

# Students' Perception on Guessing Game Use in Learning Vocabulary at SMPK Ignatius Slamet Riyadi

*by* Lamhot Naibaho

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# PROCEEDING

## EFL Theory & Practice: Voice of EED UKI

English Education Department (EED)  
Collegiate Forum 2015-2018

***Editor***

Parlindungan Pardede

**Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris  
FKIP UKI  
2019**

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(EED CF) 2015-2018**

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## PREFACE

English Education Department Collegiate Forum (EED CF) is an academic forum organized by the English Education Department, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Kristen Indonesia (EED FKIP UKI). Initiated in 2008 by Mr. Parlin Pardede Dean of FKIP UKI, the event was held bi-monthly in every even month. It aims at providing a friendly and open opportunity for the faculty, students, alumni, and English teachers to share ideas, research findings, and experiences in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) field. It is expected that the forum can cater the interested parties an innovative and exciting opportunity to share, care, and collaborate for developing their professionalism in EFL learning and teaching.

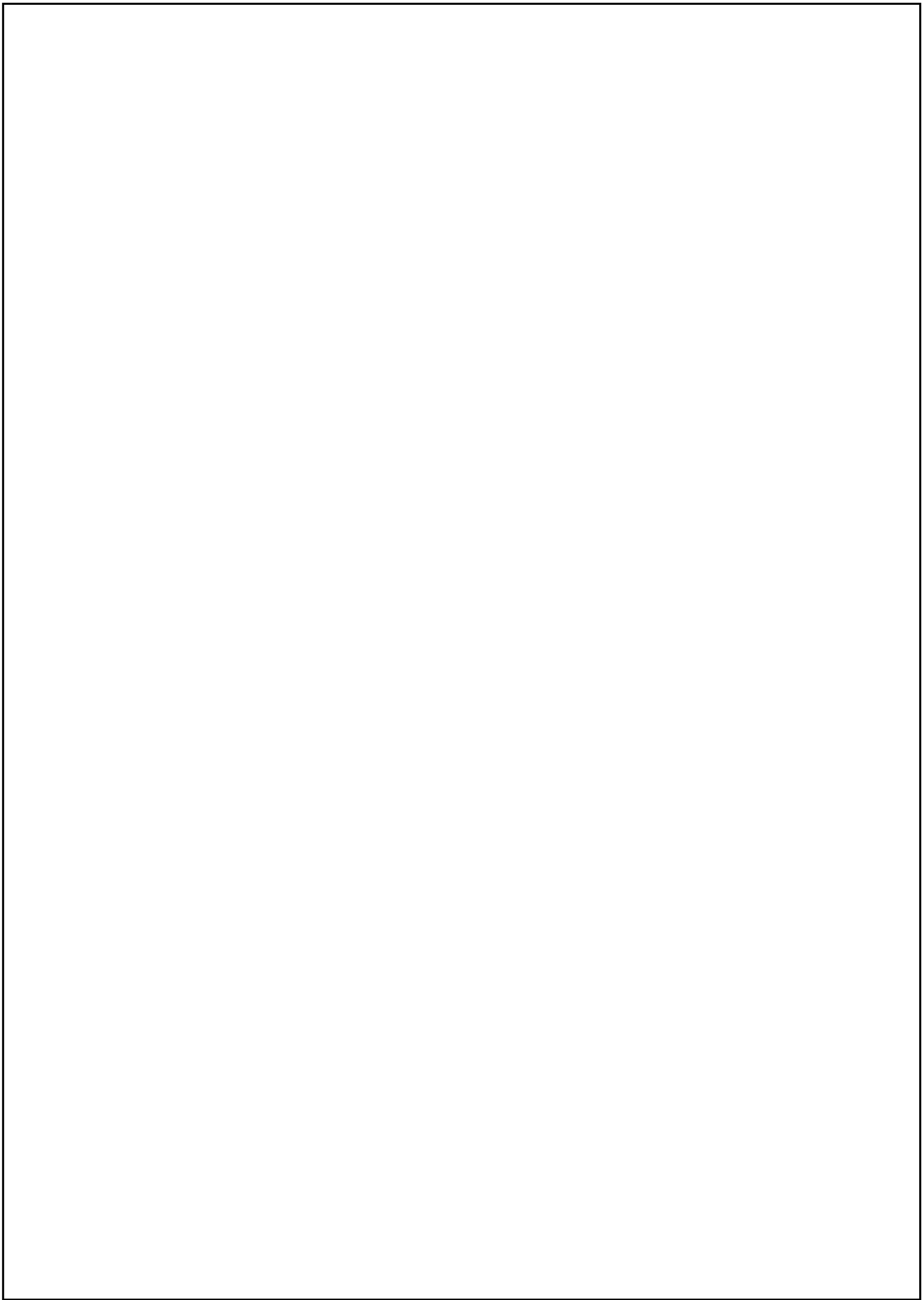
Following related parties' recommendation, starting from 2015 the papers presented in the forum will be compiled and published in a proceeding in every four years. This proceeding, therefore, includes the 24 articles presented in the forum from 2015 to 2018. Since the presentation in this forum is voluntary, every resource person is free to decide the EFL topic he or she presents. Consequently, the articles in this volume cover a broad theme. Despite the broad theme, the topics covered in the articles do represent current hot issues in EFL, such as learning and teaching methodology and strategies; language skills, pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar development; curriculum, evaluation and assessment matters; language research methodology, and the implementation of technology in EFL.

On behalf of EED FKIP UKI, I would like to offer my appreciation all faculties, students, alumni, and fellow English teachers who had contributed in EED CF along 2015-2018. My special thanks should go to Parlindungan Pardede whose hard work in editing the articles in this proceeding has made this publication possible.

Finally, I hope each article in this proceeding can inspire every reader as it had inspired the audiences when it was presented in EED CF.

Jakarta, July 26, 2019  
English Education Department Chairperson,

**Hendrikus Male**



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## Students' Perception on Guessing Game Use in Learning Vocabulary at SMPK Ignatius Slamet Riyadi <sup>1</sup>

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### Abstract <sup>6</sup>

The objective of the current study is to describe the students' perception on the application of guessing game as a pedagogical device for learning EFL vocabulary. This survey method employed a questionnaire. The participants were 30 students of SMPK Ignatius Slamet Riyadi. After analyzing the data and interpreting the findings, the results reveal that (1) the guessing game method was an ineffective way for mastering the English vocabulary, 58.91% out of 30 students disagreed. This is caused by the fact that (2) only a half of respondents experienced that guessing game was interesting (56.00%) and beneficial (59.59%). Only the easiness of guessing game received a positively moderate response (62.30%). To acquire the same frame of reference on the guessing game method as a conceptually influential procedure, a comprehensive study with a broader sample needs to be executed. Finally, it is hoped that the current report can address and provide informative data of the description of teaching and learning English atmosphere using guessing game method, so that it can be taken into account during the process of material selection, teaching procedure, and vocabulary material design by the English teacher at SMPK Ignatius Slamet Riyadi.

Keywords: *guessing game, vocabulary, perceptions*

### INTRODUCTION <sup>22</sup>

Teaching English as a foreign language to young adolescent learners is noticed as an interesting topic. This is because they have their own characteristics that define their language learning process tendency and style. Lesiak (2015) has divided the adolescent

<sup>1</sup>This article was presented in The UKI English Education Department Bimonthly Collegiate Forum held on Friday, April 14, 2017 <sup>3</sup>



learners' characteristics into physical change, socialization, cognitive processes, and emotional changes. Physically, those thirteen- to nineteen-aged students experience growth of skeletal enlargement, muscle and brain development, along with sexual and hormonal maturity. Socially, they usually start to find their own friends, not restricted to socialize with family members. Furthermore, their cognitive development is characterized by their ability to think abstract things. They are able to figure out their capability in reasoning. Emotionally, in this phase, adolescent learners seem to experience so-called "emotional storm". They have aggressive behaviors and some other discipline problems.

In relation to the previous description, therefore, it can be concluded they are the most difficult learners. It takes a lot of time to gain their attention, trust, motivation, and respect as they are eager to explore their surroundings and to tend to be free looking for their true identity. Nevertheless, they have great potentials. One of them is in making decision and interaction.

Responding to such challenges and opportunities, guessing game has been reported applied to junior high school EFL students at SMPK Ignatius Slamet Riyadi in teaching English vocabularies. A number of reasons in implementing the guessing game technique were of course based on previous studies and theories. Empirically, Mubaslat (2011) has proved that the use of games was effective in learning a foreign language. Her correlational analysis showed that post-test for experimental group got improved. More interestingly, it was reported that participants' attention and motivation got increased, and educational games created an interactive learning process. Another equally important advantage of using game has been reported by Al Zaabi (n.d.). His action research testified that game improved students' vocabulary mastery.

Theoretically, many advantages of using a game in EFL learning are understood. Amongst of Constatinescu's (2012) explanation as supported by Goszu and Caganaga (2016) are (1) building up students' English repertoire, (2) increasing motivation and desire for self-improvement, (3) challenging and competitive, (4) interdisciplinary approach that allow them to apply their theoretical knowledge, (5) developing an ability in observing, (6) developing critical thinking, problem solving, and imagination, (7) offering a new and dynamics of teaching, (8) adaptable for different level of knowledge, (9) easy to understand and use, (10) time efficiency, (11) intermediating feedback both for students and teachers, (12) results are more visible and have strong impact, and (13) facilitating collaborative learning.

To know whether the EFL learners at SMPK Ignatius Slamet Riyadi experience those benefits in learning English vocabulary, the current study was designed to record their view. It is hoped the study may contribute to an understanding about the appropriateness of guessing game in teaching vocabulary as well as to enlarge teacher's pedagogic knowledge.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Student's Perception on Language Learning

Understanding substance and importance of students' perception on language learning have to be taken into account as it is the major psychologically determinant factor of

language learner's learning success. There are many definitions and theories of perception. Most notably, the perception is characterized as the process of recognizing, organizing, and interpreting. It deals with the human senses that generate signals from the environment through sight, hearing, touch, smell, and taste. It can be what we have experienced, a reflection, and can be what will be, a prediction. Therefore, students' perception of language learning, simply stated, is meant as a process to record their understanding and view on the teaching and learning they have experienced or will be experienced.

It is definitely useful for teachers to understand the students' perception of learning. As a trained educator, the student's view is used as a consideration in defining teaching objective, designing teaching procedure and aid, and administering the test as their recorded views are basically purely objective. It can become a source of data for teaching reflection as a basis for upgrading and developing the teaching quality meeting the students' needs and preferences.

More specifically, according to DeFranzo (2012), a successful study on students' perception has four reasons. First, uncover the answers. In a good survey, we can learn about the motivation, attitude, and desire of the respondents. They can also provide us feedback toward the EFL learning that they have been experiencing. Second, Evoke discussion. This means that survey can facilitate a "question and answer" between researcher and respondents. Such a technique has a great role by which the students being asked are able to freely communicate their feelings, ideas, and opinions toward the teaching and learning atmosphere. Third, base decisions on objective information. Survey result seems to be very appropriately used in making a decision. An unbiased result of the respondents' view, the reliable one, causes it as a good approach to deciding further feedback the EFL teachers have to provide and prepare. Finally, compare results. As a research field result, students' comment can be treated as a baseline to measure and establish the teaching and learning quality development over time.

### Vocabulary Mastery and How to Master it

In language learning, vocabulary plays an important role and grants much of the basis for how well learners listen, speak, read, and write (Renadya, 2002, p. 255). Without vocabulary, people will have many problems in expressing their idea both in spoken and written forms since body language (Beattie, n.d. ) and whispering (Lewis, 2016), other alternatives for communication, cannot express the ideas, opinions, and feelings comprehensively and the limited competence to systematically study them happens in human language acquisition. In other words, vocabulary holds an important role in language proficiency due to its basic function and foundation in communication. It is the heart of language learning and the ultimate goal of language teaching (Saengpakdeejit, 2014).

To address such importance, exploring the size of EFL vocabulary appears to be fundamental as Basic English user, and independent and proficient speaker have different degrees and numbers of vocabulary. For a Basic English user, can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and introduce themselves, 500-1,000 basic

words are needed. An independent speaker (understanding the abstract things, describing events, dreams, and hopes) has to master 2,000-4,000 words. A proficient user has to acquire 8,000-16,000 words.

Mastering vocabulary, like other English skills, is empirically proved complex. Besides its number, as what McCarthy and O'Dell (2001, p. 6) stated, "English has a very large vocabulary, which adds greatly to our opportunities to express the meaning in different styles," EFL learners find it difficult because of its spelling, meaning, and context use. The spelling, however, seems to be the most difficult one. More precisely, English spelling appears in all English words. An interesting report by Benyo (2014) stated that the spelling error made by Dongola University students were more reported in vowels rather than in consonants. It was hypothesized that the absence of specific sound in Arabic influenced the spelling error frequency. More surprisingly, the problems in learning vocabulary are found associated with age and time spent in learning it. Finally, the problems are not only encountered by males, but they were also faced by the females. It was confirmed that there are no significantly different problems across genders, Aydo an (2017) confirmed.

Knowing such a challenge in English vocabulary teaching drives us to an understanding that what we fail more often is because we solve the wrong problem. This means that solving the problem, though we get the wrong solution to it, seems to be more appreciated than we do nothing to it or we solve a different problem. Harmer (2007) stated that there are many ways in explaining the meaning of words. This is to say that there are many strategies in teaching vocabulary. The teaching strategy should be applicable and according to the contexts of learning, such as learning styles and preferences, teaching materials, facilities, teaching methods, and many more.

### **Teaching Vocabulary by Using Guessing Game**

There are many definitions and views on what characterizes the game. Most notably, a game, simply stated, is a play where its members are participating on overcoming or competing in a systematic problem. Generally, participants' records are scored for deciding its winners. In participating in the game, we are obliged to follow the rules. Supported by Salen and Zimmerman (2003), it was stated, "A game is a system in which players engage in an artificial conflict, defined by rules, that results in a quantifiable outcome."

Implementing the game in teaching and learning process is interesting and useful. Constatinescu (2012) as supported by Goszu and Caganaga (2016) listed functions of the game in learning: (1) building up students' English repertoire, (2) increasing motivation and desire for self-improvement, (3) challenging and competitive, (4) interdisciplinary approach that allow them to apply their theoretical knowledge, (5) developing an ability in observing, (6) developing critical thinking, problem solving, and imagination, (7) offering a new and dynamics of teaching, (8) adaptable for different level of knowledge, (9) easy to understand and use, (10) time efficiency, (11) intermediating feedback both for students and teachers, (12) results are more visible and have strong impact, and (13) facilitating collaborative learning.



The game, therefore, is a kind of pedagogical device due to its function to contextualize the teaching process and to make it more attractive. Through the games, students are totally involved in a particular problem, a realization of intended collaborative learning. Strengthened by Boyle (2011), it was stated that games are extremely useful – they can enliven teaching topics and are especially effective for dealing with problem-solving and key concepts. Aligned with its positive impact, the participation in playing the game naturally builds up the learners' self-confidence as well as social interaction among the participants. Lowenstein, Barndshaw, and Fuszard (2016) argued that games had a special role in building students' self-confidence and reducing the gap between quicker and slower learners.

Another equally important reason for the use of guessing game in teaching vocabulary mastery is that guessing game is more likely applicable in both inside and outside of the classroom. The various concepts and topics, more technically the contexts, seem to be learnable using the guessing game as long as the participants are aware of and follow the rules. It is based on what has been explained by Thornbury (2002, p. 144) who said that guessing from context is probably one of the most useful skills through which the learners can acquire and apply it both inside and outside the classroom as it can be painless ways to develop or reinforce any number of concepts.

Furthermore, there are also many empirical pieces of evidence of the benefits of using games on language teaching. Mubaslat (2011), for example, has proved that the use of games was effective in learning a foreign language. Her correlational analysis showed that post-test for experimental group got improved. More interestingly, it was reported that participants' attention and motivation got increased, and educational games created an interactive learning process. Another equally important advantage of using game has been reported by Al Zaabi (n.d.). His action research testified that game improved students' vocabulary mastery.

Additionally, a previous study entitled "Student's perceptions on the use of guessing game to enrich vocabulary" was conducted by Purnata (2012). It was discovered that using guessing game made the students motivated in studying and significantly enriched their vocabulary. Supriyatna (2014) showed that guessing game can be one of many alternative techniques that teachers can use in teaching vocabulary. Finally, Robiyah (2015) showed that there were significant differences between teaching English through guessing games and without guessing games technique. It was concluded that teaching English vocabulary through guessing games technique was effective to enrich students' vocabulary. The use of guessing game seemed to be one of the interesting ways in enriching students' vocabulary. By implementing this game, the students could expand their vocabulary because the game was interesting and stimulating.

## METHOD

This study, employing a survey method, is a descriptive research aiming to investigate the students' perceptions of guessing game use on vocabulary mastery. The participants of this study, consisting of 16 females and 14 males, were seventh graders at SMPK Ignatius Slamet Riyadi.

The data were collected through a questionnaire in May 2017. The questionnaire was adopted from Purnata's (2012) work. The questionnaire consisted of 30 statements used Likert Scale. The participants reported their views by choosing one of the five options provided, i.e, 1= Strongly Disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Neutral; 4 = Agree; 5 = Strongly Agree. Four grouped indicators of perception are interest, benefits, easiness, and guessing game and vocabulary perception.

To analyze the questionnaire, some steps were employed. Firstly, coding. The students' answer sheets have been coded for which a subjectivity in scoring can be avoided. Second, scoring. The scoring was conducted to record the qualitative data of the students' perception. Three things that have been calculated are mean, maximum and minimum scores. Third, tabulation. Tabulation was to display the data in the forms of table, matrix, and figures. Fourth, discussion. The analyzed data has been further continued with the discussion. It was employed to contrast the findings to the previous studies and related theories. An in-depth analysis and description of the research report has been met through this phase. Finally, conclusion drawing. Confirmed with the interview data and met the trustworthiness of the finding, the conclusion was drawn.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Interest

The data of students' interest perceptions of guessing game used on vocabulary enrichment indicates that most of the students were interested to learn vocabulary using a guessing game. On average, 56.00% of the students experienced that it was an attractive method in learning.

This means 44.00% of the respondents did not enjoy the use of guessing game and the guessing game did not build the students' English repertoire (Constatinescu, 2012; Goszu & Caganaga, 2016). Referring to Cheung's (2017) work on the key factors affecting students' individual interest in school science lessons, it is more likely to hypothesize that the reasons of 44.00% 'uninterestedness' toward the guessing game are self-concept, individual interest in the subject being learned, and the situational influences in vocabulary lessons. Two nonsignificant factors of the interest in using a guessing game in learning English vocabulary are grade level material, or its difficulty level of vocabulary, and gender.

In addition to the previous evidence of the relationship between interest and self-concept, Todt and Schreiber (1998) explained that interest, an orientation, and basis for preferences, is an essential element of the structure of self-concept and is fully integrated into the individual's self-concept. The self-concept is understood as our overall understanding about ourselves – fundamentals of ourselves, personal potentials, and what the roles that we have to play to maximize them. Such definition is based on Baumeister's (1999) and Rosenberg's (1979) view on self-concept. Baumeister characterized the self-concept as the individual's belief about himself or herself, including the person's attributes and who and what the self is, whereas Baumeister viewed it as the totality of an individual's thoughts and feelings having reference to himself as an object.

Exploring more about individual interest, a relatively stable affective-evaluative orientation toward certain subject areas or objects, of the participants and situational interest, a temporary state aroused by specific features of situation, task, or object, drives our attention to what has been reported by Schiefele (2009) and Vainikainen, Salmi, and Thuneberg (2015). Reported by Schiefele, a high level of interest, meant as a situational interest, shows close associations between the subject area or individual interest and positive feeling – and value – related attributes. And claimed by Vainikainen, Salmi, and Thuneberg, the individual interest predicted the situational interest. The situational interest has become a positive predictor of learning outcomes.

### **Benefit**

The majority of the respondents reported that the use of guessing game was beneficial for them in learning new vocabularies. Though, almost a half of the respondents, 41.41%, disagreed to the benefits of guessing game method in learning English vocabulary, statistically, the average perception on its positive function is 59.59%, or 3.59% better than of interest.

The finding arises some implications. First, guessing game stimulates collaborative learning, one of the advantages of guessing game by Constatinescu (2012) and Goszu and Caganaga (2016), among the students. This is also to suggest, though it still needs further empirical findings, that among the 30 participants, 59.59% preferred to collaborative learning. The students preferred to study collaboratively is more probably influenced by a reduction of anxiety and positive attitude towards English teachers (Laal & Ghodsi, 2012) during the guessing game.

Second, the game strengthens its benefit offering a new and dynamics of teaching. More than half of the students reported their benefits of learning through guessing game as it gave new insight and experience in learning procedure. This is to hypothesize that the majority of the participants were aware of the dynamics of teaching and learning (Prabhu, 1992), including teacher quality (Wiswall, 2011), language (Dakhi, 2011), classroom interaction, and decision making (Tayaru & Lakshmi, 2013).

However, among the aforementioned dynamics, the interaction of teachers and learners which is determined by the racial category of skin color was found as the most powerful predictor of the dynamics in teaching and learning practices. This is in line with Johnson-Bailey and Cervero's (2006) argument that the positionality of the teachers and learners, in particular, the racial category of whiteness, emerged as a key power of relationship mediating classroom dynamics.

### **Easiness**

The results showed that two thirds, 62.30%, of students viewed that guessing game method is easy to conduct in learning vocabulary. That perception seems to be the most influential predictor of the success of guessing game application since it is 2.71% higher than benefit and 6.30% better than of the interest. However, 38.30% of the students were found 'disagreed' to the ease of the guessing game.

Two important interpretations have been made which are used to respond to the current perspective. Firstly, consulting Constatinescu's (2012), and Goszu and

Caganaga's (2016) previous work, the present study strengthens that guessing game is easy to understand and use. As a result, it seems to increase the teaching and learning atmosphere and implicit vocabulary learning. Secondly, the guessing game activity adds the number of classroom activities. And regardless of the complexity of those activities, students still felt the simplicity of learning vocabulary. This, therefore, suggests that guessing game method as a simple and attractive procedure in teaching vocabulary.

Frankly speaking, the complexity activity in a classroom is definitely beneficial. Some studies showed the contribution of complexity in the classroom to learning and teaching. Podschuweit, Bernholt, and Brückmann (2016) discovered that the mean level of complexity in classroom contribution explains a large portion of the variance in post-test results. Not only for students' learning, with a positive tone Nelson (2011) argued, "Complexity theory can help us understand both the situatedness of language learning and commonalities across contexts by examining language learning through the lenses of emergence, distribution, and embodiment."



Figure 1. *Research Results*

### Guessing Game and Vocabulary Learning

Figure 1 displays how the respondents viewed the influence of guessing game on their vocabulary mastery. Surprisingly, less than a half of them, 42.19%, reported that guessing game influenced their vocabulary mastery. This means that 58.91% out of 30 students disagreed to its usefulness and influence.

In this regard, it can be said that even though games had a special role in building up students' self-confidence and reducing the gap between quicker and slower learners (Lowenstein, Barndshaw, & Fuszard, 2016), it did not positively predict the students' vocabulary mastery. And therefore, it deviates the previous studies, like Mubaslat (2001), Purnata (2012), and Robiyah (2015). Mubaslat concluded that the use of games was effective in learning a foreign language. Her correlational analysis showed that post-test for experimental group got improved. More interestingly, it was reported that participants' attention and motivation got increased, and educational games created an



interactive learning process. Purnata claimed that using guessing game made the students motivated in studying and significantly enriched their vocabulary. Finally, Robiyah (2015) showed that there were significant differences between teaching English through guessing games and without guessing games technique. It was concluded that teaching English vocabulary through guessing games technique was effective to enrich students' vocabulary.

Some tentatively given answers why is different from the previous studies. First of all, the current study is merely a survey method that recorded the participants' perception through the structured questionnaire. Since it is a quantified instrument, there will be a possibility that they unseriously completed the form. This is supported by the fact that the researcher did not observe them directly during the application of guessing game in their teaching and learning process and during the completion of the questionnaire. Such a single instrument also weakens the objectivity of the questionnaire result. Secondly, the problem is more possibly also caused by the experience of the English teacher who applied the guessing game in teaching vocabulary. Less experienced in-service teachers tend to more focus on their physical performance and management, instead of teaching material and techniques. This means a weaker teacher with less experience who are applying guessing method will not significantly affect the learning outcomes. Thirdly, contexts of the studies. The previous studies were conducted in an exactly different context with the current one. As a consequent, there will never exactly the same research findings.

## CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

The objective of the current study is to describe objectively the students' perception on the application of guessing game as a pedagogical device for learning EFL vocabulary. After analyzing the data and interpreting the findings, the results reveal that (1) the guessing game method was reported as an ineffective way in mastering the English vocabulary, 58.91% out of 30 students disagreed. This was caused by the fact that (2) almost a half of respondents experienced that guessing game was interesting (56.00%) and beneficial (59.59%). Only the easiness of guessing game received a positively moderate response (62.30%).

Referring to the previous studies, the present report deviates the related research results, including Mubaslat (20011), Purnata (2012), and Robiyah (2015). Three different reasons making it happened are (1) the current study is merely a survey method that recorded the participants' perception through the single instrument, namely structured questionnaire; (2) the problem is more likely to be caused by the less experience of the English teacher who applied the guessing game in teaching vocabulary as less experienced in-service teachers tend to more focus on their physical performance and management, instead of teaching material and techniques; and (3) the previous studies were conducted in exactly different context with the current one. As a consequent, there will never exactly the same research findings.

To acquire the same frame of reference on guessing game method as a conceptually influential procedure, a comprehensive study with a broader sample needs to be executed. Finally, it is hoped that the current report can address and provide informative



data of the description of teaching and learning English atmosphere using guessing game method, so that it can be taken into account during the process of material selection, teaching procedure, and vocabulary material design by the English teacher at SMPK Ignatius Slamet Riyadi.

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