

Students' Perceptions on the Use of a Snake and Ladder Board Game in Learning Vocabulary at the English Club of SMK N 1 Banyumas

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Abstract

This research examines the use of a snake and ladder board game implemented in SMK N 1 Banyumas. This research aimed to explore students' perceptions of the use of a snake and ladder board game to facilitate vocabulary learning for the students participating in the English Club of SMK N 1 Banyumas. The researcher formulated two different issues in this study: (1) The students' perceptions of the implementation of a snake and ladder board game for English Club students' SMK N 1 Banyumas and (2) How the use of snake and ladder board game could enhance the English Club students' vocabulary mastery at SMA SMK N 1 Banyumas. A case study as the research design was applied in this research. The research participants were thirty-three (33) students and an English teacher of the English Club at SMK N 1 Banyumas. In collecting data, the researcher conducted observation, distributed questionnaires, and conducted interviews with students and an English teacher of the English Club. The data were presented in the form of narrative descriptions. This study indicates that the participants were interested in using a snake and ladder board game. In fact, the participants realised that the use of a snake and ladder game could encourage students' ability to enrich their vocabulary and suggested that the game is used for learning vocabulary in class.

Keywords: Perceptions, Snake and ladder board game, Vocabulary, Narrative descriptions

Introduction

The Ministry of National Education (2013) decided that English is one of the local subjects taught in an extracurricular program at school. Some schools in Purwokerto, for example, place English as one of the extracurricular subjects taught to support their students in practising English. One of those schools is SMK N 1 Banyumas. The students are facilitated by their school with an English Club. This program allows students to practice their speaking skills to compensate for minimum speaking practice time.

In the learning process of improving students' language skills such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing, students need a series of words called vocabulary. Richards and Renandya state that "vocabulary is a core of language proficiency and provides much of the basic for how well learners speak, read and write" (2002, p. 255). Vocabulary is one element of language that should be learned and taught. It becomes central to any language acquisition process, especially in introducing a language.

The English Club in SMK N 1 Banyumas is held from 11.00 AM to 01.00 PM every Friday for the tenth and eleventh-grade students. Unfortunately, SMK N 1 Banyumas has not yet used media during the learning process. In this case, students are mostly not interested in joining this program. They feel bored of the current revolution in English Club. It is the same as the learning process in their class.

In this situation, the teacher has to think of a strategy that helps students solve their vocabulary problems in learning English. The use of a game as supporting learning media can be one of the strategies to help students improve their vocabulary mastery. The important thing in the teaching and learning process is how

much or how little teaching and learning is done in the classroom and how the students are active and enjoy their learning process. In learning vocabulary, there are many kinds of games that can be used: a snake and ladder board game, crossword puzzle, hangman, flashcards, etc. Those games may help students to understand vocabulary easily. In this study, the researcher focuses on implementing the snake and ladder board game.

Snake and ladder game is not a new medium used to help students learn vocabulary. Although this game is suitable for assisting students in enhancing their vocabulary mastery, many teachers would argue that students might not benefit from playing any kinds of games, and it is a waste of time. Some teachers even assume that a snake and ladder game is an old game that is ineffective as an alternative way to teach vocabulary. Many teachers also thought that a snake and ladder game is used only in ice-breaking activities. However, in SMK N 1 Banyumas, this kind of game is used as the main media when teachers focus on English Club students' vocabulary achievement. Teachers believe that the snake and ladder game will help their students succeed. The teachers use the game as a learning medium to help students improve their vocabulary mastery. The researcher would like to see how the English Club students' perceptions of the implementation of snake and ladder can enhance their vocabulary mastery. The researcher expects that a set of English materials used when a snake and ladder game is played in speaking can help students reduce their learning problems and improve their English speaking skills.

To support the teaching and learning of English vocabulary, the researcher uses a snake and ladder board game to facilitate the students learning of English vocabulary. Snake and ladder board game is one of the media that the English teacher uses to encourage the students to practise their vocabulary skills. The teacher provided the materials accommodated by the snake and ladder board game. The teacher expects that the students would be motivated to learn English in an exciting situation by using a snake and ladder game. Consequently, the students can practice the vocabulary that they know. While the students practice the vocabulary, they can enjoy the game because the pictures and colours found in the game might be interesting for them. It is expected that the research can give information for English teachers that they can use a snake and ladder game as one of their alternative teaching media in vocabulary learning during the teaching and learning process.

Review of Related Literature

Vocabulary

Vocabulary is defined as a stock of words in a language that can support the learners to learn the skills of the language in terms of reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills (1958, p. 21). However, in this study, the researcher uses the definition from Stahl (2005). He argues that vocabulary is knowledge of a word that implies a definition and how that word fits into the world. Learning vocabulary is the most crucial part when students want to learn English. Without a sufficient vocabulary, someone cannot communicate effectively or express ideas in oral and written forms. Students are expected to understand the meaning of the words and their uses in sentences in oral and written forms. Therefore, in this research, the researcher wants to know the students' perceptions of using a snake and ladder board game to improve their vocabulary mastery.

Snake and Ladder

In order to make the students achieve their vocabulary skills easily, the teacher needs to use appropriate media to conduct the learning activity. As cited in Sadiman (1986, p. 6) and Rasibah (2006, p. 18), Gagne states that media is a kind of component in the surrounding around students that stimulate them to study. Briggs, as cited in Rasibah (2006, p. 18), argues that media are all physical tools that serve messages and

make stimuli towards students to study, like books, film, cassettes, etc. Based on those definitions, it can be summed up that media is everything used to obtain information from the sender to the receiver so that it can stimulate the learning process to get knowledge, skill, and a certain attitude. In this research, the researcher chooses a snake and ladder board game. The term snake and ladder game is used to describe a board game to help students enhance their vocabulary in English. Snake and ladder board game is a board game in which players try to make words from letters printed on small plastic blocks and connect them to the words already placed on the board. Snake and ladder are memory games used to help students encourage the students' vocabulary mastery. Learning vocabulary using snake and ladder can encourage students to enhance vocabulary mastery.

Methodology

In this study, the researcher attempts to answer two research questions: (1) What are the students' perceptions on the implementation of a snake and ladder board game in learning vocabulary?; (2) How does the use of snake and ladder board game encourage the English Club students' vocabulary mastery at SMK N 1 Banyumas? This research employed a qualitative method. To answer those questions, a descriptive qualitative approach was used. According to Bogdan and Biklen (1998), descriptive qualitative research data is taken in words or pictures rather than numbers. The data includes the interview transcripts, the field notes, and the other official records (Bogdan&Biklen, 1998). In answering the research questions, the researcher described how the English Club students' perceived the implementation of the snake and ladder board game in SMK N 1 Banyumas related to the data from the questionnaire and interview. The researcher then identified the questionnaires to gather information about the English Club students' vocabulary mastery encouragement through a snake and ladder board game. Then, the researcher also identified the interviews related to vocabulary mastery encouragement, which include memorising and pronouncing elements to get further information.

Findings and Discussion

The students' perceptions on the implementation of snake and ladder board game for English Club students' SMK N 1 Banyumas

Before using the snake and ladder in vocabulary learning, the teacher recalled the previous topic. After that, the teacher divided thirty-three students into eight groups containing 4-5 students. There were eight snake and ladder boards for eight groups and thirty-three students. Then, the teacher explained the rules and requirements that the students used to play the game related to the lesson's topic.

From the questionnaire, twenty-nine out of thirty-three (87,8%) students had never played a snake and ladder game before. A snake and ladder game was used to trigger the students' curiosity and encourage the students' attraction. The questionnaire and the interview strengthened this statement. Based on the questionnaire, thirty out of thirty-three (90,9%) students agreed that the use of a snake and ladder game attracted them. Since the game could attract the students, they were very interested in using it as the media to learn vocabulary. Twenty-seven out of thirty-three (81,8%) students stated that they were enthusiastic about using the game. In the interview, the researcher asked whether snake and ladder made the students interested. Students 5 and 1 stated as follows:

S5: Yes, I am really interested in using snake and ladder to learn vocabulary. I have never used this game before. A snake and ladder game was never taught in my junior high school.

S1: Yes, I am interested. Besides, it makes me enjoy the lesson and helps in learning vocabulary.

Since the students were impressed and interested in using the game as the media to learn vocabulary, the students' motivation to learn vocabulary also increased. Thirty out of thirty-three (90,9%) students answered "Yes" that the game made them excited to learn vocabulary. This statement was supported by the interview's answers from students 1 and 5, stated as follows:

S1: Yes, it made me excited when the snake and ladder game was involved in the lesson.

S5: Excited or not, it depends on the condition, but overall, the game usually makes me excited.

The result of the questionnaire and interview above shows that the snake and ladder successfully attracted the students' attention and measured the students' interest. Hence, it made the students motivated to learn vocabulary in the class.

The third, fourth, and last statements were related to the students' activeness when they worked in pairs to compete when playing the snake and ladder game in the classroom. The students were enthusiastic when they played the snake and ladder for competition. The students then cooperated actively among others in their own group. Twenty-eight out of thirty-three (87,8%) students answered "Yes" that they could cooperate actively when they worked in pairs. It could be seen from their interaction among others and teachers. This statement was strengthened by the interview's answers from students 3 and 4, stated as follows:

S3: We worked in groups and cooperated actively. It was because each pair wanted to give the best for the game.

S4: Yes, both of us helped each other. We wanted to compete with the others.

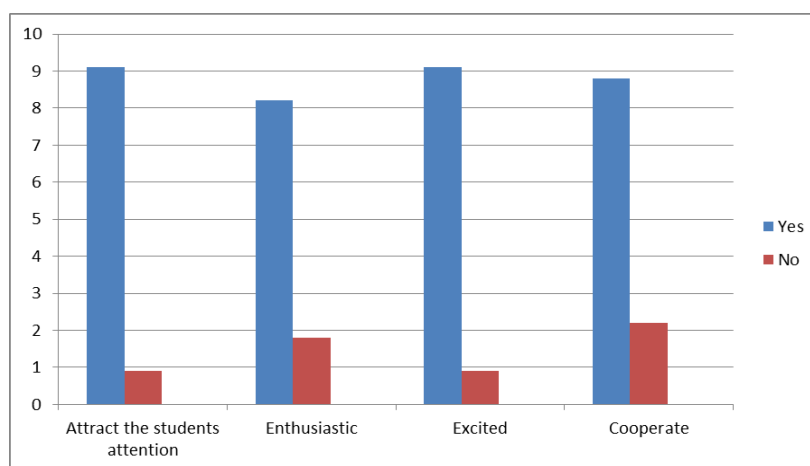


Figure 4.1: The Result of Interview

From the results above, it can be seen that the snake and ladder game could make the students actively follow the learning activities. Besides, the small competition planned by the teacher using the snake and ladder game worked to reinforce the students' activeness in learning vocabulary.

It can be concluded that the implementation of a snake and ladder game in learning vocabulary builds a positive learning environment for the students and is perceived positively by the students. It can be seen from the data above that the students assumed the snake and ladder game helped them to encourage their interest and motivation in learning vocabulary. It is because the snake and ladder let the students use their creativity.

The Use of Snake and ladder Game to Encourage the English Club Students' Vocabulary mastery

In this part, the researcher presents the general statements related to the use of a snake and ladder game that can enhance the students' vocabulary mastery in terms of memorising and pronouncing elements. This part shows how the game gave the students chances to improve their vocabulary mastery in terms of learning and pronouncing. Since the students had a positive learning environment because of the implementation of the game in vocabulary learning, it shows that the snake and ladder game could successfully help students of the English club enhance vocabulary mastery.

Basically, the students' vocabulary mastery is different from one another. When the students played a snake and ladder game in a group, they could share their vocabulary with others by cooperating in the competition. This statement was strengthened by the interview's answer from students 1 and 3 as follows:

S1: Yes, through a snake and ladder game, I feel that my vocabulary mastery has improved.

S3: A snake and ladder game really makes my vocabulary mastery improve. I can enrich my vocabulary without reading a book. My vocabulary was getting better through a snake and ladder game without realising it.

This result shows that the snake and ladder game could influence the students' vocabulary encouragement. From the interview, the students also answered that they could enrich their vocabulary through the game. However, the researcher specified that the students' vocabulary mastery improves because of the use of a snake and ladder game. The researcher found that the students' vocabulary mastery in terms of memorising and pronouncing elements was encouraged through snake and ladder. The implementation of the game was done well. The students thought that the implementation of the snake and ladder game was very important for everyone. Some of them suggested the researcher spread this technique to the other students, not only for the English club students but also to the other students who do not join an English club, so that they could experience the same thing.

Conclusion

Based on the research findings above, it can be concluded that the students perceive the performance of the snake and ladder game in two ways. The first way is the students' attitudes towards their vocabulary learning experience. The students perceive it is difficult to master vocabulary through memorising, pronouncing, and spelling. The second way is the implementation of snake and ladder in vocabulary learning and their attitudes towards it. The English Club students perceive that the implementation of a snake and ladder game in vocabulary learning could generate their learning motivation. The students could cooperate actively in their own group when they played the game. It, therefore, brings about a positive learning environment for the students.

This research proves that a snake and ladder game can improve the students' vocabulary mastery at the English Club of SMK N 1 Banyumas. Three vocabulary elements were encouraged by playing a snake and ladder game in vocabulary learning: memorising and pronouncing vocabulary. In this study, the use of a snake and ladder game is evidenced to create a positive learning environment in vocabulary learning. In other words, the game can benefit the students' vocabulary mastery.

For further study, it is expected that future researchers can investigate more on the appropriate teaching strategies to be implemented in vocabulary learning to encourage the students' vocabulary mastery. After knowing students' perceptions of the use of snake and ladder board games, the English teachers or the future English teachers can develop this technique into a good one. The teachers who have not implemented the game can use this technique to encourage students' vocabulary.

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