Chapter 51

The Hoppers: A Potential Game to Enhance Secondary School Students’ Vocabulary Learning

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ABSTRACT

The current study is conducted to study the improvement of student's vocabulary through incorporating the game ‘Hoppers’ in classroom. Through research, students do not have much exposure to different types of vocabulary to be used in writing and there is high tendency to make spelling mistakes. Therefore, the game hoppers was introduced to 47 students of age 14 years old in classroom. Before introducing the game, students went through pretest to determine their proficiency vocabulary level. After 6 six weeks of exposure, students went through posttest to find out their improvement in vocabulary after playing the game ‘Hoppers’. An open-ended interview was carried out to find out students’ perception towards the game ‘Hoppers’.

Key Words: hoppers, fun learning, educational game.

1. INTRODUCTION

English language is an essential language as it is an International language to be used for communication. English language has its own crucial elements that it important to learn in order to convey message in English. Vocabulary plays a central role in a language. Without vocabulary, it is difficult to communicate or express the ideas in target language. Therefore students need to learn adequate amount of words to be able to convey their message. The Hoppers game was designed specifically to improvise the students Vocabulary knowledge in a fun way. The Hoppers game ensures the students to have fun while learning and also at the same time improve their spelling ability and knowledge on synonym and antonyms of words. This indirectly improves the students’
ability to speak and write using various type of words, thus improving their ability to use English language in a more advanced level.

**Problem Statement**

Vocabulary is an important element in English language as it gives meaning to our spoken and written form. The importance of vocabulary has always emphasize in English language. However, students always have problems to use vocabulary in their spoken or written form. Instead of using varieties of choice of words in their essay, they end up conveying their ideas in simple sentences. Students face this kind of difficulties due to the process of learning vocabulary. Students always feel bored during vocabulary lesson because teacher use traditional teaching approach. Furthermore, students can't remember the list of vocabulary taught by the teacher in one particular lesson. This is because the way teacher teach vocabulary is in a passive way. For instance, they will ask students to memorize the definitions of the words and they will explain the definition of those words (Derakhshan & Khatir, 2015). Even though different situation are given to explain the particular word, students won't be confident enough to apply the word because they are uncertain of all the functions of a word. Moreover, even if the students know the meaning of the words, they might have problem to pronounce the word correctly because they are not given a scenario to use and apply the words in a context. These kind of situation will reduce students’ motivation to learn vocabulary. Therefore, language games are able to produce an active learning environment. Incorporating games in English lesson will not only motivates the students, it also helps students to remember better about the specific lesson. When students are motivated to learn in a classroom, they will fully participate in the lesson and this will make them to give their full attention in class. They tend to remember things better and this will enhance their confident level to use the word.

**2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

Conducting specifically vocabulary lessons can be very difficult for the teachers. According to (Carlos & Morass, 2001), learning vocabulary is usually incorporate with other language skills as reading or listening. Hence, there will be always lack of time or only limited words can be learn by the students as expansion of vocabulary only occurs during practice or a task and it is prove that is not sufficient enough for the students. Games can be tool for the teachers to make their lesson more interesting. There are few studies has been carried out to prove language games helps students to improve their vocabulary knowledge. The first study was taken place in Jordan, the researcher used electronic games in the lesson. The aim of this study is to study the effectiveness of electronic games in improves students’ vocabulary. This study involves 100 kindergarten students in a private kindergartens in Irbid. The students were divided four groups, two control groups and two experimental groups. Electronic games were incorporated in experimental groups whereas vocabulary was learn traditionally in control group. Pretest and posttest were conducted to compare the results. Based on the data collection, it
proves that games boost learning vocabulary in the classroom. Through this research, it can be concluded that students feel less stress when they are learning vocabulary and games helps to maintain their motivation. When they motivated, they will automatically be excited hence this ease the learning process in classroom. Students are able to perform better in language when they are learning in an active classroom (Alnatour & Hijazi, 2018). Another study was carried in Iran, to investigate the effect of using fun activities learning vocabulary among learners. 40 female participants were selected through convince sampling from Oxford English Institute Ahvaz. Pretest was conducted before dividing the participants into two groups, experimental and control groups. Games were played in experimental group whereas vocabulary was taught in traditional method. At the end of the course, participants took posttest so the researcher can compare the results. Based on the data collected, participants from experimental group has improve their vocabulary knowledge compare to the control group. Students tend to face difficulties to memorize all the vocabulary that they have learn, especially abstract words but games helps them to retrieve information better than learning vocabulary in a traditional way (Bavi, 2018). Another related study was been carried out in Vietnam, involving 50 first-year students of Economics and Business Administration from Thai Nguyen University. The aim of the study is to investigate the impact of language games in teaching vocabulary. The study was carried out for 3 months, participants went through pretest and posttest. Based on the data collected, it shows that games have positive impact on the students’ vocabulary knowledge. Students feel more positive when they can learn new words in different and new technique. Incorporating games in lesson makes them feel as if they are taking a break from studies but subconsciously they will be still learning and applying the knowledge in a fun way (Lan, Van & Huyen, 2019).

3. METHODOLOGY

This research study was carried out in Poi Lam High School (SUWA), Ipoh from 1st September 2019- 11th October 2019 (6 weeks). The participants were 47 students from Junior Two Li class (Form 2). The participants were well explained about the research study and the research was conducted with their full consent. The research consist of six lesson plan which were designed specifically consisting of Vocabulary lessons to be carried out for six weeks. The students were taught these lessons in the time frame of 80 minutes per week (Two class periods). On the first week, the students were given a Pre-test consisting 20 questions (10 synonym and 10 antonym questions). The students answered the questions by giving as much synonym and antonym for the words given in the question. The students spelling ability was also recorded. The students’ Vocabulary knowledge in synonym and antonym was tested alongside their spelling ability to determine their proficiency level and exposure in English language. On the second week onwards, the first 40 minutes was used to teach the students on the designed specific topic for Vocabulary. Then the students were asked to play the Hoppers game guided by the teacher. The teacher divides the students into four groups. Each group were given a word and the students will take turn to hop on the scattered letters on the floor to spell the
words correctly. In the second round, the students were asked to give synonym/antonym for the earlier given word and again the students took their turn to hop and spell the words correctly. The groups which scores the highest mark receives candies/stationaries from the teacher. At the end of the sixth week, the group with the overall highest scores received a trophy and stationaries. The students were also given a Post-test to evaluate on their improvement in their Vocabulary knowledge at the end of the sixth week.

**The Hoppers Game**

This game have students to jump around on each letters on the floor to spell the correct word given to them. The Hoppers game consist of 34 letters (One set of Consonants, Two set of Vowels and Four letter of Z). The letters will be jumbled up on the floor and the students need to jump around each letter to spell the word given correctly. The letter Z acts as a bridge for the students to jump from one box to another box. The students were challenged to spell the word or to find synonym/antonyms for the given word within a particular time limit.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test</th>
<th>No. of Students</th>
<th>Spelling: Less than 3 mistakes (%)</th>
<th>Synonym/Antonym: More than 2 synonym/antonym given for one question (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pretest</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>23 students (50%)</td>
<td>18 students (38%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posttest</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>36 students (76%)</td>
<td>29 students (62%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In the Pre-test, it was clear a lot of students was unable to spell and to give the appropriate synonym/antonym for the given words. As shown, only 50% of the students were able to score less than 3 spelling mistakes and the students who managed to give more than two synonym/antonym was only 118 (38%). The Hoppers game definitely made a huge impact on the students’ vocabulary knowledge as we can see the result of the posttest shows more students started to improvise on their spelling ability and on their synonym/antonym knowledge. The students who made less spelling mistake increased from 56% to 76% and the students who improved their synonym/antonym knowledge also increased from 38% to 62%. The students found the game very interesting and challenging as they competed against each other to win the trophy. Indirectly the students were improving their spelling ability and learned/memorized a lot of synonym/antonym related to the words taught to them in the class. This improved their ability to use more variety of words in speaking and writing.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The Hoppers game proved that the students could gain better understanding in improvising their Vocabulary knowledge. The game, not only did improved the students spelling ability but also improved the students' knowledge on synonym and antonym. This enhances the students’ ability in speaking and writing using more variety of words. The game also increased the students’ interest in learning English and boosted their self-esteem level to use the language for communication. The recommendation that should be adjusted are the challenges in the game (word choices) according to the students' proficiency level. The Hoppers game also can be used to be used for more challenging task such as answering riddles through playing the game. This will ensure the high challenge level for the students to sustain their excitement level in learning English through this game.

REFERENCES