



## THE EFFECT OF CHARADES GAME TECHNIQUE ON PUPILS' VOCABULARY RETENTION

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**Abstract.** This study is intended to enhance pupils' retention of English vocabulary words to reinforce perception and memorization. Teaching words inside the classroom should be more interesting and enjoyable for pupils and accordingly charades games technique has been used as an alternative way. It is a useful technique that can be easily employed in the learning process. The study used quantitative research method. The samples of the study were randomly selected from the fifth primary school pupils. The aim of this study was to investigate the effect of charades game technique on enhancing pupils' memory of English vocabulary by using the participants' scores on vocabulary achievement tests. In this study, the pre-test and post-test designs are adopted. The sample of the study was 62 pupils. The study proved that the use of charades game technique has had a beneficial effectiveness on the pupils' retention of English vocabulary.

**Key words:** charades game, vocabulary, retention

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### INTRODUCTION

Language master cannot be done without handling its components first. Vocabulary is considered as a basic component of any language that must be mastered in order to master other components. It is supported by Nation (2003) in Nunan and Caroline (2005: 122) that one of teachers' responsibilities is to teach pupils by using different techniques and strategies to create an enjoyable environment and that will make it easier for them to know and grasp the meaning of new words by depending on themselves rather than depending totally on the teacher. The problematic issue in this study is that teachers are not thoroughly conscious to the seriousness of vocabulary teaching and how to follow the appropriate methods in vocabulary practice that most times causes boredom inside the classroom, while teachers should be completely aware about pupils' needs and how to work together to make an effective vocabulary instruction (Berne and Blachowicz, 2008: 314-323). Vocabulary is defined as a collection of terms for a single language that might be utilized by specific speakers of a certain language (Hatch and Brown, 1995:1). Nowadays, the emphasis is on the variety of different techniques and strategies that teachers use to reinforce vocabulary teaching that enable pupils to make a connection between new words and their meaning as well as identifying the word forms. According to the pupils' age, the teacher used charades game technique for teaching vocabulary especially because it is enjoyable and fits their level of thinking rather than just depending on pictures as a standard aid for teaching vocabulary. Pupils like to learn by using their body to guess meanings of words. The conception is to use different gestures to represent the new words by one of the pupils without pronouncing it, while other pupils try to guess the correct word. The reason behind selecting charades game technique is due to its simplicity in application inside the classroom and also it enhances pupils' memorization because they have to make correct guessing depending on their understanding. Decarrico (2001) cited in Pourdana (2014: 213) stated that understanding of words is more substantial than learning words by their own or by repetition (Pourdana, 2014: 213).

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Learners at the primary stage have special characteristics that are different from those at the more advanced level. Therefore, successful teaching should fulfill the psychological needs of the pupils away from teachers' wants and text-books' teaching demands (Cameron, 2001: 1). Also, Gül Keskil and Pasa Tefvik Cephe (2001) cited in Harmer (2007: 82) noted that the pupils' age considered as a main factor determining the types of techniques and strategies that should be applied to fit the pupils' needs and level of thinking. At the age of 10 and 11, activities that insert body movements in the teaching and learning process should be used. At the age of 12 and 13 years, the focus will be on the pupils' knowledge (i.e., oral activities should be emphasized). They like games because at this age they have the curiosity to discover new things by learning not just from explanation but from different experiences and objects around them in what they can see, hear or touch (ibid). There are many relevant studies in this research. One of these studies is written by Saryati in 2013 to test the effect of guessing game as a technique in vocabulary teaching. The other research is written by Jauhari 2014, used bingo game as a technique to test learners' mastery of vocabulary. Also, Husna 2014 investigated the impact of riddle game on vocabulary. The results of such experimental researches showed that these games had a noticeable distinctions in effect on the mastery of English new words among the learners who taught by using these games and those who taught by the typical techniques and strategies. The researcher in this study intended to use charades game as a technique to test its effect on vocabulary.

### CHARADES GAME TECHNIQUE AND ITS ADVANTAGES

After a short time when the lesson begins, pupils normally lose their attention and concentration due to the lack of media during the lesson and neglecting pupils' psychological needs by focusing on how to complete the lesson following the traditional method. Therefore, teachers should be aware of the pupils' characteristics and what fits their level of thinking. Teaching vocabulary can be successfully achieved when pupils have the ability to remember words automatically with no or a little effort. At the primary stage, the activities that involve pupils' bodies in learning new words such as games have a positive impact on their results. Lewis and Bedson (2008: 5) described that games are something natural as a part of pupils' requirements. It's facilitate learning and achieve better understanding with an environment that supports pupils with a strong feeling of energy, excitement and interest in what they can do and learn.

The concept of charades game technique is to represent words in gestures or mimes that involve facial expressions and body movements without the utterance of words (nonverbal signs). The physical actions will be the major factor in this technique rather than the verbal language for facilitating the new vocabulary words. In this technique, pupils will retain words faster than ever because they will work together as teams to create challenges and that will enhance pupils' excitement and interest that helps to deliver the content of lesson easily (Hidayati, 2014: 3). Nau (2000) defined charades as a game that requires body movements and face expressions to convey something to others. It's a game applied by one of the pupils standing in front of others representing a word or a phrase using his body with some noises if necessary without a clear utterance, while others guess the correct word.

One of the most important advantages of charades game technique is to develop learners thinking process. Himmele (2011: 72) stated that taking the learners to activities of higher level thinking will create a challenging situation that gives learners the motivation to pay more attention to the process itself. They have to analyze the concepts to act them out. The pupils' thinking process can be enhanced by divided them to work in groups. This technique is enjoyable and encourages them to work as a team without being afraid of making mistakes. It



makes it easier for them to handle vocabulary learning by making them more comfortable inside the classroom when dealing with different tasks and activities.

Also, charades game technique helps pupils to overcome their negative feelings and try to understand each other. Kaduson and Schaefer (2003: 218) argued that charades can be used as a tool to treat the relationship between the learners by creating a friendly and joyful environment and focusing on aspects of teamwork. By working together, the process of learning will happen naturally during the passage of time. The acceptance of all the feelings will establish a comfort level to the pupils and that will create an appropriate learning environment.

Furthermore, Layne in Rafinggi (2013: 10) explained that this technique helps the young learners to represent the words by using different body movements and facial expressions. This helps pupils to adjust their actions and define the words they are speaking.

Finally, this technique helps the pupils to work as a team to guess the new words by pantomiming them in a cooperative manner if they want to be the winner. It increases confidence during the process by giving them the permission to use their bodies to do certain movements in front of other pupils. Also, it motivates the quiet and passive ones by engaging them through the whole learning process to be active and from the psychological aspects they will show and improve their hidden abilities.

### **IMPORTANCE OF VOCABULARY**

The learners' ability in mastering the four language skills rely on his/her knowledge of vocabulary (Richards & Renandya, 2002: 255). Also, Levine and Reves (1990: 37) noted that inadequate skillfulness is often mentioned as one of the barriers that affects comprehension of texts by English learners. Vocabulary is treated as a big problem that influences other language aspects and determines learners' proficiency level.

Normally, learners who have a limited vocabulary words will find it challenging to express themselves in the learning process and very exhausting to fully understand what the teacher wants. Thus, engaging learners together to discuss the new concepts and information will be frustrated for learners who have a poor vocabulary. Rasinski et al. (2008: 15) clarified that learners who master numerous types of word lists, will read content smoothly and be more productive inside the classroom.

The insufficiency of words make leaners have an evident confusion on how to comprehend and produce the language (Thornbury, 2002: 13). Furthermore, Allen (1983: 1) explained that in order to manage any language like a native, an extremely large number of words must be acquired. According to that, without a large set of words to convey a broader variety of concepts, contact in any language cannot occur in any significant way (McCarthy, 1990: VIII). Thornbury (2002: 3) stated that vocabulary learning appears to be a major factor influencing learners' acquisition and mastering the other language skills. In addition, Coady and Huckin (1997: 5) regarded vocabulary as an essence to language learning and of great significance to normal learners.

To show how important vocabulary is, Bromley (2004: 3-4) stated some roles of vocabulary:

#### **Promoting fluency**

Pupils who have active words are able to read and grasp new ideas without difficulty than those who have a limited number of words.

#### **increasing comprehension**

Comprehending texts in an effective way, related to the number of common words the pupils have.

## **Improving achievement**

Words amount determine how well pupils can do in tests.

## **Enhancing thinking and communication**

Words allow pupils to interact with others in a meaningful and convincing way. At last, Graves (2009: 1) explained that the benefits of vocabulary are regularly confirmed in educational matters and life situations. Pupils who accomplish their work have a functional and extensive vocabulary. Activities inside the classroom require spoken pupils to communicate ideas and information to gain favorable outcomes in completing activities successfully.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Hypothesis of the Study**

There are no statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the pupils (control group) who are taught vocabulary by the recommended way in (Teacher's Guide) of Iraqi teachers and the mean score of the pupils (experimental group) who are taught by charades game technique.

### **Aims of the Study**

The aims are:

- 1-Developing pupils' ability in acquiring the new vocabulary items in their textbooks and thus increasing pupils' vocabulary capacity.
- 2-Creating a creative and joyful environment to encourage the pupils to think and work together without hesitation by applying the charades game technique.

### **Population and Sampling**

The population of the study represents the fifth primary school pupils of the Babylon educational directorate in the educational year (2019-2020). The two samples were randomly selected from Al-Maghrib primary school. The size of the sample is (62) fifth primary pupils allocated into two groups, group (A) represents the control sample and group (B) represents the experimental sample. Group (A) receives traditional language teaching while group (B) is taught according to the charades game technique.

### **Sample Equivalence**

The researcher equated the two samples with reference to their social and economic status by selecting them from the same district in Babylon and also from the same school. Pupils' age was calculated by months. Pupils who repeated the same class were excluded from the experiment. The linguistic background of the two samples was measured by relying on the test scores as a comparison with the mean scores for the first course which turned out to be equivalent to the research requirements. The achievement of the parents was also taken into consideration and equated by using a statistical formula (Chi square).

## **Extraneous Variables**

Some extraneous variables may affect the course of the experiment. Therefore, the researcher made sure to equate them also. The experiment lasted for 45 days and none of the participants left the experiment. They all matured the same as the experiment did not last more than the intended period hence; the growth is unified across all members of the experiment. The students did not know that they were participating in an experiment and according to that the Hawthorne effect did not take place.

## **The Material**

The material used in the experiment is the English for Iraq textbook for the fifth primary school and the trial covered units (3,4 and 5) from the syllabus. The researcher throughout the experimental period presented (20) lessons and set a number of behavioral objectives to be met across (20) lesson plans which are proved by a jury of (15) language methodologists.

## **Instruments**

To reach to the predictable goal of this study, the researcher used pre-test and post-test for the control and experimental groups. The vocabularies tests consist of thirty-five items are given in the formats: multiple choice, matching and completion. The test is planned depending on the revised Bloom's Taxonomy of educational objectives. The allocated time for the vocabulary test is 45 minutes and questions range from easy to difficult. The statistical analysis of obtained data from the pre and post vocabulary comprehension test were arranged in terms of tables by stating the interpretation of these data in percentages to make them clear and understood.

## **Procedures**

To insure the reliability of the test, the researcher selected pupils from two different schools near the major one on which the experiment is conducted. The test items applied on (96) pupils selected from those two schools to ensure how much time each item needed and whether the test is reliable or not. The results of the pilot study demonstrated that the test items were valid in difficulty. At the main school (Al-Maghrib) the charades game technique has been applied. The pre-test conducted on both groups, a control group which is taught in a traditional mechanical drill as repetition. The experimental group is taught through using charades game technique in teaching vocabulary perception. Initially, the teacher greeted the pupils as a first step, and then he prepared a lesson plan to describe how to implement charades game technique in vocabulary teaching. The researcher explained to pupils how to use charades game inside the classroom by asking one of them to stand in front of other pupils and pantomiming a list of words without any utterance and others watching him carefully to make a correct guessing with help and guidance from the teacher. Subsequently, he asked the pupils to give an explanation about what they saw. In whilst-teaching activities, the researcher explained the new words by using different pictures and asking the whole group to represent those words by using their body movements, facial expressions and available objects inside the classroom. The researcher wrote the words on the white board without any identification to test pupils understanding by asking them to guess each word and then after making the correct guessing the teacher put the pictures along with the words on the white board. Then, the researcher arranged pupils into two groups to challenge each other in a competition that ends with a winner. Each pupil acts out a word in front of two groups and the first group that makes correct guessing takes a point until one of these groups wins. Afterwards, the researcher guided the



pupils to solve the drills in their activity book according to their knowledge and assigned the new words as homework to be prepared for a spelling test next lecture.

## RESULTS AND FINDINGS

In the charades game technique, the pupils in the experimental group were superior to those in the control group who studied in the performance test according to the recommended method. The first null hypothesis is thus rejected and the alternative null hypothesis accepted: (There is a statistically significant difference in the level of (0.5) and the average score of the control group pupils who study in English using the recommended method). The following table shows the results of both groups:

**Table (1) T Test Results for the Study Groups of the Test**

Group T	No. of Pupils	Mean	Standard deviation	T- test		significance at (0,05)
				Calculated	Tabular	
Experimental	30	24.34	3.87	7.328	1.96	Significant in favour of the experimental group
Control	32	17.45	3.56			

The researcher concluded that charades game is a helpful technique for enhancing English vocabulary teaching and facilitating vocabulary perception. It increases pupils' interest and self-confidence during the learning process. Improvements in teaching vocabulary can be easily achieved according to the result of the post-test scores that is higher than those of the pre-test. The results also indicated that the technique adopted by the researcher in his study has been confirmed to be effective in developing the pupils' vocabulary retention and memory.

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