Go Fish English Game: Enhancing Special Needs Pupils with Hearing Disabilities Vocabulary

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Abstract
In 2013, The Ministry of Education (MOE) implemented the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) for English language learning in Malaysian primary and secondary schools. This framework involves special needs pupils with hearing disabilities - Murid Berkeperluan Pendidikan Khas (MBPK) Pendengaran as it has been standardized to be implemented to all pupils without discrimination. Innovation in language material is important for hearing-impaired pupils because they require more help in being a proficient language user compared to normal pupils. Therefore, this study seeks to help hearing-impaired pupils through an innovative card game known as 'Go Fish English game' by incorporating four language skills which are seeing, signing, reading and writing. The data for this research was collected through observation and interview sessions after the game was completed. The analysis for the data is meant to show the effectiveness of the vocabulary lesson as well as the comprehension level of the hearing-impaired pupils prior to the activity. The findings revealed that three out of four pupils were able to display the mastery of four language skills correctly based on the topic of the vocabulary lesson. Only one of the pupils did not manage to read the sentences correctly after the activity. Thus, this research has added value to enhance and strengthen vocabulary lessons with a gamification approach, namely Go Fish English Game towards special needs pupils with hearing disabilities**.** Further research can be conducted to explore and discover the possibilities of other types of gamifications in teaching and learning of different language skills focusing on special needs pupils with other disabilities according to specific age, gender, and proficient level of English language.
Keyword: Special Needs Pupils, Hearing Disabilities, English Language, Innovation, Game

Introduction
The usage of technology has been immensely booming across the globe as people of the world start to get a hang of it and include it in their daily lives. Not only does it affect the ways of

communication and the industry, the world of teaching and learning is not excluded from adapting to the technological usage in various levels of education. As defined by Wood (2016), technology is the tool by which we put scientific knowledge to use and along with devices (like computers), it also involves methods and procedures (like the way we produce computer chips). Although most of the contemporary technology is electronic, this does not mean that all technology is (Wood, 2016). For instance, tyres, boats and knives are examples of technology.

On the other hand, technology has been widely used by educators in educational institutions like schools and universities. Apart from incorporating the usage of computers and gadgets in the lessons, the utilization of the internet in classes has provided the opportunity for educators and students to explore the learning process digitally and connect with each other interactively. One of many technological applications in education is integrating games in teaching and learning. Choi et al (2022) described gamification in teaching and learning as merging a game-like style teaching method with the traditional approach. The implementation of gamification in teaching and learning has been widely used and accepted by educators in recent years including the teaching and learning of language skills such as vocabulary skill.

The Ministry of Education in Malaysia also made an initiative to make an advancement of teaching and learning in schools, notably the implementation of The Malaysian Education Blueprint. In the blueprint, educators are obliged to acquire the CEFR C1 level and to possess pedagogical knowledge and the proficiency of English language (Krishnan et. al., 2021). In order to be proficient in the English language, one must comprehend the language skills of the English language. This implementation would help the educators to develop their understanding and result in pupils' improvement in the subject. Along with this, the implementation of gamification in teaching and learning of English language has been growing substantially throughout the pandemic of Covid-19 as the lessons were held online and the educators had the access to alternative methods in teaching and learning.

In an ideal world, teaching and learning of language skills would be comprehensible for every pupil as well as special needs pupils. As initiated by UNESCO, education for all is to ensure that all pupils have the opportunity for basic, high-quality education. This means establishing learning settings where children are capable of learning in both schools and basic education programmes. Such a setting must be warm and friendly to children, healthy for children, efficient when working with children, and child protective. However, special needs pupils, namely those with hearing disabilities usually have a hard time to retain vocabulary and they heavily depend on visual aids. These pupils also require extra learning materials especially in the form of visuals and hands-on materials. This research chose the innovation of Go Fish Game turned to Go Fish English Game as a platform to help hearing-impaired pupils in enhancing their vocabulary learning through the inclusion of visual materials and signing pictures. With the innovation of Go Fish English Game, the researchers proposed that this research would be an aid to enhance pupils' vocabulary according to the lesson of the day. This research also aimed to specify the vocabulary that needed to be focused for the lesson thus utilizing the use of digital media in accordance with the traditional way of teaching and learning.

Literature Review
Role of Vocabulary in Language Learning

The basic formula for learning any foreign language is mastering its vocabulary (Nurman, 2018). Along with grammar and pronunciation, vocabulary is one of the aspects considered crucial for language acquisition (Nurman, 2018). Vocabulary acquisition, specifically in English language learning, is an essential feature for students in learning (Hashim et al., 2022). It will be possible for them to comprehend the English language if they can comprehend its vocabulary component (Hashim et al., 2022). In ensuring that students understand words, they should have provided direct instruction, repeated exposure, word contextualization, and opportunities for interacting with words during teaching. (Rafiq et al., 2020). Students need to master vocabulary from the very start (Tiing et al., 2021). As a result, teachers should employ various strategies during ESL classrooms to maximize vocabulary learning.

Gamification in Teaching and Learning

English teachers and educators have incorporated best practices from around the world into their teaching methods to replicate realistic and relevant ESL sessions (Yaacob et al., 2022) As a result, they have begun to investigate new ways to include games in the classroom. Experts define gamification as a learning innovation incorporating game aspects into non-game contexts (Santosa et al., 2022). Gamification integrates elements of games and plays into learning environments to increase engagement and participation (Rahmani, 2020). It can improve learners' language with well-designed digital and non-digital games (Jassim & Dzakiria, 2019). Gamification has been familiarized and utilized by teachers, particularly English teachers in nations with solid educational rankings, such as Ukraine, Poland, the United States, China, and the Netherlands (Rahmani, 2020). Language learning and teaching in the form of a game allows English language learners to learn quickly and enjoyably (Rahmani, 2020). In gamification-based learning, game components and ideas can be combined into instructional content that aids in teaching and learning another language and considerably increases retention (Santosa et al., 2022). It is also meant to boost students' enthusiasm and dedication and instil excellent and competitive behavior in them (Yaacob et al., 2022). Scholars and instructors have acknowledged the significance of games in aiding English language acquisition.

Moreover, games motivate students to remain involved in the learning process and encourage previously inactive students to become active (Sangja, 2022). It is also important to note that teachers can conduct game-based instruction using specific technological tools and devices to stimulate greater motivation in a relaxed learning atmosphere (Sangja, 2022). The relationship between games and language teaching has been accepted and praised. It also has always been part of the learning process (Kıyançiçek & Uzun, 2022). Therefore, when preparing games and gamified activities, teachers should consider several factors such as students' needs, interests, age, language level, personality, and enjoyment (Kıyançiçek & Uzun, 2022). When all this is considered, the educational importance of games and gamification cannot be underestimated.

The learning of ESL among the hearing-impaired pupils

Hearing impairment is defined as a whole, or a partial loss of hearing ability caused by a variety of circumstances, including biological and environmental variables (Nasir et al., 2021). People with this type of condition communicate using a different way of communication which is using sign language (Puri et al., 2019). In Malaysia, pupils learning English use signing,

known as Sign Exact English, as their third language and their mother tongue as their first language. Meanwhile, Malaysian Sign Language (MSL) is the second language officially used in special schools (Nasir et al., 2021). However, learning English is difficult for these pupils (Ay & Sen Bartan, 2022). As they cannot hear the sounds like their hearing peers, most of them cannot speak correctly, influencing their language performance and attitudes (Birinci & Saricoban, 2021).

Therefore, the best way to teach them is by using visual material (González et al., 2021). Teachers and educators can utilize visual materials comprised of graphics, photographs, flashcards, puzzles, charts, puppets, realia, magazines, videos, films, gestures and facial expressions to teach their pupils (Birinci & Saricoban, 2021). Pupils can easily learn the language with the help of visual aids as they can see it, which is accessible to them. Nowadays, besides the conventional way of teaching, technology helps cater to these special needs pupils. ESL learning can be assisted by using mobile technology with interactive English applications that function as educational games, translation, sign language, videos and words with pictures (Nasir et al., 2021). It is found that it can boost their motivation and accelerate their understanding of the language as they can learn it anytime and everywhere according to their pace (Nasir et al., 2021). Incorporating game elements alongside visual materials can help the pupils feel motivated and strengthen their vocabulary retention, which helps them enrich their vocabulary knowledge towards successful language learning (Mashuri et al., 2020). Thus, teachers can use gamification that does not use an internet connection in their learning to make sure it is feasible during ESL learning in the classroom.

Methodology
Research Design
Using a qualitative method, this research was conducted towards four intermediate level Year 3 hearing-impaired pupils. The purpose of this study is to observe the effectiveness of the vocabulary lesson that was carried out by implementing the 'Go Fish English Game' as an activity to assess the pupils' comprehension level after the lesson. The researcher started off the study by identifying the most common problem occurring in English vocabulary language teaching and learning which is the ability to associate the word with the object. This is especially hard for hearing-impaired pupils due to their inability of associating the word through sounds and totally relying on visual aids and materials. The card game also assesses the pupils using all four main language skills in order to thoroughly reflect the pupils' understanding regarding the topic.

Figure 1: Example of Language Skills Activities

The card game consists of four kinds for the topic 'The Days of The Week'. Each kind covers the language skill of seeing, signing, reading and writing as shown in the Figure 1 above, respectively.

Research Instrument
This study uses observation as the main instrument to provide the data which the researcher analyzes using thematic analysis. The researcher also checked the pupils' understanding by conducting an interview session. In this study, the observation and interview session were conducted to collect the data.

Research Procedure
The teacher conducted a vocabulary lesson for 'The Days of The Week' by introducing the content of the lesson and including the focus vocabulary in a sentence with the aid of visuals and signing pictures. The presentation stage for the vocabulary lesson was shown as Figure 2 below.
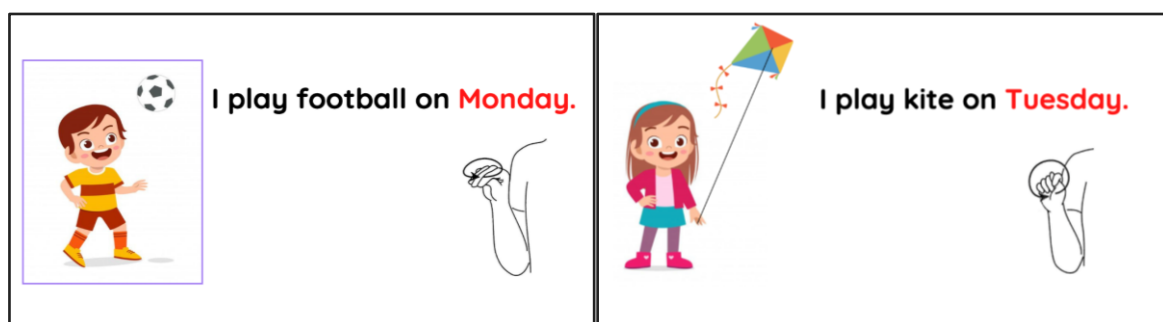

Figure 2. The presentation stage for the vocabulary lesson

Figure 3. Activities done in the classroom

During the lesson as shown in Figure 3, pupils are guided to read by signing along with the teacher. This is to ensure that the pupils were really engaged with the lesson. The teacher also made sure that the pupils repetitively sign correctly based on the shown vocabulary. Following the introduction of the vocabulary, the researcher carried out the implementation of the innovation material as an assessment tool and a part of the lesson activity.

Findings

Figure 4. Activities played by the students

The results of the study were analyzed using thematic analysis that was collected through observation and interview from four hearing-impaired Year 3 pupils. The researcher chose this approach since it is easier to summarize the key features and provide qualitative insights. Since all the pupils are in the intermediate level of English proficiency, the researcher is able to classify the themes as follows

  a) The effectiveness of 'Go Fish English Game' in enhancing hearing-impaired pupils' vocabulary learning.
  b) The ability of hearing-impaired pupils to see, sign, read and write correctly.

Out of four pupils that were involved in the implementation of the innovation tool, three of them managed to collect two of each kind while the other one pupil only managed to collect one kind of the card game. Although technically there was no winner among them, the researcher found that the implementation of the game is effective in enhancing the pupils' vocabulary learning because as the game progresses, they gain understanding on the purpose of the game. When the pupils understand the game, it has indirectly led them to be more particular and clearer in their mission of collecting each kind. The researcher also found that the pupils were really engaged in the card game as soon as they understood the rules of the game as well as able to retain the information needed from the prior vocabulary lesson. The researcher is able to conclude that the purpose of creating gamification vocabulary innovation 'Go Fish English Game' is successful in attempting to create a constructive and fun way of vocabulary learning.

The researcher also conducted an interview session after the implementation of the innovation and found that three out of four pupils were able to display the mastery of four language skills correctly based on the topic of the vocabulary lesson. One of the pupils did not

manage to read the sentences correctly after the activity which reflected the pupil's results from the game in which she managed to collect only one kind. However, the pupil still managed to display seeing and signing skills correctly which can be observed during the observation as well as when the researcher interviews afterwards. Through the interview session, the pupils who showed high proficiency and understanding of the lesson all managed to answer all the questions correctly which demonstrated their understanding regarding the lesson completely.

Discussion

According to a study conducted by Birinci & Sariçoban (2021), it was proven how visual materials were able to aid deaf students to learn vocabulary better compared to only using sign language instruction. Using visuals is also more effective for long-term retention as it can increase the linguistic memory of deaf students in learning English as a foreign or second language. In relation to this study, the researcher agrees with the motion as the subjects for the study demonstrated better understanding and retention of the vocabulary with the use of visual aids. Besides that, the students were proven to have enjoyed learning English with the aid of visual materials as supported by (Reyes et al., 2021). This also reflects the purpose of this study which is to create an effective way of vocabulary learning by implementing a fun and effective way to assess and observe the proficiency level of hearing-impaired pupils. The utilization of this gamified learning is meant to cover all four skills of language learning for hearing-impaired pupils. Rahmat Soe'oed et al (2020) conducted a study which has been proven effective by using a picture-assisted lexical input approach as a treatment to promote deaf students' vocabulary mastery development. This somehow correlates with the study as the researcher introduced the content of the vocabulary lesson in a sentence while focusing on the target vocabulary and later on included the words in the card game in the form of reading and writing. This is a proof of how vocabulary learning can be more meaningful and effective with the use of the words along with the visual materials.

Conclusion and Implication

To sum up, innovative approaches like gamification in teaching and learning are much needed considering the recent ICT advancement. Considering technology isn't going anywhere, gamification in teaching and learning will always grow and bring new discontinuities. Through gamification, the lessons could be done interactively and increase the involvement as well as the engagement of pupils in the class. As the young generations have been exposed to the internet and gadgets at early ages, the game style learning would be an interesting approach as well as creating an exciting learning lesson. While learning language skills could be tricky for the pupils, the gamification approach has helped the educators to ease the teaching and learning process. The innovation of the renowned Go Fish Game that turned to Go Fish English Game has successfully attracted pupils' involvement while learning the lesson. Go Fish English Game is one of many gamification approaches in teaching and learning. As the study reveals, from this game, the skills of seeing, signing, reading and writing have been imposed thus enhancing the pupils' vocabulary in English language. With this approach, the lesson is proven to be more engaging and has positive feedback from the pupils, namely with special needs of hearing disabilities. The pupils understood the rules of the games thus cleared the mission at the end of the lesson. This research has added value to enhance and strengthen vocabulary lessons with a gamification approach, namely Go Fish English Game towards special needs pupils with hearing disabilities. Further study still needs to be conducted to explore and

discover the possibilities of other types of gamifications in teaching and learning of different language skills focusing on special needs pupils with other disabilities according to specific age, gender and proficient level of English language. It is also recommendable for the researchers in the future to develop, design and implement gamification research such as online game lessons thus observing the impacts and effects of it on special needs pupils. While this research was conducted qualitatively, it is proposed for future research to conduct the research in a quantitative method.

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