

USING GAMES TO TEACH VOCABULARY FOR GRADE 4 CLASS AT MIS MAMBAUL ULUM DAHU

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ABSTRACT

Background: This study focuses on evaluating the effectiveness of two specific educational games, Word Bingo and Charades, as tools for teaching English vocabulary. The research is conducted with Grade 4 students at MIS Mambaul Ulum Dahu, an Islamic elementary school in a rural setting. Word Bingo, an interactive activity that involves matching vocabulary words to their meanings or contextual usage, is designed to enhance word recognition and recall. Charades, on the other hand, encourages students to act out vocabulary words, fostering creativity, physical engagement, and comprehension.

Method: The methodology involves a quantitative pre-test and post-test experimental design, comparing an experimental group taught using games with a control group taught using traditional methods. Data collection included tests and questionnaires to assess vocabulary mastery and student engagement.

Result: The results showed that the mean score of students' pre-test (45.2%) increased to 78.6% in the post-test, reflecting a notable enhancement in their vocabulary skills. These improvements were observed across all aspects of vocabulary learning: grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and fluency. the t-score was higher than t-table both in the level of significance 5% ($14,101 > 2,063$). It means the H_0 was rejected and the H_a was with significant level. **Conclusion:** The study identified notable differences in the learning process before and after the intervention. Prior to using the games, students were passive learners and often struggled with vocabulary retention. After the intervention, students became more active and demonstrated higher proficiency in vocabulary mastery. The games not only enhanced their linguistic skills but also promoted a positive learning environment and better peer interaction.

Keywords: vocabulary learning, games, english learning, primary education, experimental research

Abstrak

Latar Belakang: Penelitian ini berfokus pada evaluasi efektivitas dua permainan edukatif, yaitu Word Bingo dan Charades, sebagai alat bantu dalam pembelajaran kosakata bahasa Inggris. Penelitian ini dilakukan pada siswa kelas 4 di MIS Mambaul Ulum Dahu, sebuah sekolah dasar Islam yang berada di lingkungan pedesaan. Word Bingo merupakan aktivitas interaktif yang melibatkan pencocokan kosakata dengan makna atau penggunaannya dalam konteks tertentu, yang dirancang untuk meningkatkan pengenalan dan daya ingat kosakata. Sementara itu, Charades mendorong siswa untuk memeragakan kosakata, yang bertujuan untuk menumbuhkan kreativitas, keterlibatan fisik, dan pemahaman.

Metode: Metodologi yang digunakan adalah desain eksperimen kuantitatif dengan pre-test dan post-test, membandingkan kelompok eksperimen yang diajarkan dengan menggunakan permainan dan kelompok kontrol yang diajarkan dengan metode tradisional. Pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui tes dan angket untuk mengukur penguasaan kosakata dan keterlibatan siswa.

Hasil: Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa nilai rata-rata pre-test siswa (45,2%) meningkat menjadi 78,6% pada post-test, mencerminkan peningkatan signifikan dalam keterampilan kosakata mereka. Peningkatan ini terjadi pada seluruh aspek pembelajaran kosakata: tata bahasa, kosakata, pelafalan, dan kelancaran. Nilai t-score lebih tinggi daripada t-table baik pada tingkat signifikansi

5% ($14,101 > 2,063$). Hal ini berarti hipotesis nol (H_0) ditolak dan hipotesis alternatif (H_a) diterima secara signifikan.

Kesimpulan: Studi ini mengidentifikasi adanya perbedaan yang signifikan dalam proses pembelajaran sebelum dan sesudah perlakuan. Sebelum penggunaan permainan, siswa cenderung pasif dan sering kesulitan dalam mengingat kosakata. Setelah intervensi, siswa menjadi lebih aktif dan menunjukkan peningkatan yang lebih tinggi dalam penguasaan kosakata. Permainan tersebut tidak hanya meningkatkan kemampuan linguistik mereka, tetapi juga menciptakan lingkungan belajar yang positif serta meningkatkan interaksi antarsesama siswa.

Kata kunci: kemampuan berbicara, media video, pembelajaran bahasa Inggris, pendidikan dasar, penelitian eksperimental

I. INTRODUCTION

This research is grounded in the importance of vocabulary mastery in English language learning, particularly for elementary school students learning English as a foreign language. Vocabulary serves as the foundation for the development of the four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Thornbury (2002) emphasizes that even with good grammar, communication cannot occur effectively without sufficient vocabulary knowledge. However, in practice, vocabulary teaching often relies on traditional methods such as lectures and rote memorization, which tend to be monotonous and fail to actively engage students—especially young learners with short attention spans.

At MIS Mambaul Ulum Dahu, a madrasah located in a rural area of Indonesia, vocabulary instruction primarily uses conventional techniques. Observations show that students struggle with memorization and have low motivation due to the lack of engaging and interactive teaching methods. The constructivist learning theory suggests that knowledge is constructed more meaningfully through hands-on and contextual experiences (Piaget, 1976; Vygotsky, 1978). Games such as *Word Bingo* and *Charades* provide opportunities for such experiences by promoting active learning, competition, and collaboration (Wright, Betteridge, & Buckby, 2005).

This study aims to address the gap between students' learning needs and the teaching methods used. The identified problems include the dominance of rote learning, minimal use of interactive media, and lack of student-centered strategies. Games have been proven effective in previous research. For instance, Huyen and Nga (2003) found that game-based vocabulary learning led to better retention and student enthusiasm. Similarly, Susanti (2015) and Nugroho (2020) confirmed that games improve student engagement and vocabulary acquisition.

The scope of this study is limited to teaching vocabulary to Grade 4 students at MIS Mambaul Ulum Dahu using *Word Bingo* and *Charades*. Other language skills are not the focus unless they directly support vocabulary learning. External factors such as students' home environments or previous English exposure are not examined.

The research questions include:

1. How is the vocabulary learning process before using *Word Bingo* and *Charades* games?
2. How is the vocabulary learning process after using those games?
3. What differences can be identified before and after the implementation of these games?

The purpose of the study is to describe the vocabulary learning process before and after using the games and analyze the changes that occur. The expected contributions are both theoretical and practical. Theoretically, this research supports game-based learning as part of constructivist pedagogy. Practically, it offers insights for teachers and curriculum developers seeking more engaging and effective vocabulary teaching methods.

Key terms defined include:

1. Vocabulary: the collection of English words students are expected to understand and use appropriately.
2. Games: structured learning activities that stimulate active and interactive participation.

3. Word Bingo: a vocabulary game where students match definitions to words on a card (Wright et al., 2005).
4. Charades: a guessing game where students act out vocabulary words without speaking (Cameron, 2001).
5. Vocabulary Acquisition: the process of internalizing and applying new words, both receptively and productively (Nation, 2001).
6. Grade 4 Students: learners aged 9–10 years who benefit most from visual, physical, and social learning experiences (Cameron, 2001).

II. METHOD

This chapter outlines the research methodology used to evaluate the effectiveness of using games Word Bingo and Charades in teaching vocabulary to Grade 4 students at MIS Mambaul Ulum Dahu. The study employs a quantitative experimental design, specifically a pre-test and post-test control group design, to measure the differences in vocabulary mastery before and after the intervention (Creswell, 2012).

2.1 Research Subjects

The research was conducted at MIS Mambaul Ulum Dahu, targeting Grade 4 students as the population. A total of 25 students (7 males and 18 females) were selected using simple random sampling to ensure fairness and representation. These students were chosen because they are at an age where interactive and visual learning is most effective (Cameron, 2001). The study involved both an experimental group (taught using Word Bingo and Charades) and a control group (taught using traditional methods).

2.2 Research Instruments

Three primary instruments were used:

- a. Pre-test and Post-test: Designed to measure students' vocabulary mastery before and after the treatment. The tests included matching words to definitions, sentence completion, and identifying synonyms/antonyms. These instruments were validated by language experts to ensure content reliability (Ary et al., 2010).
- b. Questionnaire: Developed to assess students' perceptions of the learning process using *Word Bingo*. The questionnaire used a Likert scale (1–4) and consisted of 15 items covering four dimensions: Engagement, Motivation, Perceived Benefits, and Social Interaction. It provided qualitative insights into the emotional and behavioral impact of game-based learning.

2.3 Treatment Procedure

The learning procedure is conducted in three sessions with the following stages:

- 1) Session 1
Introduction to the *Word Bingo* game. Students listened to clues and matched them with vocabulary words on their cards. This session emphasized word recognition and comprehension.
- 2) Session 2
Implementation of Charades, where students acted out vocabulary words while peers guessed them. This focused on enhancing understanding, creativity, and pronunciation.
- 3) Session 3
Combined use of Word Bingo and Charades with tasks requiring sentence construction and short dialogues. This stage aimed to develop fluency and contextual vocabulary usage.

2.4 Data Analysis Techniques

The collected data from pre-test and post-test were analyzed using SPSS version 23. A paired

sample t-test was applied to assess whether the difference in vocabulary mastery before and after the treatment was statistically significant.

- 1) If the t-score > t-table at the 5% significance level ($\alpha = 0.05$), it indicates a significant difference; thus, the alternative hypothesis (H_a) is accepted.
- 2) If t-score < t-table, it means there is no significant difference, and the null hypothesis (H_o) is accepted.
- 3) This quantitative approach ensured objective and reliable results (Creswell, 2012), allowing the researcher to draw clear conclusions on the effectiveness of games in vocabulary teaching.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study aims to determine the effect of using Word Bingo and Charades on the vocabulary learning of fourth-grade students at MIS Mambaul Ulum Dahu. Data were obtained from the results of oral tests before and after the treatment (pre-test and post-test) which included four aspects: Grammar, Vocabulary, Pronunciation, and Fluency.

3.1 Pre-test and Post-test Results

Based on the pre-test results, only 1 student (4%) achieved a total score above the KKM, while 24 students (96%) scored below the KKM. This data emphasizes the need for an improved and interactive teaching approach, such as Word Bingo and Charades games, to enhance students' vocabulary mastery and overall English proficiency.

Table 1 Result of Pre-Test

Score Range (%)	Number of Students	Description
20–40	5	Struggled significantly with basic vocabulary.
41–60	15	Moderate understanding with frequent errors.
61–80	4	Good understanding but some inconsistencies.
81–100	1	Strong mastery and consistent application.

The pre-test results indicated that most students had low to moderate vocabulary proficiency across four aspects: grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and fluency. Out of 25 students, only one exceeded the minimum passing score (KKM) of 75, while the majority (15 students) scored between 41–60%, showing moderate skills but frequent errors and lack of confidence. Five students struggled significantly with scores between 20–40%, and only four demonstrated good proficiency (61–80%). The highest score recorded was 81, and the lowest was 25, highlighting the wide performance gap and the ineffectiveness of conventional teaching methods. These results suggest the need for more engaging and interactive strategies, such as Word Bingo and Charades, to better support vocabulary learning.

Table 2 Paired Samples Statistics

Paired Samples Statistics					
		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	PreTest	49.64	25	15.676	3.135
	PostTest	82.00	25	6.144	1.229

Based on the paired sample statistics table above, it showed the mean score of pre-test is 49,64 with standard deviation 15,676. On the other hand the mean score of post-test is 82,00 with standard deviation 6,144. The number of participants of each test (N) is 25.

3.2 Statistical Test (Paired Samples t-Test)

To determine whether the difference in values is statistically significant, a paired samples t-test was conducted. The analysis results showed a t-value of 14.101 with a significance (p-value) of 0.000, which means the p-value is < 0.05 .

Table 2 Paired Sample Test

		Paired Samples Test							
		Paired Differences							
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	PreTest - PostTest	32.360	11.474	2.295	37.096	27.624	14.101	24	.000

From Paired Samples Test table above, the mean shows the difference between pre-test and post-test is 32,360 with standard deviation 11,474 and standard deviation error 2,295. The t-score is 14,101 with the degree of freedom 24 and significance (2-tailed) 0.000.

Thus, it can be concluded that the use of Bingo and Charades has a significant impact on improving students' vocabulary learning. This is in line with the research hypothesis that Bingo and Charades can enhance students' performance in vocabulary skills.

3.3 Discussion

The discussion highlights that the implementation of *Word Bingo* and *Charades* significantly improved students' vocabulary mastery. After the treatment, students showed marked progress in all aspects grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and fluency. The games created an engaging and interactive classroom environment that fostered active participation, motivation, and better retention of vocabulary. These findings are consistent with studies by Ahmed (2018) and Wright et al. (2005), which emphasize the role of educational games in enhancing language learning.

The constructivist learning theory, particularly Piaget's (1976) framework, supports this approach by stating that learning is most effective when students construct knowledge through meaningful experiences. The questionnaire results confirmed that students felt more confident, motivated, and enthusiastic during game-based lessons. Additionally, the games encouraged peer interaction and collaboration, helping students especially shy ones feel more comfortable using new vocabulary in context.

Despite the overall success, a small number of students faced challenges, such as difficulty understanding game rules or feeling shy during group activities. These limitations suggest that clearer instructions and adaptive group settings could enhance effectiveness in future implementations. Overall, the discussion concludes that game-based strategies like *Word Bingo* and *Charades* are not only effective but also enjoyable alternatives to traditional vocabulary instruction.

IV. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the use of *Word Bingo* and *Charades* games significantly enhances vocabulary mastery among Grade 4 students at MIS Mambaul Ulum Dahu. Prior to the

implementation of these games, students demonstrated low motivation and limited vocabulary proficiency due to the use of monotonous, traditional teaching methods. After the treatment, students showed substantial improvement across all aspects of vocabulary learning—grammar, pronunciation, fluency, and vocabulary usage. The mean score increased notably from pre-test to post-test, and the statistical analysis confirmed a significant difference in learning outcomes. Additionally, the games created a more engaging and interactive learning environment, promoting active participation, collaboration, and confidence. These findings support the idea that integrating educational games into English instruction is an effective, student-centered approach that addresses both cognitive and affective learning needs.

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