The Use of Spelling Bee to Improve Vocabulary among Year 5 Pupils in an Online Environment

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Abstract
The value of vocabulary for ESL students has been demonstrated in numerous research throughout the years. However, there have been few research on the usage of board games, notably Spelling Bee, among young learners. The purpose of this research is to look into the use of Spelling Bee to help year 5 students enhance their vocabulary in an online setting. This action research was conducted with 30 Year 5 students from SK A in Kuala Lumpur. Participants were given pre- and post-tests to measure their level of enrichment in mastering the language learnt before and after. The findings demonstrated that the Spelling Bee is an effective method for improving vocabulary mastery among students. In addition, future research can target a greater number of people and use an experimental research design to improve the data's reliability and validity. it is perceived that the learners are more eager and interested in learning English, especially for the implementation of *Spelling Bee game* it was proved that this method influenced the learners' vocabulary mastery. It is believed that the findings would provide insight to teachers and students in the teaching and learning process, as well as add to the existing research.
Keywords: ESL Learners, Spelling Bee, Year 5 Pupils, Online Environment

Introduction
Teachers' teaching styles and approaches should evolve with time. The incorporation of ICT technology into instructional procedures such as game-based learning (GBL) is viewed as one of the mediums for engaging students in the process of vocabulary mastery. Additionally, this strategy can assist in developing an easier-to-understand concept of learning (Steinmaurer et al., 2020). The new Primary School Standard Curriculum (KSSR) was launched in 2011 in Malaysia's education system with the goal of improving students' English language proficiency (Mohamed, 2017).

According to the Year 5 KSSR English document standard, the English program's objective is to teach kids the language in order to enable them to communicate in their daily lives, continue their studies, and work (Ministry of Education, 2012). As a result, teachers' instructional approaches must be altered to incorporate cutting-edge technology-based

teaching and learning techniques that contribute to the increased effect of mathematics learning (Tokac et al., 2019). This is consistent with the evolution of twenty-first-century education, which strives to educate students who are capable of communicating, resilient, and informative (KPM, 2017), in order to compete worldwide.

Utilizing game-based learning tactics can assist primary pupils in gaining learning experiences, fostering a fun, creative, and cooperative learning atmosphere in the classroom, capturing primary pupils' attention, and improving primary pupils' vocabulary learning results. The combination of technological resources and novel educational methodologies has altered the nature of teaching and learning. Thus, the Spelling Bee game will be studied further as one of the activities integrated into an online environment for Year 5 students and to improve their comprehension of previously learned vocabulary.

Due to the present pandemic, the researcher changes the game for an internet environment in order to reach children and help them memorise the vocabulary learned. Students would not be left behind when it comes to taking activities to increase their vocabulary through the Spelling Bee. With this objective in mind, this study provides information for students, parents, and instructors regarding the importance of focusing on students' vocabulary through the usage of the Spelling Bee. However, the significance of games in an online environment for vocabulary mastery has received little attention, particularly in an online setting for Year 5 learners. This will contribute to the existing body of research regarding the integration of internet and board games in language classrooms.

Methodology
Research Design
In order to assess the effectiveness of using Spelling Bee to expand learners' comprehension of vocabulary learned, the researchers employed an action research approach based on Kemmis and McTaggart's (1988) model. This model has been widely used among the practitioners. Kemmis and McTaggart (1988; 2000) describe the Action Research Spiral as consisting the following moments: Planning, Acting, Observing, and Reflecting (as cited in Bantfield & Cayago-Glealn, 2006).

The Participants
A group of 30 Year 5 pupils which has been exposed to the conventional English language teaching approach for 6 months were chosen for this research. 15 of them were chosen from SK A, Kuala Lumpur. The reason why Year 5 pupils were selected to be the participants is because vocabulary acquisition begins in early childhood. The acquisition of vocabulary begins long before children are of school age so the factors that influence development during early childhood are also important.

Materials
Pre-test
The pre-test gathered 14 words in crosswords was given to the participants a week before the intervention. The test contained crosswords section. The participants based on the picture in the pre-test and match the correct words to its correct answers.

Post-test
At the end of the intervention, the participants were administered a test again to check their improvement. The test contained the similar items as the pre-test.

Survey Questionnaire
A set of survey questionnaire was given to the participants after the intervention. It contains 5 items and each item is constructed to check on their feedbacks towards intervention.

Research Procedure
        In this study, action research was used in conjunction with the use of the Spelling Bee as an innovative technique to help students improve their vocabulary mastery. This research was conducted for almost 2 weeks. The study was carried out in one school in Malaysia. The targeted participants are Primary Year 5 pupils. With the focus on one particular topic in the Year 5 syllabus, the 30 participants who went through the conventional approach of teaching on the topic, were given a pre-test. After the pre-test was obtained, the intervention was carried out to the participants. Once the intervention cycle was completed, participants were given a post-test which contained the same questions as the pre-test to test on their mastery of the vocabulary learnt. The researcher will then compare the result of the pre and post-test. Following that was the distribution of survey questionnaire to the participants. Participants were required to provide feedbacks on their opinions toward the intervention applied. Analysis of the questionnaire will be done afterward.

Results
The following shows Table 1, Table 2 and Table 3 indicate the findings of this research conducted.

Table 1: Percentage of Scores between Pre- and Post-Test.

Pre and Post Test Score Improvement	Percentage of Score's Improvement	Numbers of participants
0	0	3
1-15	6% -88%	27
	Total	30

Table 1 shows the difference percentage of scores obtained from the participants. The data revealed that 3 out of 30 participants obtained 0% of improvement in the pre and post-test as they have already obtained full scores for their pre-test. Whereas 27 of them showed a significant of achievement in increment of 5% and above in the both pre and post-test. The highest percentage of increment is 88%. Therefore, based on the results shown above, it can be seen that Spelling Bee has helped pupils to master their vocabulary learnt.

Table 2: Questionnaire's result on Spelling Bee

Items	Statement	Agree		Disagree	
1	I enjoy using Spelling Bee to learn vocabulary.	28	93%	2	7%
2	Spelling Bee helps me to understand the meaning of vocabulary learnt more.	26	87%	4	13%
3	Spelling Bee motivates me to learn vocabulary.	27	90%	3	10%
4	Spelling Bee helps me to remember vocabulary learnt better.	28	93%	2	7%
5	Spelling Bee makes vocabulary learning process more fun and interesting.	27	90%	3	10%

Table 2 represents questionnaire's result of Spelling Bee obtained. Items 1, 3 and 5 imply pupils' enjoyment and motivation while Spelling Bee is used in teaching and learning session. Based on the results obtained, we can see a mean percentage of agreement on items 1, 3 and 5 is 91%. Majority of the participants claimed that they enjoyed using Spelling Bee as it was fun and interesting. Additionally, it motivated the participants to learn vocabulary better than the conventional approach. Nevertheless, the mean percentage of disagreement on items 1, 3 and 5 is only 9%, which indicates only a small number of participants disagreed on the items. It could be the reason that the participants still preferred the old method way of learning vocabulary. Whereas, items 2 and 4 infer that Spelling Bee allows participants to understand and remember the vocabulary learnt better. A mean percentage of agreement on items 2 and 4 is 90%. Most of the participants agreed that Spelling Bee facilitated them to understand and remember the vocabulary learnt more effectively. Despite that, a mean percentage of disagreement on items 2 and 4 is only 10%. It could signify that the participants might need a longer time to familiarize themselves with Spelling Bee.

Table 3: Paired Two Sample T-Test analysis of the Pre and Post-Test

	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference			t
	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper	
PreTest & PostTest	0.8100	-7.8566	-4.5434	-7.654*

N=30 *p<0.05

Based on Table 2 above, paired two sample t test was used to examine the different between score obtained by participants before and after intervention carried out. Research found out that there is significant difference between the score obtained by participants before and after the intervention with t (29) = -7.654, p<0.05. As a result, the research hypothesis is that the Spelling Bee is successful in assisting students in expanding their vocabulary mastery.

Discussion and Findings

Pre and Post Test

The usage of Spelling Bee to help students expand their grasp of vocabulary leant was effective, as evidenced by a considerable improvement in pre and post-test scores. The results of this study have shown that mastery of vocabulary learnt are better when they are associated with images than just with a simple text. Sadeghi and Farzizadeh (2013) agreed that teaching vocabulary through visual aids help pupils to gain more in vocabulary learning. Mastery of vocabulary learnt are significantly enriched and improved since Spelling Bee contains shorter words.

By using Spelling Bee, pupils are no longer learning vocabulary via conventional drilling method. According to British Council (2005), drilling of structures per se seems much less likely to be useful because of the mental processing that is required to apply a new piece of language for the learners. Constant drills and pointless memorisation are stressful to the young learners especially towards the Year 5 children. Traditional teaching approaches like "chalk and talk" are no longer appropriate for today's kids. Conventional way of drillings pupils with vocabulary is less likely to motivate them in mastery of vocabulary learnt. Through this research, the use of board game named Spelling Bee showed a rather great improvement in pupils' mastery of vocabulary.

Pupils showed positive attitude towards enriching their mastery of vocabulary. Ghaviekr and Rosdy (2015) impose those students will benefit from ICT integration where they are not bounded to the limited curriculum and resources, instead hands-on activities in a technology-based course are designed to help them to stimulate their understanding about the subject due to pandemic situation. The research objective is achieved based on the pre and post test result which indicates Spelling Bee is able to help pupils to enrich their vocabulary mastery.

Survey Questionnaire

Apart from that, the result obtained from survey questionnaire also supported enrichment in pupils' mastery of vocabulary learnt. 26 out of 30 participants marked agree on all the items 1,3 and 5 which indicated that they preferred to use Spelling Bee in the learning of vocabulary. As mentioned earlier, Spelling Bee was applied based on the idea of word game. Therefore, it was able to capture the young learners' attention towards vocabulary mastery. They are motivated in their learning when the lesson is fun and interesting. Instead of learning through the conventional approach, pupils were fascinated by the use of Spelling Bee as it is enjoyable and attractive.

Wimolmas (2013) stated that students who are more highly motivated will participate actively and pay more attention to a certain learning task or activity. Therefore, majority of the pupils shown agreement on having fun and enjoying using Spelling Bee to learn vocabulary. However, a majority of 25 participants out of 30 agreed that on item 2 and 4 whereby they believed that Spelling Bee helps them to understand and remember the meaning of vocabulary learnt better. Spelling Bee provides learners a huge opportunity to play with the words repeatedly. When pupils are able to use the words actively, the chances of him or her to master the vocabulary is higher. The Spelling Bee was intended to assist students in improving their vocabulary mastery. The association of vocabulary and images

helps to improve pupils' mastery of vocabulary. When pupils can associate the words learnt with something meaningful, it helps them to retain the vocabulary better.

Some expert findings that support the findings of this study include: Rahayu Sekarini (2012) stated that the Spelling Bee Game could help students improve their spelling ability and was an alternative activity to strengthen the students memory to remember the vocabulary, and Iin Inayatullah (2012) stated that the Spelling Bee Game was one of the vocabulary games that could be used in the teaching and learning process and was appropriate for memorising the vocabulary. Furthermore, it is believed that learners are keener and more interested in studying English, particularly with the adoption of the Spelling Bee game, which has been shown to influence learners' vocabulary mastery

Conclusion

After the intervention, the study was able to determine the effectiveness of the Spelling Bee in assisting the respondents in improving their vocabulary memory. Various approaches and ideas for boosting vocabulary retention were discussed, and some were adapted for use in the Malaysian ESL environment.

The improvement in the samples' grades after the intervention period implies that Spelling Bee can help them learn new words and motivate them, especially for low-proficiency students. Games can encourage students and create an enjoyable learning environment, allowing them to become more confident and creative in real-life situations while also becoming great communicators. All the data collected during the intervention has shown that the pupils were interested and happy in using Spelling Bee as one of the ways to improve their spelling.

Furthermore, with Spelling Bee, samples were motivated and enthusiastic about learning new words. This study's findings are consistent with earlier studies that advocate for the use of visuals in ESL classrooms. Teachers might leverage such a significant result to incorporate Spelling Bee into their teaching and learning processes. For further research, it is encouraged that you take advantage of Spelling Bee's unique characteristics which helps students to remember, which may be applied to various languages and skills where to remember the words which they can apply in their examinations as well as in real-world situations. Besides, it can also be used to test other language skills like reading and writing can help increase student participation, foster social and emotional learning, and motivate students to take risks. Policy makers can include this in the curriculum design and encourage teachers to use it as a tool to support vocabulary acquisition and to solve the desired instructional goal

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