

Use of Letter Blocks Word Builder Game and Compound Words Game to Enrich Students' Vocabularies: A Study of Writing 1 Students of English Education Program of STKIP SoE

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Abstract: *The objectives of this study are to enrich students' vocabularies and get their understanding in using the words. The researcher recognized from their own experience in school and absolute uselessness of vocabulary lists and tests. Teaching vocabulary was important for the students to get familiar with the meaning of the words and the used of them in writing, instruction of teaching vocabulary should be enhanced. For these reasons, the researcher presents on teaching vocabularies by using Letter Blocks Word Builder Game and Compound Word Game. Letter Blocks Word Builder Game is an online game in which the students can choose letters and form them into words while Compound Words Game is also an online game that requires the students to combine two words become one word and has its own meaning. The participants of this study are the second semester students of STKIP SoE. Quantitative approach is used to measure the effect of using the games in teaching vocabularies. The result shown that there were good effects after playing the games, 75 % of the students agreed to use the games, 35 % of the students said that Letter Blocks Words Builder Game was good for forming letters became words and 40 % of the students said that Compound Word Game challenged them to create more words while only the 25% rest of the students did not care with the use of the games.*

Keywords: Compound Word Game, Letter Blocks Word Builder Game, Use, Vocabularies

1. Introduction

In learning a foreign language, vocabulary plays an important role. It is one element that links the four skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing all together. In order to communicate well in a foreign language, students should acquire an adequate number of words and should know how to use them accurately. Vocabulary learning is an essential part in foreign language learning as the meanings of new words are very often emphasized, whether in books or in classrooms (Alqahtani, 2015).

Teaching vocabulary is more than just presenting and introducing new words to the students and asking them to memorize. It is needed for expressing meaning and using the receptive (listening and reading) and the productive (speaking and writing) skills. Memorizing words may be good and useful as a temporary technique for tests but not for learning a foreign language (Igbaria, nd). Students need to learn vocabulary of the target language in another way. Teachers can help the students to build a new store of words, find the meaning of the words and understand when they should use the words.

One strategy used for gaining student's interest to enrich their vocabulary is by using games. Language games are not mainly aimed to break ice or to kill time (Mubaslat, 2012). Games and especially education games are one of the techniques and procedures that the teacher may use in teaching a foreign language. Games are often used as short warm-up activities or when there is some time left at the end of a lesson. A game should not be regarded as a marginal activity filling in odd moments when the teacher and class have nothing better to do. Games ought to be at the heart of teaching foreign language, games should be used at all the

stages of the lesson, provided that they are suitable and carefully chosen. Games also lend themselves well for revision the exercises helping learners recall material in a pleasant, entertaining way.

When using games in the classroom, they are beneficial for teachers to have a complete understanding of the definition of the games, not only to play concerning rules, competition and an element of fun but also for encouraging students ability in using technology. The ability to capture students' attention: lower students' stress and give them the chance for real communication. Therefore, games especially online education games may be challenging for teachers to try to add in class in order to develop students' English proficiency especially writing in English.

The second semester students of English Education Program of STKIP SoE also have some difficulties in speaking and writing. Lacking of vocabularies became the main problem in their study. There were no English backgrounds that help them to be familiar with the language. They learned English when they were in junior high school and senior high school but did not strong. They learned to speak English since they were in semester one while semester two is the first semester for them to learn writing in English. Most of the students came from non-English background; it made them confused to share their ideas in writing. Besides, lacking of vocabularies and boundaries of ideas become the problem for them to write. They could not express their ideas; they just became passive students in the class. Many students complained that writing English was too difficult and it made them bored. The appropriate strategy or teaching media was needed in teaching writing to attract the students interested in writing. In order to make the student easier to understand and enrich vocabularies, the researcher tries to

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introduce two online games: Letter blocks word builder game and compound word game. These games are used to increase students' vocabularies before they are speaking up or writing down their ideas.

Letter blocks word builder game is a game which there is a grid of letter blocks; you need to pick up the letters to form words and destroy the blocks. When choosing the letters, the next letter must be adjacent to the previous one. The longer the word formed the higher the score you earned. The advantages of this game are students can achieve many words as well as they play and enjoy the game. After playing this game, the students have to mention the words then they can write their ideas related to the material given. Letter blocks word builder game was an online game then students should be dealt with computer. They are required to be able operate the computer to play that game. This game was created for students to enjoy playing it as well as increasing their vocabularies. This game has some levels from the easiest level to the difficult one with different speed of time. The strength of this game is students can improve their ability in arranging words and enriching their vocabularies. Meanwhile, it will be quiet difficult for students who are not able to operate the computer, they need some times to learn how to be familiar with the computer so they can enjoy the game. Lacking of vocabulary is also a problem for students in playing the game. They will spend more time to think and arrange the word and come to end the game or game over.

While, compound game is a game which uses to engage their understanding in choosing words and combining form of the words. It conveys a unit idea or special meaning that is not as clearly of quickly conveyed by separates words. This game is required the player to understand each word meaning before combine them to create a new word with new meaning. For many students, a lesson on compound words marks the first time they become aware of the component parts of words. This kicks off the process of learning about word roots, suffixes and prefixes. A compound word game is also an online game that asks students to suggest matches for the small words on each side, to make them compound words. When all matches are complete, move the dividing compound words again with all of the students. This activity requires students to divide the compound words into their original words. The students get to know what compound word is. They must be able to combine the words to create new meaning in terms of using those words in writing. By playing this game then they will understand how to use the words appropriately in writing. Since, students should develop their ideas and write freely then compound words can help them to understand to use the compound word in writing.

Therefore, solving the students difficulties in enriching and understanding vocabularies, the researcher did the research to answer the question of how effective is the use of Letter Blocks Word Builder Game and Compound Words Game to Enrich Students' Vocabularies. The objectives of the research were to enrich students' vocabularies and get their understanding in using the words.

2. Review of Literature

Previous Study

There were several studies about teaching vocabulary by using games and other techniques. Firstly, using games to practice vocabulary improves learners' ability to memorize the words effectively. Games provide comprehensible input while learners interact in the group, allowing students to clarify meanings of words in such contexts (Neyadi, 2007). The use of games also enhanced students' motivation to learn vocabulary. This might be because the students have experienced new methods of teaching, as they have been used only to learning the new language through drilling the vocabulary. The games also provided a challenge, where they need their concentration to get the tasks done which strengthens students' mental work. Such activities were also new to students' experience, and they think carefully to get the right answers. While according to Rohani (2013), vocabulary learning has always been a major concern for those who want to learn a second language. The present study aimed at determination of effect of games on vocabulary gain of student. For this, two groups of students were chosen as control and experimental groups. The control group was exposed to textbook teaching between pretest and posttest; however, the experimental group was taught by games. Although both groups made noticeable progress after training program, there was no significant difference between the groups.

The last was from Tunchalearnpanih (nd). He stated that the variety of vocabulary games is one of the factors which make the learners interested and motivated. The vocabulary games can be verified and applied into a new game by changing something of the old games for example from individual game into small group or large group or from personal sheet into big sheet on board. The learners are motivated and interested which causes learning effectively. The game helped them to remember more words. Therefore, the students' vocabulary knowledge was improved after they studied through games. The awareness came from students and teacher's experiences such as classroom management, clear instruction and motivation could be mentioned as the tools of successful lessons.

The studies showed that vocabulary had a very important role in learning language. The use of games and other interesting techniques could build the student's interest to learn more. These studies had very close relation this recent study, letter blocks words builder game and compound words game were help the students a lot in getting words and understanding the use of them.

3. Theoretical Framework

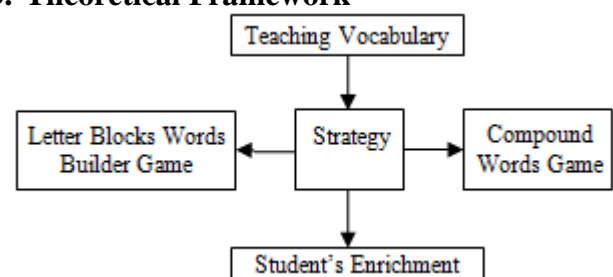


Table 1: Theoretical Framework

The table showed the relation among the process of enriching student's vocabulary in English. Teaching vocabulary is done through strategy of playing online game to help the students enjoy the process of learning. The researcher still needs a lot of suggestions to revise this study. However, this study can help the students to enrich their English vocabularies by playing the games.

4. Method

Population and Sample

The population of this study was students of English Education Program of STKIP SoE in total 103 students from four classes. While, the sample of this study was the students of writing 1 class that consisted of 23 students. They were 10 males and 13 females.

Instruments

Two instruments were used in this study consisting of vocabulary test and questionnaire.

Data collection

In collecting the data, the researcher had to use instrument. Here, the instruments of this study were vocabulary test and questionnaire. The test was used to see the student's improvement in enriching vocabularies. Vocabulary test done as follows: first, the students turn on the computer and connect it to the internet, go to vocabulary.com and pen the list of game and start playing the letter blocks words builder game. It has some levels, from the easiest to difficult one. Compound words game also had the same step but the students should combine two words become one word and it has new meaning. The total number of words that they got from the games was counted, and then the words were used to write freely and build simple conversation with friends. While questionnaire was used to get the students opinion about the effectiveness of both of the games, letter blocks words builder game and compound words game.

Data Analysis

The data of this study was analyzed by Microsoft excel with descriptive analysis. Mean score of the description showed the total of students with the total number of answers from the questionnaire. From the description, the researcher could explain the result of the effectiveness of Letter Blocks Words Builder Game and Compound Words Game.

5. Results and Discussions

The result of the effectiveness of the use of Letter Blocks Words Builder Game and Compound Words Game were shown as follows;

Table 2: The result of student's vocabulary test

No	Letter Blocks Words Builder Game	Compound Words Game
1	80	100
2	40	60
3	60	80
4	70	50
5	90	80
6	20	100
7	80	20

8	60	40
9	70	90
10	20	70
11	90	90
12	100	8
13	30	10
14	80	50
15	60	40
16	70	80
17	50	70
18	40	80
19	10	80
20	30	80
21	20	30
22	90	40
23	90	60

The table above was the result of the vocabulary tests shown that students were enthusiastic in playing the games, the score displayed was the final score after 5 time's trials. The students with low score were those who did not show their interested in playing the games.

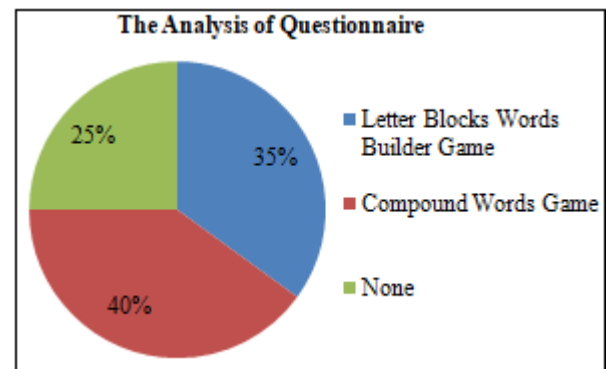


Figure 1: The analysis of questionnaire

The figure had shown that that there were good effects after the students were playing the games, 75 % of the students agreed to use the games to enrich their vocabularies. 35 % of the students said that Letter Blocks Words Builder Game was good for forming letters became words and 40 % of the students said that Compound Word Game challenged them to create more words while only the 25% rest of the students did not care with the use of the games.

The students were shown their interested in learning and playing at the same time. The way they understand the new words also became a good effect of playing these games. The students tried hard to form the letters to become words and the word to become compound words. These strategies had shown its effectiveness in enriching the student's vocabulary in English.

6. Conclusion and Suggestions

Learning by playing is always fun. In order to get the students attention in learning then games are good for it. Letter Blocks words Builder game and Compound words game had shown their capacity in influencing students to play while enriching their vocabularies. 75% of the students agreed that playing these games gave them advantages. They got many new words; they understand more about the use of

the words. However, some students still hold on their old technique of memorizing words, they did not care with the game.

The researcher suggests the teachers and students who are having problems with vocabulary, they may use these games. As long as they have computer and internet access then try these games.

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