

Games in Teaching English Vocabulary in EFL Context: Young Learners' Perceptions

Suhartawan Budianto¹, Nur Sayidah², Sucipto³

Universitas Dr. Soetomo, Surabaya, Indonesia

Universitas Dr. Soetomo, Surabaya, Indonesia

Universitas Dr. Soetomo, Surabaya, Indonesia

Email: suhartawan.budianto@unitomo.ac.id¹, nur.sayidah@unitomo.ac.id²,
sucipto@unitomo.ac.id³

Abstract

This study examined young learners' perceptions on using games and songs for learning English in EFL context. Many methods have been found to assist young learners in acquiring English as a foreign language. The students' perceptions were given from the questionnaire. The findings showed that most students had a positive attitude of used games and songs in teaching English in EFL context. It is recommended that both games and songs can be applied in teaching English for young learners in EFL context.

Keywords: *Applying; Games; Songs; EFL*

A. Introduction

It is believed that a lot of children like playing games and listening songs. They sometimes do those activities when spending their spare time. Therefore, many research have tried to apply games and songs in teaching language. It is expected that the young learners are excited during the class.

The previous studies have examined the efficacy of games in learning English for young learners in EFL context Ahmed et al., 2022; Amal Shehadeh Al Natour & Dima Hijazi, 2018; Behnamnia et al., 2020; Ben El Moudden, 2021; Dashtestani, 2022; Fu et al., 2019;

Hao et al., 2021; Kumar et al., 2022; Lin et al., 2020; Patra et al., 2022). The efficacy of games occurs for some skills of language.

Games also bring the positive influence in vocabulary Ben El Moudden, 2021; Dashtestani, 2022; Hao et al., 202; Patra et al., 2022), grammar (Lin et al., 2020), writing (Fu et al., 2019; Dashtestani, 2022), pronunciation (Dashtestani, 2022), listening (Dashtestani, 2022; Kumar et al., 2022), speaking (Dashtestani, 2022), problem-solving Ben El Moudden, 2021; Dashtestani, 2022), motivation (Dashtestani, 2022; Ahmed et al., 2022). These findings indicated that

games were helpful in learning English.

Similarly, the previous studies have investigated the efficacy of songs in learning English for young learners in EFL context (Al-efeshat & Baniabdelrahman, 2020; Nguyen & Nguyen, 2020), in ESL (Al-Smadi, 2020; Singh, 2020). Most those research examined the vocabulary skill (Agaj Avdiu, 2021; Al-efeshat & Baniabdelrahman, 2020; Islami, 2019; Lelawati et al., 2018; Nguyen & Nguyen, 2020; Putri et al., 2022; Rohmah & Indah, 2021; Sanjaya et al., 2022; Triwardani & Yuningsih, 2022; Yeni & Amelia, 2020), speaking (Yeni & Amelia, 2020; 2020; Putri et al., 2022), writing (Yeni & Amelia, 2020), reading (Yeni & Amelia, 2020), pronunciation (Agaj Avdiu, 2021; Al-Smadi, 2020; Putri et al., 2022; Yeni & Amelia, 2020), grammar (Al-Smadi, 2020; Yeni & Amelia, 2020), motivation (Al-Smadi, 2020; Ernawati et al., 2019; Singh, 2020), positive responds (Ernawati et al., 2019; Islami, 2019).

Songs contributed significantly, especially to

vocabulary mastery for children (Sevik, 2014). Song used as learning media can provide joy in learning English for children (Shen, 2009; Hadian, 2015). In regard to language acquisition, songs help children to obtain and remember new English vocabulary easily (Kuśnierek, 2016). Song is used as learning media to learn English vocabulary (Sukirmiyadi, 2017; Hadian 2017; Almutairiri, 2017; Al- Azri, 2017). Some of the previous studies also showed that song contributed significantly, especially to vocabulary mastery for children (Sukirmiyadi, 2017; Almutairiri, 2017; Ma'rifat, 2017; Sevik, 2014).

A. B. Research Method

This research uses questionnaire to find out young learners' perceptions on learning English. Questionnaire was applied to examine students' perceptions on learning English. Questionnaire was addressed to the students in Indonesian language to obtain the understanding from the students. The study involved 6 elementary schools where the participant was the

students and the teachers or English teachers of grade 4th. One school were private schools, and five were state elementary school. There were 569 students taking a part in this study.

C. Results and Discussion

Figure 1 and 2 reports the results of question 1, using English songs was 56%, using games was 63%. Students preferred using games than songs in learning English.

The findings above were in line with the previous studies which proved that there were many beneficial outcomes by using games for young learners. There were two areas covered by the previous studies that was in line with the finding of the study. First area was relating to the English aptitude. Using games in teaching English also improved grammar (Lin et al., 2020), writing (Fu et al., 2019; Dashtestani, 2022), pronunciation (Dashtestani, 2022), listening (Dashtestani, 2022; Kumar et al., 2022), speaking (Dashtestani, 2022), problem-solving Ben El

Moudden, 2021; Dashtestani, 2022).

The second area was delaing with aptitude such as motivation (Dashtestani, 2022; Ahmed et al., 2022), and positive influence (Boyinbode, 2018; Chen et al., 2019; Fithriani, 2021; Kohnke, 2020). In addition, Zhonggen (2018) said that gaming is better than traditional approach.

Besides the effectiveness of using games, songs also contributed significantly in learning English for young learners. Songs influenced positively, especially to vocabulary mastery for children (Sevik, 2014). This findings were in line with the studies recently which claimed that games bring the positive influence in vocabulary Ben El Moudden, 2021; Dashtestani, 2022; Hao et al., 202; Patra et al., 2022). Song used as learning media can provide joy in learning English for children (Fransischa, 2017; Shen, 2009; Hadian, 2015). In regard to language acquisition, songs help children to obtain and remember new English vocabulary easily (Kuśnierek, 2016). This is in line with the previous finding proposed by (Hao et al.,

2021).

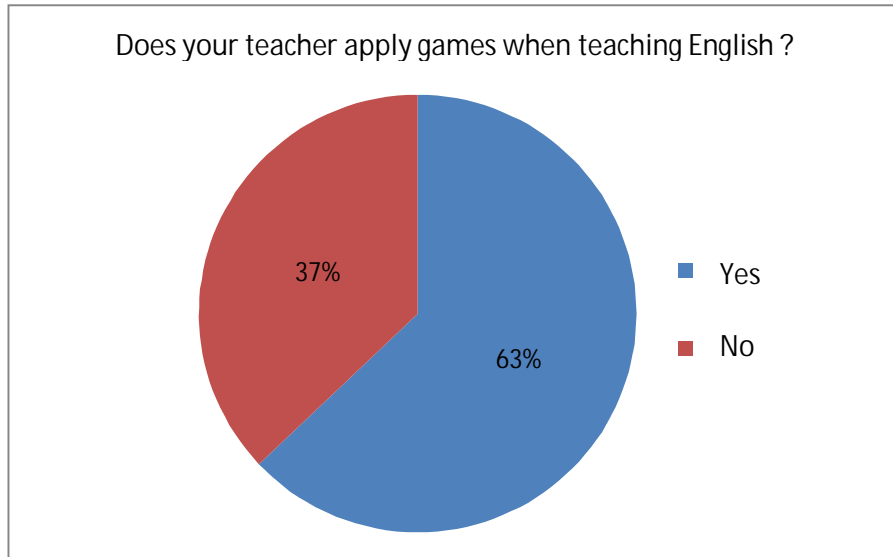


Figure 1. The Use of Games in Teaching English

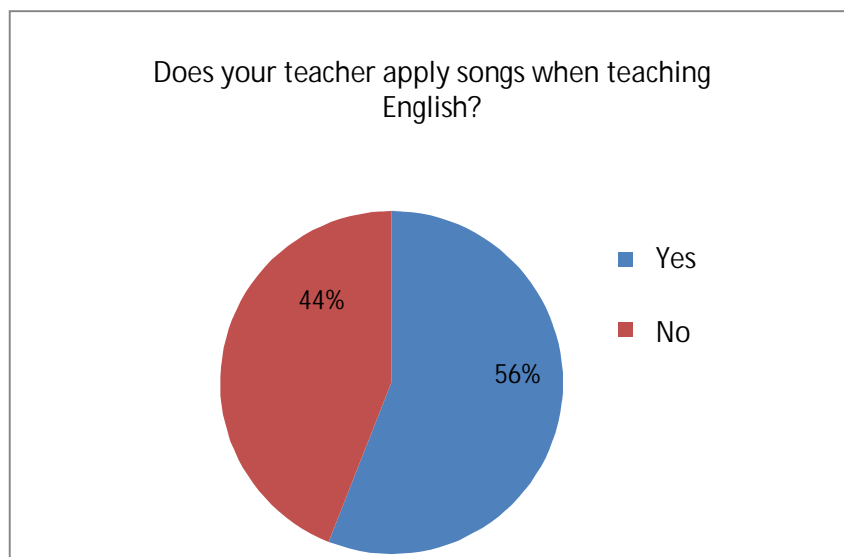


Figure 2. The Use of Songs in Teaching English

D. Conclusion

Teaching young learners needs sufficient creativity from the teachers. The creativity method would be fruitful by applying games and songs since young learners loved and enjoyed games and songs. Further studies should explore the use of games and songs in improving EYL in EFL context. For example, facilitating students' preference in learning English as foreign language by using technology like table, electronic dictionary, mobile phone, etc.

References

- Abdelrady, A. H., Jahara, S. F., Elmadani, A. E. A., & Kumar, T. (2022). The Attitude of Sudanese EFL Students towards Literature to Enrich Their Vocabulary Building. *Education Research International*, 2022, 12. <https://doi.org/10.1155/2022/7569371>
- Abdullah, A. (2020). EFL learners' experience of a MALL-based vocabulary learning tool. *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 10(2), 283–291. <https://doi.org/10.17509/ijal.v10i2.28590>
- Agaj Avdiu, T. (2021). Non-native English teachers' views on the use of music and songs in teaching English as a foreign language to primary school learners, *Rast Dergisi*, 9 (3), <https://doi.org/10.12975/rastmd.20219310>
- Ahmed, A. A. A., Ampry, E. S., Komariah, A., Hassan, I., Thahir, I., Hussein Ali, M., Fawzi Faisal, A., & Zafarani, P. (2022). Investigating the Effect of Using Game-Based Learning on EFL Learners' Motivation and Anxiety. *Education Research International*, 2022. <https://doi.org/10.1155/2022/6503139>.
- Al-efeshat, H., & Baniabdelrahman, A. (2020). The EFL Teachers' and Students' Attitudes towards the Use of Songs in Learning English. *International Online Journal of Education and Teaching*, 7(3), 844–858. <https://iojet.org/index.php/IOJET/article/view/862>
- Al-Smadi, M. H. (2020). The Effect of Using Songs on Young English Learners' Motivation in Jordan. *International Journal of Emerging Technologies in Learning*, 15(24), 52–63. <https://doi.org/10.3991/ijet.v15i24.19311>

- Al-Azri, R., Al-rashdi, M. H., & Kazazi, L. (2015). Using Songs To Support Vocabulary Learning For Grade Four Pupils. *International Journal of Scientific & Technology Research*, 4(6), 40–45. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyo uth.2020.105227>
- Alghasab, M. B. (2020). Flipping the Writing Classroom: Focusing on the Pedagogical Benefits and EFL Learners' Perceptions. *English Language Teaching*, 13(4), 28. <https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v13n4p28>
- Almutairi, M., & Shukri, N. (2017). Using Songs in Teaching Oral Skills to Young Learners : Teachers' Views and Attitudes. January. <https://doi.org/10.5296/ijl.v8i610464>
- Amal Shehadeh AlNatour, & Dima Hijazi. (2018). The Impact of Using Electronic Games on Teaching English Vocabulary for Kindergarten Students. *US- China Foreign Language*, 16(4), 193–205. <https://doi.org/10.17265/1539-8080/2018.04.001>
- Behnamnia, N., Kamsin, A., Ismail, M. A. B., & Hayati, A. (2020). The effective components of creativity in digital game-based learning among young children: A case study. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 116 (July), <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyo uth.2020.105227>
- Ben El Moudden, M. (2021). The Integration of Games in Teaching English as a Foreign Language in the Classroom: Moulay Ismail University as a Case Study. *International Journal of Language and Literary Studies*, 3(1), 208–229. <https://doi.org/10.36892/ijlls.v3i1.425>
- Boyinbode, O. (2018). Development of a gamification based english vocabulary mobile learning system. *International Journal of Computer Science and Mobile Computing*, 7(8), 183–191. https://www.academia.edu/37339456/Development_of_a_Gamification_Based_English_Vocabulary_Mobile_Learning_System
- Bsharat, T. (2021). The influence of music and educational songs on EFL students' achievement from their teachers' perspective in Jenin Region. *African Educational Research Journal*, 9(3), 728–738. <https://doi.org/10.30918/aerj.93.21.106>
- Cabrera-Solano, P., Gonzalez-Torres, P., Solano, L., Castillo-Cuesta, L., & Jiménez, J. (2019). Perceptions on the internal factors influencing EFL learning: A case of Ecuadorian children.

- International Journal of Instruction, 12(4), 365–380.
<https://doi.org/10.29333/iji.2019.12424a>
- Chen, C. M., Liu, H., & Huang, H. Bin. (2019). Effects of a mobile game-based English vocabulary learning app on learners' perceptions and learning performance: A case study of Taiwanese EFL learners. *ReCALL*, 31(2), 170–188.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/S0958344018000228>
- Dashtestani, R. (2022). The Winding Path towards Implementing Digital Game-based Learning (DGBL) in an Educational Context: the Voices of Pre-service Teachers. *Call-Ej*, 23(3), 70–93.
- Ernawati, E., Tsurayya, H., & Ghani, A.R.A. (2019). Multiple intelligence assessment in teaching English for young learners. *Research and Evaluation in Education*, 5(1), 21–29.
<https://doi.org/10.21831/reid.v5i1.23376>
- Fithriani, R. (2021). The utilization of mobile-assisted gamification for vocabulary learning: Its efficacy and perceived benefits. *Call-Ej*, 22(3), 146–163.
- Fithriani, R., Rafida, T., & Siahaan, A. (2019). Integrating Online Blogging into EFL Writing Instruction: Exploring Students' Perceptions. 188 (Eltlt 2018), 87–90.
<https://doi.org/10.2991/eltlt-18.2019.17>
- Fu, Q. K., Lin, C. J., Hwang, G. J., & Zhang, L. (2019). Impacts of a mind mapping-based contextual gaming approach on EFL students' writing performance, learning perceptions and generative uses in an English course. *Computers and Education*, 137, 59–77.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compe du.2019.04.005>
- Gutierrez Arvizu, M. N. (2020). L2 Vocabulary Acquisition through Narratives in an EFL Public Elementary School. *IAFOR Journal of Education*, 8(1), 115–128.
<https://doi.org/10.22492/ije.8.1.07>
- Hadj Said, M., Goui, D., & Al-Jamal, D.A. (2018). Students' Perceptions Of Their Native And Non-Native Teachers' Effect On Their Oral Fluency: EFL Context As An Example, July, 117.
<https://doi.org/10.35156/1174-000-030-044>
- Hao, T., Wang, Z., & Ardasheva, Y. (2021). Technology-Assisted Vocabulary Learning for EFL Learners: A Meta-Analysis. *Journal of Research on Educational Effectiveness*, 14(3), 645–667.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/19345747.2021.1917028>

- Hussain Al-Qahtani, M. (2019). Teachers' and Students' Perceptions of Virtual Classes and the effectiveness of Virtual Classes in Enhancing Communication Skills. *Arab World English Journal*, 1, 223–240. <https://doi.org/10.24093/awej/ef11.16>
- Ika Dhamayanti, F. (2021). EFL Students' Perception and Motivation Toward Quizizz as E-Learning Media in English E-Classroom. *Education of English as Foreign Language*, 4(2), 71–78. <https://doi.org/10.21776/ub.edu.cafl.2021.004.02.03>
- Islami, F. T. (2019). Using song as a media in teaching vocabulary to young learners based on total physical response (TPR) method. 274–282.
- Klimova, B., & Polakova, P. (2020). Students' perceptions of an EFL vocabulary learning mobile application. *Education Sciences*, 10(2). <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci10020037>
- Kohnke, L. (2020). Exploring learner perception, experience and motivation of using a mobile app in L2 vocabulary acquisition. *International Journal of Computer-Assisted Language Learning and Teaching*, 10(1), 15–26. <https://doi.org/10.4018/IJCALLT.2020010102>
- Kumar, T., Akhter, S., Yunus, M. M., & Shamsy, A. (2022). Use of Music and Songs as Pedagogical Tools in Teaching English as Foreign Language Contexts. *Education Research International*, 2022. <https://doi.org/10.1155/2022/3384067>
- Kurt, G. (2021). Technology-mediated tasks in the young learners' EFL classroom. *Elementary Education Online*, 20(1), 327–340. <https://doi.org/10.17051/ilkonline.2021.01.031>
- Kuśnierek, A., & Derenowski Kalisz, M. (2016). The role of music and songs in teaching English vocabulary to students. *WSN World Scientific News*, 43(1), 155. www.worldscientificnews.com
- Lelawati, S., Dhiya, S., & Mailani, P. N. (2018). The Teaching Of English Vocabulary To Young Learners. *PROJECT (Professional Journal of English Education)*, 1(2), 95–100.
- Lin, C. J., Hwang, G. J., Fu, Q. K., & Cao, Y. H. (2020). Facilitating EFL students' English grammar learning performance and behaviors: A contextual gaming approach. *Computers and Education*, 152(March), 103876. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.com>

pe du.2020.103876

- Nguyen, T. C., & Nguyen, H. B. (2020). Teachers' Perceptions about Using Songs in Vocabulary Instruction to Young Language Learners. *Universal Journal of Educational Research*, 8(6),26782685. <https://doi.org/10.13189/ujer.2020.080652>
- Patra, I., Shanmugam, N., Ismail, S. M., & Mandal, G. (2022). An Investigation of EFL Learners' Vocabulary Retention and Recall in a Technology-Based Instructional Environment: Focusing on Digital Games. *Education Research International*, 2022. <https://doi.org/10.1155/2022/7435477>
- Putri, M. W., Juniarta, P. A. K., & Wahyuni, L. G. E. (2022). The Implementation of Songs in Teaching English for Young Learners in Online Learning Context. *The Art of Teaching English as a Foreign Language*, 3(1),49–58. <https://doi.org/10.36663/tatefl.v3i1.251>
- Rohmah, N., & Indah, R. N. (2021). The Use of Modified English Song To Improve Vocabulary of English Language Teaching, 121–129. www.e-journal.stkipsiliwangi.ac.id/index.php/eltin/article/view/2537
- Sanjaya, I. G. H., Dewi, N. L. P. E. S. & Paramartha, A. A. G. Y. (2022). An Investigation of Teaching Aids Used by English Teachers in Teaching Vocabulary for Young Learners. *Journal of Educational Study*, 2(1),26–34.<https://doi.org/10.36663/joes.v1i2.227>
- Sevik, M. (2014). Young EFL learner about classroom songs. *International Journal of English and Education*, 3(1), 346–355.
- Shen, C. (2009). Using English Songs: an Enjoyable and Effective Approach to ELT Using English Songs: an Enjoyable and Effective Approach to ELT. *English Language Teaching*, 2(1), 88–94. <https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v2n1.p88>
- Sheybani, M. (2019). The relationship between EFL Learners' Willingness to Communicate (WTC) and their teacher immediacy attributes: A structural equation modelling. *Cogent Psychology*, 6(1). <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311908.2019.1607051>
- Singh, C. K. S. (2020). A Review of Studies on action Songs among ESL Learners to Improve English. *International Journal of Psychosocial Rehabilitation*,

- 24(5), 2337–2344.
<https://doi.org/10.37200/ijpr/v2.4i5/pr201932>
- Song, D., & Lee, J. H. (2019). The use of teaching code-switching for very young EFL learners. *ELT Journal*, 73(2), 144–153. <https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/ccy049>
- Soria, S., Gutiérrez-Colón, M., & Frumuselu, A. D. (2020). Feedback and mobile instant messaging: Using whatsapp as a feedback tool in EFL. *International Journal of Instruction*, 13(1), 797–812. <https://doi.org/10.29333/iji.2020.13151a>
- Tragant, E., & Vallbona, A. (2018). Reading while listening to learn: Young EFL learners' perceptions. *ELT Journal*, 72(4), 395–404. <https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/ccy009>
- Triwardani, H. R., & Yuningsih, Y. (2022). Building Vocabulary Through Song as Effective Method in Learning English. *Journal of Linguistics*. <https://doi.org/10.34005/Lingua.V%vi%i.1710>
- Wallace, Matthew P., & Leong, Emily In Leng. 2020. Exploring Language Learning Motivation among Primary EFL Learners. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*. Vol.11, No.2.
- Wang, N., Chen, J., Tai, M., & Zhang, J. (2021). Blended learning for Chinese university EFL learners: learning environment and learner perceptions. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, 34(3), 297–323. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09588221.2019.1607881>
- Yeni, M., & Amelia, R. (2020). Teaching alphabet for young learners through song. *Journal of English Language and Education*, 5(2), 12–22. <https://www.jele.or.id/index.php/jele/article/view/69>
- Zhonggen, Y. (2018). Differences in serious game-aided and traditional English vocabulary acquisition. *Computers and Education*, 127(July), 214–232. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compe du.2018.07.014>