

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF WORD CHAIN GAME TO TEACH VOCABULARY IN AN ISLAMIC JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

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Abstract: Vocabulary is a fundamental element and the most essential thing learned in the English language. However, the students still encounter problems in learning vocabulary that was also worsened by the Covid-19 pandemic. Therefore, this study investigated the implementation of a Word Chain Game to teach vocabulary in an Islamic Junior High School. The aims were to find out the teacher's strategies for the implementation of the Word Chain Game in teaching and learning vocabulary and to analyze the teacher and student's perceptions of the implementation of the Word Chain Game in teaching and learning vocabulary. This case study was carried out on the English teacher and 22 students in the seventh grade of an Islamic Junior High School in Tasikmalaya. Three instruments in form of the observation, the interview, and the questionnaires were triangulated. The findings indicated that Word Chain Game was conducted by the teacher in teaching and learning vocabulary through ten steps. It also indicated that the teacher and the students had positive perceptions of the implementation of the Word Chain Game in teaching and learning vocabulary because it enhance their knowledge, mastery, participation, interest, and motivation in learning vocabulary. Even though some students still found it hard to implement the Word Chain Game, the teacher could overcome them.

Keywords: *Word Chain Game; teaching and learning vocabulary; Islamic Junior High School.*

INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary is a fundamental element and the most essential thing learned in the language because without mastering a lot of vocabulary, the words to be conveyed are extremely limited. Likewise, vocabulary is an important skill in English in which the students should engage words and put them together to make sentences, conversations, and discourse all things. They cannot

put forward their ideas if they do not learn them (Fitriani & Sitepu, 2018, p. 24). Without mastering vocabulary, the students are unable to reach their potential in learning English words. Similarly, teaching vocabulary ought to be complete, intensive, and full of interesting data. It requires covering a great many words (Hiebert & Kamil, 2005, p. 112). Thus, the teacher should teach vocabulary by using interesting ways that cover many words to learn.

Nevertheless, based on the writer's pre-observation in teaching English at an Islamic Junior High School in Tasikmalaya, the writer found that the students still found it hard to learn vocabulary. However, problems found during the teaching and learning process were that the students got difficulties pronouncing words correctly, remembering, and grasping the meaning of the words. Besides that, their attention and motivation in learning vocabulary also decreased. The reason is that they were careless about understanding and mastering unfamiliar words in the texts. Likewise, many problems often appeared during the teaching and learning vocabulary in that the students were passive to keep in mind the unfamiliar words that they found in the text (Ramadani et al., 2020, p. 3).

The student's difficulties in learning vocabulary are also worsened by the Covid-19 pandemic. It affects the way of teaching and learning vocabulary from face-to-face meetings to online learning. Therefore, game instructions can be the principal alternative media in both online and offline learning during the Covid-19 pandemic (Umbara et al., 2021, p. 483). Thus, the teacher should apply games as a learning media that can be implemented in online learning during the Covid-19 pandemic. Lots of kinds of games can be adopted in teaching English, especially vocabulary; one of them is the Word Chain Game. The Word Chain Game is a word game for two players who come up with words beginning with the letter or ones that the preceding word ended with (Hasibuan & Lase, 2018, p. 48). In other words, this game is played through vocabulary words.

In this study, the writer chose Word Chain Game in teaching and learning vocabulary because of some advantages. Firstly, it can build and improve the students' vocabulary words. Likewise, it can be used to build students' vocabulary mastery using a variety of themes and can improve their vocabulary mastery (Fitriani & Sitepu, 2018, p. 25). Secondly, it can make teaching and learning vocabulary more attractive, fun, and helpful. Thirdly, it can be used as one of the solutions to the problem of teaching English vocabulary (Ramadani et al., 2020, p. 3). It can be argued that Word Chain Game can be implemented to improve vocabulary mastery and to solve problems in learning vocabulary.

Many studies have observed the application of a Word Chain Game to teach vocabulary. First, Hashemi (2021) discovered the effects of using games to teach vocabulary in reading comprehension among new students at Takhar University, Afghanistan. The second, Medina et al. (2021) focused on improving students' vocabulary by using word chain games for the eighth-grade students of SMP N 2 Bumiayu. The third, Ramadani et al. (2020) examined the effect of word chain games in building the student's vocabulary mastery in the eighth grade of MTs Barana Jeneponto Regency. The fourth, Fitriani and Sitepu (2018) conducted the effect of the word chain game on students' vocabulary mastery in the first grade of SMK Swasta Abdi Negara Binjai. Fifth, Hasibuan and Lase (2018) conducted the effect of a word chain game on students' vocabulary mastery among seventh-grade students of SMP Negeri 1 Pandan. The last, Firmansyah and Adi (2015) employed the word chain game to teach descriptive speaking to the eighth graders in SMPN 26 Surabaya.

The previous studies revealed that Word Chain Game brings some positive impacts on teaching English, especially vocabulary. They have mostly focused on Word Chain Games in teaching and learning English, especially vocabulary. Similar to the previous studies, the present study also focuses on Word Chain Games in teaching vocabulary. Nevertheless, no none of them related to the implementation of the Word Chain Game to teach vocabulary after the pandemic era in rural areas, especially in the seventh grade in Tasikmalaya in which the students will move from EYLS to teenagers. Moreover, it is conducted in rural areas. Therefore, it is worth to be conducted.

METHOD

A purposive sample technique was applied to select the sample in this case study. In this regard, “in using purposive sampling, the writers use their decision to choose a sample which they believe, based on earlier information provides the data they require” (Fraenkel et al., 2012, p. 100). It means that the writer should select the sample in this study based on her judgment that the sample gave the data needed. Besides that, the sample selected should be specified based on the purposes of this study. Therefore, this study took the English teacher and 22 students in class VII-B in the seventh grade of an Islamic Junior High School in Tasikmalaya as research participants. The students were applied because they often faced difficulties in learning vocabulary. In addition, the English teacher implemented Word Chain Game to overcome their difficulties in learning vocabulary.

The writer collected the data by using three instruments to investigate the issues, namely the observation, the interview, and the questionnaires. This study was carried out through the following steps. Before distributing the research instruments, the writer gathered the English teacher and the students in class VII-B in the seventh grade of an Islamic Junior High School in Tasikmalaya to conduct this study. After collecting the English teacher and the students, the writer observed the process of teaching and learning vocabulary by implementing Word Chain Game. The writer was a non-participant observer who did not participate in the activity being observed but recorded the all activities of teaching and learning vocabulary by implementing the Word Chain Game. Furthermore, the observation was conducted for three sessions. Therefore, the writer prepared a digital camera to record the classroom activities being observed.

After conducting the observation, the interview was conducted with the English teacher to check and verify the results of the observation. In conducting the interview, the writer acted as the interviewer and the teacher acted as the interviewee. At the same time, all interview conversations were also recorded by the writer. In this case, the interview consisted of five (5) questions which were adapted from Hasibuan and Lase (2018, pp. 48-51). Furthermore, the questions and the answers of the interview were also recorded by the writer.

Besides that, the questionnaires were also distributed to 22 students in class VII-B which was conducted on the 23rd of April 2022. The questionnaires consisted of ten (10) items that were adapted and edited from Hashemi (2021, p. 157). In distributing the questionnaires, the writer prepared close-ended questionnaires. Besides, two responses “YES” and “NO” were provided to limit students’ answers. Then, the questionnaires were given to the students by explaining how to answer the questionnaires first. In filling out the questionnaires, the students should respond to the items by marking checklist [√] in the response’s column that consisted of ‘Yes’ or ‘No’. After that, the writer collected the questionnaires after the students finished

answering them. Finally, the data taken from the observation, the interview, and the questionnaires were processed using data generalization and interpretation the data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data obtained from the observation, the interview, and the questionnaires were analyzed to answer the following research questions: 1) The Teacher's Steps on the Implementation of Word Chain Game in Teaching and Learning Vocabulary; 2) The Teacher and Students' Perceptions of the Implementation of Word Chain Game in Teaching and Learning Vocabulary. The answers will be elaborated in the following organization:

The teacher's steps on the implementation of Word Chain Game in teaching and learning vocabulary

As stated in the first chapter, research question number one in this study was stated in the following question: "How does the teacher implement Word Chain Game in teaching and learning vocabulary?" Thus, the writer used triangulation to process the results of the observation and interview from the first (1) and the second (2) interview questions to answer the first research question. It was aimed at figuring out the teacher's steps on the implementation of the Word Chain Game in teaching and learning vocabulary.

The results of the observation had been analyzed and triangulated with the results of the interview on the first and the second questions to find the answer to the first research question. The findings showed that the teacher implemented Word Chain Game in teaching and learning vocabulary in the classroom. In this case, ten steps of the Word Chain Game were implemented by the teacher in teaching and learning vocabulary. Those steps were quite similar to the steps in conducting Word Chain Game in teaching vocabulary which were proposed by Muhammad et al. (2021, p. 31).

In the first step, the teacher introduced briefly the definition and the steps of the Word Chain Game to the students before implementing it in teaching and learning vocabulary in the classroom. In the second step, the teacher discussed briefly the topics of teaching and learning vocabulary with the students. In the third step, both the teacher and the students wrote down the words to be played in the Word Chain Game related to the topics. In the fourth step, the teacher instructed them to pronounce all the unfamiliar words they had written before. It was done to enable them to know how to pronounce the words and their meanings. In the fifth step, the teacher instructed them to make small groups before implementing Word Chain Game in teaching and learning vocabulary. Thus, each group had four to six students in accordance with the teacher's decision. Likewise, the students should be alienated into several groups by the teacher before using Word Chain Game (Muhammad et al., 2021, p. 36).

In the sixth step, the teacher determined different topics or categories of the words played by every group before starting to implement the Word Chain Game. In the seventh step, the teacher also re-explained the steps of implementing the Word Chain Game to all groups. In this regard, the teacher instructed them to increase a word engaging the last letter of the previous work in the group for about 10 minutes. In the eighth step, the teacher instructed one of the groups to begin playing Word Chain Game. It was done by stating their topic and adding a word using the last letter of the previous work. In the ninth step, the teacher also instructed the other groups to begin playing Word Chain Game. In the last step, the teacher reviewed Word Chain Game that has been played by the students and guided them to correct the answer. In line with

this, when a chain has been finished, discuss the words used and ask students to give an explanation about the word(s) that they contributed (Hasibuan & Lase, 2018, p. 49).

The teacher and students' perceptions of the implementation of Word Chain Game in teaching and learning vocabulary

As stated in the first chapter, the second research question in this study was implied in the research question, as follows: "What are the teacher and students' perceptions on the implementation of the Word Chain Game in teaching and learning vocabulary?" In this study, the writer triangulated the results of the interview from the third (3) to the fifth (5) questions and the results of the questionnaires to answer the second research question. Its purpose was to analyze the teacher and student's perceptions of the implementation of the Word Chain Game in teaching and learning vocabulary.

The interview result from the third to the fifth questions had been analyzed and triangulated with the results of the questionnaires to answer the second research question. The findings showed that the teacher perceived the application of the Word Chain Game was beneficial for the students in learning vocabulary because it enabled them to collaborate with their groups easily, remember words and their meanings, and be active in the process of teaching and learning vocabulary. Nevertheless, it could also bring some difficulties for the students because some of them are still shy to describe or pronounce the words. Besides that, some of them still did not pay attention and were passive in the activity. In addition, some of them are still confused and worried to play Word Chain Games in front of other students. To solve the barriers, the teacher motivated and guided them to pronounce and remember vocabulary words. Besides that, she also promoted students' interest and motivation in learning vocabulary and creating interactive and effective experiences. Similarly, teachers must create something interesting and attractive to fulfill students' interest, and interesting lessons using interactive activities, and inspiration for their better and higher motivation (Sarip et al., 2021, p. 7).

To confirm the teacher's perceptions, the students also perceived the application of the Word Chain Game as a game that allowed them to increase knowledge, mastery, participation, interest, and motivation in learning vocabulary. Besides that, it enabled them to remember new vocabulary words, increase their active participation in learning vocabulary, and save time. However, it could be stressful because they did not remember a set of vocabulary words, improved their students' boredom because it was frequently implemented by the teacher, and was very difficult to do because it was done quickly and needed high concentration, and did not know what vocabulary words that must be remembered. Likewise, in a study conducted by Firmansyah and Adi (2015, p. 4), most students did not get many problems mentioning the words, but they did get the problem when they had to describe their words.

This study focused on investigating the implementation of a Word Chain Game to teach vocabulary in an Islamic Junior High School. The results of the observation had been correlated and processed using triangulation with the results of the first and the second interview to answer the first research question. The findings could be concluded that Word Chain Game was conducted by the teacher in teaching and learning vocabulary through ten steps:

Firstly, the definition and the steps of the Word Chain Game to the students were introduced by the teacher. Secondly, the topics of teaching and learning vocabulary were also discussed by the teacher with the students. Thirdly, the words to be played were written down by the teacher and the students. Fourthly, they were instructed to pronounce all the unfamiliar

words. Fifthly, they were instructed to make small groups of four to six students. Sixthly, different topic or category of the words played by every group was determined by the teacher. Seventhly, the steps of the Word Chain Game were also re-explained to all groups. Eighthly, one of the groups was instructed to begin playing Word Chain Game. Ninthly, other groups were also instructed to begin playing Word Chain Game. Lastly, Word Chain Game that has been played by the students was reviewed and guided by the teacher to correct the answer.

Those steps were quite the same dominantly as the steps in implementing Word Chain Game in teaching vocabulary which were proposed by Muhammad et al. (2021, p. 31). The different steps between both this study and their studies lay on some steps. In a study conducted by Muhammad et al. (2021, p. 31), the teacher assisted other groups to correct their friends' answers and asked them to make several sentences relevant to the topic. In this study, however, the teacher did not give them a chance to other groups to correct other groups' answers and did not ask them to make several sentences relevant to the topic.

The interview result from the third to the fifth questions had been correlated and analyzed using triangulation with the questionnaire result to answer the second research question. The findings could be concluded that the teacher and the students had positive perceptions of the implementation of the Word Chain Game in teaching and learning vocabulary. In this regard, it enabled them to collaborate with their groups easily, to remember words and their meanings, and to be active in the process of teaching and learning vocabulary. Besides that, it enabled them to improve their knowledge, mastery, participation, interest, and motivation in learning vocabulary. In addition, it enabled them to remember new vocabulary words, increase their active participation in learning vocabulary, and save time.

Nevertheless, it could also bring some difficulties for the students because some of them are still shy to describe or pronounce the words. Besides that, some of them still did not pay attention and were passive in the activity. In addition, some of them are still confused and worried to play Word Chain Games in front of other students. As result, it could be stressful because they did not remember a set of vocabulary words, which improved their students' boredom, and was very difficult to do because it was done quickly and needed high concentration, and did not know what vocabulary words must be remembered.

To solve the barriers, the teacher motivated and guided them to pronounce and remember vocabulary words. Besides that, she also promoted students' interest and motivation in learning vocabulary and creating interactive and effective experiences. Similarly, teachers have to create something interesting and attractive to meet students' interest, attractive lessons via communicative activity, and inspire their better and higher motivation (Sarip et al., 2021, p. 7).

To support the findings of the present study, some previous studies also have found that the implementation of the Word Chain Game brings some positive impacts on teaching and learning vocabulary. One of them is a study from Hashemi (2021) who found that employing games is effective and beneficial for teaching vocabulary in reading comprehension. The findings of the previous study conducted by Hashemi (2021) also supported the findings of the present study which found that the implementation of the Word Chain Game was beneficial for the teacher and the students in teaching and learning vocabulary.

However, there were some differences between the previous study that was initially conducted and this study. The previous study conducted by Hashemi (2021) did not investigate the teacher's steps as well as the students' perceptions of the implementation of the Word Chain Game in teaching and learning vocabulary. Furthermore, Hashemi (2021) focused on exploring

the effects of using games to teach vocabulary in reading comprehension. However, this study investigated the teacher's steps as well as the students' perceptions of the implementation of the Word Chain Game in teaching and learning vocabulary. Other differences, Hashemi (2021) applied mixed-method research by employing pre-test, post-test, and a semi-structured interview to collect the data. In contrast, the recent study applied a case study by employing observation, interviews, and questionnaires to collect the data.

Furthermore, the study about the implementation of a Word Chain Game to teach vocabulary was also conducted by Medina et al. (2021) who found that using a word chain game could improve the students' vocabulary mastery. The findings of the previous study conducted by Medina et al. (2021) also supported the findings of the present study which found that the implementation of the Word Chain Game enabled the students to improve their knowledge, mastery, participation, interest, and motivation in learning vocabulary.

Nevertheless, there were some differences between the previous study that was initially conducted and this study. The previous study conducted by Medina et al. (2021) did not investigate the teacher's steps as well as the students' perceptions of the implementation of the Word Chain Game in teaching and learning vocabulary. Furthermore, Medina et al. (2021) focused on improving students' vocabulary by using Word Chain Game. However, this study investigated the teacher's steps as well as the students' perceptions of the implementation of the Word Chain Game in teaching and learning vocabulary. Other differences, Medina et al. (2021) applied a quasi-experimental method by employing a multiple-choice test to collect the data. In contrast, the recent study applied a case study by employing observation, interviews, and questionnaires to collect the data.

Other researchers, a study about the application of a Word Chain Game to teach vocabulary was also conducted by Ramadani et al. (2020) who found that there is a substantial enhancement in the student's vocabulary after being educated using Word Chain Game. The findings of the previous study conducted by Ramadani et al. (2020) also supported the findings of the current study which revealed that the implementation of the Word Chain Game might improve the student's vocabulary knowledge and mastery.

However, there were some differences between the previous study that was initially conducted and this study. The previous study carried out by Ramadani et al. (2020) did not investigate the teacher's steps as well as the students' perceptions of the application of the Word Chain Game in teaching and learning vocabulary. Furthermore, Ramadani et al. (2020) focused on investigating the impact of the Word Chain Game in improving the student's vocabulary mastery. However, this study investigated the teacher's steps as well as the students' perceptions of the implementation of the Word Chain Game in teaching and learning vocabulary. Other differences, Ramadani et al. (2020) applied a quasi-experimental method by employing a writing test to collect the data. In contrast, the recent study applied a case study by employing observation, interview, and questionnaires to collect the data.

Additionally, a study about the application of a Word Chain Game to teach vocabulary was also conducted by Fitriani and Sitepu (2018) who found that Word Chain Game is effectively and positively taught to the first-grade students of SMK Swasta Abdi Negara Binjai in teaching vocabulary. The findings of the related study carried out by Fitriani and Sitepu (2018) also backed up the findings of the current study which found that the teacher and the students perceived positively the application of the Word Chain Game in vocabulary teaching and learning.

Nevertheless, there were some differences between the previous study that was initially conducted and this study. The related study carried out by Fitriani and Sitepu (2018) did not investigate the teacher's steps as well as the students' perceptions of the application of the Word Chain Game in teaching and learning vocabulary. Furthermore, Fitriani and Sitepu (2018) paid more attention to the influence of Word Chain Games on students' vocabulary mastery and students' achievement in learning vocabulary through Word Chain Games. However, this study investigated the teacher's steps as well as the students' perceptions of the application of the Word Chain Game in vocabulary teaching and learning. Other differences, Fitriani and Sitepu (2018) applied a quantitative method by employing pre-test and post-test to collect the data. In contrast, the recent study applied a case study by employing observation, interviews, and questionnaires to collect the data.

Meanwhile, a study about the application of Word Chain Game to teach vocabulary was also carried out by Hasibuan and Lase (2018) who found that Word Chain Game has a good effect on vocabulary mastery. The findings of the previous study carried out by Hasibuan and Lase (2018) also supported the findings of the current study which found that the application of the Word Chain Game could advance the student's vocabulary knowledge and ability.

Nevertheless, there were some differences between the previous study that was initially conducted and this study. The related study carried out by Hasibuan and Lase (2018) did not investigate the teacher's steps as well as the students' perceptions of the application of the Word Chain Game in vocabulary teaching and learning. Furthermore, Hasibuan and Lase (2018) focused on finding out if there is an essential effect of the Word Chain Game on students' vocabulary ability among students of grade seven in SMP Negeri 1 Pandan. However, this study investigated the teacher's steps as well as the students' perceptions of the implementation of the Word Chain Game in teaching and learning vocabulary. Other differences, Hasibuan and Lase (2018) applied a pre-experimental research design by employing an observation sheet and test to collect the data. In contrast, the recent study applied a case study by employing observation, interviews, and questionnaires to collect the data.

In addition, a study about the application of a Word Chain Game in teaching vocabulary was also carried out by Muhammad et al. (2021) who found that the application of a Word Chain Game in teaching vocabulary turned out to be effective in teaching vocabulary mastery. The findings of the related study conducted by Muhammad et al. (2021) also supported the findings of the present study which found that the implementation of a Word Chain Game in teaching and learning vocabulary could improve the student's vocabulary knowledge and mastery.

However, there were some differences between the previous study that was initially conducted and this study. The related study carried out by Muhammad et al. (2021) did not investigate the teacher's steps as well as the students' perceptions of the implementation of the Word Chain Game in teaching and learning vocabulary. Furthermore, Muhammad et al. (2021) focused on the application of the Word Chain Game in teaching vocabulary ability. However, this study investigated the teacher's steps as well as the students' perceptions of the application of the Word Chain Game in vocabulary teaching and learning. Other differences, Muhammad et al. (2021) applied scientific writing to collect the data. In contrast, the recent study applied a case study by employing observation, interviews, and questionnaires to collect the data.

CONCLUSIONS

This study is focused on investigating the implementation of a Word Chain Game to teach vocabulary in an Islamic Junior High School in Tasikmalaya. In this regard, there are two main points to answer the research questions. The first main point showed that there were ten steps used by the teacher in implementing Word Chain Game in teaching and learning vocabulary in the classroom. The next result showed that the implementation of the Word Chain Game was useful in teaching and learning vocabulary as alleged by the teacher and the students. In this case, it enhanced students' knowledge, ability, participation, interest, and motivation in learning vocabulary. On the contrary, few of them are still passive, shy, confused, and worried to take part in it. To solve the barriers, the teacher motivates, guides, and supports their interest and motivation in learning vocabulary. It is suggested that English teachers should engage the students to implement Word Chain Games in teaching vocabulary. However, the students should be encouraged and cheerful in learning vocabulary by having Word Chain Game. The result of the present study is beneficial for other researchers and further studies because it provides precious references and information.

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