

Teaching English Vocabulary for Young learners using Electronic Word Guessing Games

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Abstract

Teaching English in this epidemic period requires an engaging strategy, and teaching vocabulary to young learners through educational games is a fun way to do it. The purpose of this study is to describe the use of an electronic word guessing game, as well as students' vocabulary knowledge and accomplishment motivation after using educational games. Observation, interviews, questionnaires, and tests were used as instruments. The results revealed that electronic word guessing games made learning fun, engaged students actively, integrated pronunciation and meaning, and assisted students in memorizing vocabulary. The purpose of this study was to determine the students' vocabulary mastery before and after the use of electronic word guessing games. The students' mean score on the pre-test was 6.00, and it improved to 7.50 on the post-test, according to the results of the pre-test and post-test. The issues are a lack of suitable facilities and some technical difficulties that arise during implementation, although employing games can give several benefits for both teachers and pupils. As a result, it is reasonable to conclude that utilizing games to learn English is effective since games are both entertaining and compatible with the qualities of children as novice learners. Playing electronic word guessing games can help you expand your vocabulary. Most of the students are very interested in learning vocabulary using electronic word guessing games.

Keywords: collaborative writing, soft skills, writing performance

INTRODUCTION

The importance of vocabulary in learning a foreign language in the lives of students cannot be overstated. It is one of the factors that ties the four skills; speaking, listening, writing, and reading. Thus, students must know basic terminology to support their vocabulary in learning English before they can master these four skills. This is due to the

fact that vocabulary is a crucial and necessary component of language development. Students must learn a sufficient quantity of words and know how to use them correctly in order to communicate effectively in a foreign language (Renandya, 2002)). According to Heibert (2005), vocabulary is defined as "understanding of the meaning of words." The term vocabulary has a variety of connotations. Some teachers, for example, use the phrase to refer to visual vocabulary, which refers to students' direct recognition of printed words; others refer to words that are comprehended as their meaning vocabulary.

Rider (2003) stated that increasing pupils' vocabulary is crucial since they would feel smarter as a result of doing so. This is because they will be able to comprehend what they read and hear more easily. Furthermore, because they have a greater command of the language, they will find it simpler to express themselves. Furthermore, according to Thornbury (2002), a person needs to acquire a minimum of 2,000 words in order to converse naturally in a language. It is clear from this explanation that vocabulary plays an important role in the process of learning a language.

The importance of vocabulary in language learning cannot be overstated. Thornbury, according to linguist David Wilkins (2002), nothing can be communicated without grammar, yet nothing can be communicated without vocabulary. This remark implies that a learner's vocabulary is the first and most important thing he has to know if he wants to use the target language he is studying. Students' language development will be aided by expanding their vocabulary.

One of the most important aspects of displaying English as an unknown dialect is age. According to Harmer (2007), EFL students can be divided into three categories based on their ages: youth, immaturity, and mature students. An English teacher should prepare himself for varied teaching methods when teaching those three different students. It is based on the fact that those three types of students have different needs, abilities, and mental capacities. For example, younger students may benefit from playing a game to learn a new dialect, whereas older students may benefit from enhancing their theoretical thinking (Harmer, 2007).

McKay (2007) defines young pupils as those who acquire English as an unfamiliar dialect or second language for the first six or seven years of the traditional educational system, which is typically at the grade school level. English is taught in Indonesia starting in elementary school. According to McKay's definition, primary school pupils in Indonesia who are between the ages of 7 and 13 can be classified as youthful students.

Teaching English to young learners is a difficult task. This is due to the fact that a young pupil has a short attention span, enjoys playing, and gets bored rapidly. Because of these traits, English teachers must be inventive in their instruction design in order to keep students engaged. One approach for motivating young pupils to learn is to play a game. Experts feel that games can assist students to maintain their interests and working with English teachers to create circumstances in which language is helpful and relevant, and; provide a chance for learners to experience rather than merely learn the language. Scott

(2000) holds a similar viewpoint, stating that young learners prefer to play and learn best when they are having fun. Teachers must provide material in engaging ways for students to enjoy the teaching-learning process. According to Nation Linse (2006), teachers should make vocabulary learning easier for students by teaching them use words and assisting them in finding their meaning. Additionally, learners are children that enjoy playing and learn best when they are having a good time. They do not always realize they are learning a language.

There are a variety of strategies and tactics that may be used to make teaching and learning English enjoyable and engaging. Using the game is one of them. Furthermore, the presence of technology today has a number of beneficial implications for the development of games for the teaching of English to young learners. Computers can run graphics, audio, and video, assisting English teachers in developing unique games for use in teaching young learners. As a result, the authors developed an Electronic Guessing Game as an innovative strategy to teach vocabulary to young learners, taking into account the characteristics of young learners, the role of games in teaching English to young learners, and the benefits of using computers in teaching English to young learners.

Playing games is something that children and young learners enjoy doing. The guessing game is a brand-new concept. The major task in this game is guessing the word based on some of the clues provided, as the name suggests. According to Gordon (2007), guessing games can provide language learners with comprehensive input at the preproduction and low-emergent developmental levels. Because of its unique structure, the game is successful. While it provides a wealth of information, it also limits the learner's projected output. In language guessing games, the teacher explains an object, a person, or a phenomenon, and the students try to figure out what it is. Gordon is a man of many talents (Gordon, 2007).

The pupils in my English for children sessions at English Easy Course were tired of the old method of teaching vocabulary. Furthermore, according to Brown (2001), a vocabulary item is a list of dull words that students must know and memorize, the lexical form is seen in its essential function in contextualized and meaningful language; therefore the researcher utilized an electronic word guessing game. The researcher employs an electronic guessing word game that corresponds to the vocabulary material to be generated in this study. According to Gordon (2007), guessing games in the form of games give numerous benefits that can be acquired through integrating technology for the learning of young learners. The advantages include using technology to motivate and encourage young learners to develop positive attitudes toward learning, technology assisting teachers in creating meaningful contexts for communicative activities, and engaging students in authentic and realistic experiences that add to the learning process' excitement, and the various combinations of text, images, and sounds. Text, images, and sounds provided by various technologies can be utilized to improve receptive language

skills, spark class debate, help individual learners acquire target language, and create varied learning styles while engaging students.

METHOD

Observation, interviews, tests, and questionnaires were used to gather information. Observations were done to gather information regarding the situation during the introduction of computerized guessing word games in the classroom. Interviews were performed to verify the observational data and learn more about the benefits and challenges of integrating electronic games from the perspective of students and teachers. There are two sorts of tests employed in this study: pre-test and post-test. The pre-test was used to establish vocabulary knowledge before the electronic guessing game was implemented, and the post-test was used to determine vocabulary mastery after the electronic guessing game was implemented. After using the electronic guessing word games, questionnaires were used to collect data on achievement motivation. A 12-item accomplishment motivation questionnaire is used to assess motivation for achievement. After being trained to utilize computerized guessing games, 32 students from English for children class at Easy English Course (EEC) were given questionnaires.

The purpose of this study was to determine vocabulary mastery before and after the use of electronic guessing games. As a result, the writer administered a pre-test before the implementation of the electronic guessing game and a post-test following the implementation of the electronic guessing game. This study enlisted the participation of 32 students. As previously stated, a guessing word game is one in which the main objective is to guess particular words based on a set of clues. There are four activities involved in applying for vocabulary teaching in general.

Small groups were formed from the pupils. The next step is to go over the game's rules. The game's rules should be explained by the English teacher. The rules are as follows: (1) multiple clues will be displayed one at a time; (2) when the clue is displayed, the opportunity to guess the word after it has been indicated by the clue will be given; (3) the group that raises their hand first will be given the first chance to guess; (4) the group that has answered, but the answer is not good, will lose the opportunity in the next opportunity; (4) the group with the highest score will be the winner.

The teacher begins the game by displaying each item one at a time and allowing the group to guess by following the rules that have been presented. When all of the words have been guessed by the pupils, the teacher declares the game-winner, which is the group with the highest score.

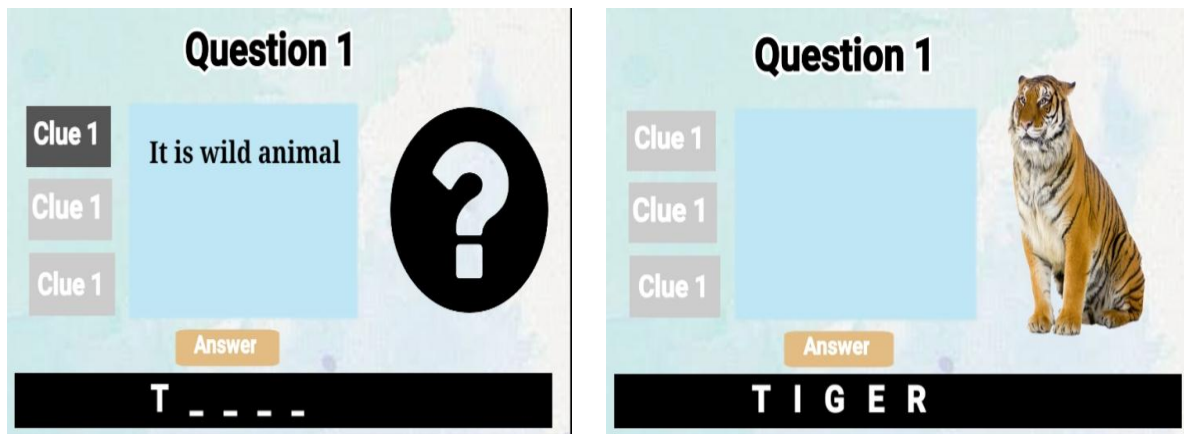


Figure 1. Sample of an electronic word guessing game

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The researcher was interested in learning two things in order to explore two key objectives: first, pupils' vocabulary mastery, and second, the benefits and drawbacks of electronic word guessing games.

Students' Vocabulary Mastery

Because vocabulary mastery will help students master all language skills — speaking, listening, writing, and reading – vocabulary education plays a vital part in language acquisition. Students will be able to practice the framework more easily if they have a good vocabulary. It will help students communicate in everyday situations and will reinforce their conviction that English can be used to express the same ideas or sentiments as their mother tongue (Finocchiaro, 1974). When it comes to language instruction, it is assumed that young kids have basic English skills.

The purpose of this study was to compare vocabulary mastery before and after using electronic guessing games. As a result, the writer administered a pre-test before the implementation of the electronic guessing game and a post-test following the implementation of the electronic guessing game. This research involved 32 students. The average score of the students in the pre-test was 6.00 and increased to 7.50 in the post-test, according to the findings of the pre-test and post-test. Table 1 shows a summary of the findings of the pre-test and post-test. The findings of the study are consistent with those of Alemi's research (2010). Azar (2012) conducted a similar study and discovered that games were particularly successful in helping students increase their vocabulary mastery. Muhanna (2012) conducted another study that found that games can help children increase their vocabulary.

Table 1. The result of Pre-Test and Post Test

Test	Mean	Median	SS	Minimum	Maximum
Pre-Test	6.00	5.50	0.82733	5.00	7.00
Post-Test	7.50	7.70	0.70711	6.00	8.00

The Benefits of Implementing Electronic Word Guessing Games

In real life, games are a collection of language learning tools (Misirli, 2007). As a result, games can be a useful tool for learning new languages that are based on our daily lives. The major reasons why games are used as learning tools are that they increase student motivation and are effective in competitive play; also, students attempt harder in games than in other courses (Deesri, 2002).

Furthermore, the game has demonstrated several benefits and efficacy in teaching and acquiring vocabulary in a variety of ways. For starters, students use games as a way to unwind and have fun. As a result, the teacher should assist children in readily acquiring and memorizing new terms. Then there are games, which usually include friendly competition and keep pupils engaged. This atmosphere encourages children to engage in and participate actively in learning activities. Third, games help students use English more flexibly and communicatively by bringing real-world context into the classroom (Nguyen 2003).

Even if different games do not work because students have different learning styles and preferences, as well as a variety of other factors such as the timing of events, the nature of the game itself, and even the nature of the teacher, it is still worthwhile to try them out in the classroom because they provide students with some valuable benefits. A game can help you learn a language in a variety of ways. It provides a fun and comfortable learning environment. Students get the opportunity to use the language in a non-stressful manner after learning and practicing new terminology (Uberman,1998). Students' attention is drawn to the message rather than the language when they play games. Rather than focusing on the correctness of the linguistic form, the majority of participants will do all possible to win. This produces a fear of bad assessments and public judgments, which is one of the primary motivators for language learners to use the target language in public.

The writers used observations and interviews to learn about the benefits and drawbacks of implementing an electronic word guessing game. Based on observations and interviews, the learning process becomes enjoyable due to the game's enjoyable nature, and the use of electronic word guessing games can help students enjoy the class. The participants' laughter and passion during the game's implementation demonstrate this. The class grew extremely boisterous during the implementation, but this was due to the kids' desire to guess the words. They make mistakes from time to time, yet they still smile and laugh at each other. That they are having a good time in class. This is backed up by comments from students and teachers who said the class was enjoyable.

This encourages kids to become active in observing the noise, which represents their attempts to guess words. As a result, electronic word guessing games have the potential to engage pupils in the teaching and learning process. Students were practically unafraid to make mistakes when guessing words, according to the observations. Students respond confidently to pictures from electronic word guessing games.

The findings of this study support Lee's (2012) assertion that games encourage introverted individuals to communicate with other students and participate in the teaching and learning process. It combines spelling, pronunciation, and meaning into one. Learners learn the spelling, pronunciation, and meaning of words simultaneously when they utilize electronic word guessing games. Because it includes audio to help you pronounce the word and images to help you understand what it means. Pim (2013) believes that using ICT that can produce audio and video into the teaching of English to young people will aid students in practicing the language, particularly in spoken English.

It assists students in memorizing terminology. Because electronic guessing games integrate graphics, sounds, and clues, they aid in the memorization of new words. This is in keeping with Thornbury's (2002) opinion, which suggests that visualizing is one method teachers can use to help students remember the terminology they're learning in the long run.

The writers also performed observations and interviews to uncover issues with the application. The findings of the observations and, first and foremost, suitable facilities are required. A computer or laptop is required to carry out the teaching and learning process using Electronic word guessing games, however, an LCD projector and pointer would be preferable. The LCD will allow students to view the slides more clearly, and the pointer will allow the teacher to operate it while moving around the room, making the class more exciting. The second reason is that some technical issues arise. Due to the fact that it is an electronic medium, several issues may arise during installation. The most typical difficulty, based on observations, is when the electronic word guessing game stops operating and the teacher has to restart it.

The average score of the students in the pre-test was 6.00 and increased to 7.50 in the post-test, according to the findings of the pre-test and post-test. The findings of the study are consistent with those of Alemi (2010). Azar (2012) conducted a similar study and concluded that games were very beneficial in assisting students in improving their vocabulary mastery. Muhanna (2012) conducted another study that found that games can help children increase their vocabulary.

CONCLUSION

Based on the previous research findings, it can be concluded that electronic word guessing games are effective in teaching vocabulary to young pupils. This may be observed in the study's findings, which revealed that students' vocabulary knowledge improved after using electronic word guessing games and that the majority of students were highly acquainted with acquiring vocabulary via electronic word guessing games. There are numerous advantages to using an electronic word guessing game, one of which is that the learning process becomes enjoyable due to the game's enjoyable character, and so the usage of electronic word guessing games can make students love the class. The participants' laughter and passion during the game's implementation demonstrate this. The

class grew extremely boisterous during the implementation, but this was due to the kids' desire to guess the words. They make mistakes from time to time, yet they still smile and laugh at each other. From this expression, it can be concluded that they are having a good time in class. This is backed up by comments from students and teachers who said the class was enjoyable. Appropriate facilities are required. A computer or laptop is required to carry out the teaching and learning process utilizing electronic word guessing games, although an LCD projector and pointer would be preferable. The LCD will allow students to view the slides more clearly, and the pointer will allow the teacher to operate it while moving around the room, making the class more exciting. However, English teachers who want to use it in their classrooms should be aware of the potential issues.

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