

Vocabulary Recollection through Games

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Abstract—This research sought to examine whether games influence young learners' vocabulary recollection in Way Ahead classes at Ngoi Nha Thong Thai Elementary School (The House of Wisdom Elementary School), Vietnam. Two classes were randomly selected as experimental group and control group. The experimental group was exposed to games in recollecting vocabulary whereas the control group involved in exercises without games. The independent samples *t*-test was implemented to compare the mean scores of the pretest and two posttests. The results of the pretest and two posttests indicate that the experimental group surpassed the control one in recollecting vocabulary during the immediate retention stage and the delayed retention stage.

Index Terms—vocabulary recollection, vocabulary teaching, games, EFL

I. INTRODUCTION

“If language structure makes up the skeleton of language, then it is vocabulary that provides the vital organs and flesh,” (Hammer, 1991, p. 153). Thus, the magnitude of vocabulary teaching and learning is never too far to be highlighted. For young learners, perhaps it is less difficult to learn vocabulary items for the first time than to consolidate and remember them. We often hear young learners complain that they keep learning and forgetting. When English language young learners are acquiring new vocabulary, they need concrete methods to collect, store, and retrieve words for retention and future use. Therefore, it is necessary to find out effective methods to help young learners retain new words in long-term memory. The aim of this research is to examine if implementation of games can be an effective method to reinforce vocabulary recollection. The research question guiding this research is:

Is there a difference between the game group (i.e. the experimental group) and the the control group in the recollection of vocabulary during (a) the immediate retention stage and (b) the delayed retention stage?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Vocabulary Teaching

A focus on vocabulary recollection

Memory is crucial in vocabulary learning and the benefits of revision and repetition have been clearly demonstrated in studies of vocabulary learning (O'Dell, 1997, p. 276). According to Rubin (1987, p. 29), learning is the process by which information is obtained, stored, retrieved, and used”. The word “use” can mean “interactional communication” and “vocabulary practice” (Schmitt, 1997, p. 203). Therefore, the teacher needs to provide initial encoding of new words and then “subsequent retrieved experiences” (Rubin, 1987, p. 29). Similarly, research suggests that if learners see or use a word in a way different from the way they first met it, then better learning is achieved. Schmitt (2000, p. 116) also states that the amount of exposure can affect second language vocabulary acquisition. In fact, research in vocabulary acquisition by Nation (1990) reveals that students require at least five to sixteen exposures to a new word before learning it. Also, Bunch (2009, para.1) points out that English language learners will benefit from a variety of activities aimed at increasing exposure to key vocabulary.

Besides, vocabulary acquisition is related to the effect of repetition on learning (Laufer, 1997, pp. 140-142). It can be said that repetition is one of the most effective ways to learn new words. Similarly, according to Carter and McCarthy (1988, p. 67), new words are forgotten if they are not recycled in some way and make it into our long-term memory. In order to learn vocabulary, words have to be recycled numerous times. In fact, providing incidental encounters with words is one method to facilitate vocabulary acquisition (Sökmen, 1997, p. 237). Through regular recycling, children can be given opportunities to meet the same vocabulary, embedded in different contexts, languages, and activity types. This not only improves their recall and develops memory processes, but also extends their understanding and associations of vocabulary in an ever expanding network of meanings and use. Ellis (1997, pp. 134-138) shares the same view that repetition is a strategy for consolidating vocabulary. In addition, Thornbury (2002, p. 18) summarizes the process of meaning acquisition in L1 children in three basic stages: (1) labeling (attaching a label to a concept), (2) categorization (grouping a number of objects under a particular label), and (3) network building (connections between related words).

Stages of teaching vocabulary

According to Doff (1988, p. 98), there are four stages in teaching vocabulary, namely presentation, practice, production, and review.

Presentation

Presentation is one of the most important and complex preliminary stages in teaching vocabulary. The title of this stage indicates clearly its function is introducing new lexical items to learners. As suggested by Thornbury (2002, pp. 75-76), learners need to learn both the meaning and the form of a new word. He also emphasizes some major factors subject to the number of word to be presented such as

- The learners' level (beginner, intermediate, or advanced)
- Learners' likely familiarity with the words
- The difficulty of the items

Their "teachability", which means whether they can be easily explained or demonstrated within the context of the classroom.

- Whether items are being learned for production (in speaking and writing) or for recognition (in listening and reading). Since more time will be needed for the former, the number of items is likely to be fewer if the aim is only recognition.

According to Gairns and Redman (1986, pp. 73-75), there are three techniques used in the presentation of new vocabulary items. The first one is visual techniques including mime, gestures, and visuals such as flashcards, photographs, blackboard drawings, wall charts, and realia. The second one is verbal techniques: (1) use of illustrative situations, (2) use of synonymy and definition, (3) contrasts and opposites, (4) scales, and (5) examples of the type. The last one is translation. It is considered a quick, easy, and effective way of conveying the meaning of vocabulary. Similarly, Thornbury (2002, p. 77) suggests a variety of techniques in introducing vocabulary such as translation, real things, pictures, gestures, definitions, and situations. Doff (1988, p. 96) groups these techniques into four categories: showing the meaning of words visually, showing the meaning of words in context, using synonyms and/or antonyms, and translation. He adds that a combination of the techniques should be implemented when it comes to the effectiveness of presenting meaning of new words (p. 97).

Practice

When the teacher presents the meaning of the words, they can only become students' passive vocabulary, and students may easily forget them or do not know how to use them properly. Students' vocabulary can only be activated effectively if the teacher gives the learners opportunities to practise them through vocabulary exercises or activities. Thornbury (2002, p. 93) underlines the popular belief that "practice makes perfect". Additionally, he emphasizes the action of moving from short-term memory into permanent memory. In order to ensure long-term retention, words or lexical items need to be put into practice.

Teacher plays an important role in helping students' vocabulary motivated. According to Scivener (1994, p. 127), some kinds of practical exercises to help students become more familiar with the words they have learned: matching pictures to words, matching parts of words to other parts, using prefixes and suffixes to build new words from given words, classifying items into lists, using given words to complete vocabulary specific task, filling in crosswords, grids or diagrams, filling in gaps in sentences and memory games. Similarly, Thornbury (2002, pp. 93-94) points out that there is a variety of tasks which can be used in order to help move words into long-term memory. They can be divided into five types in order of least cognitively demanding to most demanding: identifying, selecting, matching, sorting, and ranking and sequencing.

Production

Developing fluency with known vocabulary is essential to help learners make the best use of what they have already known. In this stage students are advised to complete high-level tasks namely production tasks (Thornbury, 2002, p. 100). He recommends that learners should produce something as a product of their own. In this way, learners will turn words from receptive to productive and put them into long-term memory (p. 100). For production tasks, there are two major types that teachers may have used very often: completion and creation. According to Hunt and Beglar (2002, p. 261), fluency building activities recycle already known words in familiar grammatical and organizational patterns so that students can focus on recognizing or using words without hesitation. Activities used to develop learners' production of vocabulary may also include the following: first and second language comparisons and translation carried out chunk-for-chunk, rather than word-for-word aimed at raising language awareness; repetition and recycling of activities, such as summarizing a text orally one day and again a few days later to keep words and expressions that have been learned active; noticing and recording language patterns and collocations; working with language corpuses created by the teacher for use in the classroom (Nation, 1990, p. 208). Besides, Doff (1988) judges communicative activities such as information exchanging, elicitation of student-talk, games and role plays as the most effective ways to motivate students to be more actively involved in the speaking activities to produce the words they have known.

Review

This process aims at helping students acquire active, productive vocabularies. According to Davies and Pearse (2000, p. 103), reviewing is "new work on old language", "a challenge, requiring ingenuity and creativity". It produces better results for teaching and learning vocabulary. In the reviewing stage, students have more "opportunities to use language and receive feedback". Methodologists agree that games and communicative activities are the best ways to help students review vocabulary. Besides, visual aids can make vocabulary revision more interesting and effective. Revision can be done in both individuals and collaboration. Doff (1988, p. 97) expresses that vocabulary is mainly reviewed through the

warm-up step. That means teachers review vocabulary learnt in an earlier lesson. It aims at refreshing students' memories or as a preparation for a new presentation.

B. Games in Language Teaching and Learning

What is game?

A game is an organized activity that usually has the following properties: a particular task or objective, a set of rules, competition between players, and communication between players by spoken or written language (Richards, Platt, and Platt, 1992, p. 153). Game is also defined as an "activity with rules, a goal, and an element of fun" (Hadfield, 1990, p. v).

Kinds of games in language teaching and learning

Different writers have different classification of games. Lee (2000, p. 65) classifies games into ten kinds: structure games, vocabulary games, spelling games, pronunciation games, number games, listen-and-do games, read-and-do games, games and writing, miming and role-play, and discussion game. However, McCallum (1980, p. 74) categorizes games for language learning into seven kinds: vocabulary games, number games, structure games, spelling games, conversation games, writing games, and role-play and dramatics. From these two writers' division, we have five main kinds of games: vocabulary games, structure games, writing games, reading games, and games for developing speaking and listening skills. Each kind of game focuses on a language component or a skill, so when choosing games, one of the factors that teachers have to consider is the aim of the lesson. As mentioned above, the language games chosen in this study must serve the purpose of helping the learners recall vocabulary; therefore, vocabulary games were chosen in this study. Haldfield (1990, p. 8) said that games can take one of the following forms:

- a. Information gap. Students ask their partners to get missing information to complete the task or card they have or together solve a problem.
- b. Guessing games. The player with the information deliberately withholds it, while others guess what it may be.
- c. Search games. Players must obtain all or a large amount of the information available to fill in a questionnaire or to solve a problem.
- d. Matching games. These games involve matching pairs of cards or pictures. Everyone must find a partner with a corresponding card or a picture.
- e. Matching-up games. Each player in a group has a list of opinions, preferences, wants or possibilities. Through discussion and compromise, the group must reach an agreement.
- f. Exchanging games. Players have certain articles, or ideas which they wish to exchange for others. The aim of the game is to make an exchange that is satisfactory to both sides.
- g. Collecting games. Players need to collect cards in order to complete a set. Combining activities. Players must act on certain information in order to arrange themselves in groups.
- h. Arranging games. Players must acquire information and act on it in order to arrange items in a specific order.

The second taxonomy that Hadfield (1999, pp. 102 -104) uses to classify language games has many more categories. As with the classification of games as linguistic games or communicative games, some games will contain elements of more than one type.

- a. Sorting, ordering, or arranging games. For example, students have a set of cards with different products on them, and they sort the cards into products found at a grocery store and products found at a department store.
- b. Information gap games. In such games, one or more people have information that other people need to complete a task. For instance, one person might have a drawing and their partner needs to create a similar drawing by listening to the information given by the person with the drawing. Information gap games can involve a one-way information gap, such as the drawing game just described, or a two-way information gap, in which each person has unique information, such as in a Spot-the-Difference task, where each person has a slightly different picture, and the task is to identify the differences.
- c. Guessing games. These are a variation on information gap games. One of the best known examples of a guessing game is 20 Questions, in which one person thinks of a famous person, place, or thing. The other participants can ask 20 Yes/No questions to find clues in order to guess who or what the person is thinking of.
- d. Search games. These games are yet another variant on two-way information gap games, with everyone giving and seeking information. Find Someone Who is a well known example. Students are given a grid. The task is to fill in all the cells in the grid with the name of a classmate who fits that cell, e.g., someone who is a vegetarian. Students circulate, asking and answering questions to complete their own grid and help classmates complete theirs.
- e. Matching games. As the name implies, participants need to find a match for a word, picture, or card. For example, students place 30 word cards, composed of 15 pairs, face down in random order. Each person turns over two cards at a time, with the goal of turning over a matching pair, by using their memory.
- f. Labeling games. These are a form of matching, in that participants match labels and pictures.
- g. Exchanging games. In these games, students barter cards, other objects, or ideas. Similar are exchanging and collecting games. Many card games fall into this category, such as the children's card game Go Fish: <http://www.pagat.com/quartet/gofish.html>.
- h. Board games. Scrabble is one of the most popular board games that specifically highlight language.

i. Role-play games. Role play can involve students playing roles that they do not play in real life, such as dentist, while simulations can involve students performing roles that they already play in real life or might be likely to play, such as customer at a restaurant. Dramas are normally scripted performances, whereas in role plays and simulations, students come up with their own words, although preparation is often useful.

Nonetheless, Greenall (1990, p. 11) classifies games in a different way:

a. Do-it-yourself simulation. It is an activity in which the students play themselves in a situation which he/she has either experienced or can at least relate to in some way.

b. Role-play. Students are required to react in accordance with the identity or the role marked on the card, developing the character with improvised dialogue in either an everyday situation or a clearly defined setting.

c. Describing. This is a simple situation in which one person has a certain item of information which he/she can only reveal by drawing, mime, roundabout description or Yes/No answer to questions put by the others.

d. Matching pairs. This is where words, pictures, lines of dialogue, etc. are divided into more than two parts and then shuffled. One part is given to each of the students who must then find his/her partner.

e. Jigsaw. It is similar to Matching Pairs. It is divided into more than two parts and the students have to work to match them together.

f. Logical sequences. This technique is similar to Jigsaw, but it is used for materials such as strip cartoons, song lyrics or proverbs of which the components can be reconstructed in the correct and logical order.

g. Board games. Teacher thinks of a situation, which involves some sequence of events, and asks students to think of a number of favorable and unfavorable events which might occur as the players proceed.

h. Discussion. Activities can be used as a springboard for discussion or questionnaires.

These above games can be played in pairs, groups, or with the whole class. They can be card games, board games, puzzles, and role-play according to the size of the class or the excitement of the games. Games are diverse and techniques used to carry them are various. They can be used at any stages of a class (Harmer, 1991, p. 101). This study only focused on labeling games in which participants matched labels with pictures.

Characteristics of games in language teaching and learning

According to Bradley (2010, p. 3), games have some characteristics that are advantageous to language learners as follows:

First, games engage all students in the learning process. When students play games in pairs or groups, they have the opportunity to recognize and appreciate the contributions of others and use team-building skills. Some classroom games focus on individuals working to win against all other peers in the class. This type of game works well with students who are highly motivated and competitive.

Second, games provide an opportunity for collaboration and/or cooperation. Classroom games provide an opportunity for students to collaborate and cooperate with each other, while working towards a common goal - winning. In some games, students are paired or grouped, which may lead to peer tutoring and the use of cooperative skills in order to win. They may not realize that they are actually learning, but they are working together towards a common goal.

Third, games provide an enjoyable learning experience. Creating a fun and enjoyable learning environment is a large first step toward motivating students. Research indicates that classroom games are effective strategies that facilitate learning.

Concisely, games help engage all students, provide an opportunity for collaboration and/or cooperation, and provide an enjoyable learning experience.

Role of games in vocabulary retention

In order to learn and retain new words, learners should participate in different task-based activities in their classroom and such activities also include vocabulary games which especially focus on helping learners develop and use words in different contexts by making the lessons enjoyable. Therefore, it is necessary to explore whether students learn vocabulary effectively through games and how they learn it. Many experts of language teaching methodology agree that playing games is a good way to learn vocabulary, especially in communicative language teaching classes. Games have been shown to have advantages and effectiveness in learning vocabulary in various ways.

First, using games is a good way to increase exposure to vocabulary which enhances students' vocabulary acquisition. Learning is a process by which "information is obtained, stored, retrieved, and used"; therefore, the teacher needs to provide initial encoding of new words and then "subsequent retrieved experiences" (Rubin, 1987, p. 29). Research suggests that if learners see or use a word in a way different from the way they first met it, then better learning is achieved. According to Schmitt (2000, p. 116), amount of exposure can affect second language vocabulary acquisition. Research in vocabulary acquisition reported by Nation in 1990 reveals that students require at least five to sixteen exposures to a new word before learning it. Also, Bunch (2009, para. 1) points out that English language learners will benefit from a variety of activities aimed at increasing exposure to key vocabulary. Besides, Laufer (1997, pp. 140-142) points out that vocabulary acquisition is related to the effect of repetition on learning. It can be said that repetition is one of the most effective ways to learn new words. Similarly, according to Carter and McCarthy (1988, p. 67), new words are forgotten if they are not recycled in some way and make it into long-term memory. In order to learn vocabulary, words have to be recycled numerous times. In fact, providing incidental encounters with words is one method to facilitate vocabulary acquisition (Sokmen, 1997, p. 237). Through regular recycling, children can be given opportunities

to meet the same vocabulary, embedded in different contexts, languages and activities types. This not only improves their recall and develops memory processes, but also extends their understanding and associations of vocabulary in an ever expanding network of meaning and use. As games provide another encounter with the target words, they have the advantage of being fun, competitive, and consequently, memorable (Sökmen, 1997, p. 242). Methodologists agree that games can help students review vocabulary effectively. Memory plays a key role in vocabulary learning and the benefits of revision and repetition have been clearly demonstrated in studies of vocabulary learning (O'Dell, 1997, p. 276). Besides, Ellis (1997, pp. 134-138) shares the same view that repetition is a strategy for consolidating vocabulary. He adds that games lend themselves well to revision exercises helping learners recall material in a pleasant, entertaining way (pp. 134-138). Similarly, McCallum (1980, p. 78) points out that games can function as reinforcement, review, and enrichment. In fact, games can lend themselves perfectly to quick bursts of revision. Using some of the games, the teacher can revise a massive amount of vocabulary and grammar in a few minutes. Clearly, students have more chance to be exposed to vocabulary through games. According to Hadfield (1999, p. 91), in order to retain a word, students have to go through three distinct processes: (1) fix the meaning of the word in their mind, (2) make the word their own, (3) use the word to communicate with others. He adds that games can help the learner through these three processes. It can be said that games are very effective in helping students increase exposure to vocabulary.

Second, games can maintain students' motivation in vocabulary learning because they are amusing and interesting (Uberman, 1998, p. 18). In the easy, relaxed atmosphere which is created by using games, students remember things faster and better (Uberman, 1998, p. 18). Similarly, games bring in relaxation and fun for students, thus help them learn and retain new words more easily (Nguyen and Khuat, 2003, p. 11). They also add that games usually involve friendly competition, and they keep learners interested; these create the motivation for learners of English to get involved and participate actively in the learning activities (p. 11). Games also help learners recall material in a pleasant, entertaining way (Uberman, 1998, p. 20). For many children between four and twelve years old, language learning will not be the key motivational factor; games can provide this stimulus (Lewis, 1999, p. 101). Using games helps the students to relax; they remember things faster and better. Moreover, games can lower anxiety, thus making the acquisition of input more likely (Richard-Amato, 1988, p. 147). As Nguyen and Khuat (2003, p. 11) put it, students tend to learn and retain new vocabulary better when it is applied in a relaxed environment like playing vocabulary games. Especially, labeling and displaying pictures depicting new vocabulary is helpful, especially with beginners. Matching words to pictures is a useful review exercise (Bunch, 2009). In short, games are very effective in motivating students in learning vocabulary.

Third, games can provide students with intensive and meaningful practice of language (Wright, Betteridge, and Buckby, 2005, p. 11). In fact, most vocabulary games make learners use the language instead of thinking about learning the correct forms (Lee, 1995, p. 78). Hadfield (1984, p. 127) shares the same view that games can provide an opportunity for real communication and bridge the game between the classroom and the real world. Language games thus allow the use of meaningful and useful language which is used in real contexts (Ersoz, 2000, p. 85) and are able to provide a chance for pupils to use the language that they have learnt.

In a nutshell, games are motivating and effective in helping learners increase exposure to vocabulary and providing students with meaningful practice of language, so they play an important role in the retention of vocabulary. Therefore, Lee (1995, p. 78) suggests that games should not be regarded as "activities filling in odd moments when the teacher and his/her class have nothing better to do" (p. 3). They ought to be at the heart of teaching a language in general and vocabulary in specific (Uberman, 1998, p. 20).

III. METHODOLOGY

A. *Participants*

The population of the research comprised 121 students in six classes of Way Ahead at Ngoi Nha Thong Thai Elementary School (The House of Wisdom Elementary School). Two classes of Way Ahead were selected for this research. The technique employed to select the subjects for the study was nonprobability sampling. This form of sampling is the most common type in educational research. Nonprobability sampling (also called convenience or availability sampling) involves using whatever subjects are available to the researcher (McMillan and Schumacher, 1993, p. 160). These two classes were then randomly selected as experimental group and control group. The technique was chosen because it would give each group an equal chance of being selected as experimental group or control group (Best and Kahn, 1993, p. 97). The experimental group (Class Way Ahead 2A) was exposed to labeling games in recollect vocabulary, whereas the control group (Class Way Ahead 2B) received exercises without games. In the experimental group, there were 32 students, 15 males and 17 females. The control group was composed of 31 students, 12 males and 19 females. The age of the participants in both the experimental group and the control group was seven.

B. *Instruments*

This research entailed a quasi-experimental research design. The impact of using games on the learners' vocabulary retention was based on quantitative analyses of the results of the pretest and posttests. According to Creswell (1994, p. 106), experiment is a highly controlled method. Experiment gives the researcher valuable data for judging and comparing the changes in the scores between the experimental group and the control group in the pretests and posttests.

The comparison of the results of the pretests and posttests between two groups and each group helps the researcher clarify how the treatment has influenced the subjects' vocabulary scores.

IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The research results indicate that the experimental group recollected vocabulary better than the control one during the immediate retention stage and the delayed retention one. This is shown through the mean scores of the two groups in the two posttests in Table 1.

TABLE 1.
INDEPENDENT SAMPLES T-TEST RESULTS FOR THE MEAN SCORES OF THE CONTROL AND EXPERIMENTAL GROUPS IN THE TWO POSTTESTS

	Posttest 1			Posttest 2		
	\bar{X}	SD	Sig.	\bar{X}	SD	Sig.
Control group	5.81	1.795		5.11	1.588	
Experimental group	8.02	1.142	.000	7.79	1.296	.000

As seen from Table 1, the mean from the experimental group in posttest 1 was significantly higher than that from the control group ($\bar{X} = 8.02$ and 5.81 respectively), and the chance probability was less than 5 per cent ($p < .05$). Concerning the dispersion of the scores from the mean scores, the distance found in the experimental group was lower than that found in the control group. This shows that there was a consistency of the scores found in the experimental group ($SD = 1.142$), compared with that found in the control one ($SD = 1.795$).

Likewise, Table 1 also shows that the students in the experimental group performed significantly better than the ones in the control group in terms of scores attained on posttest 2 ($\bar{X} = 7.79$ and 5.11 respectively), and the chance probability was less than 5 per cent ($p < .05$). The experimental group's standard deviation was narrower than that of the control group (experimental $SD = 1.296$ and control $SD = 1.588$); this is worth noticing because the standard deviation of the experimental group was consistent.

Moreover, the results suggest that the game treatment was successful if a comparison is made between the results of the pretest and two posttests.

TABLE 2.
INDEPENDENT SAMPLES T-TEST RESULTS FOR THE MEAN SCORES OF THE CONTROL AND EXPERIMENTAL GROUPS IN THE PRETEST

	\bar{X}	SD	Sig.
Control group	3.92	.972	
Experimental group	3.86	1.008	.904

In the pretest, the difference between the two groups was not statistically significant at the confidence level of .05. That means the two groups were of the same level before the treatment in terms of vocabulary knowledge. The difference just occurred after the treatment as found in the results of the two posttests, which proves the progress in the experimental group. It appears that the use of labeling games resulted in substantial difference in performance in the two posttests. The similarity of the pretest means and mean difference between the two groups in the two posttests are revealed in Table 3.

TABLE 3.
THE MEAN SCORES OF THE CONTROL AND EXPERIMENTAL GROUPS IN THE PRETEST AND TWO POSTTESTS

	Pretest			Posttest 1			Posttest 2		
	\bar{X}	SD	Sig.	\bar{X}	SD	Sig.	\bar{X}	SD	Sig.
Control group	3.92	.972		5.81	1.795		5.11	1.588	
Experimental group	3.86	1.008		8.02	1.142		7.79	1.296	
			.904			.000			.000

V. CONCLUSIONS

The results of the pretest and two posttests indicate that the experimental group surpassed the control one in recollecting concrete object words during the immediate retention stage and the delayed retention one. The results of this research may have the following implications for the teaching and learning of vocabulary at Ngoi Nha Thong Thai Elementary School (The House of Wisdom Elementary School) in particular and in other elementary schools in general.

First, exercises in workbook can help young learners recollect vocabulary to some extent, but it will be more effective if teachers add more games in class to motivate young learners in learning vocabulary. Actually, games create a fun learning environment, add motivation when students' motivation shrinks, and promote team learning and collaborative skills. Being motivated by the relaxed and hilarious atmosphere, young learners are willing to take part in the learning process in a subconscious manner. Teachers should recognize that games are also a form of learning. In spite of the heavy schedule to fulfill on time, teachers should sometimes let their students relax with games after a long

period of hard study. This is not a waste of time, but it can energize their mind and encourage them to study better. Games, in fact, are not games only, but a good means of education. By playing games, students can both relax their mind and review or practice things that they have just studied. In fact, games do not take much time to play, so teachers can make use of spare moments to let them play. Especially, learning English vocabulary using games has an important role for elementary teachers and students because they have strong and good motivation to deepen English language. Game use should be considered as central to instructional planning as children acquire knowledge through playing. For young learners, games should be used in a short amount of time with dynamic activities suitable for their psychological characteristics.

Second, in order to achieve the most from vocabulary games, it is essential that games must be well chosen. Various kinds of games can be used to help young learners recollect vocabulary, so the teacher assumes responsibility for finding out the most suitable games for his class as well as involving learners in searching interesting games and sharing them with their peers in the classroom. Byrne (1987, p. 31) points out that “the more different games are used, the more motivated students become”.

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