The Implementation of Board Race Game in Improving Vocabulary of Grade 5 Students of Wakarleli Elementary School.

[1]Surlina Fanbora Tutleta, [2]Salmon James Hukom, [3]Louisa Sarah Kamanasa

[1,3]Program Studi Diluar Kampus Utama, Universitas Pattimura
[2]English Education Studi Program, FKIP, Universitas Pattimura
Corresponding e-mail: surlitutleta017@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This study aims to improve the vocabulary acquisition of Grade 5 students at Wakarleli Primary School through the implementation of the Board Race Game. The research employed a Classroom Action Research (CAR) design, involving 22 students, and was conducted in two cycles, each consisting of four stages: planning, action, observation, and reflection. Data were collected through observations, vocabulary tests (pre-test and post-test), and interviews to evaluate the effectiveness of the game in enhancing students' vocabulary mastery. Each cycle included four meetings where the Board Race Game was integrated into the learning activities. The results indicated a significant improvement in students' vocabulary acquisition, along with increased student engagement and motivation in the learning process. This study contributes to the development of more effective, interactive, and engaging vocabulary teaching strategies, while also addressing knowledge gaps regarding the use of game-based learning in language instruction.

Keywords: *Board racing game, Vocabulary teaching, Learning motivation, English language learning.*

INTRODUCTION

Language learning is a fundamental aspect of human life, as language serves as a crucial communication tool for interacting with others, conveying information, and understanding scientific knowledge (Tarigan, 2008). In the context of learning English, students must master four essential skills: writing, reading, listening, and speaking. Among these, vocabulary forms the foundation that supports the development of all other language skills. The acquisition of a robust vocabulary is vital for the formation of quality individuals, especially at the basic education level, as it significantly contributes to students' ability to comprehend and communicate effectively.

Vocabulary is not just a component of language; it is the building block that facilitates the understanding and expression of ideas. Alqahtani (2015) emphasizes that vocabulary is indispensable in language learning because language itself is fundamentally composed of words. A rich vocabulary enables students to grasp the meaning of texts, articulate their thoughts clearly, and engage in meaningful conversations.

Despite its importance, many Grade 5 students struggle with vocabulary acquisition due to factors such as unengaging learning strategies, lack of motivation, and limited access to diverse learning media. Traditional rote memorization techniques often fail to capture students' interest, leading to poor retention and minimal application of new vocabulary in real-life contexts. This research aims to address these challenges by implementing the Board Race Game, an interactive and dynamic learning strategy designed to enhance vocabulary acquisition and boost students' motivation to learn English. Board games as educational tools have been shown to create engaging and supportive learning environments. Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory supports the use of games in education, highlighting their role in promoting active learning, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills through social interaction. The Board Race Game, in particular, encourages teamwork, quick thinking, and active participation, making it an effective method for vocabulary learning.

Previous studies have demonstrated the efficacy of game-based learning in language education. For example, Ersoz (2000) found that games provide a meaningful context for language use, helping students practice vocabulary in a fun and relaxed setting. Similarly, Nguyen and Khuat (2003) reported that games reduce language anxiety and foster a positive attitude toward learning, which in turn improves vocabulary retention. Research by Uberman (1998) also supports the notion that games enhance vocabulary learning by increasing students' exposure to new words and reinforcing their usage through repeated practice.

Initial observations at Wakarleli Elementary School indicate that students possess limited vocabulary knowledge and exhibit low motivation to learn English. To better understand the potential impact of the Board Race Game, a baseline study will be conducted to assess students' current vocabulary levels and their responses to this game-based learning method. This preliminary assessment will provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of the Board Race Game in enhancing vocabulary acquisition and inform the subsequent stages of the research.

By exploring the implementation of the Board Race Game, this study aims to fill existing knowledge gaps related to the effectiveness, proper application, and long-term impact of game-based learning strategies on vocabulary retention. The findings are expected to contribute to the development of more engaging and effective vocabulary teaching methods for primary school students, ultimately supporting their language learning journey and academic success.

METHOD

This study employs a Classroom Action Research (CAR) design conducted at SDN Wakarleli, focusing on improving the vocabulary acquisition of Grade 5 students through the implementation of the Board Race Game. The participants consisted of 22 students with diverse backgrounds and varying levels of English language proficiency, selected through random sampling to ensure representativeness.

The research was structured into two cycles, each comprising four key stages: planning, implementation, observation, and reflection. This cyclical process allows for continuous assessment and refinement of teaching strategies to better meet students' learning needs.

Cycle 1:

1. **Planning:** The objectives and research questions were formulated to guide the study. The Board Race Game was designed in alignment with the existing English curriculum, ensuring relevance to the students' academic context. Lesson plans, learning materials, and assessment tools were also prepared.
2. **Implementation:** The Board Race Game was introduced to the students, focusing on active participation and engagement. Vocabulary pre-tests were administered to establish a baseline for students' existing knowledge.
3. **Observation:** Systematic observations were conducted to monitor students' interactions, participation levels, and engagement during the game. Qualitative data were collected through field notes to capture classroom dynamics and student behavior.
4. **Reflection:** The effectiveness of the intervention was evaluated based on student performance and observational data. Challenges and areas for improvement were identified to inform the planning of Cycle 2.

Cycle 2:

1. **Planning:** Adjustments were made to the instructional strategies based on the reflections from Cycle 1. This included modifying the game rules, introducing new vocabulary sets, and enhancing student support mechanisms.
2. **Implementation:** The revised Board Race Game activities were conducted, with an emphasis on addressing the identified challenges. Post-tests were administered to measure vocabulary improvement compared to the pre-test results.
3. **Observation:** Continued observations focused on evaluating the changes in student participation, engagement, and vocabulary usage. Additional qualitative data were gathered to assess the impact of the modifications.
4. **Reflection:** The final reflection involved a comprehensive analysis of student progress, the effectiveness of the Board Race Game, and the sustainability of vocabulary gains. Insights from both cycles were synthesized to draw conclusions and provide recommendations for future practice.

Data Analysis: Quantitative data from the pre-test and post-test were analyzed to measure vocabulary improvement. The following steps were undertaken:

1. **Scoring:** Students' correct answers from the pre-test and post-test were tallied. The scores were calculated using the formula:

$$Score = \frac{Total\ Correct\ Answers}{Total\ Test\ Item} x\ 10$$

2. **Percentage Calculation:** Students' scores were compiled and expressed as percentages using the formula:

$$P = \frac{F}{N} x\ 100$$

     Where:
- o   = Percentage
- o   = Cumulative frequency of correct responses
- o   = Total number of students

     This systematic approach ensured a comprehensive evaluation of the Board Race Game's impact on vocabulary acquisition, providing both quantitative and qualitative insights into its effectiveness in the classroom setting.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This study is based on data collected before and after implementation when students used the Board Race Game to improve vocabulary word acquisition. In this study, the researcher collected data by conducting interviews. In addition, the researcher also recorded the activities performed during teaching.

1. Result of Pre-Test Cycle One The results of the pre-test attended by 22 students of class 5A at Wakarleli Elementary School showed that the majority of students had low vocabulary comprehension. From the data, 52% of students (11 students) scored very poorly, 43% (9 students) in the poor category, and only 5% (1 student) in the fair category. There were no students who reached the good or excellent categories. With only 5% of students meeting the passing criteria (66-75% score), it shows that 95% of students did not achieve adequate understanding.

These results emphasize the need for serious attention in vocabulary teaching. More effective and engaging learning methods, such as Board Race games, are needed to improve students' vocabulary comprehension. Early evaluation is also important to design teaching strategies that can help students succeed in learning English. A focus on interactive and fun methods is expected to improve students' motivation and learning outcomes in understanding English vocabulary.

2. The Result of the Test This study shows the students' post-test results after the first cycle of learning. From the data, 32% of students reached the 'Excellent' category, reflecting

deep understanding and high vocabulary mastery. However, 32% of students were also in the 'Fair' category, indicating inadequate comprehension and needing more attention. A total of 14% of students were in the 'Fair Good' category, indicating sufficient understanding but still below the expected standard. Meanwhile, 9% of students were in the 'Good' category, indicating adequate understanding but still requiring additional support.

There were 14% of students who achieved the category of 'Very Good,' signaling success in learning. Overall, the post-test results showed good progress, indicating that the applied learning strategies, such as board racing games, were quite effective in improving students' vocabulary acquisition. However, there were still students in the 'Fair' and 'Poor' categories, indicating the need for further intervention to help them achieve better comprehension.

3. Implementation of Board Race Game Cycle Two The researcher conducted an activity to introduce body part vocabulary in English. Firstly, a representative from each group was asked to point out a particular body part while the other students guessed and mentioned the appropriate vocabulary. After a few rounds, the researcher asked if any body parts were not understood and provided additional explanations if needed.

Next, the researcher conducted a board racing game. Students were divided into two groups and given a blackboard and markers. In this game, students took turns writing the name of the body part mentioned by the researcher within 30 seconds. Each correct answer gets a point, and the researcher gives positive feedback to increase student enthusiasm. After all the body parts were written, the points were counted, and a discussion was held regarding the body parts that the students remembered. The winning group was given a small award to motivate them.

According to Wright, Betteridge, and Buckby (2006), games in language learning foster active participation and motivation, creating a dynamic environment conducive to vocabulary acquisition. Additionally, Uberman (1998) highlights the benefits of vocabulary games in reinforcing new words through repetition and engagement, making them effective in language classrooms.

4. The Result of the Test Data regarding student achievement categories showed that 41% of students were in the 'Excellent' category, reflecting deep understanding and high mastery of the material. A total of 27% of students were in the 'Very Good' category, indicating strong mastery despite some minor errors. The 'Good' category included 9% of students who had adequate understanding, although there were deficiencies in knowledge or skills. The 'Fair Good' category consisted of 14% of students who understood some basic concepts but still needed additional help. Finally, 9% of students

were in the 'Fair' category, showing limited understanding and difficulty in grasping some concepts.

The standards for evaluating student performance were based on the improvement observed between the pre-test and post-test scores. Students were categorized according to defined score ranges: 'Excellent' (90-100%), 'Very Good' (80-89%), 'Good' (70-79%), 'Fair Good' (60-69%), and 'Fair' (below 60%). This criterion-referenced assessment allowed the researcher to measure progress objectively and identify areas needing additional support.

Overall, 68% of students were in the 'Excellent' and 'Very Good' categories, indicating that the majority of students were successful in their learning. However, there was still a percentage of students in the 'Good,' 'Fair Good,' and 'Fair' categories, indicating the need for more attention in teaching to help them improve their understanding and skills.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the Board Race Game is an effective vocabulary teaching strategy for Grade 5 students at Wakarleli Primary School, significantly improving students' vocabulary acquisition, engagement, and retention. The game fostered active participation, collaboration, and enthusiasm, while also promoting positive perceptions of the learning experience. To maximize its benefits, future research could explore the long-term effects of the Board Race Game on vocabulary retention across different age groups and subjects. Additionally, integrating this interactive strategy into the regular curriculum, providing teacher training on its implementation, incorporating student feedback mechanisms, and covering diverse vocabulary topics relevant to students' interests and real-life contexts can further enhance its effectiveness. These efforts will support the development of more dynamic and engaging vocabulary acquisition strategies in primary education.

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