

STUDENTS' PERCEPTION IN LEARNING ENGLISH VOCABULARY THROUGH HANGAROO GAME

Shofiyatul Najah; Yudhi Arifani

Universitas Muhammadiyah Gresik; Universitas Muhammadiyah Gresik

shofiyatul_180403@umg.ac.id; yudhi_arif@umg.ac.id

Abstract

Vocabulary learning for second and foreign language students is essential and needs attention during English language learning. That is because vocabulary is needed to master other English skills and communicate effectively in and outside the classroom. However, many elementary school students still lack vocabulary because they do not fit the teaching method. This study investigates the student perceptions of implementing the Hangaroo game in learning English vocabulary. The participant in this study is five students from elementary school in Thailand. This study used interviews and observation to gather information and explanations regarding the student perceptions of learning English vocabulary through the Hangaroo game. To analyze the research data uses thematic analysis for classification and summary purposes. The results showed that most students express their positive perception of vocabulary learning using the Hangaroo game. Accordingly, this research recommends that English teachers use the Hangaroo game to teach English vocabulary to students in the classroom.

Keywords: Learning English vocabulary, students' perception, Hangaroo game, elementary school

Introduction

Learning vocabulary for EFL or ESL students is one of the essential things that must be done well because it will affect their English skills. According to Schmitt (1997), cited in Novriana et al. (2016), vocabulary is a basis of a language, and it is essential to be master first. Moreover, Maritha & Dakhi (2017) stated that vocabulary is one of the skills languages need to be paid attention to in teaching English. Thus, learning and mastering vocabulary is essential and needed when learning English. The teacher must pay attention to students' vocabulary besides teaching them all English skills. The teacher also should provide good strategies and good learning media to learn vocabulary.

Moreover, Lestari (2018) and Wahjuningsih (2018) as cited in Apriliani (2021), stated that students have to know the meanings of many words and master vocabulary. To master other English skills; that is, listening, reading, speaking, and writing, the students need to master vocabulary. In short, mastering vocabulary is a bridge to mastering other English skills, making us fluent in using English. In addition, Alexander (2009) in Faliyanti & Sari (2018) stated that vocabulary is essential. When youngsters improve their vocabulary, their academic and social confidence and competence in using the language will improve. That means the students' vocabulary is influential in the daily life and education of students.

English is taught to students from elementary school until senior high school in Thailand. Furthermore, in Thailand, English is taught as a foreign language. According to Ministry of education (2008) as cited in Mungkonwong & Wudthayagorn (2017), the students are expecting to get a vocabulary size of around 300 – 400 words when they graduate from grade 3 and should get around 1,050 – 1,200 words when they graduate from grade 6 of elementary school. When they graduate from grade 9 of junior high school should get around 2,100 – 2,250 words. Moreover, grade 12 of senior high school should

have 3,600 – 3,750 words. However, students' success in getting the number of words they are expected to depend on how they are taught and learn. Ngersawat & Kirkpatrick (2014) stated that English lessons in Thailand are usually taught only by memorizing new words and learning the sentence structure. Students who take part in the bilingual program class have to face difficulties, such as; attending lectures, participating in the classroom and taking notes during class. That explains why Thai students are challenging to choose the right words because they only memorize the words without understanding the context and the meaning of the words. In addition, Thai and English languages have a very significant letter or alphabet differences, which also affects the students in spelling the words due to language interference from the first language. Moreover, using traditional strategies to teach vocabulary quickly makes the students bored and not interesting to learn.

Foreign languages teachers are constantly looking for the most effective methods and techniques for teaching and learning vocabulary in the classroom. Setiawan & Wiedarti (2020) stated that teachers must provide media that could motivate students and make them more interested in learning English vocabulary. One of the strategies teachers usually use in teaching-learning is games. Wright, Betteridge & Buckby (2006) stated that games in language learning help and motivate many learners to be constantly interested in learning. The use of games also helps teachers teach students that language is valuable and meaningful. In that case, Jannah et al. (2019) found that using games such as Memory games, word association, Miming, Hangman, and Hangaroo games positively affects the students' vocabulary mastery because memorization of the vocabularies can be easier since it is delivered indirectly through fun activities. The game also makes students more active during the learning process. Moreover, Masri & Najar (2014) Stated that teaching English vocabulary using word games for elementary students has a positive effect on students' achievement in English vocabulary. The study proved a significant difference score of the students post-test taught using traditional way and word games.

The teacher uses many games to teach vocabulary; one of them is the Hangaroo game. The Hangaroo game positively influences students' vocabulary mastery (Faliyanti & Sari, 2018). In addition, Farihah & Rachmawati (2020) found that the students gave good responses to implementing the Hangaroo game in teaching-learning. Moreover, some studies compared the Hangaroo game and other word games, and the result found that the Hangaroo game result showed no different test result from the Hangaroo and other word games (Sabila, 2019). That is means the Hangaroo game is suitable as one of the teaching media for teaching English vocabulary to the students.

Many studies about using the Hangaroo game to learn English, especially vocabulary, were conducted. However, none of the studies explores the students' perception when using the Hangaroo game to learn vocabulary. They only focus on the Hangaroo game's effectiveness. Moreover, it needs to explore the students' perception of some media in teaching-learning. According to Jumroh & Rohmah (2019), there is a significant influence between the student's perception and student's motivation to learn with the media use in the classroom toward students' English achievement.

The researcher conducted a study to investigate the students' perception of English vocabulary through the Hangaroo game based on the phenomena. The researcher formulated one research question: How is the students' perception of learning English vocabulary through the Hangaroo game?

The researcher expects this research to give the learners information on the importance of learning vocabulary and the use of the Hangaroo game as a learning medium to help them in vocabulary learning. The researcher also expects this research to be useful for teachers, especially in English class. Teachers can use the Hangaroo game as

a learning medium during teaching vocabulary. In addition, teachers can make learning more fun while using the Hangaroo game.

Literature Review

Vocabulary Learning

Vocabulary is a list for a particular language or a list of possible word sets used by an individual language speaker (Hatch & Brown (1995) as cited in Farihah & Rachmawati, 2020). We cannot use a language effectively without an adequate vocabulary. Therefore, second and foreign-language learners need vocabulary learning to communicate effectively (Çinar & Asım, 2019) as cited in (Aprilani, 2021). Similarly, Hatch & Brown (1995), cited in Novriana et al. (2016) stated that to express ideas and to understand what other people say, we need to master vocabulary. In addition, Lestari (2018) and Wahjuningsih (2018) as cited in (Apriliani, 2021) stated that to master other English skills, that is, listening, reading, speaking, and writing, the students need to master vocabulary. That means learning vocabulary is a must because vocabulary makes us easier to communicate with other people and vocabulary we need to get ability in all English skills.

However, Wulanjani (2016) states that vocabulary learning is challenging when learning a new language, especially for young learners. Young learners usually need more fun learning strategies from adult learners. It is because young learners are easily bored than adults. Usually, they learn vocabulary using traditional ways like mimicking what the teacher said, memorizing the words in the book, and other ways. In addition, Nguyen & Khuat (2003) as cited in Jannah et al. (2019), learning vocabulary might be difficult for beginners because they have to memorize unfamiliar words and their spelling. That means teachers should find learning strategies that make students not challenging to learn vocabulary.

Moreover, Wulanjani (2016) states that teachers cannot teach vocabulary to the students independently because it will make young learners confused and frustrated to learn vocabulary. Asyiah (2017) suggested that the EFL teacher introduce students to various vocabulary learning strategies when teaching them. She also suggested that EFL students learn to master vocabulary and practice it in daily communication, spoken or written. One strategy to teach vocabulary to the students usually teacher use is using words games. Wright, Betteridge & Buckby (2006) define the word 'game' as an activity that is entertaining and engaging, often challenging, and an activity in which the learners play and usually interact with others. Ghahraman & Shabani (2021) study explores the effects of word games on Iranian EFL learners in elementary school vocabulary achievement. The study found that words game has more achievement of vocabulary knowledge than traditional strategy. Similarly, Masri & Najjar (2014) found that teaching English vocabulary using word games for primary stage students in Jordan positively affects the students' achievement English language.

Hangaroo Game

This day implementing games in the teaching and learning process is getting popular. That is because the improvement from the traditional way to teach is needed. Hangaroo Game is one of the vocabulary games used by the teacher. Hangaroo Game is a game that comes up as an adaptation of the classic Hangman game. The creator of this game is NCBUY entertainment network. This game uses a Kangaroo instead of a man as the animation. While we play this game, we have four chances to make mistakes when answering each question, or the kangaroo will get punishment. The questions or the clue given can be the word similarity, the antonym of the word, or the definition of the word. The students can answer by guessing the word by mentioning and choosing the letters. Hangaroo Game is a familiar vocabulary game and easy for teachers and learners. Implementation of the Hangaroo game and the classic Hangman game have already been discussed in many studies.

The study about classical Hangman games found that the game could be improving the student's vocabulary. With the Hangman game, students can understand the meaning of the words, the spelling of the words, how to pronounce the words, can use the words based on the context. In addition, the Hangman game can improve the class situation because, with this game, the teacher asks the students to listen and write the material that was given, but the teacher also asks the students to join in the game (Novriana et al., 2016; Wiratania, 2018; Munikasari & Riyanti, 2021).

Like the classical Hangman game, Hangaroo game studies also found a positive effect on students' vocabulary. Farihah & Rachmawati (2020) prove that students' vocabulary mastery improved by implementing the digital hangman game, and almost all of the students gave their positive responses to the implementation of this game in the classroom. Faliyanti & Sari (2018) also found Hangaroo game has a positive and significant effect on students' vocabulary mastery. Similarly, Aprianti (2018) research shows that the Hangaroo game positively impacts the student's vocabulary ability, and this game also has a positive impact on the class situation. In addition, Widyastuti (2020) stated Hangaroo game is successful in improving students' vocabulary mastery. She also stated that this game could be applied in teaching English vocabulary.

Moreover, Sabila (2019) stated that the Hangaroo game was able to attract the students' attention to learning vocabulary, and the students could gain some new vocabulary from this game. She also compared the Hangaroo game with other words, namely world jumble. She found no distinctions between students taught using Word Jumble and students taught using Hangaroo game vocabulary mastery. The student's scores in the pre-test before implementing the game and post-test after implementing the game are proof of the improvement and the positive effect mentioned by all studies. The score is increased from the student's pre-test and post-test results. In short, we can conclude that the implementation of Hangaroo games in vocabulary learning positively impacts students' vocabulary and classroom situations.

However, all of the studies about the Hangaroo game only focus on the effectiveness and the implementation of the Hangaroo game for English learning, especially vocabulary. None of the studies is conducted to explore students' perception of the Hangaroo game in learning English vocabulary. The researcher conducted a study to investigate the students' perception of learning English vocabulary through the Hangaroo game.

Method

In this study, the researcher applied a case study with a qualitative approach to explore the students' perception after using the Hangaroo game as a medium to learn

vocabulary. Creswell & Creswell (2003) as cited in (Apriliani, 2021) define a case study as a research strategy in which the researcher investigates a case meticulously in limited time and activity, and researchers gather information using various data collection procedures based on the limited time. The researcher uses a case study to investigate the Hangaroo game to learn English vocabulary is because the time and the activity are limited.

The primary purpose of this research is to find out the students' perception of learning vocabulary using the Hangaroo game as a learning medium. The researcher uses Observation and interviews adopted from (Apriliani, 2021) to draw the students' perception of the Hangaroo game. (Apriliani, 2021) study also explored the students' perception but with different learning media. The researcher used participant observation to collect data. Based on the level of participation, observation activities are carried out through complete (full) participation, full membership, active participation, joining certain activities, and participation as observers (Hasanah, 2017). The participant observation is because the researcher includes one of the teachers who teaches the students in the learning environment. For the interview, the researcher used a semi-structured interview.

According to (Sugiyono, 2010) as cited in (Apriliani, 2021), a semi-structured interview means the researchers commit to in-depth interviews, but it is more freely than structured interviews. The researcher used a semi-structured interview because the researchers still prepared the questions, but possible that researchers were not so attached to the prepared question. The research participants are recruited according to the student's participation and performance in class that the teacher recommends. Because the researcher and the participant were in different countries, the interview and observation were conducted online using Google Meet. The interview duration is about 10-15 minutes for each participant.

The participant of this qualitative case study is sixth-grade elementary students in Chumchonnonghin School, Loei, Thailand. The researcher joined an international internship program and was placed in this school, and the Hangaroo game was used for helping students learn vocabulary. The researcher takes some steps to achieve the purpose of this research. First, the researcher introduces the Hangaroo game, how it works, and the rules for students. After that, the researcher gives students a chance to try the Hangaroo game to learn vocabulary. Then, the researcher will use the Hangaroo game to teach vocabulary to the students with different material for each meeting. At the end of the meeting, the researcher will conduct an interview session with students after using the Hangaroo game.

To process the data that has been obtained from the interview, the researcher carried out a thematic analysis to analyze data. Thematic analysis is one of the ways to process qualitative data by identifying the patterns or themes from the data that researchers have gathered (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). Braun & Clarke (2006) as cited in (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017), provide six steps for thematic analysis, and the researcher will use that. The sixth steps are re-reading the interview transcripts, giving codes on the words or sentences that describe the students' perception, searching for themes, analyzing the words and sentences pattern, grouping into some themes or categories, and interpreting or reporting the analysis.

Result and Discussion

To investigate the students' perception of the Hangaroo game to learn English vocabulary, the researcher interviewed 5 (five) students, one male student, and four female students from sixth-grade elementary students. All of the students are 12 (twelve)

years old. The participants were interviewed to give information to the researcher after they experienced learning vocabulary using the Hangaroo game for two weeks in the second semester of grade 6.

Overall, from the interview, all of the students can play the Hangaroo game well and easily. That can be seen from the students' answers related to whether they have difficulty when the teacher uses the Hangaroo game to learn vocabulary or not. As stated below:

"Not difficult at all. It is a funny and easy game for me."

"No, it is easy to learn vocabulary using the hangaroo game."

"I don't find difficult when teacher use this game."

"This game is not difficult."

"Not all all."

However, from the observation, the researcher found that when teachers use the Hangaroo game, the students feel confused and strange. That happened because the students still think this is a new way to learn vocabulary, and the students also know this game. The students' confusion only happened in the first meeting, and in the next few meetings, they played the Hangaroo game well and had much fun. Nevertheless, the point is that they are happy during the lesson even though they are confused at first.

Students' Perception of Vocabulary Learning

All of the five students agreed that learning vocabulary is essential because learning and mastering vocabulary will help them with their classroom activities, especially during English lessons. We can see the students' perception in these statements:

"Yes important, to know more English words."

"Yes, teacher, it is important. To be able to speak English well"

"Yes, for learning English well."

"Yes, to know more words."

"Yes, to know and understand what the teacher teach me (during English lesson) in class."

So, all of the students realized that learning vocabulary is essential. That is in line with Hatch and Brown (1995) that to express ideas and to understand what other people say we need to master vocabulary. Moreover, Lestari (2018) and Wahjuningsih (2018) as cited in Apriliani (2021) stated that vocabulary is needed to master other English skills: listening, reading, speaking, and writing.

Students' Perception of Learning Vocabulary Through Hangaroo game

The researcher explored the students' perception of what is the Hangaroo game and students' answer are different, the most student's perceptions as follows:

"It is a fun word game."

"It is guessing word game to learn vocabulary."

"It is a fun game, and I like it."

There is no wrong perception and definition from the students' answers. Because according to Susanti (2014) in Faliyanti & Sari (2018), the Hangaroo game was a guessing game. It helped check the students' spelling. Moreover, Kartika (2015) in Faliyanti & Sari (2018) stated that the name of the game, Hangaroo is coming from the kangaroo word because kangaroo uses as the leading figure in this game. In the game Hangaroo, we have to fill the empty squares with the alphabet A until Z, and we have a chance to make a mistake four times for each question. Hangaroo games can be used for learning by doing some adjustments to the topics taught and the class conditions.

Based on the interview result, the researcher found that students think that the Hangaroo game has an attractive appearance, easy game to learn vocabulary, motivated

and help them learn and make them enjoy and happy during class. All of the students agreed, as stated below:

"Yes, the game help me to learn vocabulary and how to write the words (the spelling)."

"I am happy, I can learn vocabulary together with my friends."

"Yes, it is easy game. I can learn the vocabulary in Loy Krathong festival (one of the topic)."

"This game has interesting appearance, the kangaroo animation (in the game) is cute."

"Yes motivating me, the clue (usually content definition) in the game help me learning many vocabulary."

The researcher found that students like almost all of the parts or features of the Hangaroo game. The students also considered some part or feature in the Hangaroo game to easily learn vocabulary. As stated below:

Student 1: *"The clue in the game, it help me learning many vocabulary"* – easy to learn

"The alphabet choice to answer" – the student like

Student 2: *"The answer box"* – easy to learn

"The alphabet to answer" – the student like

Student 3: *"The answer box"* – easy to learn

"The alphabet choice teacher, I can learn the spelling of the words" – the student like

Student 4: *"The answer box"* – easy to learn

"The kangaroo animation, because it is cute" – the student like

Student 5: *"The answer box"* – easy to learn

"The alphabet choice to answer, because I can learn spelling word" – the student like



Figure 1. The Hangaroo game

The answer box is one of the parts or features in the Hangaroo game that provides the alphabet number in the word (answer). And most of the students like this part of this game. According to the observation, students think it can be the part to make them easy to learn vocabulary because that part can provide information about how many alphabets they should choose to guess the answer.

The parts or features in this game that students think can be part of the reasons they like learning vocabulary using the Hangaroo game are the alphabet choice to answer and the kangaroo animation in this game. The students like the alphabet choice to answer because they can learn the spelling of the word while playing the Hangaroo game, and that makes it easy to remember the spelling of some words while writing the word. That is proved by Rabu & Talib (2017) that features in digital games, such as controls, challenges, interactivity, and feedback are able to attract students' interest and provide a sense of pleasure to learn vocabulary. These features also help students train their short-term and long-term memory to memorize the taught vocabulary thereby increasing their vocabulary achievement. And the next reason is the kangaroo animation in this game, they think the kangaroo animation is cute and it can motivate them to learn. Proved by Sabila

(2019) that the Hangaroo game was able to attract the students' attention to learning vocabulary.

According to the students' opinion, apart from feeling that learning vocabulary using the Hangaroo game is easy to learn, they also feel that using the Hangaroo game brings them closer to their classmates. Moreover, that can also be seen during observation of the learning process. The students more actively communicate with their classmates. That is evidenced by the students' perceptions below:

"Yes it bring me closer, I can discus with my classmate during playing game"

"Yes, I discuss with my friends for answer (the questions)"

"I think yes, because the game is very fun and I can discuss the answer with my friends when play this game"

However, some students do not feel that using the Hangaroo game brings them closer to their classmates during learning vocabulary. There is no wrong and right perception from the students' answers. It is because of their feeling when using the Hangaroo game. That can be seen from the students' answers below:

"Just normal, because me and my friends just randomly choose alphabet when don't know the answer"

"Not really (close), my classmates don't want to help me understand (the clue)"

Table 1. The Findings of the research using Thematic Analysis

Open Code	Axial	Selective
Fun	Positive Perception	The students' perception of learning vocabulary through Hangaroo game
Easy game		
Easy to learn		
Help me		
I can learn		
I can discuss		
Interesting		
Motivating	Negative Perception	
happy		
Just normal		
Not really		

Based on the student's perception, using the Hangaroo game to learn vocabulary was fun and made them happy. They also feel that this game is easy to use and play, motivating them to learn and improve their classroom situation. It is supported by Aprianti (2018) and Farihah & Rachmawati (2020); research shows that the Hangaroo game positively impacts the student's vocabulary ability, and this game also has a positive impact on the class situation. From all of the parts of the game, students decide some parts help them easily to learn, and they like this game. Most of the students choose the answer box in this game as part of the game, making it easy to learn vocabulary. This part provides the number of the alphabet in the word (answer). Most of the students choose the alphabet to answer as a part of this game that they like the most. This part makes the students learn how to spell the word, so they can remember when they want to write the word. It is supported by Faliyanti & Sari (2018), Widyastuti (2020) and Sabila (2019) said the Hangaroo game is positively improving students' vocabulary and also stated that this game can be applied in teaching English vocabulary.

To sum up, from the interview result and the observation, most of the students express a positive perception of learning vocabulary using the Hangaroo game. We can

see from the thematic analysis in Table 1. The students feel that the Hangaroo game is fun. The Hangaroo game is easy and easy to learn using this game. This game helps to learn vocabulary, and this game can be used to learn vocabulary. Students can discuss with their classmates, and this game has an interesting appearance. This game motivated them to learn, and they are happy to learn using it. Because according to Setiawan & Wiedarti (2020) teachers must provide media that could motivate students and make them more interested in learning English vocabulary. With the students' positive perception toward this game in this study, it is an approval that the Hangaroo game is one of the best learning media for learning vocabulary. The researcher recommends using the Hangaroo game for learning vocabulary in the language class.

Conclusion

Based on the interview and observation results, it was found that the sixth-grade students perceived the use of the Hangaroo game in learning vocabulary positively. The students thought and felt if the Hangaroo game as the learning media to learn vocabulary was useful. The Hangaroo game makes them more accessible and happier to learn vocabulary, motivates them, and improves class because they communicate more with their classmates. The students also felt that the use of the Hangaroo game could help them understand the word definition and learn the word spelling. Even though all students have a positive perception, they are still confused about the Hangaroo game. We can give them more time to become familiar with this game before using it. Moreover, based on the finding, the researcher recommended that the English teacher use the Hangaroo game to teach English vocabulary to students.

For future researchers, the researcher recommended increasing the number of participants to get a more diverse student opinion and hope can strengthen the statements of previous research. Future researchers also can research with a longer time so that students can be more familiar with the Hangaroo game. Moreover, future researchers can conduct similar research with participants who have different levels of education.

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