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### USING CHAIN MASSAGE GAME TO SUPPORT YOUNG LEARNERS' VAK LEARNING STYLE

Yella Dezas Perdani Universitas Bina Nusantara ydezasp@gmail.com **Abstract:** This research discusses the involving chain massage to accommodate young learners' learning style in which is conducted at grade 4 of one elementary school in Bandung. The aim of this research are (1) involving chain massage games in teaching English to the young learner, especially in grade 4 of an elementary school in Bandung, (2) finding out teacher's and children's responses toward the implementation of chain message in TEYL. This research uses a qualitative study where there are 40 students and one English teacher as the participants. The findings of this study show that chain messages can be considered as an effective activity of TEYL. The children seem to learn English more excitedly by game. With regard to the teacher, chain message game creates classroom activities more interesting and joyful because the children's are involved in. Moreover, this game is also support different learning style of the children, visual, auditory and kinesthetic. However, the teachers found some obstacles in implementing the technique because they still children who easily get bored.

**Keywords:** chain message game, learning style, visual-learning, auditory-learning, kinesthetic-learning

#### **INTRODUCTION**

It is necessary to teach English since elementary school. It assists children to learn English at a previous level such as junior high school. English teaching at elementary school is directed to prepare the children to be able to learn English at junior high school that English teaching at elementary school is proposed to familiarize children with English. Besides, English teaching at elementary school is also intended to develop language ability which is used to accompany the action. Thus, to familiarize children with English, a teacher has a task to lead children at elementary school learning English through language that accompanying actions in which an English teacher in elementary school teaches English to children by actively teaching. They can teach the children by producing simple utterances or simple conversations, reading aloud, phrases, clauses, and very simple sentences, and teaches children to copy or rewrite words, phrases, clauses, and very simple sentences by using appropriate punctuation. So, a teacher has a task to provide activities that make children doing something when learning English to get children familiar with English.

However, it is found that some English teachers at elementary school usually tend to explain the lesson to children by writing the material on the whiteboard and ask children to do exercises in the notebook that this kind of activity drives children tired of learning English. Teachers' failure to familiarize children by using the activity above occurs because of some reasons. First, this activity does not make children do something because children do not involve actively in learning. Children only ask to copy the material and do the exercise in the



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notebook. Second, this activity also does not develop children's cognitive and social-emotional development. Piaget in Santrock (1994) states young children at the age of 7 to 11 are in the concrete stages according to their cognitive development. It means elementary school children can only be taught by using concrete things. While this activity drives children to struggle with the abstract concept since no demonstration using concrete things to help them learn.

Elementary school students, also usually called young learners, will learn best if the people involved in the teaching-learning process, facilitate the learning and take into account the way they learn into the teaching practices. Piaget in Santrock (1994) suggested that children developed through specific stages, they are:

- 1. Sensory-motor stage: the period from birth up to the age of two,
- 2. Preoperational stage: The period from the age of 2 up to the age of 7
- 3. Concrete operational stage
- 4. Formal operational stage
  - From the age of 7 up to the age of 11,
  - From 11 to the adulthood

This research focuses on the formal operational stage that the participants of the research are from the age of 7 to 11 years old.

Keefe in Felder and Brent (2005) argues that learning styles are cognitive, attentive, and psychological behavior that serves as indicators of how learners aware, communicate and respond to the learning environment. There are a lot of characteristics of this learning style, such as shown in Table 1.

A Child Who Is Highly	Will Tend To Think	Enjoy	And Learn From
Linguistic	in words	reading, writing, storytelling and word games	books, journals, dialogue, stories and debate
Logical- Mathematical	by reasoning	experiments, puzzles and calculations	chemistry sets, trips to the planetarium and science museums
Spatial	in images	drawing, visualizing and doodling	paints, clay or play dough, LEGO®, videos, art museums and movies
Bodily-Kinesthetic	through physical sensations	dancing, running, building, manipulating objects and gesturing	role playing, sports and hands-on instruction
Musical	in rhythm and melodies	signing, playing music, drumming and listening	singing, concerts and playing musical instruments
Interpersonal	by exchanging ideas with others	leading, organizing and parties friendship, clubs, group games mentors	
Intrapersonal	in relation to their feelings and goals	reflecting, planning, meditating and dreaming spending time alone, independent study and making choices	



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Naturalist	through the environment and natural forms	pets, growing plants and nature hikes	observing through binoculars and microscope, and interaction with plants and animals
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Table 1. kinds of learning style

So, from these multiple intelligences, it can be concluded that each of the children is different. They have different characteristics and interests. They cannot be treated in the same way. One is good in mathematic does not mean the other has to be good also.

Furthermore, this research had the same idea as what Fleming and Bourne (2006) had composed about learning style as one of the most common of the various type of learning styles model. Fleming divides the learning style into four. They are auditory, visual, reading and kinesthetic or kinesthetic Auditory learning style is learning by hearing (Fleming, 2009). It means children who use this style use their ears as tools to absorb the information.

Based on the explanation above, the writer proposed a chain massage game to support children learning style. This research focused on the used of chain massage games to support VAK children's' learning style. The researcher limits the problem on involving chain massage accommodate children' VAK (visual, auditory, and kinesthetic) learning style in teaching English for young children to chain message game only that the formulation of this research is "How does teacher to accommodate children' VAK (visual, auditory, and kinesthetic) learning style in teaching English for young children?". The purpose of this research was to explain chain messages and how to involve them in teaching English in order to accommodate children learning styles (visual, auditory, and kinesthetic) for young children. It was hoped that it can inspire a teacher to involve play or game in their teaching.

#### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research design of this research was a case study. It is the research that the researcher has to know the practices in order to lead to the decision making (McMillan and Schumacher. 2001:415). In this research, the researcher studied the process of involving chain messages in the teaching and learning process to support different learning styles of the children. The data were in the form of observation and interviews (Cresswell, 1998).

The sample of this research was chosen by purposive sampling. The reasons were it was a case study that wanted to help the children from different learning study to be able to learn in one activity. They were a class of 4th grade of an elementary school in one of the private schools in Bandung and their teacher.

#### 1. Observation

The first instrument was an observation. It was an activity of paying attention to search information of the world or about the environment through the sense, which involved the recording of data via the use of scientific instruments. In conducting this instrument, the researcher gathered information about people and places at the research site (Cresswell, 2012: 213). The researcher did field observation that is the researcher observes directly without interaction with the participants.

#### 2. Interview

The second instrument was an interview. It was an interaction in the form of a conversation between the researchers and the interviewee (Wallace, 2001:124). This research used a semi-structured interview in that it was a very relaxed situation that the interviewee can talk freely. The question was in a general form so that the interviewee spoke up their mind



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freely. The personal data also revealed in this kind of interview (Wallace, 2001:147). The researchers had the guide questions, and then the follow-up questions were intended to allow the interviewee to interpret the question and encouraged them to give detailed responses (Travers, 2001: 3, Wallace, 2001: 147). The researcher interviewed the teacher and the children. The data analyzed by adding the qualitative data which were the respondents' opinions about strengths and weaknesses into the general conclusion.

### **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

#### **RESULTS**

1. Applying chain massage game in the classroom

Play is an important part of childhood. Santrock (1994) define play as all pleasure activity that is engaged in for its own sake. The play has many forms such as storytelling, pretend play, role play, games, drawing, singing, social play, pretending games, games involving playing with objects, and so on. Since the play has many forms, it is important to categorize play to understand it easily and make it easy to involve in learning.

According to Linwood (2012), play is categorized into several categories. They are physical play, expressive play, manipulative play, symbolic play, dramatic play, familiarization play, and games. Physical play is the first category which children engage in physical play when children run, jump, and play games such as chase and hide-and-seek. This play has a social nature because it involves other children. It also provides exercises, which are essential for normal development. The second play is expressive play that gives children opportunities to express feelings by engaging with materials. Materials used in expressive play include paints, finger paints, watercolors, crayons, colored pencils and markers, clay, and drawing paper. Next, manipulative play is the third category of play that children control or master their environment through manipulative play. They manipulate the environment and other people as much as possible and start in infancy. The fourth category of play is symbolic play that there are no rules in symbolic play, so that the child can use this play to reinforce, learn about, and imaginatively alter painful experiences. Symbolic play may be used by children to cope with the fear of separation when they go to school or the hospital. Symbolic play often appears at about 18 months of age and reaches the peak at 4 to 5 years of age, and decline gradually (Santrock, 1994). So, this play is suitable for kindergarten children.



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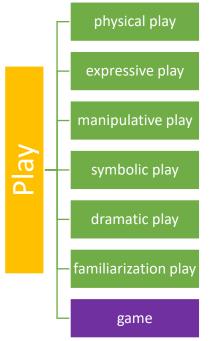


Chart 1. Categories of play (Llmwood, 2012)

Dramatic play is the fifth category that the children act out situations they suspect may happen to them, that they are fearful will happen, or that they have witnessed. It can be either spontaneous or guided and may be therapeutic for children in the hospital. The sixth play is the familiarization plays which the children handle materials and explore experiences in reassuring enjoyable ways. Familiarization prepares children for potentially fearful and painful experiences, such as surgery or parental separation. The last one is games. This was what this research focused on. In the chain massage game children learned by playing and following the rules, so that it is categorized as game (Llmwood, 2012).

In this research, some preparations need to be prepared before applying this play in the classroom. Before doing this play, the teacher prepare material that suitable for this play. Since chain message was a play that fosters children's memory, this play was suitable for learning vocabulary. The teacher chose the material for semesters two of grade four. Children should learn vocabulary around the class context such as the stationery, part of the body, and things in the classroom. In this research, the materials is about "stationeries in my box" as the topic for learning vocabulary

Before starting the game, the teacher divided the children into a five children group, prepared the material and the media. In this play, the teacher grouped them based on their seat arrangement; there were eight groups altogether.



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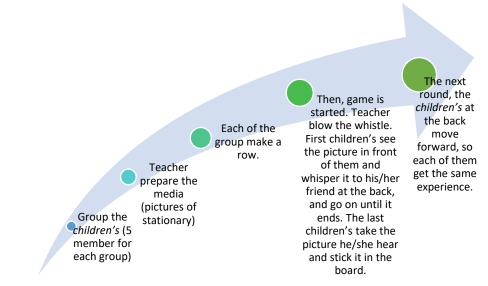


Chart 2.

Teaching process in applying chain massage game

Next, a teacher prepared the media. The media for this play were pictures of stationeries such as a pen, a pencil sharpener, a ruler, an eraser, and a pencil. A teacher prepared five pictures for each group that was given not in the same order. A teacher also prepared a box contains the same pictures with the picture that children had which had sticky tape behind each picture. A teacher divided spaces in the whiteboard for each group and gives each space a group name. The last, a teacher prepared a whistle to conduct children.

There were some steps that the teacher applied to play this game. First, he blew the whistle and asked children in the first row saw the picture in front of them and whispered the picture that he/she saw to a friend at the back. Second, after the teacher blew the whistle, children in the second row told the third row what picture that he/she heard. It was continued for children in the third, fourth, and fifth rows.

After that, the teacher blew again the whistle when the message was reached in the fifth row as the last row, and asked the children to come to the front to choose the suitable picture in the box that appropriate to what she/he heard, and stick it to the whiteboard. Next, the teacher blew the whistle and asked children to change the position. Children at the first row moved to the back, and the second row moved forward, followed by the third, fourth, and fifth row. Finally, the teacher repeats the activity until the five pictures are stuck on the whiteboard.

Before the game started, the teacher demonstrated what the children should do. The writer saw that almost all of the children paid attention to their teacher. Some of them at the back row talked to each other. But in the process of the game, they could get it. The game started when the teacher said "start". On the first try, the class was a bit noisy. The children talk and yell to their friends. The teacher just let them as they were. The game continued until the last person stuck the picture on the board.

Before the second trial began, the teacher asked the children in the back row to come forward to be the first player. He explained again the rules and asked the children to keep silent while they were playing. If they made noises again, they would be eliminated. It seemed that the children understand what their teacher commanded them to do. In the second play, they were more disciplined. Each of the instructions of the teacher was listened obediently.



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On the third try, the children seemed to have adapted to the rules. They were more disciplined and obedient to the rules and instructions. It finished quicker than the first and the second rounds.

Based on the observation and interview done, the participants were very happy. They paid attention when their teacher said, "Let' play a game". Some of them didn't understand when their teacher explained the rules. Then, the teacher explained it in Indonesian. After that, they were enthusiastic when the teacher divided them into a group. No one of them complained when they got their group. The writer realized that the teacher could control the children very well. They listened to what he said.

### 1. VAK learning style in-game

This research had the same idea as Fleming and Bourne (2006) who had composed about learning style as one of the most common of the various type of learning styles model. Fleming divides the learning style into four. They are auditory, visual, reading and kinesthetic or kinesthetic Auditory learning style is learning by hearing (Fleming, 2009). It means children who use this style use their ears as tools to absorb the information. De porter (2003) argues that auditory learners will lose the order of material if they tried to write the material when they hear seminars. It means the auditory learners have a strong memory to remember all of the material.

In this research, learning style meant an individual's natural or habitual shape of obtaining information and understanding in learning situations (Gardner in Bertsch et all, 2015). Moreover, Keefe in Felder and Brent (2005) argues that learning styles are characteristic cognitive, attentive, and psychological behavior that serves as indicators of how learners aware communicate and respond to the learning environment. Then, Bogod (2008) mentions that "learning styles are different approaches or ways of learning". It means there are many ways to learn. This definition is quite different from Cameroon (as cited in Hughes, 20A9) stated that learning style was how a person chose the way he or she likes to study, process information, and solve the problem. Through all of the definitions, learning styles are different ways that a person chooses to study, absorb information, and solve the problem, as indicators of how learners aware communicate and respond to the learning environment.

There are a lot of characteristics of this learning style. Fleming (2009) identifies twelve characteristics of this style. These learners like to read to themselves out loud; are not afraid to speak in class; like oral report; are good at explaining; remember names; notice the sounds effect in movies; enjoy music; are good at grammar and foreign language; read slowly; follow spoken direction well; cannot keep quiet for a long period; enjoy acting. Moreover, Deporter (2003) adds some characteristics. These learners annoy by sounds when learning; having difficulty in writing; moving their lips when reading; being able to repeat tones; and having problems with something that involves visualization.

Moreover, Nicholl and Rose (2003) state that auditory learners like to say some noun phrase such as "it sounds right, listening to what you say, it sounds like music in my ear, tell me, listen to me, and keep your tongue". Base on the characteristic above, it seems that auditory learners love to use vocabularies those are related to hearing perception. Madden (2002) divides the auditory styles into two (auditory-external, and auditory-internal). The differences between them are related to the way they get the information. Auditory-external learners tend to study in groups and they are dependent on others, meanwhile, auditory-internal learners tend to be independent. The next style is the visual learning style. It is showed by people who learned by seeing (Fleming, 2009). It means these people use their eyes to absorb



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information. Furthermore, according to Awla (2014), it was important to know children's learning styles in order to integrate them into their learning process.

Below, there are three learning styles that were found in this research.

	Visual learner	Auditory learner	Kinesthetic learner
Chain massage	First row: saw the	Second, third, fourth and	Fifth row: run to stick the
	picture in front of them	fifth row: listened to	correct picture in front of
	and whisper the picture	what their friends'	the class
	that he/she saw to friend	whispered	
	at the back	-	

Table 2. Chain massage supported VAK learning style.

#### a. Visual learner

The first learning style is visual learning. Visual learning children in this research can improve the vocabulary by looking at the picture given. It was in line with what Awla (2014), Bertsch et. all (2015), and Adistya (2016) composed that visual learners learned through pictures and they preferred to obtain information through visual, such as pictures, diagrams, and videos. In contrast, verbal learners gain more information through verbal explanations.

This kind of learning style gained the information by looking and viewing what around them. According to Deporter (2003), visual learners like to read and keep attention to the illustration of presentation on the board rather than listen to the speaker, being accurate in details; notice the appearance; being a good speller; good at remembering what they say rather than what they hear. In this research, the visual learners were put on the first row, so that they could learn by their learning style.

The pictures given were colorful that the visual learners were interested to see. It was what Fleming (2009) told as one of the characteristics of visual learners that they liked colors and they good at sign language. Moreover, Nicholl and Rose (2003) also stated that visual learners often use vocabulary such as "to see, to watch, perspective, it seems..., to reveal, seeing from above, to sparkle, be shiny like crystal". It supported what the teacher has done that the visual learners could be placed in the first row of the group to see the picture given.

Furthermore, the visual learners in this research were categorized as visual-external which was in line with what Madden (2002) have discussed. She divided visual learners into two groups. They were the difference in how they got the information. Visual- external learners chose something based on color and appearance. This kind of learners liked to sit in front in order to see the teachers or lectures in front of them easily. On the other hand, visual-internal got the information by imagining the concept. When they got the new information, they could add the information directly. The chain massage game was not supported the visual-internal learners yet, which further study could cover.

#### b. Auditory learners

The second learning style was auditory learning. This kind of learning style could gain more information through verbal explanations (Awla, (2014), Bertsch et. all (2015), and Adistya (2016)). This game was significant in promoting learning and fostering development. All of the children were very enthusiastic about learning by playing the game that they were actively involved in the game (Hlwonen, 2011). The children heard the words spoken clearly and in certain tones to absorb the information they learned. Children with the auditory learning style were great with remembering names but at the same time, they may forget the faces that go along with the name (Gavan in Bertsch et. all (2015).



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When the teacher blew the whistle and asked children in the first row, and they saw the picture in front of them and whisper the picture that he/she saw to friend at the back, it helped visual learners in learning because they see the picture and store the information into their mind. When children at the second row tell the third row what picture that he/she hears and continued for children at third, fourth, and fifth rows, it helped auditory learners because they get the information through their ear.

### c. Kinesthetic learners

The last learning style in this research was kinesthetic learning. In this research, the children in the last row of the group come and stuck the picture on the board. It helped them, who are kinesthetic learners, to learn the new vocabulary through doing the action. Based on Awla (2014), Bertsch et. all (2015), and Adistya (2016), kinesthetic learners tended to like moving around and work with touchable objects. Kinesthetic children learned by doing (Fleming, 2009). It meant children liked to do or to experience things to absorb the information.

Deporter (2003) states that kinesthetic learners good at interacting in group activities that involve moving. It is one of the characteristics of this style. Further, he mentions some other characteristics. Kinesthetic learners speak slowly; touch somebody to attract their attention; standing nearly to whom they speak; moving a lot; studying through manipulation and practice memorizing with walking and seeing; using a finger as a pointer when reading; using body language; cannot stay quiet for a long time; using words related to action; like to read a book that oriented to plot; probably the handwriting is bad.

Moreover, Fleming (2009) states some more characteristics of kinesthetic learners. He mentions that a kinesthetic learner is someone who "is good at sport; is not great at spelling; like science lab; studies with loud music on; like an adventure book, movies; like role-playing; take break w4ren learning; builds model; is involves in martial arts.

According to Bertsch et. all (2015), this learning style was substantially unlike the auditory and visual learning styles as it used your body's movements to retain information as opposed to hearing or seeing the information. It meant that the children had to physically move or touch objects to retain the movement process (Marriam on Bertsch et. All, 2015). If kinesthetic learners only heard or saw the information presented to them, it was highly likely that the information would not be retained and forgotten from memory a short time later.

#### **Discussion**

From the very beginning, the children were enthusiastic when they heard that they would play the game. It seemed that game is the word that brings so much joy to them. The game was done after they finished their worksheet. However, 4 of the children seemed a bit boring in the second round; they were not as enthusiastic as they were in the first round. The teacher was a bit busy conducting the game and did not pay attention to the bored children. However, the game continued.

There are some advantages if we involve games in teaching. The first is making interactive teaching and learning. For years, there is an assumption that children are an empty pot that should be filled with knowledge. This assumption has made teaching her' teaching technique become monotonous. Children are used to hearing the explanation, and the teacher keeps explain the lesson without considering whether the "pot" has been full or there is a leak there, which made the "pot" never fill with knowledge. This old teaching habit must be changed into an active one by involving communication between the children and teacher which is can



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be reached through the game. Second, making teaching become children centered. Using games in teaching makes children more active, and got more knowledge because they experience it directly through playing the game. It is different with teacher center whereas making children more passive.

Third, the learning atmosphere becomes more fun and enjoyable. They should have fun altogether while learning. Children especially have fun with movement and physical participation, and the more fun the children have the better they will remember the language learned (Shin, 2006). In conclusion, involving games in teaching English to young children is an appropriate step for accommodating children learning style.

In conclusion, VAK learning style is the usual way how human perceives the information. This learning style needs human sense to absorb the information. It is the appropriate style for elementary school children since they like to use their senses in understanding the world. As Scott and Ytreberg (1990) emphasize that children's' understanding comes through hands, eyes, and ears. In this research, the writer limited the problem of involving chain massage to accommodate children's VAK (visual, auditory, and kinesthetic) learning style in teaching English to young children to chain message game only. Moreover, related to the limitation of the problem above, the problem was formulated as follows "How does teacher involve those three kinds of play- musical chair, chain message, and snake and ladder- to accommodate children' VAK (visual, auditory, and kinesthetic) learning style in teaching English for young children?"

The purpose of this research was to explain chain messages and how to involve them in teaching English in order to accommodate children learning styles (visual, auditory, and kinesthetic) for young children. It was hoped that it can inspire a teacher to involve play in their teaching.

#### CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

#### Conclusion

In teaching English to young children, a teacher has to familiarize children with English first. One of the ways to familiarize children with English is by involving play the game in teaching English. Through playing the game, a teacher attracts children's attention, creates fun learning, and makes children absorb more information since it accommodates children learning style which is important for learners.

Among various types of games, the writer proposes chain messages, musical chairs, and snakes, and ladder. They are classroom activities that can be used by the teacher to teach young children. The teacher must prepare the material, explain the steps, and rules to children before doing the activity.

In chain massage, children are using all of their sense of perception. This drives children to understand and learning quickly. This activity accommodates all of the children learning styles. By seeing the pictures visual learners are learning quickly. The auditory learner learns by hearing the words from friends, and the kinesthetic learner learns when they stick the pictures to the whiteboard. In the musical chair, the teacher provides children with a lot of physical activity, music, and realia that encourage them to learn well. This play foster kinesthetic learner in learning since it involves moves and children act the punishment. A visual learner learns by seeing other children do an action and an auditory learner learns by listening to instruction stated in the punishment paper. To sum up, these kinds of game is suitable for accommodating children learning styles and foster them to learn English better.



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### **Suggestion**

There are some suggestions proposed dealing with the conclusion above. First, teachers should explain the rules and the procedure of how to play the game before starting. Second, Teachers are suggested to give some pictures that suitable for the topic of the lesson. Teachers should use pictures that can attract children's interest. Third, it is better for teachers to varying the instruction on the punishment paper and it must suitable with the materials. Last, teachers should evaluate every child's work in order to see whether children comprehend the material or not.

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