

Word Scavenger Hunt: A Fun Way for Literacy Skills in English Language Learning

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Introduction

Literacy is one of the essential skills students must possess when learning English. According to UNESCO (2017), literacy is the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, and communicate information across various contexts. However, many students still struggle to understand vocabulary and reading content due to learning methods that tend to be monotonous and teacher-centered. Therefore, more engaging learning strategies that actively involve students are needed, one of which is the Word Scavenger Hunt activity.

Research Questions

"How are students' literacy skills reflected through the implementation of the Word Scavenger Hunt in English language learning?"

Research Objectives

The purpose of this study is to determine how the implementation of the Word Scavenger Hunt can support and reflect the development of students' literacy skills in English language learning. This study also aims to examine the contribution of this activity to vocabulary acquisition, reading comprehension, communication skills, and student engagement during the learning process

Theoretical Review

According to Kern (2000), literacy is not only related to the ability to read and write, but also encompasses the ability to understand, interpret, evaluate, and use information meaningfully in various contexts. In language learning, literacy is also related to students' ability to construct meaning, interact with texts, and use language in daily life. Meanwhile, the Word Scavenger Hunt is a game-based learning strategy that encourages students to search for vocabulary in their surroundings, understand its meaning, and use it contextually through collaborative and enjoyable activities

Method

Research Design: Descriptive qualitative

Location: Al Islamiyah Junior High School

Participants: Grade 9 students

Data Collection Techniques:

- Observation
- Semi-structured interviews
- Documentation

Data Analysis:

- Data reduction
- Data display
- Conclusion drawing

Triangulation: Observation, interviews, and documentation to ensure data validity.

Research Findings

(Collecting Information)

During the information-gathering stage, students actively search for and identify English vocabulary from various written sources in their surroundings, such as posters, books, bulletin boards, and other print media. In addition to finding vocabulary, students also strive to understand the meanings of the words they find through group discussions and with the teacher's assistance. This activity demonstrates development in reading skills, vocabulary recognition, and the ability to comprehend information obtained from various texts. These findings are consistent with Chen and Greenwood (2021), who found that scavenger hunt activities support vocabulary development through meaningful exploration. They also align with Rosyidi et al. (2023), who state that scavenger hunt activities increase students' motivation and participation in learning.

Research Findings

Figure 1. Word Scavenger Hunt Activity in the classroom learning

- Students identified vocabulary from written sources.

This finding was also supported by interview data. One student stated:

"It was so much fun! We went around reading various texts just to find one word, and we all got excited."

- Students showed high motivation and engagement.

Another student said:

"The most memorable experience was when we had to find a very difficult word. We had to go around, read texts, bulletin boards, and even food wrappers."



Research Findings

(Processing Information)

During the information processing stage, students begin to use the vocabulary they have learned to construct meaningful sentences. They discuss appropriate word choice, refine sentence structure, and practice using vocabulary in context. This process demonstrates the development of students' critical and creative thinking skills, as they not only memorize vocabulary but also understand how to apply it in more realistic situations. These findings support Vygotsky's (1978) theory, which emphasizes that learning occurs through social interaction and collaboration. They are also in line with Barkley et al. (2014), who argue that collaborative learning enhances understanding and interpersonal skills.

Research Findings

Figure 3. Collaboration and Social Interaction Word Scavenger Hunt Activity

- Students arranged vocabulary into sentences.

The interview results also supported these findings. One student explained:

"Our group immediately divided up the tasks so we could work faster. Some looked up words, while others checked them."

- Students negotiated word choices.
- Students developed critical thinking.
- Students collaborated actively.



Research Findings

(Presenting Information)

During the information-presentation stage, students demonstrate strong communication skills through discussion and group work. They exchange ideas, explain the meanings of vocabulary words, and help classmates who are struggling. These activities show that literacy development occurs not only individually but also through social interaction and collaboration throughout the learning process. These findings indicate the development of 21st-century skills, particularly communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and creativity, as emphasized by the Partnership for 21st Century Learning (P21). Game-based learning activities also encourage active engagement and higher-order thinking skills.

Research Findings

Figure 4. Cooperation and Communication with the team

- Students exchanged ideas. Based on the interview data, students mentioned that they enjoyed:
"Working with friends." "Finding and solving clues." "Putting words together to form paragraphs."
 - Students explained vocabulary meanings.
 - Students improved communication skills.
 - Literacy developed through social interaction.



Discussion

The results of the study indicate that the implementation of the Word Scavenger Hunt effectively assesses students' literacy skills through three main stages: collecting information, processing information, and presenting information. In the information-gathering stage, students demonstrated the ability to find and understand vocabulary from various sources. In the information-processing stage, students were able to use that vocabulary in contextually appropriate sentences. Meanwhile, in the information-presentation stage, students could communicate their understanding through group discussions and presentations. These findings indicate that literacy is not only related to the ability to read but also to the ability to understand, process, and communicate information effectively. This aligns with the literacy theory proposed by Kern (2000), which states that literacy is a social practice involving interpretation, collaboration, and the use of language within specific contexts.

Conclusion

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that the implementation of the Word Scavenger Hunt effectively supports the development of students' literacy skills in English language learning. Through this activity, students are able to gather information, process information, and convey information effectively. In addition, students also demonstrated increased participation, learning motivation, communication skills, and cooperation during the learning process. These findings support the view of Bonwell and Eison (1991), who state that learning is more effective when students are actively involved in the learning process.

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