

## **Integrating Interactive Games into Young Learners Vocabulary Learning: A Case Study of Charity School**

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### **Abstract**

This study examined the effects of interactive games on the participation of young EFL learners and the characteristics of games that enhance young learners' participation and vocabulary learning. The participants were 6 low participating EFL learners in Grade 2 who practiced English vocabulary via three selected interactive games in 6 weeks. Data were collected from classroom observations and an interview with the class teacher and the teacher assistant. The findings revealed that the games which can enhance participation and vocabulary learning must consist of concrete vocabulary that are related to learners' stage of development and their learning environment, colorful images, sound and music, with an appropriate level of difficulty and a scaffolding process. The study recommended that the selection of games for young learners should consider the level of learners' abilities, strategies of games, learners' stages of development and also students' choices. Moreover, although games may be able to inherently engage learners' motivation, they cannot always be used without teachers' guides and appropriate teaching and learning plans.

**Keywords:** Young Learners, English as a Foreign Language, Vocabulary Learning,

Learners' Participation, Interactive Games.

### **Introduction**

This study focuses on English language learning of primary school students at a charity school in the south of Thailand. This school is limited in its resources regarding both teachers and teaching and learning supplies. At this school, there are specific problems relating to ineffective instructions of English vocabulary, which include the lack of teaching materials, the minimum number of experienced teachers, the low incentive for teachers, the lack of foreign teachers, and those problems resulted in the low participation of students. Young learners at this primary school (Grade 2) studied English two days per week with teachers who were mostly retirees from local private schools. These teachers employed traditional teacher-centered teaching methods. They relied mainly on the school's textbooks and all lessons must follow the prescribed study plans. Due to the teaching methods that were inappropriate for young learners and the lack of support, students were not engaged or participative in learning English. These problems definitely led to the low learning outcomes of these young learners.

This study aimed to improve this group of young learners' English language learning conditions so as to increase their participation in learning based on an assumption that young learners should start from learning English vocabulary because it suits their cognitive development rather than starting by learning complicated grammar. Besides, vocabulary is the foundation of communication. Wilkins (1972) stated that it is impossible to convey communication without vocabulary knowledge. If learners mainly focus on studying grammar, their English skills will not improve much. In contrast, learners will see improvement when they learn more words and expressions. To develop the vocabulary building process, learners need to practice by using the vocabulary they already know, as well as new vocabulary they have learned. According to Piaget (1952), children begin to develop cognitive maturity at the preoperational stage (2-7 years old). At such a young age, children learn words that are related

to concrete objects that they can see around them (Cameron, 2001). They do not comprehend abstract ideas such as grammar.

The teachers at this school found it hard to teach vocabulary and they usually resorted to using supplementary CDs that came with the book. They only employed traditional teaching methods which included playing the long CD and VDO lessons and letting the students listen and drawing pictures and writing words on the blackboard and explaining word meanings. It was obvious that such a teaching method could not hold students' attention and could not enhance their participation. Moreover, there was only one teacher in each class without assistance. It could be very hard for one teacher to control all students and to motivate them at the same time with 50 students in class. Furthermore, the English class lasted three hours, which could be quite long for young learners to sit through such a duration, especially with an instruction that did not suit them. It is thus important to explore an alternative teaching method that can assist the teachers and students to learn more effectively.

Online and offline interactive games were introduced to an English vocabulary class at this school to address the above problems. Interactive games can be an additional technological tool that motivates young learners especially when teachers lack some creative and innovative instructions. The use of interactive games should give the young learners an opportunity to enjoy learning vocabulary in the classroom and develop a positive attitude at the primary level. Besides, they provide authentic inputs for young learners to be exposed to. However, interactive games cannot be used to substitute teachers. Specific strategies suitable to young learners are required to create learners' attention and participation.

There are several aspects that one needs to be concerned with when using games to promote second language (L2) vocabulary learning. Those aspects include L2 learning theories, games' strategies, characteristics of games, and skills that games can promote. The three games implemented in this study were two online games called 'Spellasaurus' taken from Sheppard

software, and 'Mega Mall' taken from the website [kidsspell.com](http://kidsspell.com), and an offline game 'Fast hand', which was downloadable from [www.gamestolearnenglish.com](http://www.gamestolearnenglish.com). They were selected on the underlying background of Piaget's Stages of cognitive development, Krashen's hypotheses of language acquisition, zone of proximal development, and the related studies about vocabulary learning, learners' participation, and principles of using computer games in class. Each of the three games emphasizes key strategies that enhance vocabulary development; namely, repetition, pacing, spacing, imagination, and motivation (Miller, 2008; Scott & Ytreberg, 1995; Vygotsky, 1997), which are suitable to young learners in terms of age. Furthermore, game competitions consisting of aim, challenge, rules, and goal (Flores, 2015; Meyer, 2013; Wu, Chen, & Huan, 2014) were incorporated to vocabulary learning to create an entertaining atmosphere. To make the competitions more stimulating, the gamification techniques which are points and rewards were also used (Flores, 2015). Importantly, when using interactive games, the teachers have to be concerned about the characteristics of games that suit young learners. The three games contain animation, sound and music, appropriate levels, and scaffolding techniques. By using these interactive games, learners should have skill practices with spelling, listening, and pronunciation. These three main skills are prominent to vocabulary development of young learners, and it is also expected that the characteristics of games and vocabulary learning strategies provided in the games can increase young learners' class participation.

Besides game strategies and competition, the researcher conducted post-game activities as added-on practices. The post-game activities consisted of creating pictures from colored paper, drawing and guessing action verbs, drawing and writing about the rooms in the house and presenting them to the classmates, matching fruits and vegetables in pairs, and filling the vocabulary in the blank.

In conclusion, the researcher aimed to find out whether the use of games in vocabulary can enhance young learners' participation and to find out the characteristics of games that can enhance young learners' vocabulary learning. It is expected that the characteristics of games and vocabulary learning strategies provided in the games would increase young learners' class participation.

### **Research Objectives**

This study was pursued to achieve two main objectives: a) to investigate the effects of the use of interactive English vocabulary games in young learners' participation in class; and b) to examine the characteristics of interactive games that can promote young learners' vocabulary learning.

### **Research Questions**

This study aimed to examine the responses to the following questions:

- a) To what extent do English vocabulary interactive games enhance young learners' participation in vocabulary learning?
- b) What are the characteristics of interactive games that can promote young learners' vocabulary learning?

### **Literature Review**

#### **Characteristics of Young Learners**

There are several characteristics that make young learners different from adult learners. In order to create an appropriate curriculum, there must be activities and classroom atmosphere for children so that they can acquire a second language effectively, and teachers should understand the notion of learner differences, the principles of children development, and the characteristics of children at different stages of development.

Faulkner and Coates (2011) stated that young learners are students from Grade 4 up to Grade 6 in elementary school. Young learners are able to learn by themselves from the

environment and they are motivated to be involved in the learning process by exploring immediate settings (Piaget, 1952). In the Zone of Proximal Development—ZPD (Vygotsky, 1978), young learners learn from interacting with people around them. Doing activities within ZPD helps children develop their capability to resolve problems and learn effectively through guidance and support from adults.

### **Benefits of Using Interactive Games in Young EFL Classrooms**

Games are sources of motivation and challenges. There are some studies that reveal the usefulness of games for learning. First, games can provide opportunities for all skills of language practices. Practicality and enjoyment of games can engage learners and maintain their effort in learning (Leaning, 2015). Darfilal (2015), who studied about the effectiveness of using language games in teaching vocabulary of Middle School Learners, recommended that language games can promote learners' vocabulary development especially in memorization and psychological aspects. In addition, according to Benoit (2017), game-based learning provides learning strategies that can help learners increase, practice, and apply new knowledge intrinsically. Games can also increase students' participation, interaction and promote active learning. Khatibi and Cowie (2013) clarified that games were motivating because they allow students to learn together in a friendly atmosphere. Besides, games help improve students' communicative skills. Some vocabulary games can bring the real world into the classroom, and enhance students' use of English in a meaningful way. Computer games are effective in controlling learners into language learning since young learners are imaginative, creative and learn subconsciously (Ashrafa, Motlaghb & Salamic, 2014). Moreover, teaching young learners needs amusement and challenge by the teacher. Thus, games can be one of the most effective ways to achieve this.

## **Vocabulary Strategies for Young Learners**

Some research findings from Miller, (2008), Scott and Ytreberg (1995), and Vygotsky (1978) have suggested useful strategies for teaching vocabulary to young children as follows.

### ***Repetition***

This is memorizing new words through practicing rehearsal of the vocabulary while it is still working memory because it tends to have a long-term effect. When reading vocabulary, there is a good chance words will be remembered if they have been seen at least several times over again.

### ***Retrieval Practice***

This means the act of practicing vocabulary from memory makes the learners able to recall it again later. Retrieval Activities include using the new words in written sentences.

### ***Spacing***

When teaching learners a new set of words, it is best to practice two to three times, go back and test, then present some more so that each word becomes crystalized and the testing can gradually be extended. Generally, after every lesson, the presented vocabulary should be reviewed in the next lesson.

### ***Pacing***

Learners have different learning styles and learn at different rates. Therefore, learners have to start practicing by themselves and teachers should provide words to solve circumstantial problems. This may mean the teacher allows time during vocabulary learning for learners to do memory work such as organizing or reviewing their vocabulary individually.

### ***Use***

Learners have to use words in some interesting ways which can encourage them to add those words to their long-term memory. It is better for them to use those words rather than lose them.

### ***Imaging***

Using visual clues is more memorable than words that do not relate with a picture. It might help learners by learning vocabulary that is associated with some images.

### ***Motivation***

When learners learn new words, there is no guarantee that learners will succeed. Using strong motivation tasks or techniques will make learners want to spend more time on practicing vocabulary.

### ***Learners' Participation***

In classroom context, participation is the dynamic interaction between teacher and students (Larson, 1996). According to Mortensen, (2008) social factors, such as the teacher's and students' genders, cultural backgrounds, and ages, along with organizational factors, such as class size and attendance, may influence student participation. At school, the classroom should provide the opportunity for students to participate 'actively'. Students should also take part in their own learning process. Participation reflects how the students understand the situation in which they are engaged and how the activities are collaboratively organized. From Vygotsky's theory, 'Peer to Peer Interaction' is one of the best ways to implement children interaction in the classroom. In the peer to peer situations, students work in pairs or small groups. It provides students the opportunity to share their ideas with one another, views, and opinions to see their participation. It creates a non-threatening and relaxing environment. It shows that students feel comfortable asking questions and merging ideas with friends and teachers. The peer to peer interaction shows that students are likely to listen to one another during the interaction. These are all forms of active participation in the classroom.

In this study, participation consists of learners' involvement and encouragement in group learning performances by using their interactional skills, consistent focus, confidence, and problem-solving skills while they are learning in the classroom.

## **Methodology**

### **Research Design**

This research employed a qualitative method, attempting to find out the extent to which interactive games can promote young learners' vocabulary participation and the characteristics of interactive games that promote L2 young learners vocabulary acquisition. The data were collected from 1) observation of young learners' participation in EFL and vocabulary learning class, and 2) the interviews with the teacher and teacher assistant.

### **Participants**

The study involved six Grade 2 students at a charity school, which was located in the south of Thailand. The student participants were purposively selected by the class teacher based on their English achievement and their low-participating behavior.

### **Research Instruments**

This study employed 4 research instruments as follows.

#### ***Vocabulary Games and Their Characteristics***

The three games, 'Mega Mall', 'Spellasaurus' and an offline game 'Fast Hand', contain strategies that are related to the learning theories as shown in the table below.

**Table 1**

*Descriptions of the three games and their characteristics pertaining to vocabulary acquisition.*

<b>Theories/ Concepts</b>	<b>Mega Mall</b>	<b>Fast Hand</b>	<b>Spellasaurus</b>
1. Comprehensible input (Combination of Inputs)	Illustrations and listening.	Illustrations, listening, and narrating.	Illustrations and spelling model.
2. Vocabulary Acquisition	All games are presented in visual images, and are divided into categories according to complexities of meanings, learners' experience.		

<b>Theories/ Concepts</b>	<b>Mega Mall</b>	<b>Fast Hand</b>	<b>Spellasaurus</b>
3. Cognitive development	All three games are suitable to the participants' ages. They help to develop young learners' thinking process from the preoperational stage to the concrete operational stage (Piaget, 1952).		
4. Scaffolding	<p>Mega Mall: When the player clicks a wrong picture, the narrator will repeat on what she needs. If the player selects the wrong one, the narrator will shake her head.</p> <p>Fast Hand: when a player chooses a wrong picture, the unrelated-pictures will disappear, and there will be only 2-3 pictures left for the player to choose.</p> <p>Spellasaurus: the game provides three chances for the player to beat the game. The correct letters will be shown in different colors which will help the player to notice them.</p>		
5. Vocabulary Categories	1. Shapes 2. Colors 3. Stationaries 4. Verbs	1. Body 1-2 2. Animals 3. Animals	1. Family 2. Location
6. Practical skills	1. Listening skills	1. Listening skills 2. Pronunciation skills	1. Spelling
7. Vocabulary Strategies used in the three games	1. Repetition 2. Pacing 3. Spacing 4. imaging 5. motivation		

There were some strategies of these three games that were theoretical in nature. The three games provided modified input in the form of words with illustrations and narration. They contained vocabulary that the students had learnt from Grade one. These words are concrete words that are related to students' environment such as body parts, animals, family and so on. The games were implemented with scaffolding and vocabulary strategies in their procedure. All games were presented in colorful visual images and sounds that attracted students' attention. The researcher and teachers allocated space and pace for students to play

the games with friends and practice vocabulary by themselves. The students practiced their vocabulary by using games for 1 hour per week. Apart from vocabulary, the games provided an opportunity for young learners to develop listening and speaking skills. Lastly, by letting young learners work as a team, the team members developed their cognitive thinking since they had to think of what to do and make decisions by themselves and accept the agreement among friends.

### ***Observation Checklist***

The observation took place twice during the implementation of the three games and post-game activities. The observation checklist covered the students' participation behavior including consistent focus, interactional behavior, confidence and problem-solving skills during the games in every week. The researcher and a peer observer used the observation checklist to note the students' recorded behavior during class participation.

### ***Teacher and Teacher Assistant Interview***

The interview aimed to find out the students' participation behaviors and the characteristics of interactive games that suit young learners' participation in vocabulary learning. The interview consisted of 2 main questions. The first question was to find out about the participation in the game of young learners. The second question was to find out the characteristics of games and suitable games for young learners. The interview questions were adapted from Darfilal (2015), who studied about the effectiveness of using language games in teaching vocabulary to Middle School Learners. The researchers had not included students to take part in the interview because students in this study were young, aged between 7- 8 years old. They may not be able to articulate on the effect of their learning fully.

### **Data Collection and Data Analysis**

The data were collected during six weeks of class, which was from 3<sup>rd</sup> of August, 2018 to the 31<sup>st</sup> of September 2018. The three games were introduced to English teachers before

being implemented in the class. The game experiment was conducted during class activities every Friday. The main lessons conducted by the teacher were 2 hours long. The interactive games were used after the main lesson in class to stimulate the students and maintain an enthusiastic atmosphere. Each of the games took 10-15 minutes. During the games and post-game activities, the English teacher, the researcher, and the teacher assistant were in class to observe students' participation.

At the end of the game implementation, the researcher had an interview with the class teacher and the teacher assistant to elicit their opinions about students' participation and the characteristics of games that promote their participation and vocabulary learning.

The recorded interview and observation were transcribed and summarized by the researcher and the peer observer according to the two key themes: participations and characteristics of games. The observation during the games consisted of students' behavior in staying in assigned area, not playing with other things, focusing on the screen, playing the games well with peers, starting the games by him/herself without teacher's force, solving the problems that he/she faced in the games on his/her own or with peers, and being able to continue the game until it ends. The observation during the post-game activities consists of staying in the assigned area, completing the assessment on time, not playing with other things, focusing on the assignment, interacting and exchanging ideas with peers and with teacher and teacher assistant, answering questions during class activities, and participating in singing and dancing activities.

### **The Findings and the Discussion**

The findings and the discussion can be presented in twofold:

#### **The students' Participation in Vocabulary Learning**

From the observation during the three games, with regard to the students' consistent focus, it can be concluded that most of participants stayed in the assigned area. All participants

were engaged in the game although in the first two weeks, they sometimes seemed distracted by other things outside the classroom. Some participants lost their focus and ended up walking around the room. Four participants stayed with the game until it was completed while the other two participants rushed to lunch before finishing the game. The strategies that were applied to Mega Mall game were spacing, pacing and imaging. While students had played this game, they took time to figure out which images have similar shapes to the sample. The strategies that were applied to Fast Hand game were repetition, pacing and motivation since students needed to notice and match the vocabulary with the picture within the limited time. The strategies that were applied to Spellasaurus game were pacing, repetition and motivation. The students had to notice the alphabets, and at the same time, control the helicopter very quickly so they needed to pay high attention during this game. The three games required learners to repeat vocabulary practices. Furthermore, they learned vocabulary while playing games by watching and matching the vocabulary and the images on the screen. Then, the students were motivated by the post-game activities, during which they were drawing pictures from words, singing and dancing along. The songs that they sang were related to the class's vocabulary that they have learned such as songs of 'Fruits and vegetables' and 'Preposition'.

Regarding the interactional skill, five participants played the game well with peers while one participant did not seem to get along well with friends since he fought with his friends sometimes due to his disturbance during the game's section. For student confidence and problem-solving skills, all participants played the games by themselves without teacher's force. However, only one participant could solve problems by himself while the other five needed help from friends, the teacher and the assistant. Most of the students seemed to have problems with the Fast Hand game as they had to beat the game in limited time. They also had trouble with the Spellasaurus game because the helicopter animation in this game was difficult to

control and some students could not remember English alphabets that would be used to form words.

In all three games, the students were highly engaged and participative although in Fast Hand, which is a time-beating game, students seemed to be stressed. Most of the students stayed in the assigned area, played the games well with peers, and started the games by themselves. Still, they were not able to solve the problems during the games.

During the post-game activity session, which was a follow-up activity of the game playing, comprising drawing, singing and dancing, it was found that four participants cooperated well with friends in the group work and pair work sessions while the other two seemed to have some problems with the unknown vocabulary. During the pair work (matching picture with vocabulary), all participants helped their partners to complete the task. It was evident that the participants could apply some vocabulary from the games into the activity. For example, they had chosen a correct preposition of place to put in a sentence. All participants liked to share their opinions with their peers and the observer rather than with the teacher.

In addition, it was also found that the participation and the interest of students depended on the games they played and the difficulty of the games. If they knew how to play the game, they would play it until the end. Four learners could use the vocabulary that they learned from the lesson in the post-game activities while the other two seemed to need more time and help from friends and the assistant to complete to task since they could not recognize the vocabulary.

The results of the study show that interactive games can promote students' participation. The results are similar to the previous studies by Gruss (2016), which is about using games as a tool for teaching English vocabulary to five and six-year-old learners. All of the games and activities the participants had learnt were about colors, shapes and numbers, one of which was

retrieved from the Kidspell website. The results show that almost all learners knew at least four names of colors and were able to make visual association between the way the color words were pronounced and the way it looked.

Moreover, the result of this current study is also similar to the study by Bakhsh (2016), which studied the use of games as a tool in teaching vocabulary to young learners. This study found that games can be an effective tool to help explain vocabularies as they make it easier for learners to remember vocabulary meanings. Moreover, this study also supports the research by Kähärä (2017), which examined early L2 vocabulary acquisition via the Internet games. This study explored the impact of Internet video games (Clash of Clans, Counter Strike and FIFA), on early L2 vocabulary acquisition. The students were 10-13 years old. It was found that internet games seem to provide a fascinating and exceptional environment for second language vocabulary acquisition. In addition to regular nouns being used as labels for objects, the players receive advanced vocabulary and context-dependent register items.

According to Piaget (1952), regarding the stages of development, at the preoperational stage, the cognitive thinking moves towards symbolical stages. At this stage, children begin to develop imagination and make sense of things, which relates to Mega Mall and Fast Hand games. The participants started playing the games in this study, from easy games to the most difficult one. The first game was an easy game for the participants since there were only images and the participants had only listened to the speaker. In the second game, the vocabulary was shown in text and sound. In the third game, there was vocabulary in the corners in singular/plurals forms so the participants had to spell them correctly. The order of difficulty of each game was arranged according to the learners' stages of development so it can facilitate their learning and participation. The three types of inputs in the study were the interactive

games, the speed of Fast Hand game, and Spellasaurus game. These were the challenges for the participants.

In this study, the participants acquired the vocabulary when they joined the activities with friends. During that time, they could remember the words that they had learned from the games. Before the students played the three games, the researcher determined their English level by encouraging them to use natural learning strategies such as drawing things that they have learned and guessing vocabulary from visual clues. In addition, the researcher observed the students' needs in order to select the input that was suitable to the large class of mixed ability, and different learners. The Mega Mall game helped them to recall the lesson they learned in their Grade 1. This game was about shapes and colors which was easy for the students since they passed it without difficulty. When proceeding to the Fast Hand game, students explored more vocabulary in different categories such as prepositions and Body. They practiced making a decision when matching the pictures with words and listening to the pronunciation. The last game, Spellasaurus, was the most challenging for the students since this game is one step beyond their abilities. In this game, the students needed to recall vocabulary that they had learned in both class and activities sections and put the alphabets in the correct order.

Affective filter factors also play a role in this study. High anxiety was noticed from the observation. Some students looked stressed while trying to beat the time in the Fast Hand game. According to Krashen (1985), the high Affective Filter will prevent learners from learning. Affective Filter includes motivation, self-confidence and anxiety. Krashen claims that learners learn well with high motivation, self-confidence, a good sense of self-image, and a low level of anxiety. From the study, the participants' anxiety may be the reason why they did not vote for the Fast Hand game as their favorite one.

However, the students had shared their ideas and cooperated with others quite well. The teacher assistant and the researcher had approached the participants by trying to talk to them first and getting to know them. Their affective filters became lower when the participants enjoyed playing the interactive games without teacher's force, and with teachers and friends' support. They were less stressed and worried.

According to Vygotsky (1978)'s Zone of proximal development, when the learners are in the panic zone, they cannot sort out the problems by themselves so they need a more knowledgeable person to help them. Moreover, the results suggested that one significant learning strategy the students employed was asking peers when they encountered problems. They sought for assistance from others. As illustrated in Vygotsky (1978)'s ZPD, students learned a lot more if they were given aid by teachers or peers.

To restate and confirm, interactive games can motivate learners via the challenge of competition. They help engage users in the learning and activities session when the learner is competing for a high score, which includes elements of strategies and challenge of levels in the interactive games. Besides, the different levels of complexity can reveal the player's ability. They also help students improve their focus and self-esteem. Lastly, interactive games basically motivate students to learn.

### **Characteristics of Games That Can Enhance Young Learners' Vocabulary Learning**

This part discussed the characteristics of games that suit young learners in order to respond to research question 2. At the end of the week 6, the researcher asked students who had played the three games to vote on their favorite game so as to compare their responses with the teacher and the teacher assistant's interview. It was noted that the vote was casted from 26 students, which was the whole number of the class and were also the ones who had played the three games. The result shows that Mega Mall game was the one that students

liked the most (11 votes). The second vote went to Spellasaurus game (9 votes). The least favorite game was Fast Hand game (6 votes).

**Table 2**

*The Students' Votes for Their Favorite Games*

<b>Interactive Games</b>	<b>No. of Students (N=26)</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
1. Mega Mall	11	Most liked
2. Fast Hand	6	Least liked
3. Spellasaurus	9	Moderately liked

However, it was noticeable that what the teachers and the teacher assistant saw as appropriate games was different from the students' choice. Both of them felt that Fast Hand game was the most suitable game for young learners in this class because this game consisted of sound, flash card form, pictures and limited time which was suitable for these ages of students. In the same way, it provided various levels for students between 7-12 years old. The lesson in the game was related to students' daily lives. The vocabulary in the game was colorfully highlighted and the words were not too difficult for students.

Therefore, it could be said that in the teacher's view, the games that could enhance young learners' vocabulary must consist of colorful images, sound and music, levels, limited time, appropriate level of challenges and flash animation. This response was actually complied with the theories of Piaget's cognitive development, the language learning hypotheses made by Krashen, and Vygotsky's zone of proximal development.

Overall, the three games have all the characteristics that can enhance young learners' participation and vocabulary acquisition with their different aspects. To reiterate, the interactive games that suit young learners should have sound, flash card form, and pictures. However, competition and limited time are subject to teachers' consideration and should be employed

with care. Felix and Johnson (1993) supported that the characteristics of games for children including dynamic visuals, integration, rules and goals are the essential features of games for teaching young learners. Meyer (2013) agreed that the characteristics of interactive games that are good for language learning consist of seven dimensions; fantasy, rules/goals, sensory stimuli, challenge, interest, enjoyment, and control. Furthermore, the three games used in this study contained colorful images, music to motivate students, animated cartoons, challenges, and fun. The Fast Hand and Spellasaurus games have a time limit to challenge students. The games are of a basic level and not too hard or too complicated. The vocabulary is presented with clues and is related to students' environment or in the daily lives that are realistic and close to students' experiences, such as the vocabulary of occupations, things in the house, and stationary. The vocabulary is also related to the lessons. In this study, the three games also include scaffolding, visuals images, sound, vocabulary, music, time, rules, and goals.

According to the information from Leaning (2015), Meyer (2013), and Rojananak and Vitayapirak (2015), there are several reasons and advantages for using general games in the classroom. They can function as reinforcement, review, and enrichment. In this study, some additional benefits from playing the three games were the ways in which students learned to work with friends and dealt with problems. They also learned some new vocabulary in the games and made use of it in the class activity and class assignments. They had a chance to practice and repeat the same vocabulary from the previous lessons. However, only playing the games might not completely promote effective learning. In this study, there were post-games activities which aim to see more interaction of the participants and friends during the activities.

To conclude, this study reveals that young learners' participation can be enhanced by the use of interactive games and the scaffolded lessons that include a recognition of the proper stage of development, teacher and peer scaffolding, low affective filter tasks, lessons designed

and based on learners' schemas, and comprehensible input of learning materials. As mentioned in the findings, the characteristics of good games should consist of colorful visuals, music, and scaffold. In addition, the teacher may use the gamification techniques such as a point and badge to reward children. However, the interactive games to be used in the young learners' classroom must be carefully selected. The selection of games should be done with consideration of the level of learners' abilities, strategies of games, learners' stage of development and also students' choices. Although games may be used to engage learners' motivation to some extent, they cannot always provide appropriate learning experiences to learners, especially young learners that need special consideration and assistance in learning.

### **Limitations and Recommendations**

This study involved a small focus group in a specific setting. Besides, students may have different learning challenges from the ones in other contexts. The three games were selected to suit young learners in primary levels only. Although this study can provide some guidance in potential strategies of interactive games that can enhance English language learning, the results may be limited in terms of generalizability. Future study may consider examining effects of interactive games in higher levels of students and on other skills such as reading skills and writing skills.

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