'*Monkey Forest'* Board Game: A Dynamic Tool for Young Learners to Learn English Sentence Structure

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Abstrak

Menurut kurikulum, siswa Sekolah Dasar harus mempelajari struktur kalimat bahasa Inggris sebagai bagian dari penguasaan keterampilan menulis. Tantangan muncul ketika siswa menemukan pola bahasa Inggris berbeda dengan struktur kalimat bahasa Indonesia. Siswa yang tergolong pembelajar muda memerlukan strategi yang tepat untuk mengakomodasi karakteristiknya. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengungkap implementasi dan manfaat board game Monkey Forest sebagai alat dinamis bagi pembelajar muda di salah satu sekolah dasar negeri di Ngluwar, Jawa Tengah. Penelitian ini menerapkan metode campuran dengan angket dan wawancara sebagai instrumen untuk memperoleh data. Pesertanya adalah 15 siswa kelas lima. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pelaksanaan mencapai 72% menunjukkan kualifikasi sedang. Hal ini menunjukkan bahwa siswa memberikan tanggapan positif terhadap penerapan permainan papan Monkey Forest untuk mempelajari struktur kalimat bahasa Inggris. Selain itu respon siswa terhadap manfaat board game Monkey Forest juga menunjukkan kualifikasi sedang dengan perolehan 74,9%. Selain itu, permainan papan Monkey Forest sebagai alat dinamis untuk mempelajari struktur kalimat bahasa Inggris terbukti memberikan manfaat.
Kata Kunci: *Permainan Papan Monkey Forest, Struktur Kalimat, Alat Dinamis*

Abstract

According to the curriculum, Elementary school students have to learn English sentence structure as a part of writing skill mastery. The challenge arose when the students found the English pattern was different from the Indonesian sentence structure. The students who are categorized as young learners need the appropriate strategy accommodating their characteristics. This research aimed to reveal the implementation and benefits of the Monkey Forest board game as a dynamic tool for young learners at one of the state elementary schools in Ngluwar, Central Java. This research used mixed-methods research. The instruments for obtaining data were questionnaires and interviews. The participants were 15 fifth graders. The research findings revealed that the implementation reached 72% showing medium qualifications. It revealed that the students gave positive responses to the implementation of the Monkey Forest board game to learn English sentence structure. Besides, students' responses to the benefits of the Monkey Forest board game showed medium qualifications as well by obtaining 74.9%. Moreover, the Monkey Forest board game as a dynamic tool for learning English sentence structure was evidenced to provide benefits to the students.
Keywords: Monkey Forest Board Game, Sentence structure, Dynamic Tool

INTRODUCTION

Writing can be defined as expressing ideas or thoughts using written language as a communication medium, based on (Dalman, 2014). The ability to write requires someone to produce and express to others what they feel, want, and think using written language. *Writing* is a language skill used to communicate indirectly, not face-to-face, with other people, as stated by (Masril, et al, 2020). Therefore, children's writing skills need to be developed and paid attention to because writing skills are not an ability that is passed down from generation to generation but is the result of a person's learning process and perseverance so that the development of writing skills can be observed through the results of a child's writing. Writing results can only be obtained with practice and the desire within a person to learn to arrange words into sentences, arrange sentences into paragraphs, and finally into writing that can be understood by other people, as stated by (Laoli et al., 2022). Mastering writing skills is essential because of several functions, including expressing oneself, interacting with others, educating, and conveying information (Abidin, 2014) additionally, writing skills are the activities of using the written word to communicate and express ideas through thinking and sentence structure. Therefore, it is necessary to develop the skills of each individual as soon as possible.

A sentence is the smallest unit of language, both spoken and written, that expresses a thought as a whole. According to (Alwi, 2003), a sentence is an arrangement of words in a specific pattern that forms a unity of meaning that can be understood well. Sentence patterns consist of simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex sentences. Each sentence has a different pattern, closely related to sentence structure, punctuation, and relationships. The structure of English sentences in the language is a component that students must master. Sentence structure is one of the elements of English that must be studied according to the current independent curriculum.

Preliminary studies were conducted during observations and interviews regarding the condition of students who still need clarification about how to arrange random sentences according to the correct sentence structure. Observation results also found that almost all students had a combined learning style VAK (Visual, Auditory, and Kinesthetic). This learning style is used to develop and optimize student learning outcomes. As explained by (Russel, 2011), the VAK learning model is a learning model that utilizes learning achieved by training and developing learning styles to the maximum so that learning outcomes increase. The student character obtained during the interview was the student's need to play, which was defined by (Vygotsky, 1978 in Kindon 2022) as a provided activity to accommodate children's enjoyment. The statement means that playing to bring out students' enjoyment, especially in learning, with the results of observations obtained by researchers using media to help students get what they need in learning, one of which is dynamic tools in the learning process.

Dynamic tools were one of the dynamic elements of learning. A dynamic element was a learning process that could change. The dynamic element here also included the motivation and condition of educators to teach learners. According to (Kellough, 2007, in Kompri, 2016) in the process of teaching and learning activities, the teacher's most important role in encouraging student learning was to increase students' desire or motivation to learn. In carrying out this task, teachers needed to understand students properly so that teachers could provide learning experiences where students found something interesting, valuable, motivating intrinsically, challenging, and useful for them. The use of dynamic tools could be utilized in board games. The researchers used board games as a dynamic tool that could be used in improving English sentence structure.

Integrating board games into elementary English education is a dynamic and innovative approach that has received increasing attention in recent years. Board games are divided into two types: educational board games and non-educational board games. According to (Ismail, 2012), educational games are very fun activities, can be educational, and are useful for improving children's language, thinking, and social skills with their

environment. From this statement, it is explained that board games are board games that can be an effective and interesting means of learning English. The board game media itself is based on a cooperative learning approach.

Cooperative learning is a learning strategy that involves student participation in small groups to interact with each other (Rusman, 2014). Cooperative learning has several variations of models that can be applied. Students in this learning process not only act as recipients of lessons through the teacher's verbal explanations, but they also play a role in discovering the nature of the lesson material itself. The cooperative learning model makes it easier for students to find and understand difficult subject matter. By working together with friends. In cooperative learning, students are required to study together in small groups consisting of two, three, or four students and help each other prepare presentations in front of the class. Before implementing the cooperative learning model by giving assignments, students are given knowledge about cooperative learning so they can work together well in their groups, as explained by (Parker, 2009, in Huda 2015). Cooperative learning principles is to create group work interactions on academic tasks for accomplishing the learning goals. Cooperative learning is learning in which students interact with each other in small groups to complete academic tasks and thereby achieve a common goal. The purpose of cooperative learning, to ensure that students enjoy learning and that their learning needs are met, requires students to actively participate in the learning process, both individually and in groups. Apart from cooperative learning, of course, there must be supporting media as a means of conveying learning messages. This research aims to determine the implementation of the monkey forest game and its benefits as a dynamic tool.

There were many non-digital learning methods that had been applied in English language learning. In this case, the researchers wanted to use cooperative game-based learning media that had been rarely used by previous researchers, the Monkey Forest board game. Monkey Forest Cooperative Game from Mudpuppy was a game that taught counting, simple math, and color matching as well as building community, encouraging respect, and supporting social-emotional development. The players worked together, matched the colors, and calculated strategies for the best move. The aim of the game was for the participants to develop understanding and cooperative learning with a small group approach or strategy. Previous research had been conducted by Tengku and (Tengku Paris & Yussof, 2012) with a study entitled *Enhancing Grammar Using Board Game*. This research focused on teaching grammar by using board games as learning media. This research examined how the use of board games was useful in grammar lessons, and students could be motivated to learn.

The second was conducted by (Tulloh et al., 2023) with a study entitled *Dart Board Game: A Game-Based Activity to Teach English Speaking Skills for Young Learners. In this study, the researchers used the Dart Board game as a tool for learning students' speaking skills.* This study was conducted in an elementary school in Yogyakarta as a respondent. The study investigated the application of Dart Board game in English speaking skills, to reveal its implementation and benefits.

(Hasugian, 2023) conducted research with the article entitled *The Use of Word Card Media to Improve Sentence for Class V Students of Elementary School Shihombu.* The study aimed to improve the understanding of fifth-grade students in structuring sentences by using word card media. The process was carried out by organizing the cards according to the needs by placing words on each card. The procedure in the game was developed by grouping the students, and the researcher found that the students experienced a very significant development. Furthermore, the research on the use of the Monkey Forest board game as a dynamic tool for mastering English sentence structure aimed to answer the following questions: 1) How is the implementation of the Monkey Forest Board Game as a dynamic tool for young learners to learn English sentence structure? 2) What are the benefits of Monkey Forest Board Game as a dynamic tool for young learners to learn English sentence structure? This study, researchers focus on emphasized the utilizing of games given to students in learning. In previous research, there was no discussion stating that students needed games in learning, so this research was needed to fill the gap in previous research.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The researchers used a mixed-methods approach by combining qualitative research design and quantitative research design. According to (Creswell, 2018), combination research was a research approach that combined quantitative form and qualitative form. This approach involved the functions of both research approaches collectively so that the overall strength of this research was greater than qualitative and quantitative research and was more complete than just collecting and analyzing two types of data. Collection techniques for researchers included pre-tests, conducting questionnaires, interviews, and observation. The research used questionnaires and interviews to collect data. By taking the first step, researchers used quantitative research techniques to collect data. Questionnaires were distributed to 15 students from fifth grade of elementary schools in Ngluwar, Central Java; consisting of 4 female students and 11 male students, and the rquestionnaires was held on January 20, 2024, within 30 minutes. This questionnaire was used to answer research questions: 1) How is the implementation of the Monkey Forest Board Game as a dynamic tool for young learners to learn English sentence structure? 2) What are the benefits of Monkey Forest Board Game as a dynamic tool for young learners to learn English sentence structure? Thus, to strengthen the questionnaire results, the researchers conducted the interviews with 7 students. The interview aimed to reveal in deeper data in the relation of the implementation and benefits of the Monkey Forest Board Game for learning English sentence structure in the classroom from the student's perspective. This was obtained from one of the students who said that the monkey forest made learning English more fun and helped them compose English sentences according to the material that had been given.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section presented the research results of the researchers. The research presented two main findings for further discussion, including the implementation of the Monkey Forest board game and the benefits of Monkey Forest board game implementation as a dynamic tool for young learners to learn English sentence structure.

Monkey Forest Board Game Implementation

In terms of implementing the Monkey Forest Board game, the survey showed how students understood the game and their opinions regarding implementing the game. The questionnaire was explained by the researchers to help students understand the meaning of the questions. To support data on the implementation of the Monkey Forest board game, it was presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Monkey Forest Board Games' Implementation

Statement	Agree	Disagree
I can understand the rules of the *Monkey Forest* game which were explained by the teacher before the game started.	100%	0%
I can understand the picture instructions given by the teacher on the blackboard to arrange the *Monkey Forest* game cards.	93,3%	13,3%
I can compose sentences according to the picture instructions given by the teacher on the blackboard to compose the *Monkey Forest* board game.	73,3%	26,6%
I can construct sentences using the *Monkey Forest* game cards, which the teacher quickly.	66,6%	33,3%
I arranged quickly to get circle cards that would be arranged on the *Monkey Forest* game board.	46,6%	53,3%
I was able to compose English sentences using the *Monkey Forest* game in 1 minute.	60%	40%

I can arrange the cards on the *Monkey Forest* game board correctly.	66,6%	33,3%
I can work together to play the *Monkey Forest* game with friends.	100%	0%
In the *Monkey Forest* game, My group and I supported each other as we took turns constructing sentences.	86,6%	13,3%
I feel excited to compose sentences using the *Monkey Forest* game.	93,3%	6,6%

Table 1 showed that 72% of fifth-grade elementary students felt happy and interested in playing the Monkey Forest board game. This number was important because almost all students chose to agree and strongly agree with the answers. This showed that the Monkey Forest board game presented could attract their attention, making them more interested in learning. Apart from increased enthusiasm, 100% of students agreed that the Monkey Forest board game was easy to play and understand. They became confident in playing the game of constructing sentences in English. From this percentage, it could be concluded that all students were enthusiastic about learning using the Monkey Forest board game. (Smith, 2020) said student enthusiasm had a very important role in learning because it could influence their level of engagement, motivation, and academic achievement.

In this case, researchers used the Monkey Forest board game to teach accuracy and understanding of commands. 93.3% of students agreed with the statement that students understood the picture instructions given by the teacher to assemble the Monkey Forest game. This percentage showed that almost all students could understand the steps and rules of the Monkey Forest board game, which meant the development model was suitable for producing the product previously designed by (Sugiyono, 2016). With a percentage of 86.6% for the statement, students could implement the game in constructing sentences using the Monkey Forest board game, which showed that almost all students were helped in constructing English sentences according to the correct sentence structure. This statement was strengthened by (Kurniati, 2016) who said that implementing games in learning could produce better memory for children. Moreover, when children placed objects in representational and meaningful situations, that was when children provided a vital foundation for memory.

According to the interview with the students, learning activities using the Monkey Forest board game media were more fun and different, with interested and enthusiastic responses when participating in the game. Students experienced different learning activities, starting from monotonous learning activities that made students bored, as well as a lack of student motivation. Therefore, many students needed help understanding the explanations when learning English, especially in students' writing skills and motivation to study in class. They still needed more understanding to construct sentences correctly. There needed to be variations in learning, for example, games in learning. With the Monkey Forest board game activity, their understanding of English learning material continued to develop. The Monkey Forest board game looked interesting, varied, and exciting. Therefore, students' enthusiasm for the Monkey Forest board game increased. Regarding the implementation of the Monkey Forest board game, the students' views were explained as follows:

Excerpt 1: *Permainan Monkey Forest menyenangkan dan sangat menarik.*
(Monkey Forest game are fun and very interesting for me.)

Excerpt 2: *Permainan Monkey Forest sangat membantu. Aku jadi paham dan tahu cara menyusunnya.*
(Monkey Forest Game is very helpful for me to understand the lesson. I knew how to set it up.)

Excerpt 3: *Awalnya belum bisa, tapi setelah bermain aku jadi bisa mengerjakannya.*
(I couldn't do it in the beginning, but after playing the game, I enjoyed playing it.)

Benefits of the Monkey Forest Board Game

Regarding the benefits of the Monkey Forest Board game, the survey showed how students benefited from the game as a dynamic tool for learning. The questionnaire explained it so that students understood the question. The results of the benefits of the Monkey Forest board game were presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Benefits of the Monkey Forest Board Game Implementation

Statement	Agree	Disagree
Using the *Monkey Forest* game, I can understand how to construct sentences in English.	100%	0%
Using the *Monkey Forest* game, I can compose English sentences using the correct sentence structure.	73,3%	26,6%
I can find mistakes when constructing English sentences using the *Monkey Forest* game.	86,6%	20%
Using the *Monkey Forest* game in class makes me more enthusiastic about constructing sentences correctly.	86,6%	20%
I can discuss with my groups how to organize the *Monkey Forest* game.	93,3%	6,6%
By working in groups using the *Monkey Forest* game, I can exchange opinions with my group to compose sentences given by the teacher.	60%	40%
With group work using the *Monkey Forest* game, I am responsible for constructing sentences correctly.	86,6%	13,3%
By constructing sentences using the *Monkey Forest* game, I can differentiate the use of male and female pronouns.	86,6%	20%
By constructing sentences using the *Monkey Forest* game, I can differentiate subjects, objects, and verbs properly and correctly.	86,6%	13,3%
By constructing sentences using the *Monkey Forest* game, I can write about body parts and their functions with appropriate English sentences.	80%	20%

Table 2 shows the benefits of Monkey Forest board games as a dynamic tool. Based on the percentage mentioned above, 100% of students agreed that constructing English sentences using the Monkey Forest game helped students understand well; this meant that the Monkey Forest board game helped all students construct English sentences. In this statement, the feasibility of board games as a learning medium was successful. According to (Akbar, 2013), it needed to be adjusted to student readiness in accepting it so that students could accept it and find it easy to use. Then, the following percentage showed that 86.6% of students agreed that the Monkey Forest game media fostered student enthusiasm and motivation for learning. From this percentage, students' learning motivation increased. As quoted from (Yonny 2012, in Isnaeni, 2013), criteria for individual completeness in this research was if the percentage of student learning motivation increased to 70%.

Continuing the following statement, as many as 93% of students agreed on the need for games in cooperative learning, a fun and different learning process trained students to discuss and exchange opinions, increased students' understanding of the correct structure of English sentences, with this cooperative game it could direct players to interact with each other. The hope was that students who tended to be passive and less enthusiastic could become active and more enthusiastic, as stated by (Hidayati, 2019). This statement was also supported by the interview of students who realized the importance of understanding sentence structure in English, and the Monkey Forest game allowed students to develop how sentences were structured and connected

to subjects. Regarding the benefits of the Monkey Forest game as a dynamic tool, the following was the student's statement from the student's perspective:

Excerpt 1: *Seru permainannya, mudah dipahami dan kita bisa berdiskusi bareng teman kelompok.*
(The game is fun. It is easy to understand and we can have a group discussion)

Excerpt 2: *Asik! Dengan permainan Monkey Forest, aku jadi cepat memahami materi yang diberikan guru.*
(The game is fun! Through the Monkey Forest board game, I can quickly understand the material given by the teacher.)

Excerpt 3: *Bermain dalam pembelajaran sangat dibutuhkan karena tidak membuat bosan dan mengantuk.*
(The existence of playing game to learn is what I need. It won't make me bored or sleepy.)

Research data collection was based on specific techniques: observations, questionnaires, and interviews. After the data was collected, a question-based analysis was carried out using descriptive data analysis to describe and interpret the percentages as a frequency table. Then, the data was analyzed using the formula suggested by (Sugiyono, 2016). Monkey Forest board game implementation reached 72%. With this percentage, the application of the Monkey Forest board game was in the medium qualification, which showed that the Monkey Forest game was proper to be applied as a supporting medium in learning English, especially in sentence formation. However, further improvements were still needed to increase the qualifications accordingly. Meanwhile, the percentage of benefits from playing the Monkey Forest board game was 74.9%. This means the Monkey Forest board game almost reaches high qualifications but still needs improvement, based on previous research, there were differences in the results of using board games as a learning tool, in terms of students' motivation, implementation, and understanding. The limitations of this research were in writing skills, which focused on English sentence structure for young students, and Monkey Forest board game with a non-digital game-based learning approach.

CONCLUSION

The Monkey Forest board game as a dynamic tool had medium qualifications, with the Monkey Forest game implementation and benefits. This research aimed to find out how the Monkey Forest board game was applied, its benefits, and its uses as a dynamic tool for learning English in terms of understanding sentence structure. However, the percentage of implementation and benefits was still considered medium, which required improvement. The next suggestion for teachers, readers, and researchers was to find solutions to reduce existing obstacles and continue to develop the Monkey Forest board game as a dynamic medium for learning English language skills, especially for young learners.

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