

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF GAME BASED LEARNING (GBL) METHOD TO IMPROVE EFL STUDENTS' VOCABULARY MASTERY

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Abstract: This study was aimed to evaluate the implementation of Game-Based Learning (GBL) method to improve EFL students vocabulary mastery at SMPN Satu Atap 1 Katingan Hilir. The researcher chose class VII students totaling 23 as the subjects, and the informant was one English teacher. The research method employed was qualitative descriptive, enabling the researcher to gain in-depth insights into the effectiveness of GBL in improving the English vocabulary mastery of the students. Data was collected through observation, questionnaires, and interviews with English teachers involved in the teaching process. This data was used to evaluate the implementation of GBL in three phases: pre-teaching, while teaching, and post-teaching. The finding indicated that the implementation of Game-Based Learning (GBL) methods was effective in improving English vocabulary mastery EFL students at SMPN Satu Atap 1 Katingan Hilir. This indicated that a more interactive and enjoyable approach to learning addressed the previous weakness in English vocabulary mastery. The data analysis results demonstrated a substantial improvement in students' vocabulary mastery after they participated in learning sessions using the GBL method. Presenting learning material in the form of engaging games had the capability to improve students' learning interest, thus motivating them to actively participate and interact within the learning environment. Therefore, method GBL could be regarded as an effective alternative in designing enjoyable and efficient teaching strategies to improve EFL students' vocabulary mastery.

Keywords: Game Based Learning, Vocabulary Mastery, EFL Students'

Abstrak: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengevaluasi penerapan metode *Game-Based Learning* (GBL) untuk meningkatkan penguasaan kosakata siswa EFL di SMPN Satu Atap 1 Katingan Hilir. Peneliti memilih siswa kelas VII yang berjumlah 23 orang sebagai subjek, dan informannya adalah satu orang guru bahasa Inggris. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah deskriptif kualitatif, yang memungkinkan peneliti memperoleh wawasan mendalam mengenai efektivitas GBL dalam meningkatkan penguasaan kosakata bahasa Inggris siswa. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi, angket, dan wawancara dengan guru bahasa Inggris yang terlibat dalam proses pengajaran. Data ini digunakan untuk mengevaluasi pelaksanaan GBL dalam tiga tahap: pra-pengajaran, saat mengajar, dan pasca-pengajaran. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa penerapan metode *Game-Based Learning* (GBL) efektif dalam meningkatkan penguasaan kosakata bahasa Inggris siswa EFL di SMPN Satu Atap 1 Katingan Hilir. Hal ini menunjukkan bahwa pendekatan pembelajaran yang lebih interaktif dan menyenangkan mengatasi kelemahan sebelumnya dalam penguasaan kosakata bahasa Inggris. Hasil analisis data menunjukkan adanya peningkatan substansial pada penguasaan kosakata siswa setelah mengikuti sesi pembelajaran menggunakan metode GBL. Penyajian materi pembelajaran dalam bentuk permainan yang menarik mampu meningkatkan minat belajar siswa sehingga memotivasi mereka untuk berpartisipasi aktif dan berinteraksi dalam lingkungan pembelajaran. Oleh karena itu, metode GBL dapat dianggap sebagai alternatif yang efektif dalam merancang strategi pengajaran yang menyenangkan dan efisien untuk meningkatkan penguasaan kosakata EFL siswa.

Kata Kunci: *Game Based Learning, Penguasaan Kosakata, Siswa EFL*

INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary learning is a crucial part of learning a foreign language because the meaning of new words is often emphasized, both in reading materials and in the classroom (Alqahtani, 2015). Many aspects of learning and vocabulary acquisition have been investigated in various research fields focused on the topic (Alizadeh, 2016). The mastery of vocabulary plays a crucial role in the four language skills, and it is important to note that vocabulary mastery is one of the essential language components (Susanto & Halim, 2016). Furthermore, vocabulary serves as the foundation for language skills, which include listening, speaking, reading, and writing, without learning vocabulary, it is difficult to attain proficiency in any language, vocabulary is the cornerstone for acquiring a second language (Afzal, 2019).

The accuracy in selecting methods is a characteristic of a good student both psychologically and physically, aligning with the characteristics of the material. Therefore, it requires a teacher's skill and perceptiveness in determining the strategies and methods to be applied (Nurvitasari et al., 2022). Game based learning is a learning model that can foster learner activity in the learning process (Anik Sugiani, 2023). The implementation of the Game-Based Learning (GBL) method was also aimed at testing the effectiveness and efficiency of this method in English language instruction to enhance the quality and interactive nature of classroom learning (Pan et al., 2021). The issues arising in English language learning are generally rooted in students' lack of interest in learning English itself (Maharantau, 2015). Therefore, the role and function of a teacher in teaching with the right method are crucial (Sopian, 2016), as seen in the case of SMPN Satu Atap 1 Katingan Katingan Hilir, which indicates that English language instruction for students primarily focuses on knowledge transfer and still relies on lecture-based methods, resulting in a monotonous learning experience. In this study, the researchers attempted to delve into it by implementing Game-Based Learning (GBL) in English language instruction.

This is because the research conducted so far has been more focused on the general concept of GBL, which turns the teaching and learning process into a transfer of knowledge from a teacher to students with the hope of improving students' abilities and mastery of English, particularly vocabulary (Yangambi, 2022). However, along the way,

this research has paid less attention to the teachers' ability to develop interactive and innovative teaching methods. Yet, no matter how effective the teaching methods used are, if a teacher cannot understand the needs and characteristics of students in the classroom, the teaching activities carried out will feel futile (Mupa & Chinooneka, 2015). Therefore, further research is needed to determine the appropriate teaching methods to be applied by a teacher, methods that are favored by students in learning English in the future, and that are in line with the needs of the school and the students at SMPN Satu Atap 1 Katingan Hilir.

In this study, the researcher chose class VII students of SMPN Satu Atap 1 Katingan Hilir as the subjects, and the informant was one English teacher. The issue concerning students' vocabulary proficiency due to monotonous teaching methods was the lack of variety in learning, leading to students losing interest and motivation in learning (Daar, 2020). When a teacher repeatedly employs the same approach, students can experience boredom and difficulty in comprehensively understanding vocabulary (Rumbouw, 2021). This can hinder the development of students' vocabulary and limit their ability to communicate and comprehend more complex texts. Based on this problem, the researcher want to know how the implementation of game-based learning methods can improve vocabulary mastery in class VII EFL students during the academic year 2022/2023 at SMPN Satu Atap 1 Katingan Hilir.

In this previous research, the research was entitled "Game-Based Learning to Improve the Vocabulary Mastery in EFL Class". According to this research, it can be concluded that the game-based learning method can improve the quality of the vocabulary learning process and students' vocabulary mastery. Regarding the results of the analysis in cycle 1, after using the game method to learn vocabulary, the results of each indicator increased significantly. The percentage of students who passed the first test increased to 56% and continued to increase to 88% in cycle 2. Student responses to the use of game-based learning methods in increasing vocabulary were positive.

Second, this research was conducted at SMP Yayasan Miftahul Janah Ciputat. The purpose of this research was to enhance students' vocabulary in the simplest way possible through the use of games. In this study, the researcher employed Classroom Action Research (CAR) as the research method. The research consisted of two cycles, with each cycle comprising four phases: planning, action, observation, and reflection.

Each cycle also included three meetings, resulting in the researcher guiding this study through six meetings over the course of one month and three weeks. To collect and analyze data, the researcher utilized interviews, observations, and the students' performance in pre-tests and post-tests to support the gathered data. The results of this study indicate that the use of games at SMP Yayasan Miftahul Janah Ciputat can improve students' vocabulary. Student responses show that they were interested in learning vocabulary through the use of games.

Third, "The Use of Games to Improve Vocabulary Mastery." The design in this research was a classroom action research (CAR) design. The required data came from two main sources: qualitative and quantitative. Qualitative data were gathered from observation lists and field notes, while quantitative data were collected from the preliminary study results and the tests administered at the end of each cycle. The subjects of this study were 29 students in the 7th grade of SMPN 5 Malang for the academic year 2012-2013. This research cycle consisted of four major steps: planning, implementation, observation, and reflection. Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that using games to enhance vocabulary was successful.

From several studies above, researcher found differences among each study. The difference between some of the previous studies and this study was that this study examines the activity of a game-based learning (GBL) model in improving the understanding of rarely researched English vocabulary. Furthermore, another difference from previous research was that this study introduced something new, which is English language learning through the implementation of an engaging game-based learning (GBL) method that stimulates students' interest in mastering English vocabulary.

METHOD

The research approach used in this study was qualitative descriptive because it yielded conclusions in the form of data that described in detail, rather than numerical data. This was because qualitative approach is a research procedure that generates descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from individuals and observed behaviors. Qualitative methods were chosen because the research in this case had limited research targets or objects, allowing for a more in-depth exploration of the data. Consequently, it was not possible to expand the scope of the research objects. The research was conducted directly in the field, and the research questions were also discovered in the field. It is

possible that the data changed based on field conditions, leading to new discoveries in the midst of the fieldwork.

Game-Based Learning (GBL) is a learning approach that utilizes game elements such as challenges, competition, and interaction as means to teach specific concepts and skills. GBL can be connected to qualitative methods in educational research because qualitative research can be employed to understand the impact and effectiveness of GBL in an educational context. Qualitative research can delve into individuals' perspectives, experiences, and understanding of how GBL influences their learning, as well as identify factors affecting the successful implementation of GBL in the classroom. By combining the GBL approach with qualitative research, we can gain a deeper understanding of how games can be used as effective learning tools and how learners' experiences can be enhanced through this method.

Qualitative data analysis was the process of systematically seeking and organizing data obtained from interviews, field notes, and other materials in such a way that it could be easily understood, and the findings could be communicated to others. The data analysis method used by the researcher in this study was qualitative data analysis. Qualitative data analysis involved the process of searching for data and systematically organizing data obtained from interviews, field notes, and documentation by categorizing the data, elaborating into units, synthesizing, organizing into patterns, and concluding, making it easy to understand for both oneself and others. The researcher utilized observation, interviews, and questionnaires.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

Based on the results of an interview with an English teacher who applied the GBL method, they believed that mere enjoyment during learning is not sufficient; students must also grasp the lesson material. One of the teacher's main focuses was on the students' development, so they ensured that the games used were in line with the content being taught. Nevertheless, the teacher encouraged students to engage in various educational games with the aim of preventing boredom. A variety of games relevant to the lesson material not only helped students have fun but also improved their vocabulary and maintained their interest in the subject being taught. Moreover, there was a significant

improvement in the students of SMPN Satu Atap 1 Katingan Hilir, especially in their enthusiasm for English sessions. The results of the pre-observation research before and after the implementation of GBL in the class depicted these changes in detail, as shown in the following table:

Table 1. Result Pre-Observation and Observation Students
SMPN Satu Atap 1 Katingan Hilir

Before Implementation GBL		After Implementation GBL	
Like English Subject	Not Like English Subject	Like English Subject learning by Implementation GBL	Not Like English Subject
3 Students'	20 Students'	20 Students'	3 Students

The table above provided a clear picture of significant changes in students' interest in learning English, particularly in improving vocabulary. Before the teacher introduced the Game Based Learning (GBL) method in the classroom, only 3 out of 20 students showed an interest in learning English vocabulary. This was a number that indicated a lack of interest among students in that subject. The majority, or as many as 20 students, did not like English, and this was a serious concern in the effort to improve English vocabulary and their learning outcomes.

However, a noticeable change occurred after the teacher introduced Game Based Learning (GBL) as the method for teaching English in the classroom. Currently, the data shows that 22 students are showing a strong interest in learning English vocabulary. From the 3 students who were previously interested, this increase demonstrates that the GBL method is capable of sparking students' interest in learning English vocabulary more broadly. Although there are still 3 students who remain uninterested, the positive change in the majority of students is commendable.

These results indicate that the use of the GBL method as an approach to teaching English has had a significant positive impact on improving vocabulary and student interest. These satisfying results show that the English teacher has succeeded in implementing an effective learning method to address student interest issues in learning English vocabulary.

Teacher Interview Results

The following is a table explaining the results of research from interviews with informants or English teachers who teach class VII students at SMPN Satu Atap 1 Katingan Hilir, which can be seen from the following table:

Table 2. Results of Interview with Teacher

Informant Identity		
Name : Rusmaya Nurlinda, S.Pd		
Informant Profession : English Teacher of SMPN Satu Atap 1 Katingan Hilir		
No.	Variables/Questions	Informan Answered
1.	What was the purpose of implementing the game-based learning method at SMPN Satu Atap 1 Katingan Hilir?	“In my opinion, game-based learning was a good way to enhance students' critical thinking and problem-solving skills, based on the proper utilization of imagination, and as a teacher, I also allowed students the freedom to generate solutions and ideas that boosted their creativity, such as improving their vocabulary and other students' abilities.”
2.	How did you organize classes by applying game-based learning methods to improve the student's vocabulary?	“Of course, determining the theme and type of game to be played was essential. Prepared the necessary equipment and materials, arranged the steps and rules of the game, and established the learning objectives that were guided by the desired indicators to be achieved through the implementation of this gaming method, particularly in enhancing the students' vocabulary or other relevant indicators.”
3.	Where there any difficulties during the implementation of game-based learning methods to improve students' vocabulary at SMPN Satu Atap 1 Katingan Hilir?	“Of course, there were difficulties, especially in improving the skills and abilities of students. Most of them experienced difficulties, namely in providing an understanding of meaning because they did not know and had not memorized the vocabulary given, as well as in sorting out which vocabulary to use when teaching using the GBL (Game-Based Learning) method. There were also difficulties related to access to technology, alignment with curricula, adaptation for diverse learners, as well as motivation and engagement.”
4.	How did you handle difficulties during the implementation of game-based learning methods to improve student vocabulary at SMPN Satu Atap 1 Katingan Hilir?	“Occasionally, I provided warm-ups to the students on simple vocabulary topics like animals and others. Then, I asked the students to spell them. After that, I identified the difficulties the students were facing, allowing me to conclude which vocabulary I would use when employing the game-based learning method.”
5.	Did you believe that the GBL method was a very motivating and entertaining way of teaching English, especially for junior high schools?	“Based on my experience as an English teacher for junior high school students and my understanding of Game-Based Learning (GBL) method, I believe that GBL is a highly effective tool in motivating and entertaining students during English language learning. Firstly, the GBL method incorporated elements of games and competition into the teaching process. Students tended to be more engaged and enthusiastic when they were involved in games or competitive challenges. This could

	help boost students' motivation to learn English as they felt actively engaged in the learning process.”
6. Did you believe that using the GBL method was very effective in teaching English to junior high school students?	“I believed that using Game-Based Learning (GBL) method was highly effective in teaching English to junior high school students. There were several strong reasons supporting my belief. GBL offered a more engaging and interactive approach to learning. By incorporating games, students were more motivated to learn English because they could experience learning in a fun way. This helped reduce the potential boredom that often arose in conventional learning.”
7. Did you believe that using the GBL method can reduce students' anxiety and weaknesses in learning English, especially vocabulary skills or student vocabulary?	“I believe that using Game-Based Learning (GBL) reduced students' anxiety and weaknesses in learning English, especially in vocabulary skills. GBL created a more relaxed and engaging environment for students, which helped them feel more comfortable while learning. In English language games, students learned vocabulary in a more interactive and enjoyable way. This helped reduce anxiety as students did not feel burdened by conventional learning methods. Additionally, through playing, students also naturally strengthened their vocabulary without feeling pressured. Thus, GBL proved to be an effective tool in addressing anxiety and improving students' vocabulary skills in English.”
8. Did you handle difficulties during the implementation of GBL method to improve student vocabulary at SMPN Satu Atap 1 Katingan Hilir?	“In implementing the GBL (Game-Based Learning) method to improve students' vocabulary, I assessed the materials and selected relevant games. While students played the games, I monitored and provided assistance when needed, then conducted post-game discussions to analyze the vocabulary encountered. Additionally, students were given extra exercises and feedback to support their vocabulary comprehension development. With these steps, it is expected that students experienced vocabulary improvement through interactive and enjoyable learning.”
9. What were your tips if the teaching staff, especially teachers, wanted to apply a GBL method to improve student vocabulary?	“To improve students' vocabulary, the teacher chose suitable games, integrated them regularly into the curriculum, set clear learning objectives, provided guidelines before playing, facilitated post-game discussions, diversified the types of games, monitored students' progress, encouraged collaboration, incorporated student creativity, and regularly evaluated the learning outcomes to adapt strategies as needed.”
10. What did you think about the increase in student learning interest while the researcher conducted thesis research at SMPN Satu Atap 1 Katingan	“The improvement of students' interest in learning through game-based learning methods at SMPN Satu Atap 1 Katingan Hilir is an engaging approach. I suggest ensuring game variety, integration with the curriculum, student monitoring, their involvement in game selection,

Hilir? Give your input and collaborative learning, and continuous evaluation to make suggestions! this method effective. Therefore, it is expected that it enhanced students' interest in learning effectively.”

On table 2. Based on the results of interviews with English teachers at SMPN Satu Atap 1 Katingan Hilir, they emphasized the importance of the Game-Based Learning (GBL) method in improving students' English vocabulary skills. They underscored the significance of selecting the appropriate method and games, as well as adequately preparing the materials, rules, and learning objectives. Despite facing some challenges, such as students' difficulty in understanding vocabulary and limited access to technology, the GBL method helped reduce students' anxiety and enhanced their vocabulary skills in a more relaxed and enjoyable manner. Furthermore, the teachers carefully monitored students' progress and provided feedback, leading to better learning outcomes.

This research focused on improving students' vocabulary mastery by implementing game-based learning (GBL) methods for class VII students at SMPN Satu Atap 1 Katingan Hilir. Based on the vocabulary test results conducted in May 2022 at SMPN Satu Atap 1 Katingan Hilir for class VII students, it can be concluded that the game-based learning (GBL) method was effective in improving students' English vocabulary skills. The test results showed that students' vocabulary proficiency improved. Before using the game-based learning (GBL) method, only 3 out of 23 students were interested in learning English. However, after implementing the game-based learning (GBL) method, students' interest and vocabulary skills increased, and 20 students began to enjoy learning English using game-based learning (GBL), and their English vocabulary mastery improved.

Discussion

Based on the research findings, the researcher discovered that the implementation of Game-Based Learning (GBL) methods was effective in improving English vocabulary mastery among EFL students at SMPN Satu Atap 1 Katingan Hilir. This indicated that a more interactive and enjoyable approach to learning addressed the previous weakness in English vocabulary mastery. GBL helped students learn more effectively and actively participate in the learning process.

These findings also underscored the importance of teachers selecting appropriate teaching methods. Monotonous teaching methods such as traditional lectures tended to

be less effective in enhancing English vocabulary mastery. Teachers had to adapt to more interactive methods like GBL to motivate students and facilitate better understanding. The research results also reaffirmed the crucial role of teachers in boosting student motivation. The lack of interest in learning English among students could be overcome by using more engaging teaching methods such as GBL. Teachers acted as facilitators who inspired students to learn English with enthusiasm. These research findings had important practical implications. Teachers could consider using game-based learning methods like GBL in teaching English vocabulary. Additionally, schools and other educational institutions could contemplate providing teacher training in adopting these methods. Recommendations might also include further research to measure the long-term impact of GBL implementation in English language learning.

This finding is supported by Ghazy et al., (2021), which demonstrated that the use of GBL (Game-Based Learning) has successfully increased students' interest in learning English. Furthermore, this finding is corroborated by Akrimah et al., (2017), whose research indicated an improvement in students' vocabulary skills after the implementation of the Pictionary game technique.

Additionally, these findings were supported by (Yee & Aziz, 2022), whose research demonstrated that the use of game-based learning was effective in English vocabulary acquisition. Lastly, these findings were also supported by (Keodara, 2019), whose research aimed to explore the effects and improvements of game-based learning through various forms of media on students' understanding of the English language. Similarly, recent research sought to assess the application of Game-Based Learning (GBL) as a teaching strategy to enhance the English vocabulary mastery of EFL students in junior high school.

The novelty in this research was summarized as follows: there was a wealth of recent studies that attempted to identify the effectiveness of Game-Based Learning (GBL) in improving the English vocabulary proficiency of EFL students in junior high school. This indicated that GBL was a relevant method in English language education. These studies involved variations in samples, research methods, and teaching strategies, illustrating the diversity of approaches used to measure the effectiveness of GBL in enhancing English vocabulary proficiency.

The implications of the results of this research, from a theoretical perspective, the implementation of Game-Based Learning (GBL) in the context of enhancing vocabulary mastery among EFL students carried several significant implications. Firstly, GBL leveraged game-based learning principles that boosted motivation and student engagement in the learning process. By presenting vocabulary material through engaging game elements such as challenges, rewards, and competition, students were more likely to be enthusiastic participants in the learning process. Secondly, this method encouraged active learning, promoted deep understanding, and encouraged the use of vocabulary in relevant contexts. This aligned with constructivist theories in education that emphasized the importance of meaningful learning. Furthermore, GBL also facilitated independent and collaborative learning, enabling students to learn autonomously through exploration within games or collaborate with peers in achieving learning objectives. Therefore, the theoretical implications of this research suggested that the implementation of GBL could be an effective approach to enhancing vocabulary mastery among EFL students by integrating student-centered and context-oriented learning principles.

CONCLUSION

These findings conclude that the implementation of the game-based learning (GBL) method to improve the vocabulary mastery of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students at SMPN Satu Atap 1 Katingan Hilir. Before use of GBL, only 3 out of 23 students showed an interest in learning English. However, the research findings reveal a significant transformation after the adoption of the GBL method. By incorporating GBL method, students' interest in learning increased dramatically. Out of the 23 students, 20 of them began to enjoy learning English using the GBL approach. This demonstrates that GBL has a strong appeal and can stimulate students' interest in the learning process. In addition to the heightened interest, there was a significant improvement in the mastery of English vocabulary. This indicates that GBL is effective in assisting students to understand and retain English vocabulary in a more efficient and enjoyable manner. The results of interviews with English teachers further substantiate these findings. Teachers stated that GBL has helped them achieve their teaching goals more effectively, while their students are increasingly engaged in the learning process. This suggests that GBL is not only beneficial for students but also for teachers in achieving better learning outcomes. Overall, the implementation of the Game-Based Learning (GBL) method at SMPN Satu

Atap 1 Katingan Hilir has brought about positive changes in the interest and vocabulary mastery of EFL students. This method has opened doors to more engaging, interactive, and effective English language instruction.

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