

**THE USE OF ONLINE GAMES IN TEACHING
ENGLISH VOCABULARY AT SMP MUHAMMADIYAH
18 SURABAYA**

Thesis

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Sarjana Pendidikan Islam (S.Pd.I) in Teaching English**

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ABSTRACT

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Title : THE USE OF ONLINE GAMES IN TEACHING ENGLISH
VOCABULARY AT SMP MUHAMMADIYAH 18 SURABAYA

The importance of learning vocabulary has obviously a big role in the mastery of a language. That is why many teachers have used various strategy and media in the learning process. Along with Information Technology era, the learning of vocabulary has been massively studied through internet. However, this kind of learning is still uncommonly conducted in the classroom because of its difficulty of internet connection itself. But a teacher of SMP Muhammadiyah 18 Surabaya has a courage to conduct this teaching strategy, so that the researcher feels interested in knowing how she applies this learning strategy and what problems she faces during the learning process. To complete the data, the researcher also takes students' response since the students are the doers of the learning. This is to know the effectiveness of the learning medium.

By using descriptive design, the data of this research which were obtained from, documentation, observation, questionnaires, and interview, were simply described as they are. The results showed that the teacher used online games to review, and develop her students' vocabulary.

Generally, the learning process was begun after the teacher and the students were led to pray. After opening the class, she conditioned her students by having warming up or simple dialogue between them. Before the teacher started the game, she grouped her students and explained the rules of the game or the activities that they were going to do. This process of gaming was monitored by the teacher. As reinforcement, she gave certain activities to her students, such as doing dialogue and challenging groups. Just before closing the class, she sometimes gave extra-class work.

According theories of the effectiveness of learning media, these online games are included into one of effective learning media since almost of all students gave positive responses. More than fifty percent of students feel happy, active and enthusiastic when playing these games. And they remember the words in the games.

The difficulties that come up in the teaching and learning process are grouping students (classroom management), planning cancellation, internet connection, classroom organization, the availability of technology, and the acceptance of technology.

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INTRODUCTION

A. Background of study

Wikipedia estimates that four hundred millions of people (exceeding the number of native speakers reaching three hundred and fifty millions¹) use English as a second language.² Along with the globalization era, English users must have increased year to year. The necessities of social interaction in the globalization era make people speak with others from different parts of the world using language they share. From the economic perspective, for example, language will be such a bridge of communication to meet the agreement in the international trade. The economic feature shows how important English as the world language is. The importance of English can be notified from its use which grows rapidly in any social aspects, from international conference to news, and from reports to popular music lyrics. People will use this language as a tool of communication between native and non-native speaker.

In Indonesia, English is taken as a foreign language. It is taught as a compulsory subject from Elementary school to university. This subject needs, therefore more strategies in teaching and practicing, as we do not use it in our

¹ Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia. *List of languages by number of native speakers*. (Online). (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_languages_by_number_of_native_speakers. 5 May 2010) Retrieved on 6th May 2010. at 7.00 pm.

² Kenji Kitao, The Internet TESL Journal. *Why Do We Teach English?*. (Online), Vol. II, No. 4, (<http://iteslj.org/Articles/Kitao-WhyTeach.html>, 1996.). Retrieved on 4th December 2009, at 4.00 pm.

enthusiastic to be involved in the activities. They are interested in engaging in the different learning method, activities (learning vocabulary by doing game) and the game itself (without considering the learning goal). This depends on how teacher motivates students to learn. This raises researcher's interest to know how students take the online game as the learning medium.

The use of electronic media such as OHP, slide show with various form, and computer assisted games, indeed, have been commonly used in the classroom teaching. Online games, however, is firstly conducted by an English teacher SMP Muhammadiyah 18 Surabaya which has been growing and actualizing their identity to be an Internationally Standardized School.

In conclusion, by considering the importance of vocabulary in the learning of a language and the development of vocabulary learning media, The researcher defines this research by the title “The Use of Online Games in Teaching English Vocabulary at SMP Muhammadiyah 18 Surabaya. With the assumption that it is important to know how online games are applied in the classroom. As we may know that teaching using CALL (Computer Assisted-Language Learning), especially through internet connection, is often taken as a difficult strategy.

occurred in the learning process and how to anticipate or handle those difficulties.

D. Significance of study

From the objectives of study, the researcher hopes that this research can share any important information dealing with educational tool assistance especially in the teaching of vocabulary. Teaching vocabulary seems to be easy, however, in fact many strategies are often conducted ineffectively and boring.

By knowing the students' responses, teacher can be highly motivated to explore the effective and innovative media for learning vocabulary. By doing so, Problems occurring in the learning process can be minimized.

E. Scope and limitation

This research will be restricted to the first year students of SMP Muhammadiyah 18 Surabaya since the teaching through online game is intensively conducted in this level. It will be focused on the learning activities of the teacher (how she applies the online game in her teaching) and the students in the learning process (how they responds to the teaching when they learn vocabulary online). This research, however will not discuss the result of the learning assessment.

F. Definition of key terms

To avoid misunderstanding, the researcher will define the key terms used

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter will discuss the review of related literature which contains the definition of vocabulary, including its importance, types, and techniques of teaching. The review also covers games from their use and kinds to their general benefit in teaching. Other issues under the review are the advantage as well as the disadvantage of online gaming, and general difficulties in teaching using CALL. The previous studies in teaching vocabulary are also under this academic scrutiny.

A. Definition of vocabulary

According to Hornby, vocabulary is total number of words which make up a language.¹⁶ Each language has its own rules to combine. It is regarded as one of the basic tools in achieving the goals of the teaching and learning process. Hence, it is necessary to understand its importance, types and the technique of teaching.

1. The importance of vocabulary

“Without grammar, very little can be conveyed. Without vocabulary, nothing can be conveyed.”

Witkins' statement above is proposing the importance of vocabulary which means that people with no knowledge of grammar and pronunciation

¹⁶ As Hornby. *Oxford Advance Learner Dictionary of Current English*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974) p.1330

Table 2.1**Word classifications according to its function**

	Definition/function	Example
Noun	Words which are used to name of a person, place, thing, or idea	I, he, government, school, decision, etc.
Pronoun	Words which are used to exchange or place one or more nouns	It, he, she, they, etc.
Adjective	Words which are modify a noun or pronoun	Beautiful, beneficial, satisfying, etc.
Verb	Words that express action/otherwise help to make a sentence	Think, eat, find, etc.
Adverb	Word which are used to modify a verb, an adjective or another verb	Accidentally, slowly, independently, etc.
Preposition	Words which are used to show the relation if a noun/pronoun to some other words in a sentence	In, on, at, after, while, etc.
Conjunction	A word that joins words, phrases or sentences	And, but, or, etc.

C. Using Online Games in teaching vocabulary

Learning vocabulary often raises boredom in its teaching strategies. Today, games are often applied in the language classroom, but the use is often considered ineffective for it has different goal orientation. Hence, there are some ways of how to choose the game:

1. The game must be more than just fun
2. The game should involve “friendly” competition
3. The game should keep all of the students involved and interested
4. The game should focus on the use of language rather than on the language itself
5. The game should give students a chance to learn, practice or review specific language material

To choose what kind of tool that we use, we must consider some criteria of the effectiveness. Forcier and Desey promote some guideline for the effectiveness.²⁶

1. The software must stimulate a high degree of interest in the learner.
2. Software must contribute to developmental learning and, thereby, increase the permanents of that learning.
3. Software must be based in concrete experience to enhance understanding.

²⁶ Richard C. Forcier and Don E. Descy. *The Computer as an Educational Tool* . (New Jersey: Pearson Education, 2008). P. 32.

G. Different learning styles

The success of teaching is affected by teachers' ability in knowing what kinds of learner their students are. By observing students' behaviors some researchers tried to describe their styles.

According to Willing, there are four kinds of learner styles:³²

1. Convergents

Convergers tend to learn individually/independently than learning in group. They are more cool and pragmatic because they are able to impose their own structures on learning.

2. Conformists

Being active in non-communicative classroom has become the character of conformists. They are more concerned with the learning of the language rather than using it.

3. Concrete learners

The concrete learners are almost similar with conformist though in fact, they tend to use language as communication. They enjoy the social aspect of learning through direct experience. They will much enjoy games and group work.

4. Communicative learners

³²As quoted in Jeremy Harmer. *The Practice of English Language Teaching*. Third edition. (England: Longman, 2003) p. 43

H. Previous studies in teaching vocabulary

Many strategies have been applied in schools and become the subject of research. Vocabulary is an interesting topic to discuss especially when it discusses teaching and learning process with certain media and strategy used in schools. Many researches deal with the topic to know the effectiveness and the implementation of a teaching methodology through varied designs.

In 2010, some researches such as “Using Puzzles to Improve the Seventh Year Student’s Vocabulary at MTs. Nurul Islam Surabaya” (experimental research)³⁵ and “Using Total Physical Response (TPR) Method on Teaching Vocabulary at MTs. Syarifudin Wonorejo Lumajang” (experimental research)³⁶ are concerned with the topic. these two researches state that through varied design of teaching students are highly motivated in the learning process and can memorize more vocabulary than using usual teaching strategies. A thesis entitled “Using Western Animated Movie in Teaching Vocabulary” by Eka, (with the same design) finds that the learning medium can motivate students because of its characterization and the story of the movie.³⁷ While another research which is done with descriptive design is, “Techniques of Teaching English Vocabulary at SLTP Negeri 39 Surabaya,”

³⁵ Siti Nur Faiza. Thesis, *Using Puzzles to Improve the Seventh Year Student's Vocabulary at MTs. Nurul Islam Surabaya*. Thesis. (Surabaya: IAIN Sunan Ampel Press, 2010). P. 50

³⁶ Ida Lailatul Hamdah. Thesis, *Using Total Physical Response (TPR) Method on Teaching Vocabulary at MTs. Syarifudin Wonorejo Lumajang* Thesis. (Surabaya: IAIN Sunan Ampel Press, 2010). P. 50.

³⁷ F, Eka Nur., *Teaching Vocabulary Using Western Animated Movie*. Thesis. (Surabaya: State University of Surabaya Press. 2007)

games, in their class and be able to overcome the problems which may occur in the learning process.

B. Subject of study

The subject of this research was the first year students because this was the only class which had this kind of activity (using online games in learning vocabulary).

C. Data of study

According to the statement of problem, this research needed qualitative and quantitative data. The qualitative data/information of this study was taken from the documentation, observation, interview and questionnaire. Then the quantitative data was taken from the percentages of students' answers in the questionnaire.

Those instruments which have been stated above has obtained the data as being stated below:

1. The application of online games in the teaching of vocabulary
2. The frequency of online gaming in the teaching of vocabulary
3. The students' responses to the use of online games in the learning of vocabulary
4. The difficulties which occurred in the process of teaching and learning
5. The reason of the application of online games in the learning of vocabulary

researcher acted as the non-participant observer³⁸ and did the observation systematically.³⁹

this questionnaire “Semi opened questionnaire”⁴³. This is only given to the students, so the questionnaire was only about the students’ responses and difficulties toward the process of material giving (see Appendix 3).

E. Data collection Techniques

To make the process of observation become easier, the researcher formulated the observation steps systematically as below:

1. Documentation

Documentation in this research was done to obtain the qualitative data about the description of online games application and its forms

Documenting teacher's lesson plan was done every time before the teaching process using online game was begun. While the documentation of students' photos was done at the same time the researcher did observation, the documentation of game's picture was taken at the different time she did observation while pictures of games were documented in different time the researcher did observation.

2. Observation

After documenting teacher's lesson plan, doing the observation was done every time the learning process using online game was conducted to give the researcher general description of the class. What had been observed were about students' response during the learning process, the application of online

⁴³ M. Iqbal Hasan, *Metodologi Penelitian dan Aplikasinya*, (Bogor: Ghalia Indonesia, 2002), p. 85.

game, difficulties that the teacher and the students got during the learning process.

This was done four times since the researcher thought that the data have sufficed the necessity. The researcher observed the difficulties that occur and takes notes about the teacher's and the students' activities during the teaching and learning process using the check-list form that had been designed

3. Students-Based Questionnaire

The questionnaire was given based on the number of students in class VII (24 students). This was because the researcher thought that any important and different responses may rise from any students. By giving questionnaire the researcher hoped could gain the data that describe the student's feeling to activities or the use of online games in the learning of vocabulary

After getting the questionnaires back, the researcher totaled the percentage of the answers using certain formula.

4. Interview

The interview with the teacher was the next step done by the researcher after giving the questionnaires to the students. This instrument was taken in order to get adequate information about the frequency, reason, difficulties of online games application, which could not completely be obtained from the documentation, observation and questionnaire. As the characteristic of the free-guided interview, the questions may develop after doing the observation.

F. Data analysis

The researcher has analyzed the data of this descriptive research by classifying them into two parts, the quantitative data and the qualitative data.⁴⁴ The qualitative data were the results of observation, interview and the information obtained through the questionnaire. While the quantitative data were about the percentage of the respondents' answers of the questionnaire that have been sum using certain formula which has been stated in the data collection techniques. After summing the quantitative data, the researcher analyzed the qualitative data gained through the interview, questionnaire, observation and documentation. Those data were described based on the phenomena existed after the researcher modify the qualitative data with the quantitative data, which had been sum.

⁴⁴ Suharsimi Arikunto, *Prosedur Penelitian* (Jakarta: PT. Asdi Mahasatya, 2006), p. 239.

To gain complete information of the result of the research, it is important to know the general description of the class. The learning model which has been applied does not force students to learn in traditional manners (students must pay attention to their teacher). That is why the various learner styles sometimes inhibit the process of teaching. Students with different styles produce different and unique acts in the class. The concrete learners will prefer studying with direct experience. The convergers will be much engaged with individual learning. The conformists prefer to be engaged in non-communicative classroom. Unlike the communicative learners, they are happier to operate or do the activities without the guidance from their teacher. The fact shows that almost all of the students in year seven are kinaesthetic learners (kinaesthetic learners are physically more engaged with activities). This is not a taboo thing when students are moving around the class while the teacher is giving materials.

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making a little exercise for the students (standing and moving their hands up and down). Then she checked the students who brought notebook and divide them based on the number of the notebook (it needs 10 minutes to group them). What follows is that she instructed her students to open the website.

The internet network was in a good condition that students easily accessed the website page. After explaining the rules of the games, teacher asked the students to play the game and she subsequently monitored the process of gaming. The game's form was matching the picture of animal with some answers given on the screen with the time determined. On the process of gaming two computers of the students were error for awhile, that it needed to be restarted. The process of gaming was still running until the time determined was over (15").

Teacher announced that the time for gaming was over but she could not decide which group was the winner because some of them were error with their notebook. But the researcher found no expression that showed disappointment. Teacher asked the group of the weakest score to describe the picture they got. Almost all of them could pronounce the words well. But on the process of describing they did some mistakes on the agreements of the words. Knowing this, the teacher reviewed the previous material to remind students the rules of the sentences. After making sure that her students understood the material, she provided some

questions for her students having dialogues with their table mate. After observing her students having dialogues, the teacher closed the class by salaam. The class was ended 15 minutes longer than what had been scheduled.

At the second meeting, the researcher found an underestimated thing; the teacher had to change her planning to use online game. At the beginning, the teacher opened the class after praying together. She announced that the students would have online game. They seemed very enthusiastic, but the trouble happened when they tried to open the website page. It took a long time until 30 minutes, the internet connection could not be accessed by all group. Then teacher decided to cancel the game and continued the lesson without using the game. The disappointed expression of the students appeared by the sounds “yacht!”. The situation became uncontrolled. But teacher tried to fix the situation by continuing the lesson.

The teacher continued her lesson about the use of *this*, *these*, *that*, *those*. She explained the material by giving some examples. Afterward, the students were asked to differentiate the use of the word and make an example of *this*, *these*, *that*, *those* compounded by the things in the class. Before closing the class, the teacher gave her students extra-class work to make the examples of the material.

In meeting three, getting attention of the students became the first thing I met in the class. This might because the situation where the students were accustomed to going around the room during the lesson. Other than this situation was calmed down after the students were led to pray together. Soon after finishing praying, the teacher opened the class and announced that they would have online game. The students were attracted and paid attention to the teacher.

As usual, the teacher divided the groups before starting the game (four groups) based on the number of the students who brought notebook. This process run little longer since a student does not want to gather with her group. It followed that the teacher instructed her students to open the website page to have the game. The first difficulty occurred when the students started to open the website page. It took ± 15 minutes to download since the internet network ran slowly.

After being able to download the page, the teacher explained the rules of the game. At that time, the game was about the synonym of the words and the game would be won by the group who finish quickly and correctly. During playing the game, the students cooperated with their group to finish the game. It seemed that the game was a little bit difficult. It could be seen when they often asked the meaning of the words to the teacher. Having finished doing the game (twenty minutes), the students memorized the words from the game by questioning each other.

rules of the activities. On the process of answering the challenge, some students got difficulty in changing the infinitive vocabulary into past tense form that she needed to help them. This process need long time to do. As the impact, the learning process was 30 minutes longer than what had been scheduled. As the extra-class work, the students were asked to classify the words that their group got according to word class and made some examples of simple past from those words.

2. Students' responses to the use of online games in the learning of vocabulary

Since the online games were infrequently played at the school, the students' responses showed results below:

Table 4.1
Student's responses percentages of the questionnaire

Student's Responses percentages of the questionnaire			
No.	Questions	Answers	
		Yes	No
1.	Love to learn English	87,5%	8%
2.	Become focus when learning in the class	54%	41,6%
3.	Feel happy when playing online games	62,5%	37%
4.	Become active when learning with online game	58%	41%
5.	Become enthusiastic when the game is played	91%	4%
6.	The game makes me become challenged	58%	41%
7.	Cooperate with my friends when playing the game	79%	21%

3. The difficulties in the teaching and learning process

In applying the strategy, the teacher admitted (and also proven by the observation results) that some barriers which occurred in the learning process were the difficulty in classroom management, and the internet connection.

The whole meeting of the research required the fairly long process of grouping where students sometimes took a long time (some of students sometimes did not want to gather with the group that had been determined by the teacher). At almost the same time the students were gathering with their groups, they accessed the website page. This affected the time of starting the game that it became longer than what has been planned. Moreover, the different types of the students' seat seem made the process of grouping and gaming a little hard to do. The restricted moving spaces did not make students maximally involved in the game (see the field note).

The learning strategy using online games which should be well prepared in its application made this strategy rarely conducted. The teacher stated that this teaching strategy needed extra efforts when applying it because any possibilities might go off especially that dealt with internet connection. The change of speed quality which happened unsurely made the teacher often change her planning of using this learning strategy, either the change of learning strategy and medium (based on the observation, the teacher used the printed version of the game), or class

Knowing that case, it is very important to know how far our students accept the information technology. By knowing this, teacher can plan the proper (simple and short⁴⁹) teaching techniques for introducing the games that students can focus on the language and meaning itself rather than on the activities during the learning process. It is a normal thing when first time teachers who apply this medium get some troubles in dealing with the games acceptance and instructions giving. This is because for some students, this activity is new.

Each student has his/her own way of learning. The kinaesthetic learners will be much comfortable when they learn by involving their psychomotor. Learning through online games or computer may fluster them (see Table 4.2, question no. 9) since there are many rules and instructions that they have to do. Different from concrete learners, kinaesthetic learners will be much engage with the direct involvement in a new experience.⁵⁰ On the contrary, the observation results said that though almost all of the students are kinaesthetic learners, they are interested when learning with online games. Physically, they can do least with their computer except moving its mouse. These uses of Computer-Assisted Instruction are still able to accommodate any learner styles by giving variations to the teaching technique.

⁴⁹ H. Douglas Brown. *Teaching by Principles: an Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy*, second edition. (New York: Pearson Education, 2001). P. 57

⁵⁰ Jeremy Harmer. *The Practice of English Language Teaching*. Third edition. (England: Longman, 2003)p. 43

Internet connection problem may indeed become a good enough reason not to apply this medium. We can review the teacher statement (and it was proved by the observer self) that she often changed her planning because of the unsure internet connection. Conversely, she can find a good way to accommodate it by placing her students outside the classroom near with the modem. Besides having good internet connection, the students moving space are not restricted by the classroom table formation (see the field note).

From the explanations above, we can conclude that online game is still a part of effective learning media. Before implementing this learning strategy, a teacher should recognize her students' learning styles, so, the teacher can give activities that can accommodate their learning styles; and how far her/ his students accept the information technology; her/his class condition, whether the availability of computer/notebook and Wi-Fi/internet connection support the activities that she is going to do or not. After doing those all, a teacher should choose a suitable game with material and students' level, and activities which are shortly and simply designed with some objectives that they will not frame students in the confusions of the activities they do.

learning styles and her class condition dealing with the availability of internet connection and technology and another important aspect, such as student's acceptance of technology.

2. Students' responses to the use of online games in the learning of vocabulary

From the questionnaire and observation students' responses shows almost of students gave positive responses to the use of online game in the learning of vocabulary. More than 50% (fifty percent) of students were happy, active and enthusiastic and cooperative when playing online games. There were more than 60% (sixty percent) of students did not get difficulties, although 45% (forty percent) of them stated that they could not play it individually . Therefore, online game can still be included into one of the effective learning media based on the effectiveness criteria that Forcier and Descy have proposed.

Some students show negative responses toward the use of online game in the learning of vocabulary. This is because some of them feel the restricted creativity as the availability of technology are limited and weak internet connection, and confused to the instruction or activities they do.

From those facts we can conclude that teacher can maximally motivate students to learn vocabulary through online games when the technical difficulties are well handled.

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