

IMPROVING ENGLISH VOCABULARY THROUGH GAME-BASED LEARNING

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Abstract: *In this study, the effectiveness of game-based learning in expanding English vocabulary is investigated. Traditional teaching techniques, which usually lead to boredom and decreased engagement, can be replaced with interactive and entertaining activities. Game-based learning integrates educational content into gameplay. It creates a dynamic environment that enhances language usage and retention. To assess their impact on motivation, engagement, and language acquisition, this study examines a variety of game genres, including board, digital, and immersive games. The findings show that parents and educators seeking to increase their children's English vocabulary in a fun and effective way may find game-based learning helpful tactics.*

Keywords: *vocabulary, second-language learners, traditional methods, game-based learning, memorization, online games, board games.*

Introduction

Since learning the definitions of new terms is frequently stressed in educational materials and classroom situations, vocabulary development is essential to learning a foreign language. It is a fundamental component of language instruction and is crucial for students who want to become proficient in the language. Learners of second languages use a range of methods to acquire new words efficiently. Learners may initially try to deduce the meaning and usage of unfamiliar words from surrounding cues. For a detailed definition, some people may look up the word in a dictionary, while

others make notes in specialized vocabulary notebooks, between lines, or in the margins of textbooks. By employing the new word in their writing or speech, some students adopt a more proactive stance. Each of approach affects how well a word is acquired by requiring cognitive processes and metacognitive awareness.

Literature review

Information and communication technology (ICT) integration into teaching and learning is hampered by technological hurdles. Textbooks are no longer the only learning resources available to pupils. As a result, traditional teaching techniques and rote memorization have given way to more interesting, goal-oriented approaches. Instead of depending only on rote memorization, the emphasis should be on giving students to acquire language in an enjoyable and significant way (Ling & Abdul Aziz 2022).

Having fun, laughing, talking, walking, watching a movie, playing a game, or listening to music are all ways that students can expand their vocabulary in addition to memorizing or reading sources. There are several methods for teaching vocabulary, such as word cards, mnemonics, learner training, and soon (Thornbury, 2002:67). Moreover, (Iwan Fauzi 2022) highlights that the learning technique by using songs and activities is effective in boosting the young learners' vocabulary mastery. The young learners are more proficient in grasping English vocabulary after the song and game-based learning technique is implemented equivalent to the initial mastery. Through simple games, teachers can use their creativity as educators to make vocabulary acquisition interesting. These activities can include matching games, spot-the-difference tasks, or other exercises pertaining about the current class topic to keep pupils from becoming bored. To guarantee that all group members participate equally in game-based learning, teachers must assist students, especially during cooperative games. Yosua Gabriel Sahensolar and Marlin Steffi Marpaung's research participants emphasized the importance of online games' audiovisual components, such as interactive noises and graphics, in helping them learn new words (2024). While they acknowledged that these qualities improved their ability to remember new words, it implies that online gaming's immersive and multimedia elements are crucial to

improving the efficiency and enjoyment of vocabulary acquisition. Online games have been demonstrated to have favorable effects on participants because they give pupils creative and interesting ways to learn the language (Octaberlina, 2021). Students stated that they could pick up new terms fast in a single game session, indicating that playing the game again would help them improve their vocabulary, especially if they were given clear instructions. Students were also captivated by the game's design and easy-to-use interface; many reported that the straightforward, eye-catching style enhanced their enjoyment of learning.

Benefits of Game-Based Learning in Vocabulary Acquisition

Games are beneficial and effective in learning vocabulary in many ways. The games offer a pleasant change from the usual language lessons. First and foremost, games provide students with relaxation and fun, which makes it easier for them to learn and remember new words. Secondly, the games usually involve friendly competition and keep the students interested. This encourages English learners to actively participate in learning activities. Games often present vocabulary in context, helping learners understand not just the meaning but also the proper usage of words. This contextual learning reinforces retention and aids in developing both receptive and productive vocabulary skills. The immediate feedback provided by many educational games, such as quizzes and puzzles, allows learners to track their progress and correct mistakes promptly, fostering a deeper understanding of vocabulary.

Types of Games for Learning Vocabulary

1. Digital Games: The capacity of digital games to provide individualized learning experiences is one of their main benefits. A lot of vocabulary apps, like Babbel, Memrise, and Duolingo, use algorithms to modify the vocabulary exercises' level of difficulty according to the learner's progress. To improve long-term recall, these apps frequently use spaced repetition systems (SRS), which show words at ideal intervals. Interactive features like matching games, quizzes, and flashcards are frequently included in digital games to promote active engagement. Wordscapes, for instance, test students' ability to construct words out of provided letters, strengthening their spelling and vocabulary. With the help of Kahoot!, a popular app in classrooms,

teachers may make vocabulary tests that students can take on their phones, making evaluation enjoyable and competitive.

2. Board games combine teaching with play to provide an entertaining and engaging method of increasing vocabulary in English. By encouraging social interaction, improving critical thinking, and actively involving students, they increase the effectiveness and enjoyment of vocabulary learning. Common Board Games for Developing Vocabulary: Playing Scrabble helps players improve their spelling, word construction, and vocabulary by having them use letter tiles to form words on a grid. Boggle: This game improves fast thinking and pattern recognition by having players find as many words as they can from a grid of letters in a set amount of time. Pictionary: By using visual association to reinforce vocabulary, students illustrate words with drawings while others make educated guesses. Taboo: Players improve their descriptive abilities and broaden their vocabulary by describing a term without using particular "taboo" words.

Codenames: To encourage word association and critical thinking, players provide teammates with one-word clues to assist them guess the right terms.

Challenges and Considerations

Despite its advantages, creating excellent instructional games may be costly and time-consuming, requiring a large investment of time and knowledge. The effectiveness and accessibility of game-based learning may be constrained since not all students have access to the required technology or are sufficiently digitally literate. Furthermore, poorly designed games may put fun above learning, leading to distractions and a lack of concentration on learning goals. It can be difficult to evaluate learning outcomes through games because interactive and dynamic learning environments may not be well suited for typical assessment techniques. Additionally, not every subject or skill can be readily converted to game-based learning, which could limit the approach's suitability in some educational settings.

Conclusion

An effective strategy for improving vocabulary acquisition in English is game-based learning. GBL increases student motivation, retention, and engagement by

converting standard lessons into interactive experiences. A variety of controlled and unstructured vocabulary practice possibilities are offered by the combination of digital, board, and immersive games. The general advantages of GBL in vocabulary acquisition make it an invaluable tool for both teachers and students, even though issues like resource availability and material quality must be addressed. Using game-based learning techniques can help make language learning more efficient and pleasurable as educational technology develops.

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