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The Effectiveness of Educational Games in Enhancing English Vocabulary for Beginners

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis efektivitas permainan edukatif dalam meningkatkan kosakata bahasa Inggris bagi pemula. Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi penggunaan permainan edukatif dalam konteks pembelajaran bahasa Inggris untuk pemula, dan menyelidiki dampak permainan tersebut terhadap perolehan dan retensi kosakata. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain penelitian pre-eksperimental dengan pendekatan one-group pretest-posttest. Partisipan dalam penelitian ini berjumlah 19 remaja yang tergabung dalam kelompok belajar Sutenegere. Data dikumpulkan melalui pre-test dan post-test. Data dianalisis dengan menggunakan statistik deskriptif dan uji T sampel berpasangan untuk menguji hipotesis. Ini dilakukan dengan menggunakan SPSS 2022 untuk windows. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa nilai rata-rata pre-test adalah 57,63 dan nilai rata-rata post-test adalah 63,42. Dapat disimpulkan bahwa penggunaan permainan edukasi secara signifikan meningkatkan kosakata bahasa Inggris siswa pemula. Penelitian ini memberikan kontribusi praktis bagi guru dalam memilih media pembelajaran yang efektif dan memberikan panduan bagi pengembang game edukasi. Selain itu, penelitian ini diharapkan dapat menjadi referensi untuk penelitian lebih lanjut terkait pencapaian kosakata dalam pembelajaran bahasa.

Kata Kunci: *Permainan Edukatif, Kosakata*

Abstract

This research aims to analyze the effectiveness of educational games in improving English vocabulary for beginners. This research explores the use of educational games in the context of learning English for beginners, and investigates the impact of these games on vocabulary acquisition and retention. This research uses a pre-experimental research design with a one-group pretest-posttest approach. The participants in this research were 19 teenagers who were members of the Sutenegere study group. Data was collected through pre-tests and post-tests. The data were analyzed by using descriptive statistics and paired sample T-test to test the hypothesis. It was performed using SPSS 2022 for windows. The result shows that the mean score of the pre-test was 57.89 and the mean score of the post-test was 64.47. It concluded that the use of educational games significantly increased beginner students' English vocabulary. This research provides practical contributions for teachers in choosing effective learning media and provides guidance for educational game developers. In addition, it is hoped that this research can become a reference for further studies related to vocabulary achievement in language learning.

Keywords: *Educational Games, Vocabulary*

INTRODUCTION

The learning of English for beginners is a crucial aspect of education, particularly in today's globalized world where communication is key. In a typical English class for beginners, students are often faced with the challenge of understanding and using basic vocabulary, grammar, and sentence structures. This can be a daunting task, especially for those who are new to the language. As noted by researchers in 2017, "While students at higher levels may face different challenges, such as more complex vocabulary and sentence structures, the foundation of English learning for beginners is essential for future progress" (Kumar, 2017).

Vocabulary plays a significant role in the learning process, especially for beginners. According to Nurgiyantoro (2018), vocabulary is the wealth of words owned by a language, and mastering vocabulary is crucial for effective communication and comprehension. Beginners often struggle to learn new words and their meanings, which can hinder their ability to engage in meaningful conversations and understand written texts. Therefore, it is essential to develop strategies that can help learners acquire and retain vocabulary effectively.

Despite the acknowledged importance of vocabulary, there are several challenges that learners of English for beginners face when it comes to learning vocabulary. One major issue is the lack of exposure to new words and their meanings, which can lead to a limited vocabulary. Additionally, learners may struggle to remember new words due to the sheer

volume of new information (Goh, 2017). Furthermore, the lack of contextualized learning can make it difficult for learners to understand the nuances of word meanings (Nation, 2017).

To overcome these challenges, educators and researchers have proposed various strategies, including the use of flashcards, vocabulary lists, and contextualized learning activities. Research by Diane Schmitt and Norbert Schmitt emphasizes the multifaceted nature of vocabulary acquisition, suggesting that effective learning strategies, repeated exposures, and meaningful contexts are essential for retention and application (Schmitt & Schmitt, 2014). While these methods can be effective, they may not be engaging or interactive enough to capture learners' attention and motivate them to learn.

Educational games, on the other hand, offer a unique approach to learning vocabulary for beginners. By incorporating games into the learning process, learners can engage in interactive and fun activities that promote vocabulary acquisition and retention. In accordance with Krashen (2019), educators should consider incorporating more interactive and engaging methods to promote vocabulary acquisition. Games can provide a safe and supportive environment for learners to practice their vocabulary skills, build confidence, and develop a sense of accomplishment. Moreover, games can be tailored to individual learners' needs and learning styles, making them an effective tool for vocabulary learning.

Vocabulary

Vocabulary is one of four language components. It is an important aspect to improve all skills of English, such as speaking, reading, listening and writing. Aitchison (2012), identified the following vocabulary: 1). All the words that a person knew or used. 2). All the words in particular language. 3). The words that people are using when they spoke. 4). A list of words with meaning especially in a book for learning foreign language. According to Susanto (2017), vocabulary is a collection of words that a professional can use to describe his or her thoughts. It indicates that vocabulary has become the quantity of words that a person possesses for expressing language in communication.

1. The Importance of Vocabulary

Vocabulary is extremely crucial in learning English. There are few reasons why vocabulary is an important aspect of language development. According to Keuleers et al., (2015), vocabulary knowledge is a strong predictor of reading aptitude and capability. It is supported by Rayner et al., (2016), vocabulary knowledge will improve students' comprehension of the content of text given and help them to memorize it for a long time. That way vocabulary is very important to teach because limited vocabulary will make students difficult in learning the English language or

communication. Vocabulary knowledge is vital for foreign language learners because a lack of vocabulary in a target language will lead to communication failure (Schmitt & Schmitt, 2020).

2. Types of Vocabulary

According to Munir (2016), good vocabulary is defined as falling into four categories. There are speaking, writing, listening and reading vocabulary. Speaking vocabulary is a term used by an individual or group to express ideas orally and actively. Writing vocabulary refers to word which commonly used in writing. Listening vocabulary refers to those who acknowledge what they hear and reading vocabulary is the words that found in writing form.

However, Lelawati et al., (2019), identified two types of vocabulary, namely active vocabulary and passive vocabulary. Active vocabulary are words that the student can understand, pronounce correctly and use constructively in speaking and writing. Meanwhile, passive vocabulary noted the phrases in which the students might want to apprehend and understand when they have been analyzing or listening to someone speak, but they no longer used the word in conversation or writing

3. Vocabulary Acquisition

Vocabulary acquisition is a multifaceted process involving the intake, storage, and retrieval of words within the mental lexicon. For beginners, establishing a robust vocabulary foundation is imperative, as it forms the basis for effective communication and language proficiency. The process encompasses the understanding of word meanings, contextual usage, and the ability to recall and apply acquired vocabulary in various linguistic contexts. The Connectionist Model of Vocabulary Acquisition posits that vocabulary learning involves forming connections between new words and existing linguistic knowledge. For beginners, this model underscores the importance of exposure, repetition, and contextual usage in the process of acquiring and storing vocabulary.

Educational Game

In accordance with Saputro (2014), educational games are designed to inspire children's thinking capacities, boost their concentration, and improve problem-solving skills through interactive learning experiences. They are intended to be exciting and fun, making learning more enjoyable for children. Furthermore, Rakimahwati (2018), argues that educational games are sort of media used to teach and develop user knowledge in unique and entertaining ways. They are supposed to be engaging and visually appealing,

particularly for children, and to support educational facilities. Educational games are dynamic tools designed to transform the learning experience into an interactive and fascinating process. In the context of English vocabulary acquisition, these games encompass a wide range of activities, from digital applications to traditional board games, all aimed at fostering a conducive environment for effective learning. By incorporating elements of challenge, competition, and entertainment, educational games create an immersive atmosphere that promotes active participation and knowledge retention.

Educational games, rooted in the Constructivist Learning Theory, provide a platform for learners to actively construct knowledge through exploration and problem-solving. This theory suggests that learners, especially beginners, build their understanding of English vocabulary by engaging with meaningful and context-rich gaming experiences.

1. Types of Educational Game

Educational games are interactive tools designed to enhance learning and engagement. Here are some common types of educational games:

a. Flashcards

Flashcards are a simple yet effective educational game. They consist of a card with a question or term on one side and the answer or definition on the other. Students can use flashcards to review and memorize new vocabulary, historical dates, or mathematical formulas. This game helps improve memory retention and recall.

b. Vocabulary List

A vocabulary list is another type of educational game that involves learning new words. Students are presented with a list of words and their meanings. They can use flashcards or create their own list to practice and review the words. This game helps improve vocabulary and comprehension skills.

c. Charades

Charades is a classic educational game that involves acting out words, phrases, or concepts without speaking. Students take turns acting out the word or phrase, and their peers try to guess what it is. This game helps improve communication, creativity, and problem-solving skills.

d. Mini Game Show

A mini game show is a fun and engaging educational game that involves a series of challenges or questions. Students compete against each other or in teams to answer questions or complete tasks. This game helps improve teamwork, problem-solving, and critical thinking skills.

Based on the four types of educational games that have been described, the researcher decided to choose Charades as the focus of the educational game that will be studied. This decision was chosen for the reason that Charades is an effective way to teach vocabulary because it involves students in an interactive and engaging activity. By acting out words or phrases, students are able to associate the words with actions and gestures, making it easier for them to remember and recall the vocabulary. Additionally, Guess Gesture encourages students to think creatively and to use their problem-solving skills to guess the meaning of the word or phrase. This game is particularly useful for young learners who are just starting to learn a new language.

2. Teaching Steps using Educational Game

In the context of English vocabulary acquisition, the teaching steps within educational games follow a systematic approach. These steps may involve introducing new words in a contextualized manner, providing examples that illustrate word usage, and reinforcing learning through interactive game-based exercises.

Charades is a versatile educational game that can be adapted to teach various vocabulary. To play, start by preparing flashcards or a set of pictures and corresponding words. Divide the class into teams and have one player from each team draw a flashcard and act out the word without speaking. The other students then try to guess what the word is, and the team that correctly guesses earns points. To make the game more engaging, use different categories such as animals, sports, or hobbies.

Bloom's Taxonomy guides the structuring of teaching steps within educational games. It starts with introducing new words (Knowledge), followed by providing contextual examples (Comprehension), and culminating in interactive game-based exercises (Application), ensuring a holistic and progressively challenging learning experience.

3. Advantages and Disadvantages of Educational Game

a. Advantages

One significant advantage of educational games is their ability to increase student engagement and motivation. According to Gee (2015), games provide a context for active learning where students are more likely to participate and remain interested in the content. This is particularly important for language learning, as engaging activities can facilitate better retention and recall of vocabulary. Moreover, educational games often incorporate principles of gamification, such as rewards and challenges, which can enhance intrinsic motivation (Deterding et al.,

2017). These elements make learning more enjoyable and less intimidating, especially for beginners. A study by Johnson (2018) found that primary school students who used educational games for vocabulary learning showed significant improvements in retention and engagement compared to traditional methods.

Furthermore, educational games can provide immediate feedback and opportunities for repeated practice. This aligns with the theory of spaced repetition, which posits that learning is more effective when practice is distributed over time (Ebbinghaus, 2015). Games often employ this principle, allowing learners to revisit vocabulary in various contexts, thus reinforcing their understanding and recall.

b. Disadvantages

Despite these benefits, there are also notable disadvantages to using educational games. One concern is the potential for distraction. According to a study by Anderson and Dill (2016), the interactive nature of games can sometimes lead to off-task behavior, where students focus more on the game mechanics rather than the educational content. Additionally, the quality and educational value of games can vary widely. Not all games are designed with pedagogical principles in mind, and some may not align well with curriculum goals (Plass et al., 2017). This can result in ineffective learning experiences that do not contribute meaningfully to vocabulary acquisition.

In conclusion, while educational games offer numerous advantages such as increased engagement, motivation, and effective practice, they also come with disadvantages like potential distraction and variable quality. Educators should carefully consider these factors and integrate games thoughtfully into the curriculum to maximize their benefits.

RESEARCH METHOD

Data Collection

1. Variable Identification

There were two variables used in this research which one of them was the independent variable and dependent variable. Educational games categorized as the independent variable because it was used to manipulate the data. Moreover, dependent variable was vocabulary achievement.

2. Variable Definition

a. Vocabulary

Vocabulary refers to the set of words within a language that are familiar to a person, encompassing the words that an individual understands and uses in communication. Vocabulary is a critical component of language proficiency, impacting reading comprehension, writing, listening, and speaking skills. Nation (2017), highlights the importance of vocabulary acquisition in language learning, noting that "a rich vocabulary makes the skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing easier to perform." Furthermore, Webb and Nation (2017), argue that effective vocabulary learning strategies, including the use of educational tools and games, can greatly enhance learners' ability to acquire and retain new words.

b. Educational game

Educational Game refers to a game designed with the primary purpose of teaching or reinforcing concepts and skills through an interactive and engaging format. Gee (2017), discusses the value of educational games in promoting active and deep learning, stating that "well-designed games create powerful learning environments that can foster critical thinking, problem-solving skills, and vocabulary acquisition.

3. Instrument of the Study

The research instrument in this study was a multiple choices test designed to measure the vocabulary acquisition of beginner English learners. According to Haladyna and Rodriguez (2018), multiple choices tests are effective in evaluating students' retention and understanding of vocabulary, as they require learners to recognize the correct word among distractors, thereby demonstrating their comprehension and recall abilities.

In this study, the multiple choices test was administered before and after the intervention with educational games to measure any significant changes in the vocabulary knowledge of the participants. The pre-test was conducted before treatment to establish a baseline of the learners' vocabulary skills, while the post-test was given after treatment to reveal the extent of vocabulary acquisition attributable to the use of educational games.

4. Technique of data collection

a. Pre-test

The data collection process was begun with a pre-test administered during the first meeting. The pre-test was consisted of a multiple choices test designed to assess

the initial vocabulary knowledge of the participants. The test was included a variety of vocabulary items that the learners were expected to know at beginner level.

b. Treatment

Following the pre-test, the treatment was commenced. This treatment was conducted over 6 meetings. During treatment, the researcher was acted as a teacher who teaches students in class. Each meeting held in class about teaching vocabulary using charades included preliminary activities, main activities, and closing activities. In preliminary activities, the teacher opens the class by greeting the students, praying together and doing brainstorming. The main activity involves several steps: 1) The teacher prepares flashcards or pictures with corresponding words, 2) then, the students were divided into teams and one player from each team draws a flashcard, 3) the player acts out the word without speaking, and the other students try to guess what it was, 4) the team that correctly guesses the word earns points. The closing activity involves evaluating the students' understanding of the vocabulary.

c. Post-test

The data collection was concluded with a post-test administered during the final meeting. Similar to the pre-test, the post-test was a multiple-choice test that assesses the vocabulary knowledge of the participants. The post-test was included items comparable to those in the pre-test to ensure consistency in measuring vocabulary gains. The results of the post-test was compared to the pre-test scores to determine any significant improvements in vocabulary acquisition as a result of the treatment with educational games.

Analyzing Data

1. Descriptive statistic

For the purpose of this investigation, the data was gathered and then analysed using descriptive statistics. The researcher will use SPSS 22 for Windows to run frequencies in order to compute the mean and standard deviation of the students' test performance. This will allow the researcher to determine the standard deviation as well as the mean score of the students.

2. Statistic Required For Teaching Hypothesis

a. Normality Testing

It will used to know the normality of the data that will going to analyzed whether the sample from the population will distributed or not. The researcher perform one simple using SPSS 22 windows.

b. Homogeneity Testing

Homogeneity was used to know whether the questions were homogeneity or not. Homogeneity will perform by S-W one-way ANOVA using SPSS 22 windows.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

The researcher employed descriptive statistics to analyse the data in this study. The researcher identified the highest and lowest scores among these 19 items. The pre-test findings had a standard deviation of 10.04. Among the 19 students, the highest score was 75 and the lowest score was 45. The post-test results had a standard deviation of 9.41. The highest score was 90 and the lowest score was 55.

Descriptive Statistics of Pre-test and Post-test						
GROUP	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
PRE-TEST	19	45	75	57.89	10.04	100.877
POST-TEST	19	55	90	64.47	9.41	88.596
Valid N (listwise)	19					

Referring to the result in the pre-test and post-test, it could be seen that the mean score and the standard deviation of students' post-test were higher than the mean score and standard deviation of students' pre-test. It indicated that there was difference between students' vocabulary achievement after and before doing treatment by using educational game.

To determine if the alternative hypothesis (H_a) was accepted or rejected, hypothesis testing was utilized. The present researcher performed a pair samples T-test to investigate whether there was a significant difference in mean score between the pre-test and pos-test. The hypothesis criteria were, if the mean score of the pre-test \leq post-test, it means hypothesis (H_a) was accepted and if the mean score of the pre-test \geq post-test, it means hypothesis (H_a) was rejected. After calculating a paired samples T-test, the present researcher found that there was a significant difference in the mean score between the pre-test and post-test $t(df=18)=-6.47$ at $p=0.00$. It means that the alternative hypothesis (H_a) was accepted and the null hypothesis (H_o) was rejected. Based on the information above,

the present researcher concludes that educational games were significantly effective to enhancing English vocabulary at Sutenegere Study Group.

Paired Samples T-Test								
	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
pretest - posttest	-6.579	4.426	1.015	-8.712	-4.446	-6.479	18	.000

The data analysis in this research result mean score wich is 57.89 in pre-test and 64.47 in the post-test. Its mean that there is an improvment in the mean score from the pre-test to the post-test.

Normality Test

The calculation of normality testing was used to determine whether the distribution of the data in the pre-test and post-test were normal or not. If the values of significance level of the investigate variable was higher than $p=0.05$, it means that the distribution of the data was normal, conversely if it was lower than $p=0.05$, then the data was not normal. Based on the result of normality testing, the values in pre-test and post-test were higher than the values of the significance $p=0.05$. The value of Shapiro-Wilk in the pre-test was 0.83, while the value of significance in the post-test was 0.12. It showed that the data were normal.

Tests of Normality						
	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Pretest	.192	19	.063	.913	19	.083
Posttest	.215	19	.021	.865	19	.012

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Homogeneity Test

Homogeneity test was conducted to know that the data were homogenous or not. The data were homogenous if the value of the significance level was higher than $p=0.05$ and not homogenous if the value of the significance level was lower than $p=0.05$. Based on the calculation of One-Way ANOVA, it was found that the value of significance level was 0.33. It means that the distribution of the data was homogenous.

Test of Homogeneity of Variances

Pre-PostTest			
Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
.944	1	36	.338

Discussion

After collecting and calculating the obtained data, the present researcher found that educational games were significantly effective in enhancing students' vocabulary at Sutenegere Study Group. It could be seen from the result of descriptive statistics in which the mean score and standard deviation of the post-test were higher than the pre-test. Tentatively, it can be said that the treatment given by the researcher was successful.

Based on the normality testing, the value of significance level either of pre-test and post-test score was more than $p=0.05$. It means that the data was normal. Referring to the result of homogeneity test, the value of significance level was higher than $p=0.05$ which means that the data was homogenous. Meanwhile, on the result of hypothesis testing, the present researcher found that there was a significant difference in mean score between the pre-test and pos-test. The result of the research showed that the mean score of the pre-test \leq post-test, it means that the alternative hypothesis (H_a) was accepted and the null hypothesis (H_o) was clearly rejected.

CONCLUSION

Based on the result of the study, the present researcher concluded that educational games were significantly effective in enhancing students' English vocabulary especially for beginners at Sutenegere Study Group. It could be seen from the value of the post-test which was higher than the value of the pre-test. The mean score and standard deviation on the post-test were 64.47 and 9.41. While on the pre-test, the mean score and standard deviation were 57.89 and 10.04. It meant that both the mean score and standard deviation was significant. In conclusion, the result of the students' vocabulary achievement was better compared to before applying treatment using educational games.

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