



# Using Customized Hangaroo Game for Vocabulary Teaching at SMPN 1 Bosso

Citra Widyastuti<sup>\*1</sup>, Amalia Yahya<sup>2</sup>, Magfirah Thayyib<sup>3</sup>

\*citrawidyastuti44@gmail.com

<sup>123</sup> Tarbiyah and Teacher Training Faculty, Institut Agama Islam Negeri Palopo, Indonesia

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## Abstract

Using game is one of the most fashionable techniques in teaching vocabulary. This research aims to find out whether the customized hangaroo game is effective to improve the students' vocabulary in the eighth grade of SMPN 1 Bosso. Hangaroo game is customized to be a non-digital/offline game to meet the needs of English vocabulary teaching in that class. This research applied pre-experimental method with pre-test, treatment, and post-test design. The instrument of this research was an objective vocabulary test. The treatment of teaching vocabulary using customized hangaroo game was conducted in five meetings. The data from the tests were analyzed using quantitative procedures including statistical analysis using SPSS 22. The results show that using customized hangaroo game is effective in improving the students' vocabulary mastery at the eighth grade of SMPN 1 Bosso. The students' mean score the pre-test was 36.4783 (poor) while in post-test was 51.6957 (fair). From the t-test of the students' vocabulary, *p* value was smaller than  $\alpha$  ( $0.00 < 0.05$ ). The customized hangaroo game could interest and motivate the students in learning vocabulary. It can help the students to develop their spelling and pronunciation. It can also facilitate the students to cooperate in group and share to class.

**Keywords:** customized hangaroo game; teaching; vocabulary

## Introduction

Vocabulary is the words used to communicate in a language. Richards & Renandya (2002) stated that vocabulary is a core component of language proficiency and provides much of the basis for how well learners speak, listen, and write. It means that the first thing we have to learn in English is vocabulary since it

can make the language learning is easier and it will be useful for the process of achieving language teaching objectives. Considering the important of learning English vocabulary, the teacher should choose an appropriate technique which is suitable for teaching vocabulary. A teacher needs various instructional media and technique that will be able to help the students in learning English vocabulary. According to Harmer (1988), the techniques of teaching vocabulary which can be applied in classroom are using realia, showing the pictures, using mime, enumerating a word, associating words, giving explanation or definition, using translation, and using game.

There have been copious researches on particular technique of teaching vocabulary. Some of them are: teaching vocabulary through outdoor program for junior high school students (Masruddin, 2016); practical strategies to teach vocabulary through games in EFL beginner classes of secondary schools (Egounleti, 2018); using electronic games on teaching English vocabulary for kindergarten students (Alnatour & Hijazi, 2018); teaching English vocabulary through Think Talk Write method at junior high school (Yahya, 2019); and teaching vocabulary by using computer online-games for young learners class (Arintia & Fitriati, 2017). The techniques are generally chosen based on the students' needs and problems in leaning vocabulary. As well, the techniques chosen should be suitable to the teaching and learning situation like the classroom condition or the availability of the learning facility/support.

Based on the pre-research observation at SMPN 1 Bosso, there are some problems on the students' vocabulary found in the eighth grade. The teacher said that the students still have low ability in learning English, especially in mastering vocabulary. They do not have many vocabularies. Another problem is the lack of media that can be used to attract student' interest in learning vocabulary. The teacher teaches vocabulary with drilling list which sometimes makes the students bored. The students' feelings in the process of learning influence their achievement. Therefore, the researchers offer to use game as one common technique to attract the students to follow the learning and help them to improve their vocabulary. Kim (1995) listed several advantages of games in the classroom including motivating and challenging, language practice in the various skills, encourage students to interact and communicate and create a meaningful context for language use.

In this research locus, namely the eighth grade of SMPN 1 Bosso, the game offered is the one that can be adjusted or customized to the teaching and learning situation in the class. The adjustment of a game to a specific learning condition is occasionally done in vocabulary teaching. Lestiyanawati (2017) modified 'hide and seek' traditional game to teach vocabulary for early childhood students while Mohamed (2018) used customized board games for vocabulary learning. The game chosen to be applied and adjusted for vocabulary teaching in this research is hangaroo game. Prasetiawati (2012) stated that hangaroo game is a digital game just like hangman – guess the hidden phrase to complete a level. The name of

hangaroo comes from the word kangaroo because this game uses kangaroo as the main figure. If a player of hangaroo game fails to guess the hidden phrase/word, the hanged kangaroo will be displayed on screen.

Hangaroo game is a game that orders the user to fulfill the empty square with the alphabet letters that will be a word based on the clue (Retno, 2013). Many researchers have applied hangaroo game in teaching-learning process. Some of them are: Jannah (2014) who used hangaroo game for teaching vocabulary at SD Betengan Demak in the subject matter of public place; Kartika (2015) who implemented hangaroo game to improve students' accounting learning activity in social class at SMAN 1 Pengasih; Faliyanti & Sari (2018) who used hangaroo game for vocabulary instruction. Hangaroo game is fun, interesting, and worth to be played by all ages. It can also develop the players' linguistic skills, especially for spelling and pronunciation (Prasetiawati, 2012). Moreover, hangaroo game can be used for the learning by doing some modifications that appropriate with the conditions of the class.

Hangaroo is a game with endless possibilities. One player may think of a word, and the other tries to guess it by suggesting letters. The other popular way to play hangaroo game offline is to draw blank letters for the chosen word on a paper or the blackboard and let the players guess the letters. Susanti (2014) explained the procedure in which the teacher draws some blank boxes in the board and gives simple clues. The teacher asks the alphabet and the students who have the alphabet might put the alphabet in the blank box that was pointed by the teacher. Nikiria (2015) shared a different way to play hangaroo game which consists of clues and blank forms. The clues will help the students to answer and the blank forms have been designed appropriately with the number of letters based on the answer because one box consists of one letter. There is a blank form in a piece of papers as many as words which can be decided.

For the case of this research, hangaroo game is customized to be a manual group game, not digital one, because it is used in non-computerized English classroom. Then, this research is conducted using the customized hangaroo game in teaching vocabulary at the eighth grade of SMPN 1 Bosso. It aims to find out whether the customized hangaroo game is effective to improve the students' vocabulary in that grade/class. The vocabulary taught to the students is emphasized on the noun, adverb, and adjective. This research significance is to give a practical effect for the teachers and the students of SMPN 1 Bosso – to attempt a technique for vocabulary instruction that is suitable to the teaching and learning situation in the school. This research also gives one alternative way of playing hangaroo game that is the customized hangaroo game for non-computerized English classroom. It then becomes the novelty of this research.

## **Method**

This research applied pre-experimental method with pre-test, treatment, and post-test design. The population was the eighth grade students of SMPN 1 Bosso,

Walenrang Utara District, Luwu Regency, Sulawesi Selatan Province. The eighth grade of the school has one class only with 23 students. The sampling technique was total sampling thus the number of the sample was 23 students consisting of 14 male and 9 female students. The instrument of this research was vocabulary test administered in pre-test and post-test. The form of the test was objective test which consists of jumbled letters, sentence completion, true or false, and multiple choices. The total number of test was 30 items.

The pre-test was done before the treatment. The students were asked to answer the vocabulary test individually. After giving pre-test, the treatment of teaching vocabulary using customized hangaroo game was conducted in five meetings. The preparation steps done before the treatment are: (a) the teacher takes the vocabulary material based on the sub-topic of the lesson that will be studied in the class, (b) the teacher decides the words that will be guessed by the students, (c) the teacher makes the clues for the chosen words, (d) the teacher makes the blank forms in a piece of papers as many as words which are decided and gives the clues about the word. In every meeting of the treatment, the teacher firstly explained the material related to the topic before applying the customized hangaroo game in teaching vocabulary. Different topic was given in every meeting of the treatment. The topics which given consecutively were (a) describing people, (b) things in the classroom, (c) transportations, (d) animals, and (e) public places. After the treatment, the post-test was given to the students. The vocabulary test in post-test was in the same level as in the pre-test.

The steps of the customized hangaroo game applied on treatment in every meeting are: (a) the teacher divides students in some groups; one group consists of four or five students according to the conditions in the classroom, (b) the teacher gives the clues about the word and gives 20 minutes to answer the questions and tells students to discuss together before they answer, (c) every group can start hangaroo game by filling the blank form with letters forming words as the answers from the clues related to the questions provided, (d) after the students finish filling the blank form, the teacher then asks them to write their guesses on the white board one by one for each group, (e) if the students can guess correctly, they get the point; if they cannot guess correctly, they do not get the point; for each incorrect guess the teacher draws the hanged kangaroo on the white board, (f) the points are accumulated in group, (g) the group which gets the higher points is the winner, (h) at last, the teacher reads the words and is followed by the students to pronounce it.

The data were analyzed using a number of quantitative procedures namely: (1) scoring the result of the students' pre-test and post-test; each of the students' correct answer got 1 and the wrong answer got 0, (2) converting the raw scores to a set of core maximum of 100, (3) converting the score of the students into values, (4) classifying the score of the students into 'very good' (81-100); good (61-80); fair (41-60); poor (21-40); very poor (0-20), (5) calculating the mean score, standard deviation, frequency table and test between vocabulary achievement of

the pre-experimental by using SPSS 22 for windows evaluation.

### **Results**

From the classification of the students' vocabulary score in pre-test, there were none of the students (0%) who obtained very good. There were 3 students (13.0%) who obtained good. There were 7 students (30.4%) who obtained each of fair and poor classification. There were 6 students (26.1%) who obtained very poor. Based on the data, it can be said that the students who obtained very poor and poor were more than the students who obtained fair and good scores in the pre-test. It indicated that students' vocabulary mastery was still low before the treatment. In the pre-test, the highest score of students was 67.00 (good) and the lowest score was 7.00 (very poor). The mean score of students' vocabulary mastery in pre-test was 36.4783 which categorized as poor. The standard deviation error was 18.90856.

The classification of the students' vocabulary score in post-test shows that there were none of the students (0%) who obtained very good. There were 5 students (21.7%) who obtained good. There were 13 students (30.4%) who obtained fair. There were 5 students (21.7%) who obtained poor. And, there was none student (0%) who obtained very poor. The highest score of students was 80.00 (good) and the lowest score was 23.00 (poor). While the mean score of students' vocabulary in pre-test was 51.6957 which categorized as fair. The standard deviation error was 13.89714.

Based on the mean score of the students' pre-test and post-test also the standard deviation of pre-test and post-test was, there is an improvement of students' vocabulary mastery using customized hangaroo game. The mean score of the students' vocabulary had increased from poor category in pre-test to fair category in post-test. Then, paired sample t-test was used to know the significance of the difference between the results of students' mean score in pre-test and post-test. The result of statistical analysis for level of significance 0,05 with degree of freedom (df) = N-1, where N = 23, df = 22. The probability value was smaller than alpha ( $\alpha$ )  $0.00 < 0.05$ . It means there was a significant difference of the students' score before and after using customized hangaroo game in teaching vocabulary. Therefore, it can be said that customized hangaroo game can increase the students' vocabulary mastery of the students at the eighth grade of SMPN 1 Bosso.

### **Discussion**

In the case of this research, the customized hangaroo game could interest the students in learning vocabulary. Normally, hangaroo game is a digital/online game but in this research it was played manual/offline. The customized hangaroo game is adapted from digital to manual with some different procedures. The teacher divides the students into groups and each group is be given a piece of paper. It contains the blank forms as many as words which are decided and the clues about the words. The students are given 20 minutes to answer the questions. After the students finish to fill the blank forms, the teacher then asks the students to write

their guesses on the whiteboard. If the students guess correctly, they get the point and if the students cannot guess correctly they do not get the point and the teacher draws the hanged kangaroo on the whiteboard.

Through the treatment conducted in this research, it is found that the customized hangaroo game could make the students motivated to learn vocabulary. They enjoyed and they were enthusiastic to guess the word. The students even asked to be given a topic according to their wish. Toward the given topic which is about adjective in describing people, the students found it easier to be guessed. Though, sometimes they did not find the word in the dictionary because there is limitation of words in their dictionary. In addition, the students felt it easier to remember the vocabularies because in learning vocabulary using the customized hangaroo game, they have gone through more creative thinking to guess the words. It is evidenced that the customized hangaroo game could help the students to learn vocabulary. To apply the customized hangaroo game in the classroom, a dictionary is needed for each student. It will be difficult for the students to guess the words if they do not use a dictionary.

For further discussion, from the pre-test and post-test of this research, 3 students are taken as the representation of all students in the class. They are coded as student A, B, and C. Student A answered 15 questions correctly in pre-test and 24 questions correctly in post-test. Student B answered 6 questions correctly in pre-test and 17 questions correctly in post-test. And student C only answered 2 questions correctly in pre-test and 14 questions correctly in post-test. The three students mostly answered correctly the questions about noun in pre-test. Compared to the post-test, the students have an improvement in which they did not only answer questions correctly about noun but they also answered questions correctly about adjective and adverb. Noun is indeed easier than adjective and adverb to be identified by the students.

The implementation of the customized hangaroo game in this research made the students enjoy learning vocabulary. In fact, teaching vocabulary using the customized hangaroo game at SMPN 1 Bosso caused the students got improvement in their vocabulary score. The mean score of students' vocabulary in pre-test was 36.4783 (poor) while the mean score of students' vocabulary in post-test was 51.6957 (fair). Based on the result of paired sample t-test, there was a significant improvement of the students' score from pre-test to post-test. Therefore, it could be stated the customized hangaroo game in teaching vocabulary have solved the students' vocabulary problem and improved the students' vocabulary mastery at the eighth grade of SMPN 1 Bosso.

The results of this research confirm the theories and previous research findings provided in the introduction. Using game is one of beneficial techniques in teaching vocabulary. Games, when used appropriately in secondary schools level yielded positive impacts on EFL beginners' skills abilities and also vocabulary mastery (Egounleti, 2018). Game can attract the students' attention to new English vocabulary while playing; for online game, the availability of computer and internet

connection need to be considered first (Arintia & Fitriati, 2017). That is why the hangaroo game which is digital-online game is customized to offline mode in this research considering the English classroom/learning at SMPN 1 Bosso is non-computerized. The modification of a game is to deal with the need of allowing the students to learn English in an enjoyable process (Lestiyawati, 2017). The customized board games did result in increased motivation and enjoyment of vocabulary practice (Mohamed, 2018).

The key features of hangaroo game that should be maintained whenever it is customized or modified according to learning need/situation are guessing the words by filling the letters in blank boxes or spaces, having the clues of the words, and having the display or picture of the hanged kangaroo if the words cannot be guess correctly. In this customized hangaroo game, the teacher draws a simple hanged kangaroo on the whiteboard. The teacher can actually provide a printed picture of hanged kangaroo in the form of card (or with handled stick). The hanged kangaroo is one of the interesting features of hangaroo game. Hangaroo game can be used as a media to make teaching English vocabulary more interesting (Rahmawati, 2015).

In the customized hangaroo game applied in this research, the step of guessing the words specifically filling the blank boxes in group and writing the words in the whiteboard in front of the class help the students to improve their spelling. The last step of the customized hangaroo game applied on treatment in every meeting is that the teacher read the words and was followed by the students to pronounce it. Hangaroo game can really develop the students spelling and pronunciation (Prasetiawati, 2012). In similar quite statement, teaching using hangaroo game gives positive effect on the students' achievement (Jannah, 2014). It can stimulate them to focus and be more active in learning.

What is more, the customized hangaroo game in the process of learning through this research treatment used grouping system and needed good cooperation among the students so they can improve their vocabulary. Implementing hangaroo game, the students are asked to be more active in solving the questions from the teacher (Kartika, 2015). They do discussion with their own group. Clever students will explain to less-clever students about the material. Here, the teacher is the facilitator to guide the students in solving the problem. Teacher becomes less dominant in the learning and the students' activities are increased. The students feel enjoy and comfortable with the learning so they do not feel ashamed to share their opinion in the class. The students work in group first to guess the words and they then share the answers to whole class. In using hangaroo game, the students do not only learn and receive information from the teacher but also learn from other students (Faliyanti & Sari, 2018).

Besides the positive result and implication of this research, there were some problems found in using of the customized hangaroo game in the class. First, the students still had difficulties in answer the question about vocabulary (noun, adverb, and adjective) because they did not understand the meaning of the words.

To know the meaning of the words, the teacher needed to teach new words to students using other technique and media that are effective and interesting. Second, there were only few students who had a dictionary – only 5 from 23 students. It made the treatment process in the classroom less effective. The students had difficulties in knowing the meaning of a word. Then, it took time for them to find the word in dictionary. Third, there was a problem with classroom management, few students were noisy and disturbed other friends. A teacher certainly needs to have the right strategy for dealing with such students if they are noisy in the classroom such as asking them to re-explain the material presented by the teacher.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the results and discussion, it can be concluded that using customized hangaroo game is effective in improving the students' vocabulary mastery at the eighth grade of SMPN 1 Bosso. It could be proven by the significant difference between the students' mean score in pre-test and posttest. The students' mean score in the pre-test was 36.4783 (poor) and the students' mean score in post-test was 51.6957 (fair). It can also be seen from the t-test of the students' vocabulary achievement that was smaller than  $\alpha = (0.00 < 0.05)$ . The customized hangaroo game could interest and motivate the students in learning vocabulary. It can help the students to develop their spelling and pronunciation. It can also facilitate the students to cooperate in group and share to class.

There are some suggestions which can be proposed according to the discussion of the research. It is proposed for the teacher that hangaroo game can be applied, customized and modified in teaching vocabulary based on the learning needs and classroom situation. The teacher can re-design the hangaroo game interestingly and innovatively to make the students more interest in learning. For example, the teacher may customize a hangaroo game with different rules and employ various themes or topic. The teacher can ask beginner students to have their own dictionary to make it easier in knowing the meaning the words guessed in hangaroo game.

When the hangaroo game is played manually or offline, the teacher should consider the classroom management that the students can really learn individually, in group, or as a class. It is to handle the students from being noisy and disturbing friends while the game is playing. The teacher should create an easy-displayed card/picture of hanged kangaroo. The teacher can also use another icon of local cattle instead of kangaroo.

Finally, it is suggested for the next researchers that they can refer to the result and implication of this study to have another perspective in exploring further use of hangaroo game which is favorable in teaching-learning and flexible to be modified. Hangaroo game can be used not only for English teacher but also for teachers of another subject.

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