# TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS ON LANGUAGE GAMES IN ESL CLASSROOM AMONG PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN JOHOR BAHRU

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A project report submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Education (Teaching English as a Second Language)

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## **DEDICATION**

This thesis is dedicated to my father, **Paramesvaran Arumugam**, who taught me that the best kind of knowledge to have is that which is learned for its own sake.

It is also dedicated to my mother, **Sithaletchumi Khoothiah** who taught me that even the largest task can be accomplished if it is done one step at a time.

My sisters who always provide assistance and support throughout the journey.

My supportive supervisor, **Dr Farhana Diana Binti Deris** who always guide me and encourage me to complete my project report.

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## **ABSTRACT**

The ever-increasing numbers of ESL students adds greater urgency to the need to prioritize the most effective means by which language proficiency can be enhanced, developing language skills through games being one such method. This study examines the teachers' perceptions of using language games in ESL classroom. Teachers' perceptions include the challenges, effectiveness and ways to encourage other teacher to use language games in classroom. Thus, this project report merely focusses on studying teachers' perceptions in using language games in ESL classroom. A qualitative approach was used to gather the data collected via interview, teachers' journal and observation instrument. 10 English teachers from Johor Bahru are chosen from random sampling population. This project report expected a better utilization or implementation of language games in ESL classroom since this project report tackles and addresses on effectiveness, challenges and ways to overcome the implementation of language games from teachers' perceptions.

Keywords: ESL; language games; teacher's perception; effectiveness; challenges; ways to encourage;

#### **ABSTRAK**

Jumlah pelajar ESL yang semakin meningkat menambah desakan kepada keperluan untuk mengutamakan kaedah yang paling berkesan untuk meningkatkan kemahiran berbahasa, dan permainan dalam bahasa menjadi salah satu kaedah tersebut. Kajian ini mengkaji perspektif guru untuk menggunakan permainan dalam bahasa di bilik darjah ESL. Perspektif guru merangkumi cabaran, keberkesanan dan cara untuk mendorong guru lain menggunakan permainan bahasa di dalam kelas. Oleh itu, kajian ini hanya memfokuskan pada kajian perspektif guru dalam menggunakan permainan bahasa di bilik darjah ESL. Pendekatan kualitatif digunakan untuk mengumpulkan data yang dibuat melalui instrumen seperti temu ramah, jurnal guru dan pemerhatian. 10 orang guru Bahasa Inggeris dari Johor Bahru dipilih dari secara rawak. Kajian ini mengharapkan penggunaan atau pelaksanaan permainan bahasa yang lebih baik di kelas ESL kerana kajian ini menggariskan cabaran dan keberkesanan permainan bahasa dari perspektif guru.

Kata kunci: ESL; permainan bahasa; perspektif guru; cabaran; cara untuk mendorong; keberkesanan

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# LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ESL - English as a Second Language

EFL - English as a Foreign Language

LG - Language Games

JB - Johor Bahru

RQ - Research Question

RO - Research Objective

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#### **CHAPTER 1**

#### INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Overview

Language learning and teaching is a hard scope. A vast effort is required when it comes to teaching a language. Thus, a proper procedure and method are developed and implemented on testing the effectiveness of language learning. One of the most prominent ways of language teaching is via the implementation of games as part of teaching. The implementation of interactive games in language learning could be either dominant or vice versa. Many researchers focused on this topic in which they studied the effectiveness of implementation of games in language learning. Researchers suggest that teachers should not address games as an additional activity when the teachers are running out of ideas during the lessons. Meanwhile, games are supposed to be utilized wisely during all stages of the lesson if they suit the objectives of the lesson. Games also tend to evoke a positive environment in the classroom.

However, Mubaslat, 2012 stated that the implementation of games could be less efficient in language learning. Students seem to focus too much on playing games and could not grasp the purpose of the implementation of games in language learning. Besides that, in research from Huzinga et.al (2017), there is less research on teacher's perception about implementation of games in language learning. They have also mentioned that teachers play a very vital role by ensuring their students to not engage too much on games activity. Thus, explaining that teachers play a very dominant role in ensuring the students reach the objective of the lesson taught in the classroom.

Many guidelines and suggestion are proposed by testing on students' effectiveness after implementing games activity on language learning. However, Bani Hani, 2010 mentioned that studies done on the challenges faced by the teacher during the implementation of games activity in language learning were very few. Teachers

tend to have a different perception of the implementation of games activity in language learning. Although implementation of games in language learning gains limelight recently, a proper study needs to be investigated on the teacher's view as well which was further mentioned by Huzinga et al (2017). Osman et.al (2012) emphasised that since the implementation of games during the lesson help to achieve goals of lesson outcome and satisfy the requirement of the national curriculum, the implementation of games in language learning should be enjoyable for both students and teachers.

# 1.2 Background of the Study

Mubaslat, 2011 mentioned that implementation of language games is not just to break the ice between the students but also to occupy the teaching and learning time. The games implemented during the lessons should be fun for the learners. They do not just act as a diversion but also an approach of making the learners to learn the language via the implementation of games. In research from Zainal Abidin (2017). language games can enhance learning motivation as the students learn quickly with the presence of games during their learning process. The games can capture students' attention and participation in their learning as students eager to learn more. Besides that, Singh (2016) mentioned that games have the power to transform a boring class into a challenging one. The learners do not feel stressed up to learn the language. Although there are a lot of studies done on the effectiveness of implementation of games in ESL classroom, teachers' perceptions on the implementation of games are relatively less explored. Hence, it is vital to know teachers' perception as they are the agents in the classroom.

Huzinga et.al (2017) stated that teachers play a vital role in implementing games in ESL classroom. It can be deduced that teachers play a significant role in implementing games in the ESL classroom. Allsop (2015) mentioned that teachers' perceptions influence the implementation of games in the ESL classroom. Molilin G, (2014) further stated that teachers who show positive approach able to implement language games in the ESL classroom. Hence, it is important to explore teachers' perceptions on the implementation of games in ESL classroom as they affect the effectiveness of implementation of language games in ESL classroom. Nevertheless,

there were limited studies conducted on the teachers' perceptions on the implementation of language games in ESL classroom. Molilin G, (2014) stated that extremely limited studies have been carried out to know teachers' perceptions on the implementation of language games in the classroom. Although some studies have been carried out to explore on the teachers' perceptions Molilin G, Allsop 2015; Chen, S, (2000) they contain some limitation as the researchers have collected the data in quantitative method to achieve their research objectives. Besides that, the studies have not been conducted in Malaysian ESL primary school context. Hence, this could fill this literature gap and provide sufficient and authentic information for further research in the study.

#### 1.3 Problem Statement

Although, most researchers reveal that game design is altered according to a subject's course planner, only a few research studies on teacher's perception on using language games in the classroom. There is a vast number of suggestions on the effectiveness of language game in the ESL classroom, but do not tackle on teacher's view on the implementation of language games in ESL classroom. Hence, the objectives of the study are to know teachers' perceptions on the implementation of games in ESL classroom. It is important to explore teachers' view on the implementation of games as they act as an agent in the teaching and learning environment. In order to comprehend the implementation of games better, primary ESL school teachers were selected to explore on the effectiveness, challenges and ways to overcome in order to implement of language games in ESL classroom.

## 1.4 Research Questions

This study targets to know the effect of using LG in the ESL classroom in primary school English language teachers. The study will answer the following questions:

(a) What are the teachers' perceptions on the effectiveness of using language games in the ESL classroom among primary school English language teachers in JB?

- (b) What are the teachers' perceptions on the challenges of using language games in the ESL classroom among primary school English language teachers in JB?
- (c) What are the teachers' perceptions on the ways to encourage teachers to use language games in ESL classroom among primary school English language teachers in JB?

## 1.5 Research Objectives

This section focuses on the objectives of the research in this project report, and an in-depth of the research objectives of the project report are discussed as follows:

**RO1**: To investigate the teacher's perceptions on the effectiveness of using language games in the ESL classroom among primary school English language teachers in JB.

**RO2**: To identify the teacher's perceptions on the challenges of using language games in the ESL classroom among primary school English language teachers in JB.

**RO3**: To explore on teacher's perceptions on the ways to encourage teachers to use language games in ESL classroom among primary school English language teachers in JB.

## 1.6 Research Scope

This study focuses on the teachers' perceptions on the implementation of LG in ESL classroom. English language primary school teachers in Johor Bahru are chosen to be the participants for this study. The study highlights on teachers' perceptions on the effectiveness, challenges and ways to overcome the issues during the implementation of LG in ESL classroom (Figure 1.1). Moreover, this study only conducted during a period of time and it did not cover on other aspects such as gender, socioeconomic and race. The data was collected in three different instruments which were semi structured interviews, observation and teachers' journals.

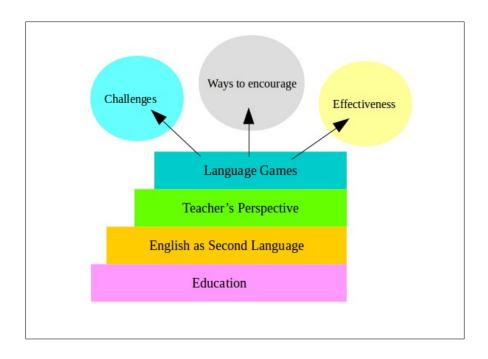


Figure 1.1: Research Scope of the Project Report

## 1.7 Definition of Terms

## 1.7.1 ESL (English as Second Language)

Abunowara, (2016) mentioned that English is one of the languages that has been used globally especially in educational settings and it is vital for the students to acquire the language. 'English as a Second Language (ESL) is defined as the use of English language in an English-speaking environment among the non-native speakers. Si (2014) highlights that ESL means English is followed by the mother tongue. In Malaysia, English is recognized as a second language followed by our mother tongue, Bahasa Melayu. Yoko Iwai (2011) also stated that ESL refers to those who learn the language in the country, and it is used as a medium of communication. Thus, English language is widely used in our educational settings as the medium of instructions. Sidhu, G.K., Kaur, S., & Chi, L. J. (2018) also further supported by mentioning one of the waves highlighted in Malaysian Education Blueprint regarding the significance of English language. Therefore, it is crucial for ESL teachers to know the importance of English language while adhering to the Malaysian Education Blueprint in initiating various approaches to develop students' proficiency in English.

## 1.8 Theoretical Framework

Erving Goffman's 1974 Frame Analysis (Figure 1.2) is related for this study as it helps to see the relationship between the teachers' perceptions and the implementation of games in ESL classroom Molilin (2014). It is also one of the frameworks that analyses on the participants' understanding 'What is going on here?' in any specific situation. Moreover, this framework is embedded in social context which influences the frames by the rules, beliefs, perceptions and etc Molilin (2014). The framework was first initiated by Erving Goffman in 1974. The main objective is to comprehend our daily life experiences. The framework are divided into few membranes Goffman (1961) namely school, classroom, student, players and game world.

Firstly, school 'membrane' focuses on the social contexts, expected behaviors and on the roles of a school environment (Goffman, 1961). The second membrane highlights on the classroom environment whereby it focuses on the perceptions and roles of the teachers in implementing the language games in the classroom (Goffman, 1961). The third membrane is students whereby it emphasizes on the expectation and views of students on language games (Goffman, 1961). The next membrane is player whereby it focuses on students' engagement in language games and lastly is gameworld (Goffman, 1961). This membrane highlights on the implementation of language games in classroom (Goffman, 1961).

Therefore, Molilin (2014) mentioned that Goffman's frame analysis aids to demonstrate the complexity and consequences when language games are implemented in ESL classroom. Many variables such as curriculum, technical support and resources, teachers' role and curriculum have to be considered before the implementation of language games in ESL classroom.

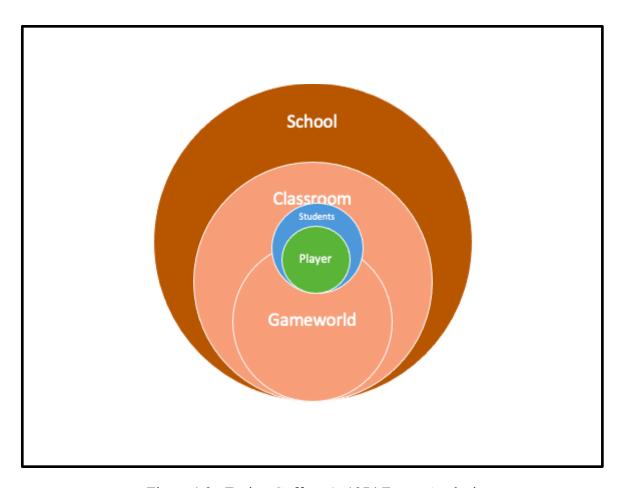


Figure 1.2 : Erving Goffman's 1974 Frame Analysis

# 1.9 Conceptual Framework

Conceptual framework portrays the path of the research and aids the researchers to study on the research problem and illustrates a representation of ideas that relate to one another (Adom,Cickson & Hussein, Emad & Adu- Agyem, Joe, 2018) This framework can also help to structure the phenomenon of the study. This study implied on the Erving Goffman's 1974 Frame Analysis to explore teachers' perceptions on the implementation of LG in ESL classroom among primary school English teachers in Johor Bahru. The current research investigated on the effect of 'game world', 'player', 'students', 'classroom' and 'school' of ESL teachers in implementing LG. The following is the conceptual framework that illustrated in Figure 1.3

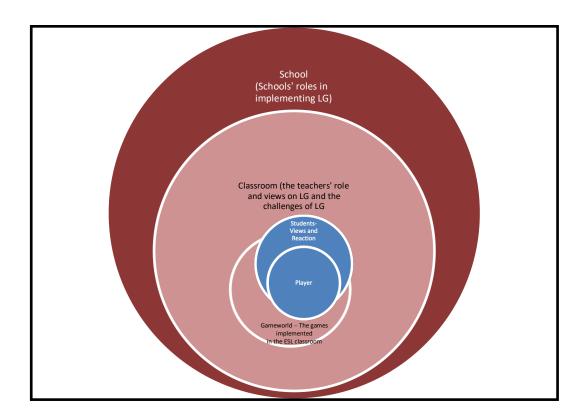


Figure 1.3: Conceptual framework developed in this research

Figure 1.3 illustrates the framework developed in the study. Framework was formed to study this research. The conceptual framework explores on gameworld', 'player', 'students', 'classroom' and 'school' that greatly affects the teachers' perceptions on the implementation of LG in ESL classroom. 'Gameworld' is the language games implemented by the teachers in the classroom that influences the teachers' perceptions to implementation of language games. 'Students' focuses on their engagement in their learning when language games are implemented in ESL classroom. 'Classroom' emphasizes on the teachers' views and perceptions of language games in ESL classroom. And lastly, 'school' highlights on the schools roles in implementing LG in ESL classroom which influence teachers' perceptions on the implementation of LG in ESL classroom. Hence, all these 'membranes' or features can influence teachers' perceptions on the implementation of LG.

## 1.10 Significance of Study

The purpose of this research is to study on the teacher's perception on implementation of language games in ESL classroom. Through this research, readers will be able to get insights on the challenges as well as the effectiveness of using language games in classroom based on teacher's perception. Furthermore, this project report focuses on the ways to encourage teachers to use language games in ESL classroom as well. Thus, this project report directs teachers about the challenges and effectiveness of language games and could enhance the ways on how to use language games in classroom. Molilin, (2014) mentioned that teachers should adapt themselves to the constant changes in education and use them in the learning process. This research will prepare teachers to fulfil new demands of learners in integrating language games in ESL classroom.

## 1.11 Limitation of Study

This research has several limitations. Firstly, this study only focuses on ESL primary school English language teachers in Johor Bharu. The result of the research cannot be generalized due to the respondents based on a selected district. Due to the time constraint, researcher could not carry out this research in other districts in Johor. Secondly, the research will be done within a given time. Hence, respondents will be given a certain period to complete the journals. This could affect the findings of the study. In addition, this study focuses only on the teachers' perceptions on the effectiveness and challenges of using language games in ESL classroom as well as touching on how to encourage other teachers to use language games in ESL classroom based on teacher's perception. This project report does not focus on different education field and solely focus on teacher's perception only in utilization of language games in ESL classroom.

## 1.12 Chapter Summary

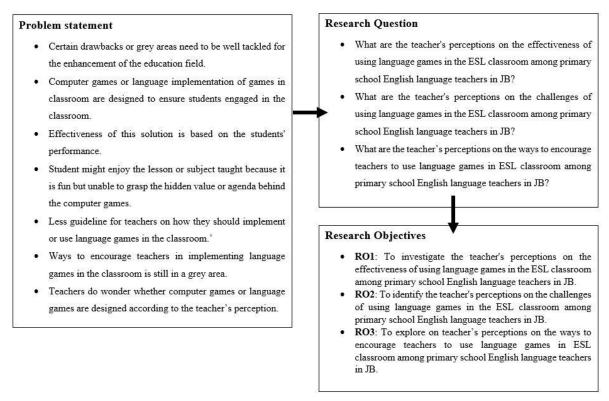


Figure 1.4: Chapter Summary 1

This chapter begins by stating the main point of the study by mentioning the vital factor of implementation of games in ESL classroom. Then, it is further proceeded to the problem statement of the study which determines the significance of the study. Next, the research objectives are stated clearly. Besides, the theories and approaches of language learning are further discussed to show the relationship between games and those theories. The researcher discussed further on the significance and the limitation of the study. Finally, relevant terminologies are defined to avoid ambiguity.

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