggest that every name is called a noun. Azar and Hagen (2006) also argue that noun is used as the subject of sentence, as the object of verb, and a noun is also used as the object of a preposition.

Related to the cognitive development of young learners by Piaget, the students easily understand the concrete things. Therefore, teacher can teach the vocabulary that is related to the world around them. Here are examples of noun

that can be taught to the beginner students: **animals** (*cat, dog, rabbit*), **fruits** (*orange, mango, banana*) and **vegetables** (*tomato, chili, union*), **foods** (*fried rice, fried chicken, sandwich*) and **drinks** (*juice, milk, coffee, tea*), **things in the classroom** (*chair, table, whiteboard*), **things in the bedroom** (*pillow, bed, wardrobe*), and etc.

b. Intermediate Level (Grade 3-4)

Students who are in grade three and four of elementary school range from nine to ten years old. After learning noun as the basic part of speech, students can continue to verb (V). So, in this level students will learn vocabulary about noun and verb (N+V).

Verb is word that shows an action or being. Harmer (2001) defines verb as a word (or group of words) which is used in describing an action, experience or state. Verb that will be taught to the students in this level should be simple verbs that can be practiced in the classroom. The examples are *stand up, sit down, close the door, open the door, clean the whiteboard*, etc.

c. Advance Level (Grade 5-6)

Students who are in grade five and six of elementary school range from eleven to twelve years old. After learning about noun and verb, students can proceed to adjective (Adj). So, in this level students will learn about Noun, Verb, and Adjective (N + V+ Adj).

Adjective is a word that is used to explain noun by describing, identifying, or quantifying something. Harmer (2001) describes adjective as a word that gives more information about a noun while Cowan (2008) states that adjective describes the properties of an entity that a noun represents.

In advance level, the noun and verb that will be taught to the students should be broader than in the previous levels. The vocabulary can be about the **occupation** (*carpenter, teacher, doctor*), **things on earth** (*moon, sun, star*), **the public place** (*school, bus station, post office*), **the name of vehicle** (*car, train, and bicycle*), **daily routines** (*sleeping, taking a bath, studying*) and more verbs such as *jump, run, pull, push, catch, walk, laugh, cry, study*, and so on.

In addition, students in this level also learn about adjective. The adjective should be simple and can be seen or felt by the students for example, *beautiful, handsome, short, tall, happy, sad, angry, surprise*, and so on.

In conclusion, to be successful in teaching vocabulary to elementary school students, teachers should be able to select an appropriate material based on students' level. The selection of these materials will influence students' achievement in learning vocabulary. Thus, teacher needs to work hard and be more creative in selecting the material which should be fit to the lesson and students level.

2. Scattergories Game

Mills (2016) ellaborates that *Scattergories* game is a board game for two to six players in which players try to list as many words as they can that start with a specific letter and fall within a list of categories. The game has been experimented in foreign language learning especially in vocabulary learning. However, in using this game to teach vocabulary to young learners, students should already have had a group of vocabulary in their mind. In other words, *Scattergories* game only can

be used in teaching vocabulary to young learners if teachers have taught some groups of vocabulary to the students.

a. The components of games

To use *Scattergories* game in teaching vocabulary to elementary school students, these are some components that should be prepared by teachers.

1) Whiteboard, Colorful Markers, Letter Cards, and Categories Cards

In teaching vocabulary to elementary school students by using *Scattergories* game, teacher needs to prepare a whiteboard, markers, letter cards and categories cards.

The whiteboard in this game will be used to draw a table in which students write their answers. Teacher will also need to prepare markers for each group that might consist of 5 students. Therefore, the number of markers depend on how many group the students are divided into. If available, teacher can provide students with colorful markers. These markers will be used by students to write their answer on the whiteboard.

Letter cards are cards that contain letter in it such as A, B, C, D and so on. One letter card will be picked by the teacher and the letter determines what words should be written by the students. (The examples of letter cards are in appendix 1)

Categories cards are cards that contain the word categories that have been taught to the students such as **animal, fruits, transportation** and so on. The categories cards will be picked by the students as many as five categories. (The examples of categories cards are in appendix 2)

2) Picture Cards

Another component that should be prepared by teachers in teaching vocabulary to elementary school students by using *Scattergories* game is picture cards. Teacher can make his or her own picture cards by printing them. These cards will be used after playing the game to help students review and re-learn the vocabulary. (The examples of picture cards are in appendix 3)

b. Rules of the game

In using *Scattergories* game to teach vocabulary to elementary school students, teacher needs to explain the rule of the games to the students. The rules are:

1) Students are divided into groups that consist of five students.
2) Each group has one marker to write on the whiteboard.
3) Every student in the group has a chance to write their answer.
4) One letter card is picked by the teacher and five categories cards are picked by students.
5) If the word written by the students is correct based on the letter and categories, the score is 20 for each word.
6) The winner is the group that has the highest score.

3. **Implementation of *Scattergories* Game in Teaching Vocabulary to Elementary School Students**

As teachers implement *Scattergories* game in teaching vocabulary to elementary school students, teachers must make sure that all equipment needed

for playing the game is ready. Before starting the game, teachers need to divide the students into groups that consist of five students each group. In grouping students, teachers must consider their ability. It is inappropriate when one group is full with the smart ones while the other is full of the lazy ones. Therefore, teachers must be careful.

If the groups have been formed, teachers ask students to sit in their group. However, teachers must help students to arrange their position so that enough space is available for students to move. This space prevents students from hitting each other as they are very active when playing the game.

It has been mentioned before that *Scattergories* game can be implemented if students have learnt about at least five word categories, for example animals, fruits, things in the classroom, transportations, and food. Teachers can do brainstorming before the game is started by asking, "Does anybody remember any thing that we have learned?" or "Can you give the example of ...... (example: food)?"

Before starting to play the game, teachers should introduce the game to the students and explain the rules of the game. Teachers must make it clear for the students about what they do to play the game. It is unexpected to see students being confused when the game is played. If needed, teachers can do a demonstration to help students understand how the game is played.

After doing a brainstorming, teachers give one marker for each group. Different color of markers could create an identity for the groups. As colorful as possible will be great. However, if only three colors of markers available, teachers should avoid the close sitting groups having the same color of marker.

To determine what word categories are going to be played, teachers asks five random students to pick five categories cards. These students must not see the categories written on them and directly give the cards to the teachers. The categories cards chosen by the students should be kept first and then teachers pick one letter card.

Since word categories and letter are picked, teachers write them on the whiteboard as seen in Figure 1. Teacher must make sure that students understand everything written on the whiteboard. Also, teachers must explain to the students which column belongs to their group. The groups' name can be in number such as 1,2,3,4,5 and so on. However, students can decide their own groups' name to increase their interest such as Rose, The Brave or by taking their favorite characters such as Snow White, Hulk, Batman, and etc.
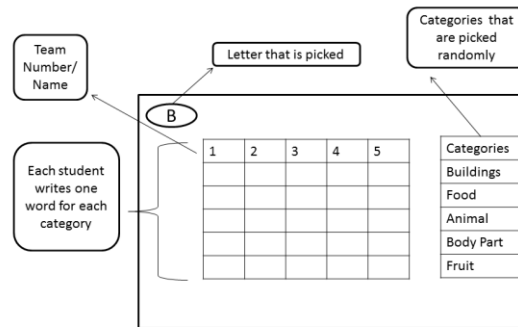
Figure 1. The display of whiteboard when playing Scattergories game

Teachers can give students one minute to discuss. However, students are not allowed to see their notebook or bother other group's member. They are only allowed to discuss with their group's member.

After discussing, teachers set 2 minute timer and ask students to write their answers on the whiteboard. The class will be very crowded and busy because students compete to run to the whiteboard and write their answers. However, teachers must control the situation to avoid loud noise and prevent students from hitting each other. Students are free to write the word from any category and each member is allowed to write one word only.

If two minute is over, one set of the game is finished, so the students sit back to their seats. Then, teachers should explain the words written by all groups first before giving a score. Every word can be discussed together related to the spelling or whether the words match the letter and the category. Every correct word is scored 20 and wrong word is scored 0. Therefore, if all the words written are correct, one group can get 100. After scoring all answers, teachers can announce the winner of the game and may give a special reward.

After that, teachers continue by explaining the five categories. Picture cards can be used to help students review students' vocabularies. Therefore, teachers must prepare all picture cards based on the categories.

4. The Importance of Using *Scattergories* Game in Teaching Vocabulary to Elementary School Students

Teaching vocabulary to elementary students could be very challenging because of the learners' characteristic. It might be easy if young learners learn like an adult does. In fact, teaching vocabulary to young learners need some considerations such as their cognitive development, socio-emotional development and physical development.

As young learners are very active in their ages, teachers must use an enjoyable technique that can support this characteristic. One technique that can be used is by using game in the teaching process. According to Cutter-Mackenzie et al (2014), game is a form of play with rules that can support learning process and meet the young learners' characteristic, especially Scattergories game. There are

some reasons why Scattergories game should be used in teaching vocabulary to elementary school students.

The first one is that *Scattergories* game demands learners to move actively and compete with others. It involves learners actively due to the game task and the essence of competition among them. These strongly match the students' characteristic.

The second one is that *Scattergories* game also has simple rules so the students can follow the instructions given by teachers easily. Although there might be some modification in the rules of the game, it will not change the essence of *Scattergories* game. The winner of the game is the group that owns the highest score.

The last one is that *Scattergories* game makes the teaching and learning process more fun and less stressful. As the game is played in group, the learners have chances to get help from the other group member in guessing the answer so they will not feel afraid and stressful. This can provide positive attitude toward the vocabulary learning.

In conclusion, it can be seen that *Scattergories* game is extremely useful to balance the young learners' active characteristic and provide fun learning. It also has simple rules and task so that *Scattergories* game is easy to apply in language learning. In addition, *Scattergories* game provides fun and less stressful learning environment. Therefore, using *Scattergories* game can be a good technique in teaching vocabulary to young learners.

C. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

In teaching vocabulary to young learners, three things must be considered: cognitive development, socio-emotional development, and physical development. Based on their cognitive development, young learners can easily understand concrete aspects rather than abstract ones. Consequently, they can understand the meaning of the words whose meaning can be deduced with an action, body language, photographs and other objects. From the view of socio-emotional development, young learners are in the industry vs. inferiority stage in which children are very enthusiastic about learning and they direct their energy toward mastering knowledge and intellectual skills. Therefore, learners need a learning situation in which learners are encouraged and motivated to complete a task and can interact with their classmates. According to the physical development, young learners are physically very active. They like playing, running or just moving.

By considering the characteristics of young learners, *Scattergories* game can be implemented as an interesting activity in teaching vocabulary to young learners. This is a classical board game which is played with letter cards and categories cards. The game can be a solution to provide young learners an active learning process. Students are needed to write the vocabularies based on the letter and categories. Moreover, all the components used in the game are safe for children. Through *Scattergories* game, students will learn vocabulary by playing. By using this game, students can learn vocabulary actively and in an enjoyable way.

Teaching vocabulary to elementary school students by using *Scattergories* game can be successful or failed. The space available to move freely can determine whether the implementation is successful or failed. Additionally, the amount of vocabulary that has been mastered by the learners also influences the game. It is impossible to implement this game at the first meeting or when teachers have not taught any vocabulary before. Also, the implementation of this game as a teaching technique can be failed if the time is not managed well by teachers. Therefore, to be successful in implementing *Scattergories* game in teaching vocabulary to young learners, the writer suggests the following points. Firstly, teachers have to make sure that students have had a group of vocabulary collections before using the game in the class. Secondly, there should be enough space for children to move as they will walk to the whiteboard to write the answer. Lastly, teacher should be able to manage the time as well as possible, so the purpose of implementing the game in teaching vocabulary to young learners can be reached.

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