

AN ANALYSIS OF ONLINE GAMES' EXPOSURE TOWARDS STUDENTS' ENGLISH VOCABULARY

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ABSTRACT

This literature review analyses the effects of online games to the acquisition of students' vocabulary in English. In order to become competent and proficient in a second language, vocabulary knowledge is essential. It is a crucial skill that students studying English as a Second Language (ESL) must acquire because understanding written and spoken communication requires a large vocabulary. Due to the general consensus that educational online games can enhance the learning process, the use of these games in vocabulary instruction is becoming more and more common. Based on library research, this study offers a review of the literature on the topic of vocabulary acquisition related to online games for ESL students. The research has demonstrated the potential of online games as learning aids for vocabulary since they increase student satisfaction with their studies and encourage independent learning.

Keywords: online games; exposure; vocabulary.

INTRODUCTION

Individuals who are trying to become proficient in English but do not speak it as their first language are known as English language learners (Brooks and Thurston 2010). Many Indonesian students studying English as a foreign language (EFL) can relate to this definition. Today's students have grown up and are surrounded by technology. They were created at the same time as some amazing devices. One medium that is currently widely used is the internet. Through phone lines and computers, people and information from all over the world are connected through the internet. Among other things, people can use the internet to explore, communicate with others, and play games.

Games that are connected to the internet are called online games. Online games typically have characters or roles that you can play along with a plot. Typically, sentences that constitute their jargon are mentioned by characters. We must interact and converse with people from all around the world when playing online games. Recently, they also enjoy video games, especially multiplayer ones online, and are

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enthusiastic users of social media. Many Indonesians voluntarily participate in these activities, which necessitate the understanding and use of English despite their frequently inadequate language proficiency. The capacity to communicate with people online becomes more and more prevalent as technology advances and online connectivity reaches every aspect of everyday life. For many people, texting and social media use have become commonplace forms of communication. This contentedness even extends to playing video games. Video games with several players online are more popular than ever. Since the rapid growth of online games touches every level of age, online games have become one of the best tools to learn English. Due to the fact that many games are developed in English and the players come from many countries, they interact in online games by using English. Online game communication attracts people, especially the young, to learn English, so they are able to play and communicate with other players well. Learning vocabulary through the games had attracted attention. These casual environments, free from the judgment and scrutiny of the classroom, aid in boosting motivation.

One of the difficult parts of learning the target language for English language learners is the acquisition of vocabulary (Derakhshan, A., & Khatir, E. D. 2015). So, online games proved to be more effective in learning English vocabulary for the students (Ashraf, H., et al., 2014). Because the informal setting of online games may offer safe spots for speakers of other languages learning English to practice their communication skills and reduce their anxiety about using a second language (Horowitz, K. S. 2019). Furthermore, adopting online games in language teaching for vocabulary learning is more efficient than rote learning (Kayaalti, M. 2018). Online games are ensured to be an effective tool for acquiring new vocabulary in an interesting way.

METHODS

The library research approach was used for this study. The data was gathered and examined using this methodology from any pertinent references. To create the closing remarks, the researcher also took notes and combined her views. This article was proposed to analyse the students' exposure to online games and their vocabulary acquisition while playing the games. Vocabulary is the basis of any language to be learned. How to instruct new words to the learners is of great significance in the field of English Language Teaching (ELT). One such tool is games in general, and online games in particular. The current study aims to find an answer to the following question:

Do online games significantly affect the learning of English vocabulary?

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Willingness to communicate (WTC) in a second language

Motivation is essential for language learners to advance their language proficiency. To become fluent and get over their nervousness, ESL students need to be willing to utilize their target language (Horowitz, K. S. 2019). This opinion was in line with the previous statement that they fear being mocked or obtaining poor grades.

Many students find it difficult to utilize their second language (L2). However, this fear is not unique to L2 learners (Zarrinabadi et al., 2014). Many educators have turned to technology because they need a language learning environment (LLE) where students can continuously practice English in realistic situations or for real-world use by real language speakers (Bahrani and Tam 2013; Krashen 2012). Teachers are using video games more in the classroom because they give them a chance to link learning to a solid activity that is emotionally and socially ingrained in the lives of kids and teenagers (Anderson et al. 2008). Young people's use of video games presents an opportunity for educators to engage their students in a popular and well-known activity. The strategy of using students' interests in the classroom would make the process of learning a new language more effective. The students would not get bored and think that their hobby would be useful in the classroom.

As Riasati, M. J. (2012) stated, many elements influence someone's willingness to talk. Task type, discussion topic, interlocutor, teacher, classroom environment, personality, and self-perceived speaking skill are some of these aspects. The results offer implications for successful language teaching and learning as well as a deeper understanding of the nature and function of WTC in language pedagogy.

Teachers ought to spend more time investigating the benefits that playing online multiplayer video games can have on reducing language anxiety and giving students the chance to practice speaking English in real time while discussing topics they find interesting. According to Young et al. (2012), online multiplayer video games have the potential to offer learners authentic and permanent contexts for second language acquisition that cannot be achieved through other approaches. Additionally, these games may reduce learners' anxiety and increase their motivation. Teachers and students alike should look for and seize real-world opportunities to improve their English, such as through online multiplayer video games or other means.

Vocabulary

The Oxford Basic English Dictionary (2006) defines vocabulary as "all the words that someone knows or that are used in a specific book or subject, or all the words in a language." Everybody has a unique vocabulary that becomes mature. A language's vocabulary is a key component in its formation. The Oxford Basic English Dictionary breaks down vocabulary into three levels. The first level, which consists of a person's entire language, is more intimate. The entire language employed throughout the text, from the start to the finish, makes up the second level. Third, vocabulary is made up of all the words that make up a language on its own.

The most crucial tool for learning a language is, without a doubt, its vocabulary. It is inconsequential if this language is a foreign or native tongue. In his well-known statement, Wilkins (1972) asserts that having the vocabulary necessary to express one's ideas effectively is more important than being able to construct grammatically correct sentences. It is possible to communicate very little without grammar, but nothing at all without vocabulary. We now see that language is even more essential than grammar

and that nothing can be represented without it. Once again, we realize the importance of vocabulary in learning or speaking a language. We cannot say that grammar is not important; however, vocabulary is one step further. If the learner does not possess adequate vocabulary knowledge, no learning can be accomplished fully" (Özgiraz, 2015). Students who have acquired a sufficient vocabulary will be able to express themselves, even if they can't speak in complete phrases. They won't struggle to make friends in an atmosphere where they are using the target language or in a store. But if the student lacks a dictionary, everything will be more challenging without the vocabulary. "If language structure is the language's skeleton, vocabulary provides the language's vital organs and flesh" (Harmer, 1991).

Online games and the vocabulary

Derryberry (2007) defines an online game as one that has noises, animations, and 2D or 3D images, together with scenario-based game rules. All games that require an internet connection in order to play with other players are considered online games. Thus, games played offline are not considered online games. Online games are typically available through the game provider's website or as downloaded applications for mobile devices or computers.

According to Rollings and Adams (Dickey, M. D. 2006), online games are better described as a technology than as a particular game genre because they serve as a means of player connection rather than specific game mechanics. Online games are regarded as more sophisticated games that call for player engagement and an internet connection. Because of the frequent creation of virtual communities via player interactions, playing online games can become a social activity.

The use of online games in learning English

Gee (2005) suggests that students who play online games could create new kinds of learning communities since massively multiplayer games like Guild Wars, City of Heroes, and World of Warcraft expose players to new methods for creating and exchanging knowledge. Games can help students learn more vocabulary by boosting motivation and enabling deeper language processing, as found by Ghanbaran and Ketabi (2014).

The body of work addresses using vocabulary games to acquire target words. For instance, Riahipour and Saba (2012) noted that students find traditional exercises like fill-in-the-blank tasks, derivations, word repetition, and memorization of lengthy vocabulary lists tedious. According to Scrivener (as mentioned in Riahipour & Saba 2012), there is no assurance that memory retention will occur when utilizing a lengthy list of words and their translations. The learning process will be more effective if vocabulary games are used. This approach can make vocabulary learning more fun, which will speed up students' retention of target terms. Playing games online can help you learn new words. They show that online games are beneficial for vocabulary acquisition because they provide an engaging and interactive environment in which

students can readily and unconsciously share their knowledge, as well as because of the obligations and requirements they must meet while playing (Ashraf, H., Motlagh, F. G., & Salami, M. 2014). According to Yip and Kwan (2006), games in general and online games in particular are useful teaching tools that boost students' enthusiasm and performance when they are learning new terminology.

Yip, F. W., & Kwan, A. C. (2006) conducted experimental research about online vocabulary games as a tool for teaching and learning English vocabulary. It indicated that the experimental group outperformed the control group statistically in the post-test.

Derakhshan, A., & Khatir, E. D. (2015) studied the effects of using games on English vocabulary learning. The result of the study showed that to acquire and teach a new language more successfully, they proposed using game-based learning activities and strategies in the classroom. He hopes that educational games will gain more traction and be used in this way.

Kayaaltı, M. (2018), in the article entitled A literature Review on the Impact of Online Games on Learning Vocabulary. The study examined five foreign studies from Iran, Turkey, and China that dealt with vocabulary learning using online games. A variety of techniques, such as quantitative and qualitative assessments, were used in these articles. The analysis of the articles revealed that using online games to teach vocabulary is more effective than rote learning, but gender has an impact on the level of success. When it comes to using online games to acquire vocabulary, male students perform better than female pupils.

Siregar (2021) conducted a study with the aim of determining the influence of games on students' development of English communicative competences. Surveys are the method employed. Following her observations of the students in meetings, the researcher gave them questionnaires. The researcher then assessed the data. The conclusion was that games can help students by piquing their interests and encouraging them to play as a team with their peers, whether in solo or group settings. Students communicate more with other players and with each other as a result of this element. Consequently, their acquisition of communicative English proficiency will increase.

Ta'uno, I. B., & Poai, S. T. (2022) conducted the study about the impact of online games on students vocabulary learning. The goal of this study is to determine how Mobile Legends, an online game, affects students' learning of English vocabulary at SMA GKST 2 Tentena. The twelve pupils from the four classes are the topic of this study. This study used a descriptive quantitative methodology with instruments in the form of tests, questionnaires, and interviews. Based on the data gathered, this study discovered that students' performance in learning English vocabulary is positively impacted by the online game Mobile Legends.

Winaldo, M. D., & Oktaviani, L. (2022) concluded that playing video games has a big effect on learning a language. The most useful elements were pronunciation and vocabulary. Playing video games is a very fulfilling hobby that offers a cozy, engaging atmosphere that is ideal for learning a foreign language.

However, Yudinseva, A. (2015), in his paper with the title Synthesis of Research on Video Games for the Four Second Language Skills and Vocabulary Practice, found different findings. Overall, the synthesis finds that learning outcomes, particularly vocabulary, are positively impacted by both serious and commercial games as well as synthetic immersive environments. The efficacy of a particular game type or genre may also vary depending on the gender of the learners, their level of second language competence, their gaming background, and their particular educational goals. Certain commercial games may not be as efficient for consolidating vocabulary as traditional drill-and-practice exercises. Some students could still favor traditional teaching methods. There is discussion on recommendations for additional research.

Regarding all the previous research above, playing online games aids students in learning new vocabulary. Because online games have chat features, they provide a place for them to practice their vocabulary. The pronunciation of the words is heard by the students. The terms in the statement were taught to the students. The definitions of the words are taught to the students. The children's internet gaming increases their vocabulary.

CONCLUSION

It is possible to summarize the literature on the subject by stating that online games are a useful and engaging method of teaching vocabulary in EFL lessons. Playing online games empowers students to actively explore resources in the target language outside of the classroom and take ownership of their learning during class. As a result, helping students become more autonomous is just as crucial as expanding their vocabulary. Online gaming could help students develop contemporary skills in addition to the academic knowledge they have acquired.

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