

## The Use of Gaming Tools on Students to Improve Vocabulary Mastery in the Classroom

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### Abstract

The fundamental issue is how to teach vocabulary as efficiently as possible, as it has become the most important component of learning English. Vocabulary should not be learnt separately or by memorization without comprehension. By reviewing research done previously, the study aimed to explore if the incorporation of class activity and collaborative work improve the student's vocabulary mastery in the classroom, based on the perception of university students in Klang Valley. There are two objectives of this research. First is to identify the relationship between class activity and student's vocabulary mastery in the classroom. Second, is to identify the relationship between collaborative work and student's vocabulary mastery in the classroom. Overall, using game method during teaching English was successful in improving student's vocabulary mastery. A total of 50 students have responded to the questionnaire. The data was collected using a set of questionnaires distributed among university students in Klang Valley. Correlation analysis was used to analyze the data by using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The results showed that there is significant relationship between class activity and collaborative work and student's vocabulary mastery in the classroom.

**Keyword:** Class Activity, Collaborative Work, Vocabulary Mastery

### Introduction

One of the most widely spoken languages in the world is the English language. As a matter of fact, it is often referred to as a 'global language'. This is because there are many places that the English language has spread to and how many people speak it. There are around 400 million speak English as their first language, also over 1 billion people use the English language as their second and foreign language in this world. The second language English speakers outnumber first-language English speakers by three-fourths, which is surprising to a lot of people.

According to Article 152 (Nor Hashimah, 2008; Gill, 2002), English is Malaysia's second language after Bahasa Melayu, which is the nation's official tongue. In both elementary and

secondary school, English subject has been taught formally in the classroom. In Malaysia, English subject was placed as a second language by the education system, which is in line with the Malaysian education policy. Therefore, in order to further their studies, students are compulsory to pass English language subjects.

In language learning, it is important for the students to master vocabulary when they want to speak the English language well. Wallace (2007), stated that the important key to learning English is vocabulary. It would be challenging, especially for the students to use language skills without having a sufficient vocabulary. Learning vocabulary is the most fundamental skill to master in the English language. There are a variety of factors that could be the reasons for the poor communication skills among students in Malaysia. According to Urrutia and Vega (2010), the learners' mistrust, fear of rejection, and lack of vocabulary all had an impact on their oral performance.

Nevertheless, finding the right methods and material that are engaging, interesting, and relevant at the same time assisting the students in learning is one of the biggest challenges in teaching English. There are a few mediums that are used in learning and teaching English vocabulary. To give an example, through game activities which can assist the teacher to teach English in the classroom. Learning vocabulary through games has obtained a lot of attention. According to Donmus (2010), "educational games have enriched the learning process, it makes teaching and learning more enjoyable and retentive." It will be effective to teach vocabulary through games instead of repetition and memorization. Incorporating games into teaching and learning is the right choice because it allows for student interaction, thought, learning, and problem-solving strategy.

The English language proficiency of many students in Malaysian schools remains low, even after efforts to raise awareness of the language have been made (Nasir, Ab Manan & Azizan, 2017; Yunus & Saifudin, 2019). This is partly due to extremely low vocabulary levels. A lack of ability to read, write, listen, or speak the language will eventually result from this. According to Maros, Hua, and Salehuddin (2007), the Malay-speaking environment in which learning takes place is specifically responsible for learners' difficulties in mastering English. The challenge at hand is to create a fun and efficient way for the students to increase their vocabulary in the classroom. Flashcards and memorization are examples of traditional vocabulary-building techniques, but those techniques might not be able to grab student's attention and keep them motivated. For that reason, it is necessary to explore innovative strategies that leverage the intrinsic appeal of gaming to foster vocabulary development. The issue addressed in this study is whether game method learning can significantly improve student's vocabulary mastery when compared to traditional teaching and learning activities. The purpose of this study was to fill the gap in the literature regarding the process of vocabulary mastery through game methods, specifically regarding the ways in which teachers and students use different game methods to expand their vocabulary in English. English teachers will be able to create lessons with appropriate game method that help students expand their vocabulary by considering this problem. It is anticipated that the study's findings will help both teachers and students in growing their vocabulary. In this research, it is expected that the students can be motivated to learn English and they can improve their

vocabulary mastery by using game methods. Meanwhile, for teachers, the results of this study can be used as new strategies for teachers in teaching vocabulary to students.

### **Research Question**

- a) Is there any influence between class activity and student's vocabulary mastery in the classroom?
- b) Is there any influence between collaborative work and student's vocabulary mastery in the classroom?

### **Literature Review**

#### *Class activity*

The use of games in language learning has several benefits including, they are learner-centered, encourage learners to use language in creative and natural ways, and encourage learners to take an active role in the process. Apart from this, games also keep students engaged with their work, and teachers can use them to create context for language use. Learning through games helps students cooperate, be creative, and use the language in meaningful ways. There are not many advantages or contributions that come with using games to teach and learn languages. The main purpose of vocabulary games is to give students a wide variety of vocabulary inputs using game-method learning. Without using any strategies, the students can memorize certain vocabulary with little effort on their own. Learning through games and in an entertaining setting, they can comprehend a wide variety of vocabulary without the need for pressure or enforcement.

Helping students learn while having fun is one of the main objectives of using games in the classroom. However, competition is crucial when playing games. This is because, since it is in their nature to defeat the other teams, it can encourage and motivate students to participate in the activity. As the explanation above suggests, there are numerous approaches to help students become more proficient in language, including role-playing, drama, visual aids, and more. A game is an additional effective tool for promoting students' language proficiency. Thus, the students' language proficiency can be enhanced not only by applying visual aids, drama, and role-play, but also by applying games. In addition, by using games the student will be fun and excited in teaching and learning process. One of the most important elements of teaching English to second language learners is providing them with vocabulary, which helps them comprehend and speak the language. Because of this, expanding one's vocabulary requires more than just memorization, it also entails using the word naturally and appropriately in context. This method might increase students' desire to pick up new vocabulary and make studying more pleasurable. Furthermore, the students only require the initial dictionary in terms of time. By making connections between new words and their environment, this method can improve their proficiency in learning a second language and aid in their memory retention of new vocabulary.

### **Types of Class Activity**

#### *a) Word Chain*

In the late 1800s, Carroll, the author of *Alice in Wonderland*, created the word chain game. Furthermore, he claims that word chain is a type of game made to help students become more proficient with words or vocabulary. In a word chain game, students play a language-

based activity where they say words that are related by a specific rule, like having the same final sound or belonging to the same semantic group. The word chain game typically involves quick thinking, creativity, and a good understanding of vocabulary.

*b) Word Web*

A word web is a visual representation of words related to main idea or theme. It is also known as a semantic map or word cluster. It is a graphic organizer that helps to explore and represent the relationships between words, providing a visual overview of the semantic connections within a particular topic or idea. Word webs are a type of mind map that assists students to learn about new words and broaden their vocabulary. Word webs help students break down the word, comprehending their meaning, and connecting it to other words that they know. As students explore the relationships between words on a word web, they are likely to come across new words that are connected to the main theme. The student's word bank grows as a result of this exposure to a wider vocabulary.

*c) Role Play*

Language development benefits from role play. This holds true for both students studying English as a second language and native English speakers. Role play teaches students how to interact with one another in a safe classroom setting in addition to helping them learn vocabulary and language. Students adopt roles and act out scenarios, which are frequently tied to real-life situations, as part of a teaching technique called role play. Role play has few advantages in the context of teaching vocabulary, such as the experiential nature of role play can enhance memory retention. Students are more likely to recall and use vocabulary later on when they actively engage with vocabulary in a memorable context.

**Collaborative Work**

One of the most effective strategies for improving students' vocabulary is working collaboratively. Students who engage in group activities focused on vocabulary building, not only share their individual knowledge but also create an extensive and comprehensive understanding of words as a group. Through collaborative work, projects, or games, students explore various perspectives, distinct connections and varied contextual applications of vocabulary. Exposure to a wider variety of words is one of the key advantages of collaborative vocabulary learning. Each student contributes their own linguistic background and experiences to the table, contributing unique vocabulary and nuances. This diversity broadens the vocabulary pool and introduces students to words they might not encounter in individual study.

In collaborative work, communication becomes a center stage. Students are prompted to use the vocabulary that has been targeted to express their thoughts, opinions, and interpretations. This active engagement not only serves to reinforce word meanings but also students' ability to use words effectively in a variety of contexts. Through dialogue and interaction, students improve their language skills and gain a more intuitive grasp of word usage. Moreover, collaborative work nurtures a social environment that supports language development. Students help each other out, provide feedback, and work together to solve language barriers. This collaborative learning approach not only hastening vocabulary

acquisition, but also cultivates a sense of community among students in classroom and provides a safe environment for language exploration and growth.

In order to make accurate guesses, students may be able help one another in recognizing and implementing the clues. Also, students can ask their group members instead of constantly relying on the teacher. This is certainly crucial of a more student-centered approach where student's ownership for their own learning. Their growth as social beings depend on this process. This is because they may develop important communication skills, for example, negotiating, elaborating, inferring, recommending, obtaining, generalizing and disagreeing.

### **Student's Vocabulary Mastery in Classroom**

Vocabulary was a device for communicating known words with others, according to Harris and Hodges in Yanti (2017). It means, mastering vocabulary is the main goals in learning English and to become proficient in reading, listening, writing and speaking to the language. Vocabulary is a crucial part of language proficiency and forms a large part of the foundation for students' ability to speak, listen, read, and write, according to Richards in Lidasari Y., Sopian, and Supardi, 2017. Language learners will find it challenging to understand the language skills like reading, writing, speaking and listening without knowing and having enough vocabulary. One of the most things that students must master first is vocabulary. It is impossible for students to speak English if they have limited vocabulary and learning English would be difficult for them.

One of the most crucial fundamental aspects of language proficiency for students in all academic subjects is learning vocabulary. Having a large vocabulary is beyond simply knowing words, it is also important for academic performance, effective communication, and cognitive development. Academic success requires a wide vocabulary. In subjects like literature, science, and reading comprehension, students come across specialized terminology. Acquiring proficiency in these subject-specific words helps students grasp complex concepts, comprehend academic texts with clarity, and perform well on their coursework. Additionally, it gives them the confidence to express their ideas clearly in written assignments and tests. Another key reason supporting the need of vocabulary mastery is effective communication. Students who possess a strong vocabulary are better at articulating their ideas clearly, conveying their thoughts persuasively and participate in meaningful discussions. With a diverse vocabulary, students can communicate accurately and nuancedly in written communication, presentations, and class discussions. On top of that, mastering vocabulary helps develop critical thinking skills. As students encounter new words, they frequently require inferring meanings from context, examine word structures and discern shades of meaning. This cognitive engagement improved their overall language and analytical skills, which also helps them to understand language and the world more deeply.

Having a large vocabulary is advantageous in the professional realm. People who can communicate effectively are highly valued by employers, whether in written reports, oral presentations, or collaborative team discussions. Comprehensive vocabulary is not only a sign of intelligence and education, but it also contributes to professional success and advancement. A well-developed vocabulary is associated with reading comprehension and lifelong learning, which goes beyond academic and professional considerations. Students who

are proficient in reading are more likely to understand complex text, experiment with different genres and continue to expand their knowledge throughout their lives.

### **Tiers of vocabulary**

#### *a. Basic*

Every fundamental and well-known word in a student's first-tier vocabulary is included in their basic vocabulary. In everyday English conversations, students use these words. Students are exposed to basic vocabulary at an early age, so they are accustomed to the words. Sight words, adjectives, verbs, and nouns are all included in the students' basic vocabulary. For example, furious, enjoyable, disorganized, swift, kitten, table, infant, rainbow, eat, phone, run, sleep, etc.

#### *b. Low frequency*

The words in low-frequency vocabulary are limited to a single domain, such as science, math, geography, social science, and technology, and are content-specific. Low-frequency words include things like molecules, laboratory, osmosis, photosynthesis, omnivore, etc.

#### *c. High frequency*

High-frequency vocabulary consists of words that are not commonly used in everyday conversations and are not automatically learned by students. Books and written texts contain these words. They are mostly used in literature and have several meanings. High-frequency words include, for example, harmony, value, experience, rarity, estimate, synonyms, beauty, and consist.

### **Research Method**

#### *Research Design*

The goal of this study is to investigate how using game methods with students can enhance their vocabulary mastery in the classroom. The research design employed in this study was descriptive, and its foundation is quantitative measurement. Numerous researchers asserted that the best way to solve the problem statements was to use a quantitative approach rather than a qualitative one (Hair et al., 2006). Data for this study was gathered using questionnaires. There are 50 questionnaires distributed to the respondents who are university students. Of those 50, 50 were returned, making the response rate 100%. It is more than sufficient for the precise research goal when the feedback rate is higher than 52%.

### **Location of Study**

The location of this study is government and private universities in Klang Valley. The targeted students of this study are from tertiary education.

### **Sample of Study**

The phrase "Sample of Study" refers to a part of the population chosen to serve as a representative sample of the broader population for the purpose of gathering data for the study. 50 students who are presently enrolled in tertiary education programs at Klang Valley universities will make up the study's sample. Since this study's goal and research question are determined whether using gaming tools with students can help them learn vocabulary more effectively in the classroom, this set of students will be the focus of the research.

### **Sampling Technique**

The technique or procedure used to determine the sample size of the entire population is referred to as the sampling technique. The sampling technique used to examine the population involves taking a sample, and data collection is done for that sample. The outcomes are therefore considered for the entire population. As such, it is the procedure by which researcher employ sampling technique to determine the characteristics of the population. The random sampling technique was used in this study because it is a popular and widely recognised research methodology that makes it easier for other researchers conducting similar or related studies to compare and replicate the findings.

### **Research Procedure**

In this study, the researcher searched online for numerous journals and articles that addressed subjects that were like or related to the topic of the study. Next, to move forward with the selected topic, the researcher requests approval from the supervisor. The researcher begins the literature review as soon as permission is granted to delve further into the subject and better grasp the problems at hand. The researcher then uses Google Forms to create an online questionnaire with all the questions they are interested in learning more about based on the topic researcher have selected. The researcher then sends the questionnaire to researcher's supervisor for approval. The researcher then uses Instagram and WhatsApp to distribute the questionnaire to the respondents after receiving approval. It takes about two weeks to finish the entire process.

### **Data Collection**

This study will use a structured questionnaire to collect relevant information. The respondents will receive the questionnaire from the researcher via Instagram and WhatsApp. The cover letter that goes with the questionnaires will include information about the researcher's background, a request for cooperation from the respondents, and an assurance to keep the respondents' identities and answers private. The estimated time taken for the respondents to complete the survey is 5-7 minutes per person.

### **Instrument of Study**

An instrument used by researchers to collect data in an organized way is called an instrument of study. The instruments of this study will take the form of a Google Form with questions designed specifically for the participants to gather relevant information. The questionnaire is divided into four sections totaling 22 questions. The questions are on a 5-point Likert scale, with the options being "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree."

### **Data Analysis**

SPSS software will be used to analyse the data gathered from the questionnaire in this study. The researcher will be assisted by this software in carrying out the descriptive analysis, frequency analysis, normality test, and reliability test of the obtained results or statements.

### **Result and Discussion**

The results clearly indicate that class activity and collaborative work is a very successful method in teaching vocabulary. The results of this study revealed that most of the respondents agreed class activity was more fun and less stressful, helped them access

additional information outside the textbook, learned vocabulary better, they enjoyed learning vocabulary, able to have wide range of vocabulary and increased their interest in learning vocabulary. Additionally, class activities offer a constructivist learning environment in which students use their prior knowledge to solve problems that relate to the material being covered. Also, it can help students absorb and decode information that is necessary to comprehend the instructional materials. As a result, class activity provides students with the framework and opportunity to engage more actively in their education. Students can cooperate to complete simple tasks and overcome obstacles by exchanging ideas and information during class activities.

The best method for guaranteeing that students are learning collaboratively is through class activities. Collaborative work is a well-established component of the learning process. According to the study's findings, most participants felt that working together broadens their vocabulary, increases their vocabulary, and helps them use their existing vocabulary more effectively. Another remarkable finding of the study is that the respondents also agreed, collaborative work with the use of vocabulary is more efficient and more required to complete a task. Collaborative learning involves students gaining knowledge through sharing information with the class community, and it is well known that the use of technology in learning encourages students to participate more actively and less passive during learning sessions.

Vocabulary learning has long been regarded as a boring subject and the traditional method of learning vocabulary which involves merely copying and memorizing words has proven to be ineffective. Meanwhile, the majority of English classroom view game as a time-filling activity. The idea that game methods are merely for fun and have no bearing on education. However, this research shows that games help students learn vocabulary if provide an ideal environment for learning, practicing and to assessing the English language. According to the research, researchers found that students are lookout for unconventional methods for teaching vocabulary, and also, they themselves are in search of a different approaches to learning this subject.

In this situation, studies have demonstrated numerous advantages and values of games in vocabulary learning. First, playing games helps students unwind and have fun, which allows word retention and comprehension. Second, games maintain students' interest as they often involve friendly competition. These provide English language learners with an incentive to participate fully in the learning activities. Third, vocabulary introduces real-life scenarios into the classroom and enables students to use the language in a flexible and communicative manner.

Therefore, it is impossible to disagree with the importance of games in vocabulary teaching and learning. However, selecting appropriate games is vital for getting the most out of vocabulary games. There are a few elements that must be considered when conducting a game, including the number of students, competence level, social setting, timing, learning topic, and the environment of the classroom.



In conclusion, using games to teach vocabulary is an efficient yet fun teaching strategy that is successful in any kind of classroom. The results of this research indicate that games can be used for purposes other than simple entertainment, most notably for advantageous practice and review of language lessons, which advances the goal of improving students' communicative competence.

### **Implication of Study**

There is a lot of importance for language education in the study "The Use of Gaming Tools on Students to Improve Vocabulary Mastery in the Classroom." The study offers valuable insights into the efficacy and applicability of this approach by investigating students' acceptance and perspectives on it. Teachers can optimize language learning strategies by having a thorough understanding of how motivation, comprehension, and language proficiency are affected. Practical implications for curriculum design and instructional methods arise from the study's identification of preferred learning styles and potential obstacles. The findings may also encourage ongoing research into associated fields and further advancements in language education. The study's conclusions ultimately have the potential to improve learning environments for students by allowing them to improve their language proficiency through game methods.

### **Limitation of Study**

The study conducted has potential limitations. The Independent and Dependent variables constitute the foundation for the effect estimations in the study. In specifically, Klang Valley students in tertiary education are the subject of this study. 50 persons, who were the targeted audience, participated in the survey by filling out a Google Form. The researcher uses WhatsApp and Instagram as primary sources for the survey. The questionnaire for every respondent is the same where researchers conduct quantitative research. A questionnaire that was created by the researcher for this study served as the main source of data. Additionally, a random sample must be sufficient size to avoid biases or sampling errors and to allow for generalization. As a result, the respondents to this survey are diverse in terms of their ages, levels of education, current university and gender.

However, a number of while challenges surfaced during this study's investigations. First, there is a lack of information availability. To get some ideas for how to conduct the study, researchers looked through and consulted a lot of online literature on the subject. For instance, it was difficult to find a sample questionnaire relevant to the issues, since there are not many examples of the questionnaire available online. To solve the issues, researchers might refer to researcher's supervisor advice as well as the diligent effort of the researchers. Second, survey questions themselves may lead to dishonesty. It is possible that respondents do not read the questions before choosing an answer, therefore responses may not be entirely genuine. There is a possibility that certain questions in questionnaires will be skipped or not answered at all.

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