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## Applying Edutainment Concept among Tourism Management Students in Learning English Language

Zainab Mohd Zain<sup>1</sup>, Noraini Ismail<sup>2</sup>, Khairunnisa Abd Samad<sup>3</sup>, Syahrina Hayati Md Jani<sup>4</sup>, Shareenie Shera Abdul Hamid<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Academy of Language Studies / Centre for Islamic Philanthropy and Social Finance, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Melaka Branch, 78000 Alor Gajah, Melaka, Malaysia, <sup>2</sup>Academy of Contemporary Islamic Studies, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Perlis Branch, 02600 Arau, Perlis, <sup>3,4</sup>Faculty of Business and Management / Centre for Islamic Philanthropy and Social Finance, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Melaka Branch, 78000 Alor Gajah, Melaka, Malaysia,

<sup>5</sup>Faculty of Hotel and Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Melaka Branch,

78000 Alor Gajah, Melaka, Malaysia

Email: zainab500@uitm.edu.my

### Abstract

Edutainment is a combination of video games, television shows, or other content that is both informative and entertaining. Learning English language using edutainment concept is essential in current situation. Since the market for higher tourism education in English (HTEE) is highly competitive and increasingly global, introducing an English-language programme exposes a school to increased competition as a cost of attracting a larger audience. By doing this approach it hoped to improve and attract learners' attention in learning language. This paper is to examine the edutainment in the application of a language board game to foster students' interest in English language learning in the classroom. The board game assisted the students in overcoming their fears of learning English. It was found that when they participated in the board game, they were less aware of using English because they were absorbed in the games and having fun. Researchers would like to recommend that by exploring this edutainment concept, it has grown in popularity the opportunity to verify the educational validity of what happens in a typical classroom. To conclude, edutainment concept not only can make the students have fun, but also can contribute to their English language learning interest.

**Keywords:** Edutainment, Board Games, English Language, Student's Interest

### Introduction

This paper is focused on edutainment concept in learning English language among the tourism student. This is important because these students need to communicate well in English. This is because their performance in English classes is evaluated in their assessments. But these students are non-native speaker of English. They need to have wide range of

vocabulary in order to speak in the intended language which is English. Many of these students were shy and reluctant to speak up in English language in the classrooms.

Particularly, special case for tourism student as tourism industry perceived to have important contribution for the economic growth, as such, the need for the tourism student being proficient in English communication. According to Hassan and Tik (2019), in their research has found that, English language is very essential for employees when asking about knowledge and needs of foreign tourists and most importantly is tourist offers should not be turned down. In connection to language difficulties, the employees responded the ability to decipher foreign accents of international visitors is most difficult to understand or comprehend especially in English spoken environment.

Ramsa and Rawian (2019) revealed 49.5 percent of polytechnic graduates were working after completing their diploma course, emphasizing the importance of conducting a needs study (Graduates Tracer Study, Malaysia Higher Education Statistics, 2011: 118). Also, Mantra et al (2020) showed that high language competence is needed by hospitality employees to be able to work professionally. It is; however, most hospitality employees still have problems in English.

This edutainment language board game is an activity held in a classroom to give them a platform to practice their speaking skills, to give them a situation to answer questions given, to evaluate other students or their team mates answers in a fun way. This is critical for the tourism management students to practice their speaking skills using this edutainment approach in their learning process. Hence, the need for some entertainment integrated in the English education. So, Edutainment is a combination of one or more entertainment such as video games, board games, cards, television or other educational and entertaining programmes.

Games have been shown to have inherent motivational properties that allow them to be used for improving educational applications (Garris et al., 2002; Gee, 2003). The use of games for education is not a new area of research. The term "Edutainment" was coined in the early 1990s and was adopted by academia and industry for games targeted to children. The aim of edutainment not only to educate people but "to attract and hold the attention of the learners by engaging their emotions through a computer monitor full of vividly coloured animations" (Okan, 2003).

The term 'edutainment' is a combination of the words 'education' and 'entertainment.' In 1973, Robert Hayman was the first to use the concept 'edutainment' in his report for the National Geographic Society. Edutainment is a term that describes exciting television shows and computer applications that are mainly intended for educational purposes. The educational purpose can be related to formal education in different school institutes or to informal learning in different daily life contexts without systematically organized education (Walldén & Soronen, 2004). The concept roots back to ancient rituals, myths, fairy-tales and fables used to educate and entertain at the same time.

There are four components of language skills in learning English. Speaking is one of the most effective language skills. Moreover, speaking, as one of the language skills learned

in kindergarten, has been a major source of concern for students. Teachers and educators of English should be able to come up with several ways to help students improve their skills, particularly in speaking. Teachers typically devote a considerable amount of time to finding an effective way to motivate students so that their speech performance improves dramatically.

## Literature Review

### Edutainment

Edutainment is the practice of entertainment-based education (Sala, 2021) that relied on resources, assignments, and activities in the classroom to make the teaching-learning process enjoyable and engaging (Pojani & Rocco, 2020). It aims to promote learners' motivation, personalize their learning experiences, and engage them in doing creative individual-collaborative problem-solving and critical thinking activities. According to Buckingham and Scanlon (2005), edutainment mostly relies on visual sources, narratives, and game components. It can be either interactive for example having learners actively participate in tasks or non-interactive which involving learners as spectators to learn and explore movies, shows, podcasts, or websites (Walldén & Soronen, 2004). Technology assists teachers in slowly becoming edutainers by giving or offering user-friendly digital contents and virtual platforms (Shadiev et al., 2018).

The advantage of playing the game offers the benefit in discussion on many aspects of language. Games can be considered as having benefit to improve grammar, speaking, listening, and pronunciation, vocabulary, and many more. Many researchers have been working on edutainment and game-based learning such as Asrifan (2021) that concludes that the use of cat and mouse game can improve the students' speaking ability. Where else Wang and Hang (2021) stated that their research found that using a digital game-based language learning mobile app improved the difficulty, accuracy, and fluency of English language learners in China's monologic oral development with varying results.

On the other hand, Lin et al (2021) in their research found that (1) the incorporation of AR into the health education board game had a huge impact on the reception and (2) the incorporation of AR into the health education board game had a positive impact on learning motivation. Eltahir et al (2021) stated that there were statistical discrepancies in the benefit of the empiric community between the empiric and control groups between the groups, according to the results. Students in the empirical community had better knowledge of the principles taught in the Arabic language grammar course and were more motivated than students in the conventional group.

Kusuma et al (2021) proposed game-based historical research on a mobile device using a role-playing game. The implementation is focused on General Sudirman's experience as Indonesia's first army general. In Jakarta, the game was conducted on 63 junior high school students. According to the findings, using the game will boost student learning motivation and achievement. Octaberlina (2021) in her research claimed that all students agree that using SpellingCity increase their vocabulary acquisition besides of also learning the pronunciation. Other than that, Demirkiran et al (2021) found that digital game-play assisted students in grasping the idea of programming, and that students have formed a positive

attitude toward programming as a result of game-based practises, despite their preconceptions.

Fundamentally, Carrier (1985) summarized seven advantages of using games in learning language which include: (1) helping to increase the variety range of learning situations; (2) maintaining students' motivation; (3) refreshing learners while having a formal learning; (4) encouraging students' interests; (5) building a relationship between teachers and students; and (6) testing students' capacity and solving their weakness. One of the advantages remarked by Carrier is consistent to Chirandon et al (2010) that games help to increase interests of students in learning English. Significantly, the world has changed, and instead of being in the "chalk and talk" setting of the past, teachers now tend to be facilitators or evaluators (Shin, 2003). In this case, all ESL / EFL (English as a Second Language) teachers should stick to their main goals responsibilities of allowing their students to practise the language as much as possible in real-life situations creating in the realm of content-oriented communication, linguistic focus and encouraging students to take full responsibility for their own learning or growth (Lund & Pedersen, 2001, pp. 63-64).

Accordingly, games have been known as one of the "powerful" motivators for increasing students' motivation and esteem during their learning process. Furthermore, language acquisition programs have been recommended as realistic medium for learning English, encouraging learning, and endorsing learning processes since the 1980s (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). In support of this view, the students will learn more effectively based on the findings of research into students' reactions to pedagogy when teachers teach in a calm way while offering adequate activities for students to understand the material fully the supplemental and participate actively in class (Paulsen & Feldman, 1995; Hudelson et al., 1993; Crandall, 1979; Burt et al., 2003; Nunan, 1999; among many others). Games can help with this by allowing students to learn English while having fun (Kim, 1995).

While games are seen as a way to pass the time in the majority of English classes, some scholars, such as Nguyen Thi Thanh Huyen and Khuat Thi Thu Nga (2003) argue that the game not for pleasure only, also it can provide an inspiration on education and learning. On other study, the impact of language games on 69 students' attitudes toward learning English was investigated by Ahmed Awad Amin Mahmoud and Ziyad Ahmed Tanni (2014). Since language learning is a difficult task that necessitates a lot of time, games are bound to yield relentless attempts as students practice their language skills (Wright, Betteridge, & Buckby, 1984; Ersöz, 2000). Richard-Amato (1988) found that games can relieve anxiety, making English acquisition more possible, whereas shy students can also engage actively without pressure (Mei & Yu-jung, 2000). More specifically, a reputable realistic guide for K-12 ESL programmes claims that "Games may be used to motivate people" (Hudelson et al., 1993, p. 151; Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 27).

Researchers who support the use of games in English classrooms agree that games should not be added solely for the sake of having anything to do in class (Lee, 1979; Rixon, 1981; Uberman, 1998). According to Uberman (1998), "Games also lend themselves well to revision exercises helping learners recall material in a pleasant, entertaining way" (p. 3). Mazidatuz Zahro et al (2013) to investigate the impact of guessing games in the form of crossword puzzles and riddles on the vocabulary achievement of eight-year-old students in

Balung, Indonesia, researchers used guessing games in the form of crossword puzzles and riddles. This is equivalent to one of the previous studies in the Thai context, referring to (Sripramong, 2004).

According to Sripramong (2004), in order to enhance students' vocabulary learning, games have been used in the English classroom. The outcome of the study also reveals the positive feedback from students that they have more positive attitudes toward English learning and the games used in the classroom. In terms of the improvement of listening and speaking skills, Roikrong (1998) implemented 10 games in the English language classroom in the Thai context with a purpose to improve listening and speaking skills of the first-year students at a school and found that those students have been improved due to the potential of the games.

Ampaipan (1999) suggested six criteria for choosing games into the English classroom. These criteria include (1) a number of students; (2) places; (3) age of student; (4) English proficiency; (5) duration and contents; and (6) language difficulties. Indeed, regardless of the games or it makes no difference what activities are offered to students as long as those games are played or learners can use exercises to better understand the words they are introduced to, as well as the meanings they do not understand. They can also get input on what they hear (Lund & Pedersen, 2001, p. 64).

### **Application of Edutainment**

As reviewed the literature and advantages of the games in education or edutainment, the researchers have experimented its potential by implementing a language board game in the English language classroom among tourism management students in a public university in the context of Malaysia. The language board game was developed by a group of English language lecturers who were teaching in a public university in Melaka. The activities had to fulfill the target group's language and learning needs, as well as enhance high levels of student interaction by enabling them to use English in meaningful ways.

Working as a group often enabled these students with valuable soft skills. This language board game has given an opportunity of a different platform and has encouraged these students in learning to express their ideas, finding useful vocabularies by asking and answering the questions that have been raised in addition in evaluating other students' answer. Most students found these procedures difficult. By using the language board game, the students were able to express their thoughts and communicate with each other. Finally, they had to get to 'The End' to be declared the winner.

On the activity's day of implementation, these tourism management students were divided into four or five small classes. A board game was given to each group, a dice and a deck of cards with questions on them. First, they were explained on the rules and regulations on playing the language board game. They had to roll the dice in turn to decide the order of the players. They had to answer questions on the card based on the number they got from the dice after that. Players had to answer the questions on the card and then move on to the next player if their answers were correct. If they do not get it right the first time, they must back up three spaces before the next turn.

The practise lasted about an hour and a half in the classroom. During the exercise, photographs and videos were taken. The students were able to overcome their fears of learning English thanks to the language board game. Overcome their shyness of speaking to each other and they were seen able to be comfortable by asking and answering the questions given among the team players while doing the activity. It was found that when they participated in the board game, they were less aware of using English because they were absorbed in the language board game and having fun by laughing at their own answers and at the responses of their teammates.

This project seemed to have helped not only the tourism management students but also the lecturers who have created the language board game named 'Dare to Speak' questions in the game. Student showed more excitement during the activities. Good feedback was received as they could tell the students were having a great time and were eager in their use of the English language as their command language, they were so engrossed in the activity that they almost forgot about their previous fear of making mistakes. These can be seen from the photographs taken during the event.

### **Conclusion**

This paper focuses on the concept and advantages of edutainment in Malaysian context among the tourism students. Tourism students are required to be outspoken and fluent in English language. Therefore, there are many different integrating activities that use the edutainment concept in the classroom. This study had combined the concept of edutainment by integrating the board game to the tourism students to enhance their language and communication skills. Various edutainment concept or game activities can be developed in the method of learning English. Hence, this study added new knowledge to the current literature by incorporating the vocabulary learning of the students. In addition, the researchers investigated the possibility and impact to make use of the language board game as one of the methods for English language teachers or educators are capable of presenting for new subject matter with. The findings recommended by using edutainment and games activities in education to the students' progress engagement can improve their English vocabulary and make their learning become more interesting.

Edutainment concept is highly recommended in language classes especially English language classes of non-native speakers. The findings suggest that the use of edutainment and game activities should be continued in the lessons; mainly with cooperative games. It is highly recommended to teachers or educators using edutainment concept or games activities because they have the ability to make the lesson more interesting, enable students to collaborate and participate in the learning process by giving them the opportunity to speak up.

There are few added value of edutainment for learning and teaching especially in English language classes. Firstly, they expand the landscape of both formal and informal education are available. Secondly, the elements of edutainment used in teaching and learning appeal to a new nature of cognition in contemporary learners, both youngsters and adults. The students tend to learn better and easier, when in place in groups and in a situation similar to their real life, where they are used to interactivity, fast flowing of information, clipped and/or fragmented information, and message delivered in the most vital way. Therefore,

attractive and engaging edutainment as an approach can contribute to learners' motivation, concentration, reflection, and progress. The instructional designer should artistically interweave the elements of edutainment into a course in order to balance education and entertainment and avoid entertainment outweighing the learning process. It is also important to offer learners a diversity of instruments of edutainment and infotainment and monitor their efficiency.

Edutainment concept or utilizing games in education provide learners in this case, the tourism management students, especially youngsters, a situation in which students can learn without being hindered by social norms, mundane habits, or performances edutainment concept or games activities can promote language development and social engagement in a lighthearted manner, positive and non-threatening manner. Researchers would like to recommend that by exploring this edutainment concept, it has improved the opportunity to verify the educational validity of what happens in a typical English classroom.

To conclude, edutainment concept not only can make the students have fun, enabling the students to express themselves freely but also can increase their English language learning interest as a lifelong learning. This conceptual study found there is need for the edutainment in teaching and learning English language. The outcome of this research suggested for the policy maker to encourage edutainment among educators and can be a guideline for future English subject syllabus. In future, empirical study on the edutainment concept can be applied on the tourism management study.

This study is significant to the existing knowledge since effective technology is important for the development of the individual's creative potential. The main feature of edutainment is its educational and enjoyable quality, as well as the active involvement of multimedia teaching tools and modern computer (Chilingaryan & Zvereva, 2020). For instance, the use of computers, the Internet, social media, and multimedia as learning tools will stimulate cognitive processes, which will assist students develop long-term educational motivation - the engine that propels them toward constructive mastery of knowledge, skills, and abilities. The high effectiveness of the educational process is determined by long-term motivation (Tolmacheva, 2015). Therefore, practically all edutainment technology should be a recent, effective technology that can not only diversify the educational process but also improve the quality of knowledge acquisition. Consequently, combining traditional and creative teaching approaches can help to vary teaching materials, raise student interest in class, and develop communicative engagement and intrinsic motivation.

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