

Conference Paper

Games As Warming Up Activities in the Classroom for Indonesian EFL Students

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ORCID:Randy Zakaria: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4243-3675>**Abstract**

This study aimed to describe how games as warming up activities are used by trainers teaching English language at Desa Inggris Singosari. Our approach was descriptive qualitative, conducting a case study wherein twelve students and three trainers from the Smart Holiday English Camp were included. The trainers used games such as the identity card, arranging words, gesturing body, mentioning profession, guessing game, and asking, do you love me? The games required words to be placed and sentences guessed. Data were collected using questionnaires, observations checklist, and through interviews. The results showed that the games as a warm-up activity did suit the students' age and their English learning ability as most of them were in the elementary level. In addition, an improvement was also seen in the students' understanding of the lessons and their self-confidence and self-motivation for learning English. However, some difficulties were encountered while using this model, such as the students ignored the game instruction, they would play unfair, using the game was time-consuming, which left less time to practice English.

Keywords: Desa Inggris Singosari, EFL students, games


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1. Introduction

At present, finding out difficulties in learning a foreign language is an effort which is essential at every moment and must be upheld over a long time. The current growth of English as a world-wide language has a significant role in language teaching and learning mainly in EFL country. Knowing English as a foreign language in Indonesia, the government familiarizes English at the early age of Elementary school to university student. Thus, fun activities become the main things to be implemented in language teaching and learning English. Furthermore, the teachers expect the students could understand English.

Nowadays, Teacher-centred class instruction builds the teachers in the school to use some techniques in teaching English such as new words described, grammar explained, and written exercises assigned. Under such a pattern of teaching as mentioned above,

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students become passive knowledge receiver and written exercises doer. When the students can do well in activities specifically for written form, in contrast, they scarcely practice themselves in English. As a result, the students find a lot of difficulties in communicating with others in English. The teachers in the school need to focus on making the students enjoy learning English.

They know that some innovative methods are required, Desa Inggris Singosari as an English course which is located in Malang. This non-government institution aims to have fun in learning English by using some innovative and creative strategies and methods. Many trainers choose many methods of teaching English. A single way of those is using games in English class, and this is most readily received by the students and which is also a very beneficial aspect of the communicative method. As everyone knows that game is an activity providing friendly competition and creating cooperative language teaching and learning environment by a set of rules. "A game is an activity carried out by co-operating or competing decision-makers, seeking to achieve, within a set of rules, their objectives" (Rixon 1981:112). Besides, the students can enjoy and become the centre of the activity.

Games are needed to grow students' motivation in learning a language; mainly for one who is a lower ability will feel the sense of playing game (Hubbard 1987). Games can enlarge the knowledge as an input. Games can improve interaction and teamwork. Thus, an interactive environment can be formed by the teacher, then might lead to excellent language teaching and learning. Dornyei (2001) claims that the teachers have to try and build students' attitudes toward the learning process. He also states that the way of attracting students must be interested in English teaching and having a deep curiosity and attention was involving students' interest in the learning process. According to students' achievements, the advantages of games as warming up activities are to build upon student's previous knowledge and use new knowledge from the activity in which they learn. Games as warming up in the class can encourage the students to related lesson since it creates a communicative environment in which the students can explore themselves without feeling afraid of making a mistake. Idea and act take place in supporting English teaching to reach the desired goal. "Playing a game shows us to plan, to discover some alternated choices, and to think compliantly" (Martinson and Chu 2008: 478). Freeman (1986) states that the students find out some fun by playing games and involve themselves in interactive communication by offering some positive and useful competitions in the classroom.

A previous study about this topic was done by Chirandon (2009) in one of Elementary school in Thailand by investigating the effects of games in teaching English for thirty

students. The result showed that the students had more improvement in vocabulary mastery and more confidence while learning English through games. While another study which investigated the impact of using games in teaching children English was conducted by Wang (2011) for 50 students in sixth grade from one of Elementary school in China. The result showed that the students had better learning motivation and had more positive attitudes while learning English. An Iranian study which was conducted by Jafarian (2017) to investigate the effect of games on Iranian young EFL learners' vocabulary learning for thirty students of each two groups. The result showed that learning English through games could make the students relaxed, less stressful and enjoyed with the atmosphere during language teaching and learning. Those previous studies focused on the effect or impact which the teachers got by applying the games in the school. Most studies used quasi-experimental and mixed-method (qualitative and quantitative methods) as their approach. But present research will focus on what types of games, the advantages and the difficulties of applying the games used by the trainers during language teaching and learning in an English course. In contrast, this present study powerfully describes how games contribute to language teaching and learning in the form of spoken or written. Eventually, the researcher expects to get the result of doing this study by knowing how games as warming up can ease EFL students in studying English.

1.1. Research question

This study tries to answer three research questions as follows:

1. What are the types of games as warming up activities which the trainers use in teaching English at Desa Inggris Singosari?
2. What are the advantages of applying games as warming up exercises which the trainers use in teaching English at Desa Inggris Singosari?
3. What are the difficulties of applying games as warming up exercises which the trainers use in teaching English at Desa Inggris Singosari?

2. Method

2.1. Research site and method

This present study was conducted at Desa Inggris Singosari. It is a place for the English community, which had a primary purpose of developing human resource in Indonesia, mainly in English. Desa Inggris Singosari is located in Malang regency on Pesantren Street 26 Randuagung Village, Singosari Sub-District. Desa Inggris Singosari is a brand of an English course that is Indocita Foundation which has been established since June 6th, 2008. The trainers of Desa Inggris Singosari have good quality in the way of teaching EFL.

This study applied a descriptive qualitative through case-study approach in which this study focuses on describing how games as warming up activities which the trainers used in teaching English at Desa Inggris Singosari such as the types of the games, the advantages and the difficulties of applying the games during language teaching and learning.

2.2. Research subject

The participants were thirty students from Avia Saygon Pasuruan that joined Smart Holiday English Camp (Sholeh Camp). The students stayed in Desa Inggris Singosari's dormitory for a month on July 13th - August 13th, 2020. The students had three main classes (grammar, vocabulary and speaking) in a day. Three trainers who taught in three main classes were in Smart Holiday English Camp as the main trainers.

2.3. Data collection

The data were collected by using three instruments such as questionnaire, interview and observation checklist. Distributing questionnaire was started on the last day of teaching and learning a language in every class subject (grammar, vocabulary, and speaking). In the same day, three trainers were interviewed by the researcher with some open-ended question to get the trainers' perception in using the games as warming up in the classrooms. The observation checklist would be held for seven days when the trainers were applying games at the beginning of class.

2.4. Data analysis

The researcher made some steps as follows (1) Data Reduction, it simplified all data from questionnaire and interview into a summary and removed some invalid information from the data collection. (2) Data display took form questionnaire that was showed into a table indicated the frequency and the percentage of answers extended to this study. (3) Conclusion drawing and verification, the researcher determined all findings through this research. Furthermore, when all valid result gained to relate and compare to have how games as warming activities in teaching English.

3. Finding and Discussion

It attempted to discuss the research questions which included types of games as warming up activities, the advantages and the difficulties of applying games as warming up exercises in which the trainer used in teaching English at Desa Inggris Singosari.

3.1. Types of games used by the trainers for teaching English at Desa Inggris Singosari

To describe the types of games which the trainers used in teaching English at Desa Inggris Singosari. There were six games as warming up activities that the trainers used in teaching. The classes were divided into three different classes: speaking, vocabulary and grammar class. Furthermore, Trainer 1 (for further in shortened as T1) applied for an identity card in her speaking class, Trainer 2 (for also in abbreviated as T2) used arranging word, gesturing body, mentioning profession and guessing game in her vocabulary class. At last, trainer 3 (for further in shortened as T3) used do you love me? as a warming up in her grammar class.

3.1.1. Identity card

T1 used identity card as warming up activity in her speaking class, T1 considered that the game was suitable with the topic (self-introduction). T1 had the purpose of making the students active in practising their English speaking by using this identity card. This confirmed T1 explained the statements above, which showed students so enthusiastic about asking and answering the blank questions in the list of paper. Furthermore, the students also liked to move and walk around the classroom to do this identity card

game. There were some steps in doing this identity card. The first, the students were divided into two groups, the first and second group. The second, each student of the first group had a card which consisted of some a person identity list and a picture of a flag behind of the card (such as, name, nationality, age, address, and profession/school).

3.1.2. Arranging words

T2 used arranging words as warming up activity in her vocabulary class, T2 had achieved the goal of the learning which could activate students' background of knowledge and got the students relaxed in learning English, mainly related to the topic (stationary) through games. T2 in vocabulary class had applied this game for twenty minutes in the middle of language teaching and learning. T2 explained the matter (stationary) at the beginning of learning, then followed by applying this arranging game. During using this game, the students seemed so curious and happy to arrange the letters with their friend, even the time was not enough, but the students could correctly place the notes given by T2. The students looked so enthusiastic while applying the game.

3.1.3. Gesturing body

T2 used gesturing body as warming up activity in her vocabulary class; T2 in vocabulary class applied this game as warming up exercise based on the lesson, the age and the ability of students. T2 also stated that this game also could improve student's self-confidence during language teaching and learning process. The students expressed themselves by showing the gesture based on the sentence provided by T2. T2 explained about the daily activity as the topic. Afterwards, T2 started the game by delivering some rolled paper which consisted of a sentence (daily activity). The students were divided into four groups which consisted of seven up to eight students. One student of each group had a chance to perform in front by doing a body language based on a sentence in the rolled paper, but the student did a pantomime, or this student was not allowed to talk about the clue or anything. Other groups should guess the corrected answer which a student was performed in front. The group that answered correctly would get the point. All group had a turn to do this gesturing body game. The students laughed so hard when they saw their friend move their body to express the sentence without any voice.

3.1.4. Mentioning profession

T2 decided to have mentioning profession as warming up activity in her vocabulary class. At the beginning of the lesson, T2 asked the students to make a circle in the classroom and sit in a cross leg position. The first student clapped on his/her tight twice while saying “mention the name of the profession”. The first student should tweak his/her right finger and mention his/her name (the name was changed by a term of the profession, such as trainer, doctor, etc.), then the student said another name or student when tweaked his/her left finger. Another student who was called by the first student should do what the first player did before.

3.1.5. Guessing game

T2 decided to have guessing game as warming up activity in her vocabulary class, and this game has a purpose of building cooperation between students in the classroom. Also, the students seemed like getting a competitive way to gain more plus points by answering correctly the question given by T2. Although, some students had a false answer too, yet T2 ordered them not to be afraid of making a mistake. This thing made the students felt free to answer the question; there are some steps which T2 had in using this guessing game. T2 provided some pictures related to the lesson (family). T2 asked the students to answer corrected word randomly in English, depending on the image was shown by T2 in the front. When the chosen student could answer correctly, they would get plus point.

3.1.6. Do you love me?

T3 chose, do you love me? as warming up activity in her grammar class mostly simple present tense. T3 decided to get a positive learning environment by applying “do you love me” game outside of the classroom. Various ways which T3 used as follows; The students made a big circle outside of the class. Then T3 ordered them to give a sign where the place they standby. The game was started by a student in the middle of the circle. This student asked a question: “do you love me?” to another student in the circle. If he/she answered by saying “no”, the student who asked a question should look for another student in the ring the same question as before until he/she find the answer “yes”.

Furthermore, if the student found out the answer “yes”, everybody in the circle should move and changed the place with others. At the end of language teaching and learning, the students seemed to have full attention to listen to T3’s instruction. Furthermore, a cooperative building came out while applying this game.

Rixon (1981) suggests that all types of games mentioned above should be used at all stages of the English lesson. Also, the result of the present research supported Zhu (2012) who also used some types of games as warming up activities in his study. Zhu (2012) mentioned that there were many types of games that he used in EFL learner’s classroom, which included guessing games, picture games, sound games and mime. The previous study resulted in the similar findings as present study such as the students gained better improvement in understanding and recalling the lesson, self-confidence’s increase, and had better self-motivation of learning English and so on. All trainers of Desa Ingggris Singosari who used games as warming up activities showed that the six games which mentioned above were related to the subject matters and adapted to the age and English ability of the students.

3.2. The advantages of applying games as a warm-up activity used by the trainers for teaching English at Desa Ingggris Singosari

To understand the advantages of using games as warming-up activities. There were four advantages of applying games as warming up exercises, such as the students easily understand in learning English through games. The students felt self-confidence’s increase while learning English through games, the games which the trainer applied could recall the previous lesson, and the games which the trainer used could motivate students in learning English.

Meanwhile, the advantages mentioned above were supported by Wright (2006), who states that the game was specific activity begins the language teaching and learning. That exercise can help many students to keep their motivation and attention. Also, Hubbard (1987) explains that games are needed to grow students’ motivation in learning a language; mainly for one has a lower ability will feel the sense of playing the game by manipulating it. Meanwhile, the present study resulted in similar findings as the theories explained above.

Furthermore, the finding supported the previous study conducted by Wang (2011) who applied games as warming up activities in the classroom showed that the students had better learning motivation and had more positive attitudes while learning English. At present study, the researcher also found the same result as the previous study

which showed that the students achieved better motivation in learning English; and they seemed to answer the questions confidently without feeling afraid of making a mistake.

At last, the finding also supported Jafarian (2017), who stated that learning English through games could make the students relaxed, less stressful and enjoyed with the atmosphere during language teaching and learning. This statement was similar to the present study, which showed that most students were interested in playing the games since they could freely explore themselves to move, speak and interact while learning English. The students also could gain better improvement in some aspects, such as background knowledge, self-motivation, self-confidence, and student's excitement of playing games.

3.3. The difficulties of applying games as a warm-up activity used by the trainers for teaching English at Desa Inggri Singosari

To understand the difficulties of using games as warming up activities, most games which were applied by the three trainers had similar challenges as follows.

1. The students were so talking active, and they liked to move around the classroom, this made three trainers had trouble to get their attention before applying the game.
2. During using identity card games, the students did unfair play such as students just filled up the empty list by their answer without interviewing their friends. Some students sited on the chair and did not walk around the classroom, they asked for some questions in Bahasa Indonesia and Javanese to their friends.

The researcher also found out another obstacle faced by the trainer. The researcher considered that because the students were a basic level of ability in understanding the lesson and the process of applying the games. The students seemed to combine their practice of speaking English with students' first language; even the trainer had already warned them to speak English.

The difficulties which the trainer experienced at present study have also occurred in Aisyatin's research (2014). She found out that there were some difficulties when using games as warming up activities, for instance; fail to make all learners participated, and it was not easy to handle students. Some findings of the previous study above were similar to the results of the present study.

There are possible solutions for these difficulties faced by the trainers who applied games as warming-up activities. First, the trainer should have some various ways which can attract the students' attention before applying the games, like using more interactive gestures, mime or printed colourful media, active sound speaker and so on. Second, the trainer must be strict and institute discipline if needed. This statement can begin by having some agreements with consequences. If the students disobey the deal which made before applying the games, they will get implications of it.

4. Conclusion and Suggestion

This study has a purpose to describe how games as warming up activities which the trainers used in teaching English at Desa Inggris Singosari. Games as warming up exercises which the trainer used at Desa Inggris Singosari had advantages and difficulties of applying the games. That there were six types of games used by the trainers at Desa Inggris Singosari which include identity card, arranging words, gesturing body, mentioning profession, guessing game, and do you love me? as warming up activities. Three trainers used those games in three different classes: vocabulary, grammar and speaking classes. Also, all the chosen games were already suited to the students' age and English ability.

Some advantages of applying the games as warming up activities, those are the students gained better improvement in understanding and recalling the lesson, improved student's self-confidence, and had better self-motivation of learning English. Other supporting data were observation checklist which showed that the students felt comfortable towards the fun atmosphere that happened because of the game application.

Some difficulties face by the trainers while using the games as warming-up activities. Those are the students did not give any attention to follow the game instruction, the students did unfair play, the overtime of applying the games and the students were in lower ability to practice their English. And to cope with the obstacles, the trainers warned the students to listen to the instruction given by the trainer and the trainer helped the students by translating (English into Indonesia) the games' instructions.

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