

EFFECTIVENESS OF USING SCRABBLE AS GAME-BASED LEARNING IN IMPROVING VOCABULARY AT CHILDREN

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Abstract:

This study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of Scrabble as a GBL (game-based learning) tool in improving English vocabulary mastery in 12-year-old children. The study was conducted over one week with three meetings, involving ten elementary school students living near the researcher's home. The method used was quantitative, where data was collected through pre-tests and post-tests designed to measure students' vocabulary mastery, spelling accuracy, and their ability to form correct and meaningful English words. This study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of Scrabble as a game-based learning (GBL) tool for improving vocabulary mastery among 12-year-old EFL learners. A quantitative pre-experimental design was implemented over one week, consisting of three learning sessions involving ten elementary school students living near the researcher's home. Data were collected using pre-tests and post-tests measuring vocabulary mastery, spelling accuracy, and the ability to construct meaningful English words. The results of the study showed a significant improvement after the intervention. In the pre-test, 70% of students scored below 60, indicating limited vocabulary mastery. After the intervention, all students scored above 60, with 50% achieving a score of 80 or higher, and one student achieving the maximum score of 90. These findings suggest that Scrabble, when integrated with dictionary use, is not only enjoyable but also effective in improving vocabulary mastery and word comprehension in students. Future research should consider larger sample sizes and longer durations to examine the broader application of educational games in an EFL context.

Keywords: Scrabble, Game-Based Learning, Vocabulary, EFL, Educational Games, Dictionary, Critical Thinking, Collaboration with children's, Language Learning.

INTRODUCTION

Education very a important role in gaining knowledge. In today's world of education, educators continue to strive to find new, innovative methods to increase student participation and their learning process. One approach that is increasingly in demand is game-based learning (GBL), a method that combines

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educational elements with game features to create a more interesting and enjoyable learning process. One of the games that makes children curious and increases their high curiosity is by introducing this scrabble game. Among other types of educational games, Scrabble is known as a classic word game, which encourages players to build words from letter pieces, while helping to improve spelling skills, word recognition, and vocabulary mastery (Plass, Homer, & Kinzer, 2021).

Vocabulary is very important in learning a new language. It is the basic for reading comprehension, communication, and academic achievement. Unfortunately, for many learners, teaching vocabulary using rote memorization and textbooks becomes boring and inefficient over time. This often results in students being unable to remember words and use them contextually in speaking or writing. (Nation, 2023) Although vocabulary is important in language learning, many children or students, especially in the context of learning English as a foreign language (EFL), still struggle to master vocabulary. Basic observations in the field often reveal low scores in vocabulary assessments, limited active use of vocabulary in speaking and writing, and a lack of motivation during vocabulary instruction. This situation highlights the need for more interactive and meaningful vocabulary learning strategies for children in English language learning.

This research is expected to contribute both theoretically and practically to the field of English language education. Theoretically, this study supports the application of game-based learning as an effective vocabulary teaching strategy. Practically, this research offers educators an alternative child-centered approach, particularly for elementary school students, which can enhance student motivation and retention in EFL contexts, whether in self-study settings or at language courses and elementary schools.

Scrabble is a word game that offers an engaging approach to vocabulary learning. It also cultivates critical thinking, and encourages recalling of old words as well as discovering new ones, all within a fun and competitive environment. In

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addition, the group dynamics of Scrabble foster collaborative learning and communication, which are important for acquiring a new language

This research seeks to assess the impact of Scrabble as a game-based learning tool on vocabulary acquisition among learners. It seeks to determine if classroom use of Scrabble would positively impact vocabulary acquisition, motivation, and engagement with the learning activities.

METHODOLOGY

This study uses a quantitative research design, specifically a pre-experimental design with the use of pre-tests and post-tests, aimed at describing and quantitatively measuring the impact of using the Scrabble game as a learning strategy to enhance vocabulary knowledge and mastery among children, particularly elementary school students, in learning English. The focus of this study is to measure changes in vocabulary recognition and usage through observation and documentation conducted at several stages of meetings with the children. The participants in this study were 10 elementary school students living in the researcher's neighborhood. They were selected using convenience sampling, based on accessibility and availability. The participants had limited English vocabulary knowledge and had never received formal instruction on vocabulary due to institutional limitations.

They were selected as the subjects of my research to identify their initial abilities in understanding English vocabulary and to evaluate the effectiveness of Scrabble as a game-based learning method to enhance understanding and knowledge of English vocabulary in children. Children in the researcher's living environment were chosen as the subjects of my research to identify their initial abilities in understanding English vocabulary and to evaluate the effectiveness of Scrabble as a game-based learning method in enhancing vocabulary mastery. The learning activities were conducted in an informal atmosphere that simulated

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classroom conditions.

This study was conducted during free time using a checklist and rubric to assess the abilities of children in the researcher's home environment, observing the level of student engagement during play, students' ability to form valid English words, rewriting unfamiliar vocabulary, and improvements in vocabulary recognition over time throughout the observations. In this study, I collected and analyzed data by examining the vocabulary lists produced by children in the researcher's home environment. While playing, the Scrabble game scores, and visual evidence in the form of photos and student work samples. The documentation served to confirm the children's vocabulary development and learning progress.

During each stage carried out, field notes were taken to record significant observations, including children's responses, challenges faced such as difficulties in using dictionaries and understanding the rules of collaborative interaction games among children, as well as direct learning moments that occurred throughout the game. students, and spontaneous learning moments that occurred throughout the gameplay.

The data were analyzed using descriptive quantitative analysis, including the calculation of students' scores from pre-tests and post-tests, the percentage of improvement in vocabulary mastery, and the frequency of correct word construction during gameplay. Observational data and documentation were analyzed qualitatively to support the quantitative findings.

RESEARCH RESULT

Findings

This study was conducted for a week with three meetings and involved ten
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12-year-old children who lived in the researcher's environment. The purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which the use of Scrabble as a game-based learning tool can improve children's English vocabulary mastery. The study used a quantitative approach, and data were collected through pre-test and post-test instruments to assess vocabulary recognition, spelling accuracy, and students' ability to form meaningful English words.

The study began with an introduction to the Scrabble game and the establishment of basic vocabulary knowledge. On the first day, a pre-test was conducted immediately after the students were introduced to the Scrabble game. This test was conducted with the aim of evaluating the initial level of vocabulary mastery that these children had. Observations during this session showed that many children had difficulty in forming simple words in English. Their vocabulary was limited, and many relied on guesswork, indicating unfamiliarity with the basic structure of spelling and word formation in English.

In the results of the pre-test conducted, most children scored in the low to medium range. As the following data: Two students scored 40 according to the researcher's analysis, the children who scored had very limited vocabulary, so they could not answer the questions. Three students scored 50, four students scored 60, and only one student reached 70, the highest score recorded during the initial teaching. These results highlight that 70% of students scored below 60, indicating that their vocabulary mastery is inadequate for effective communication or word formation in English language learning.

Table of Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores.

Pre-Test Scores

Score	Number of Students	Percentage
40	2	20%
50	3	30%
60	4	40%
70	1	10%

After the pre-test, the second day was devoted to vocabulary discovery through the use of dictionaries. Here I, the researcher, introduced and guided the children in using dictionaries to identify unknown words. The children were encouraged to record the new vocabulary they found and observe how the words were used in the Scrabble game. This step is very important, because it not only introduces them to the correct use of dictionaries, but also enables them to find the meaning of words quickly, easily and accurately. The children can also become more independent in using dictionaries by utilizing the available reference tools. There are still many children who are not familiar with how to search for words alphabetically or determine the correct spelling, so additional time is invested in training students to use dictionaries effectively.

On the third day, the children participated in playing a Scrabble game using the learning they had gained earlier. Throughout the game, they recalled the vocabulary they had found and recorded earlier, and showed clear improvements in forming valid English words. The children's self-confidence increased, and peer collaboration became more visible. Students supported each other by sharing word ideas, correcting spellings, and reinforcing vocabulary use through repetition of the game.

After the scrabble game was played, a post-test was conducted to measure the <https://www.publicresearchstudy.my.id/index.php/TGES>

extent of improvement in English vocabulary obtained by students. The test structure was similar to the pre-test to ensure consistency and comparability of the data. Unlike the pre-test, the results of the post-test showed a clear improvement in vocabulary performance by children. No participants scored below 60, and five students achieved scores of 80 or higher, including one student who achieved a score of 90, the highest possible score.

Post-Test Scores

Score	Number of Students	Percentage
60	3	30%
70	2	20%
80	4	40%
90	1	10%

The table below presents a side-by-side comparison between the pre-test and post-test scores, illustrating the change in both student count and percentage:

Comparative Analysis Between Pre-Test and Post-Test

Score	Pre-Test	Pre-Test (%)	Post-Test	Post-Test (%)	Change (%)
40	2	20%	0	0%	-

					20 %
50	3	30%	0	0%	- 30 %
60	4	40%	3	30%	- 10 %
70	1	10%	2	20%	10 %
80	0	0%	4	40%	40 %
90	0	0%	1	10%	10 %

In the research that I conducted regarding the comparative analysis between the pre-test and post-test in this study, which aims to measure the effectiveness of the Scrabble Games in improving English vocabulary mastery in children.

The table is presented in the study to show the changes in scores obtained by children before and after they participated in learning activities using Scrabble games and dictionaries. The main purpose of the comparison was to see whether there was an increase in vocabulary skills in students after the learning intervention was carried out.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study indicate that the Scrabble game, as a form of game-based learning (GBL), has a significant impact on improving vocabulary mastery for children, especially children aged 12 years or elementary school level. Scrabble

provides a learning environment that supports language development through fun and challenging games, while making children active, collaborative and cognitively engaged with each other. From the pre-test and post-test data in this study, there is an increase in children's performance in terms of the vocabulary they master. Before the learning approach using Scrabble, most children scored low (40-60), with the majority (70%) below 60. However, after the learning session using Scrabble and a dictionary, the scores increased drastically; 50% of students scored 80 or higher on the post-test. These results show the effectiveness of using game media as an alternative method of teaching vocabulary that is more interesting and motivating.

This study is in line with the language learning theory proposed by Stephen Krashen (1982), which states that learners are more receptive to language if the input is meaningful and enjoyable. Games like Scrabble can provide such input naturally, as they link vocabulary to real and relevant contexts. In addition, Vygotsky's (1978) Constructivism theory supports this finding by emphasizing the importance of social interaction in the learning process. Scrabble encourages children to work together, discuss, and actively construct meaning in their interactions.

Furthermore, the use of dictionaries during learning also helps children become more independent. They learn how to look up the meaning of words, spell them correctly, and understand words in context. This is in line with Nation's (2001) view that vocabulary should be learned actively through various strategies, including independent exploration and the use of aids such as dictionaries.

The game of Scrabble also relates to Howard Gardner's (1993) theory of Multiple Intelligences, especially in terms of linguistic and interpersonal intelligence. Children not only develop their language skills, but also their social skills while playing and working together in teams.

Finally, the results of this study showed not only an increase in scores, but also an

increase in students' self-confidence, critical thinking skills, and overall interest in English.

CONCLUSION

This study comprehensively shows that the use of Scrabble as a game-based learning method has proven effective in improving English vocabulary mastery in 12-year-old children. Based on the results of the pre-test and post-test conducted on 10 students, there was a significant increase in vocabulary test scores after learning using Scrabble, which was accompanied by the use of a dictionary as an aid. Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that the use of Scrabble as a learning medium is not only able to improve students' vocabulary mastery quantitatively, but also proven to be effective and enjoyable for children in the learning process. This method encourages the development of critical and strategic thinking skills for children, strengthens independent learning through the use of dictionaries, and builds social interaction and teamwork between group members. In addition, learning with Scrabble also has a positive influence on students' motivation to learn English and provides opportunities for teachers to apply more innovative and contextual teaching practices. Therefore, this approach is very feasible to be applied more widely, especially in English learning at the elementary school level, because it is able to enrich the cognitive, affective, and social aspects of students in the ongoing learning process.

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