
TEACHING ENGLISH TO YOUNG LEARNERS THROUGH TRADITIONAL GAMES

Rusiana | Nuraeningsih
iraw_one@yahoo.com | ning_pbiumk@yahoo.com
Universitas Muria Kudus | Universitas Muria Kudus

Received: 23 November 2015. **Revised:** 1 January 2016. **Accepted:** 10 March 2016

ABSTRACT

Teaching English for Elementary level is very important for preparing students to be ready and well prepared generation to be met with the future demand like communication and technology. In the light of communication, Indonesia is one of countries that join in agreement of ASEAN Economic Community which uses English as the language for global market in ASEAN. Dealing with communication, it is clear that nowadays almost all modern technology using English such as computer, gadget, etc. There are more student access internet or gadget for accessing game than playing the traditional ones. That is surely not a bad thing when students are exposed much to internet. Yet, being exposed to the traditional ones is also a good idea so that Indonesian students would be those who are aware of their own culture. Seeing those two things, the demand of being able to use English for communication and an effort of making the students aware of traditional games they have, we are interested in investigating the effectiveness of traditional games as a technique for teaching English for Elementary school students. Through games, teachers can create various contexts in which students have an opportunity to use English for communication, exchange information, and express opinion (Wright, Betteridge and Buckby, 1984). The aims of this research is to find out whether traditional games are effective to be used in English teaching and learning. This research was conducted at SDIT Lukman al Hakim of fourth grader students with the number of students was 19. The design of the research is quasi-experimental with one control group pre-test and post-test. The instruments are pre-test and post-test. The games which are used in this research are *gedrik* and *betengan*. The findings shows that traditional games are effective for teaching English. Suggestions are proposed for English teachers in implementing the technique in the class.

Keywords: *English, Traditional Games*

How to Cite: Rusiana & Nuraeningsih. 2016. Teaching English to Young Learners through Traditional Games. *Language Circle: Journal of Language and Literature*, X/2.

INTRODUCTION

Curriculum 2013 impacts on the position of English in schools particularly Elementary school. Previously English is a local content of many schools in Indonesia. Because of this curriculum, English there is no room for English teaching then it becomes extracurricular. In fact, students of Elementary school are those who will be living in

the world of competition in which communication is necessary. Indonesia is one of the members of *ASEAN Community 2015* which means being agreed to use English within ASEAN trading. Yet, the curriculum seems not support on the preparation of young generations to face the demand. The 2013 curriculum puts English as an extra with only 35 minutes per meeting

once in a week. With that policy, there is a worry that both teachers and students will not be aware with the importance of English for communication.

While, nowadays most of modern technology use English and students of Elementary school belong to those who make use of the technology. They are exposed much with internet, television, smartphone, and others which English is there. As a matter of fact, the exposure is not in line with the competence of using English. On the opposite, children are as the object of many games on the gadget. They spend much of their time playing games online. It causes another problem that is students tend to be more familiar with modern and online games from gadget than traditional games. Then there are two problems emerge from this illustration, students of Elementary school are not exposed with English and traditional games. Exposing students with much English can help them require target languages better. Through traditional games, students are provided with real-life game that encourages interaction and communication with fellow students. Why those two things important is because children are believed to love playing game.

According to Pellegrini (1991:241) in Bennet (1998:5-6) games are defined into three categories: (1) games are as inclination, (2) games as contexts, and (3) games as attitude that can be observed. Games are considered not only something fun but the result needs to be considered also. Traditional games are games that are exist in certain areas based on the local culture. Traditional games are fun activities for entertaining, maintaining neighborhood, and social comfortable. In other words,

playing is a need for children. So, playing for children has a value and important characteristic on the progress of daily life including in traditional games (Semiawan, 2008:22).

A worry that children is not ready with the global demand and the shift of good values, the writers conducted a research on teaching English through traditional games in Kudus regency, Central Java. In English teaching and learning by using traditional games, students have plenty of opportunities to interact and socialize with their mates and maintain traditional cultures as well.

Based on the background above, the writers conducted a quasi-experimental research entitled "Teaching English through Traditional Games for Elementary School Students in Kabupaten Kudus". This research is aimed at knowing how effective the traditional games for learning English of the fourth graders of SDIT Lukman Al Hakim.

English for Elementary School has been introduced since 1998 when Competence-Based Curriculum is applied. Although it is still debatable on the importance of English to be taught in Elementary level, Yuvaraj (2009) argues that in early of two years until the late of puberty, children possess "critical period" which is closely related to language acquisition. This argument is based on the proposition that children ability to acquire language is a genetic process supported by biology factor that ends in puberty. Within that period, brain ability to memorize words is sharper than when they have been adult. (Sommer, 2011) claims that the principal of introducing a language is get the kids used to be with the intonation and sound from the language. It clearly shows that introducing English in early age is not a big deal on

condition the English teaching bases on children development.

Students of Elementary school are around 6 until 12 years old. According to Suhartatik (2008), they belong to young learners, those aged 4 until 12 years old. She explains that characteristics of young learners are: (1) moody, (2) have short attention span, (3) highly motivated on things they like, (4) big curiosity, (5) like talking and concrete things, and (6) like physical activities. In line with that, Sugiyanto (<http://staff.uny.ac.id/sites/default/files/tmp/Karakteristik%20Siswa%20SD.pdf>.) explains similar characteristics of Elementary students like the following:

- a. Love playing
- b. Like moving:
- c. Enjoy working in groups
- d. Do or act out things directly.

Based on the characteristics that have been mentioned, teachers have to design the teaching and learning process which accomodates children characteristic that is designing English teaching learning process that meet their needs. Teachers should be aware that they certainly have their own world where they can play and explore their great imagination. Teachers also should give oppotunities for students to move and socialize with their fellow classmates in the class. Scott & Ytreberg (1990) said that children love to play what they see and hear around them. Further they describe that "Their own understanding comes through hands and eyes and ears. The physical world is dominat at all times". Therefore, through traditional games, young learners possibly learn English with fun because these games not only let them to move physically but also interact socially.

English Curriculum in Elementary School

Based on the Competence-based Curriculum, English in Elementary School is a local content. In the beginning of 2013, when 2013 curriculum was introduced, English then considered to be extracurricular. SDIT Lukman al Hakim is one of schools assigned to implement this curriculum for all classes in academic year 2015/2016. Yet, when the research was being conducted, the curriculum used was still Competence-based Curriculum. The competences include oral communication in school context covering listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

For grade IV, the standard competence for listening is understanding simple instruction with action in school context. Students are expected to be able to: 1) respond the instruction appropriately in school context, 2) respond simple instruction in verbal. While for standard competence of speaking, students are expected to be able to give simple instruction or express opinion in class context. For reading, students are expected to understand simple English texts with picture, including words, phrases, and sentences and be able to read aloud with appropriate intonation, pronunciation, and stressing. For writing, students are expected to be able to copy simple words, phrases, or sentences in class context.

Traditional Games

Traditional games are games that are played by certain community for generations. The games are some for children and the rest are for adults. Traditional games in each area are different on the rule showing its characteristics. The purposes of playing traditional games are to get amusement,

spending spare time, and to be sociable. There are 3 kinds of traditional games. Seriaty and Hayati in <http://staff.uny.ac.id/sites/default/files/tmp/Karakteristik%20Siswa%20SD.pdf>, classify the games into 3:

- a. Physical games, for example *betengan*, *gobak sodor*, *setinan/gundu*, *engkek*, *bekelan*, *gobag sodor*.
- b. Song games for example *jamuran*, *jaranan*.
- c. Physical and Song Games for example *jaran lumping*.

The research conducted by Thanh and Nga (2003) shows that: (1) through games the students can be more relax and enjoy the learning, (2) Games also involve friendly competition and still keep their interest to learn. It encourages the students to be involved and participate actively in learning activities, (3) vocabulary games can provide real-life into the class context and improve the use of English communicatively.

Azar (2012) investigated about effects of games toward strategies for teaching vocabulary for English students in Iran. Other research was conducted by Arif (2009) about the implementation of Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) in Teaching Science through Traditional Games. The result shows that there is a significant difference on the implementation of CTL through traditional games in science activities on the experimental group in which traditional games were implemented. Similar research was conducted by Yulianti (2012) who found that *Portek* (Portable *Engklek*) is effective to increase students' English vocabulary.

METHODOLOGY

The present research is quasi-experimental research which aims at investigating the

effectiveness of traditional games for teaching English in Elementary School. It was one experimental group with pre-test and post-test group of which the instruments were pre-test and post-test. The subject of the research is 18 students of fourth grader Al Basith of SDIT Lukman Al Hakim Kudus. Actually there were 22 students altogether. Yet, some of them did not join the pre-test and the others did not join the post-test. So, to make the data valid, the number of the students considered to be the object of the research was 18 students who joined either pre or post-test. The pre-test and the post-test is typical test consists of 10 items of vocabulary in multiple choice, 5 items of listening, and 5 items of speaking.

Before administering the pre-test, try out was conducted to test how reliable the instrument is. Four graders Al Karim of SDIT Lukman Al Hakim was chosen to try the test out. Then, by using split half technique, the writers analyzed the students' scores. Based on the SPSS calculation, the result shows that *r* coefficient is 0.685. It means that the test has sufficient reliability.

The treatment was carried out for 6 meetings of thirty five minutes by teaching them by using two traditional games named *Gedrik* and *Betengan*. They were exposed to learn vocabulary, and integrated skills through those two games both individually and in group. The students' scores in pre-test and post-test were then compared to test whether there is significant difference by using *t-test*.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Before conducting the treatment to the research subjects, a pre-test was administered. The result is as shown in the following table.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of students' English achievement

	Minimum score	Maximum score	Mean	Standard deviation
Pre-test	50	90	71.25	11.03970
Post-test	75	95	79.5	6.73528

Based on the table, before getting the treatment, the students' minimum score is 50 and the maximum score is 90.

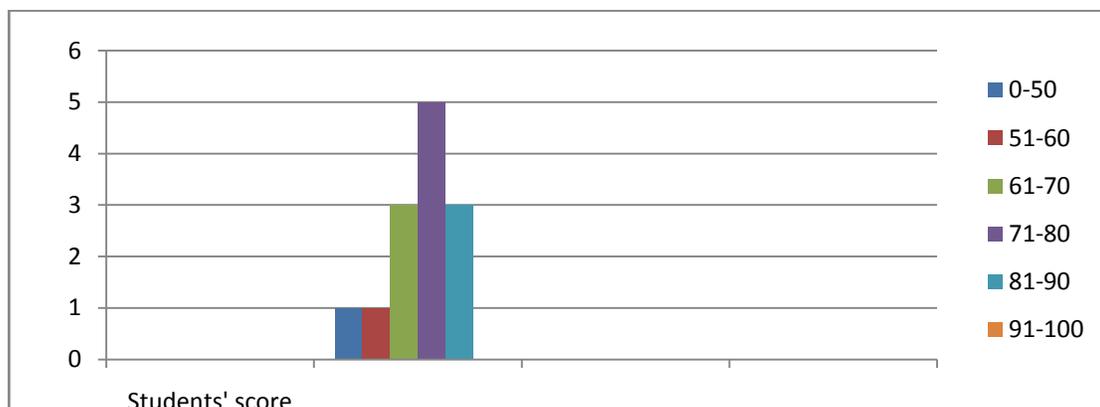


Chart 1. Students' score before being taught by using traditional games

After being taught through traditional games, the minimum score is 75 and the maximum score is 95. In addition, the mean increases from 71.25 into 79.5. Thus, the

difference between two means is 8.25. The following chart describes the students' score after traditional games were implemented.

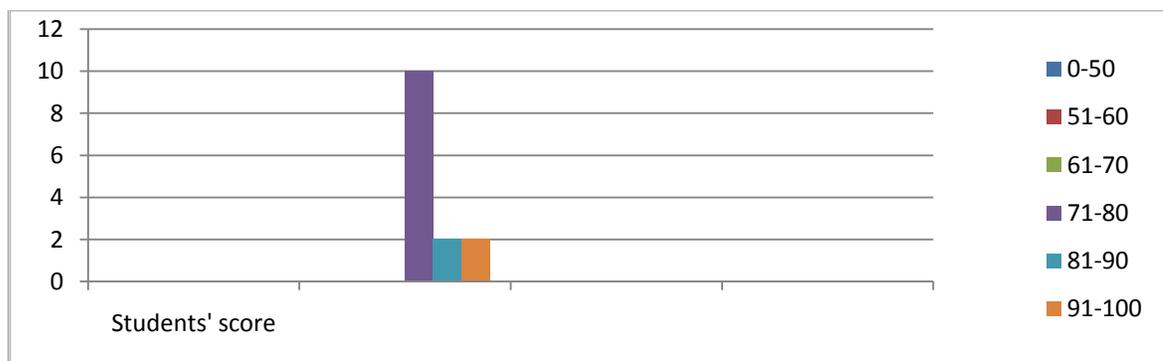


Chart 2. Students' score after the implantation of traditional games

After the two means were found, the next step is calculating them into t-test through PSSS. Here is the result.

Table 2. The result of t-test calculation

		Pair 1	
		pretest-posttest	
Paired Differences	Mean	-8.21429	
	SStd. Deviation	9.97249	
	Std. Error Mean	2.66526	
	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	Lower	-13.97223
		Upper	-2.45634
T		-3.082	
Df		13	
Sig. (2-tailed)		.009	

From the data above, we can see that the significance level is 0.009, which is lower than 0.05. Therefore, it can be said that there is a significant difference between students' English achievement before and after being taught by using traditional games.

Based on the finding, it shows that through traditional games students' English achievement is significantly higher than before. This research result supports Thanh and Nga's study (2003) that games are effective to build students' vocabulary. During the treatment, the games have successfully encouraged the students in learning vocabulary subconsciously and interactively. In addition, the games also provide the students with speaking practices since they have to ask and answer questions related to the topic learnt. Right after the games, students are exposed with writing practices as well. In other words the games trigger the students in learning English in a contextual situation. It is in line with what Kirkland & O'Riordau (2008) who claims that games offer a medium for students to explore and interrogate information in a fun & interactive way.

Different from other research, this study used traditional games exist in Kudus regency, i.e. *Gedrik* and *Betengan*. Through those two games, the students are provided with some physical activities and chances to interact with their mates, which lead them to master English better. The teaching stages of using games have considered the four skill to be included in every single meeting of treatment. Starting from opening which aims at getting the students' attention, then playing the games for icebreaking and lead them aims at getting the students' readiness in learning. After the material is presented, practices covering all skills are given to them. The first practice is Controlled-practice such as blank filling to highlight vocabulary and grammar related to the target language. In addition, semi controlled practice such as listening to check the students' understanding is also given. Then for uncontrolled-practice, it is provided a meaningful task that leads them to produce either oral or written work based on the material learned. From those stages, surely all skills of English are highly considered. Hence, the use of traditional games

influences the students' achievement to be higher than before the treatment. It is understandable, since the games are designed in such a way so that the students learn and practice four skills of English. Besides, the test administered is also considered to cover the four skills. All in all, the games are believed to be effective for teaching English.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, traditional games are effective for teaching English. Seeing the

result of the research, there are some suggestions are proposed to English teachers and further researchers. For English teachers, employing traditional games for teaching English can be a good idea yet some things should be considered like the kind of game, the number of the students, the crowd that the students might make while playing the game. Then for further researchers, it might be another idea of having traditional games to be more specific for teaching skills for example for speaking.

REFERENCES

- Arikunto, Suharsimi. 1998. *Manajemen Penelitian*. Jakarta: PT Rineka Cipta
- Azar, Ali Sorayaie. 2012. The Effect of Games on EFL Learners' Vocabulary /Learning Strategies. *International Journal of Basic and Applied Science Vol.01.No.02 October 2012*. Retrieved on April 28, 2014 www.insikapub.com
- Bennet, Naville. 1998. Annotation: Class Size & the Quality of Educational Outcomes. *Journal of Child Psychology & Psychiatry/volume 39/issue 06/ September 1998, pp.97-804*.
- Ersoz, A. 2000. Six Games for the EFL/ESL Classroom. in the Internet TESL Journal. Retrieved April 28, 2014 from <http://itesl.org/lessons/Ersox-Games.html>.
- Kirkland, O'Riordan. 2008. Games as an Engaging Teaching and Learning Technique: Learning or playing ? [http://icep.ie/wp-content/uploads/2010/Kirkland et al.pdf](http://icep.ie/wp-content/uploads/2010/Kirkland_et_al.pdf)
- Lee, J.M.1996. *English Games*. Seoul: The People Publisher.
- Pellegrini, Anthony D.1991. *Applied Child Study Developmental Approach*. Hillsdale, N.J.: L.Erlbaum Associates
- Peraturan Menteri Pendidikan Nasional No.23 Tahun 2006
- Scott, Wendy A, & Ytreberg, Lisbeth H. 1990. *Teaching English to Children*. Harlow: Longman
- Setiawan, Cony. 2008. *Belajar & Pembelajaran Pra-Sekolah dan Sekolah Dasar*. Jakarta: Indeks
- Suhartatik.2008. Teaching English for Young Learners. *Paradigma*, Tahun XIII, Nomor 25, Januari-Juni
- Thanh, Nguyen Thi, Nga, Huyen Khuat Thi Thu. 2003. The Effectiveness of Learning Vocabulary through Games. <http://asian-efl-journal.com/1493/quarterlyjournal/2003/12/learning-vocabulary-through-games-the-effectiveness-of-learning-vocabulary-through-games/>
- Undang-Undang Nomor 20 Tahun 2003 tentang Standar Pendidikan Nasional

- Uberman, A. 1998. The Use of Games for Vocabulary Presentation & Revision. *Forum*, 36 (1), 20-27'. Retrieved April 27, 2014 from <http://exchangesstate.gov/forum/vol/vols36/no.1/p.20.htm>
- www.gsdu.cn/tupianshangchuanmulu/zhongmeiwangluoynyan/learning_vocabulary_through_games.pdf. <http://staff.uny.ac.id/sites/default/files/tmp/Karakteristik%20Siswa%20SD.pdf>.
- Yuliati, Fitri. 2012. Teaching English Vocabulary to Elementary School Aged Children through A Modified Hop-Scotch Games Named Portek (Portable Engklek)., <http://journal.unnes.ac.id/sju/index.php/eej>. Retrieved on April 26, 2014