

Teaching Vocabulary Using Games: A Case Study of ELT Classroom at 7th Grade Students of Secondary School

Mikhael Misa

Faculty of Educational Science, Universitas Timor, East Nusa Tenggara (Kupang-NTT) – Indonesia
misamikhael@gmail.com

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine the effectiveness of using games to teach vocabulary. To determine the effectiveness of researchers comparing learning outcomes using conventional methods with learning outcomes using games. The method used was experimental research which consisted of an experimental group and a control class consisting of 20 students each in the seventh grade of Middle School. The four types of tests are multiple-choice, word matching, and true-fall tests. To analyze the data, the researcher used the Standard Deviation. Calculation of t-score is $132 > 0.44$. Compared to the t-table, the t-score is higher. Thus, this shows that there is effectiveness in teaching vocabulary by using games. As a result, using games to teach vocabulary can improve students' vocabulary mastery. This proves that students' mastery of teaching vocabulary using games is significant. Developing student success requires a good partnership, between the teacher and the students themselves.

Keywords

vocabulary teaching; using games; ELT Classroom



I. Introduction

One of the very basic elements of learning English is vocabulary. Moreover, it is important for language teaching and learning. Furthermore, of all the components of language, vocabulary is the most important. People automatically perform better in many areas when they have a large vocabulary. They may also be more confident in their ability to use it. Therefore, students should study seriously because they will have difficulty with their English skills without strong vocabulary and study techniques.

Teaching vocabulary is more than just presenting new words. It also includes the choice of which term to use to indicate how often a speaker of the language uses it. In addition, strong language acquisition helps learners to express their thoughts clearly. The most important skill that students should learn is vocabulary (Alqahtani, 2015). Without good vocabulary mastery, the intended meaning or message will not be well-received (Khan et al., 2018; Olinghouse & Wilson, 2013). Therefore, teachers should be able to develop students' vocabulary skills in addition to teaching grammar. Teachers should use creative teaching methods to help students improve their vocabulary. Although research (Sinhaneti & Kyaw, 2012) has shown that the translation method is less effective than other approaches in improving students' vocabulary skills, teachers continue to use it. The translation technique is only used to assist students in remembering the terminology. According to Nation (2013), students are considered to have high vocabulary skills if they can spell, pronounce, understand, and use a word correctly in its context. In addition, it is important to start teaching vocabulary in elementary schools as soon as possible. Teachers should also understand that teaching vocabulary to elementary school students is different from teaching vocabulary to adults (Cahyati & Madya, 2019; Habibi & Sofwan, 2015; Juhana, 2014). This is because primary-school-age children differ from adult learners in

many ways. Children prefer to learn through interactive media such as movies, games, music, and physical activities such as dancing and singing in elementary school (Biesaga, 2017; Nabhan, 2019; Permana, 2020; Smith et al., 2016; Ulfa, 2018; Vitasgoro et al., 2019). Students will be able to understand reading material, and other people's conversations, respond, speak clearly, and write about various themes by having a stock vocabulary. Students will not be able to contribute to the conversation, communicate some ideas, or provide information if they do not understand the meaning of the words used to address them.

Teachers can use games to help build a meaningful and practical context for the language. Students can participate fully and receptively in the whole teaching and learning process through games. To do this, students must be able to understand what is said or written by the teacher or others and be able to express their opinions or provide information orally or in writing.

Teaching vocabulary by using games has an important role for teachers and high school students. First, as students, they have a strong and good motivation to deepen their English. Second, they easily accept English because they learn by playing games, which is currently growing and developing in Indonesia. Third, teaching English vocabulary by using games can help teachers in the teaching and learning process.

Several relevant studies as input from this case study. There are several card games, such as those using the idea of a one-size-fits-all model (Mertler, 2013), which allows players to fully immerse themselves in the kind of learning that encourages recognition and memory (Kusuma et al., 2017). And one as a form of entertainment and art. This card game is also used as a technique to improve grammar and vocabulary, two important linguistic elements of writing ability. Effective vocabulary learning can be facilitated by game-based learning (Bakhsh, 2016; Derakhshan & Khatir, 2015; Wu, 2018). Students are engaged and enthusiastic about learning grammar when games are included (Cam et al., 2017).

The students' English vocabulary mastery is very low, as evidenced by the students' lack of understanding of English. In addition to learning many terms, students also need to remember them. For children to learn and master multiple languages, the teacher in this situation must be very intelligent. For students to understand, the teacher must use the media to teach, whether it is a textbook or anything that can help in the learning process. Due to the use of learning media, learning is more interesting and students' understanding of what is being taught is higher.

Research Question

What is the effectiveness of teaching vocabulary by using games?

II. Review of Literature

Some are relevant to current vocabulary investigation using games (Utku & Dolgunsöz, 2018) investigated how digital games were used by Aghlara and Tamjid at the Islamic University of Azad, Iran, to promote vocabulary learning in Iranian children. This study looks at vocabulary retention in foreign language acquisition. For the experimental group, appropriate digital games were used, whereas no digital games were used in the control group, which included 40 participants aged six to seven years. The fact that the average scores of children in the experimental group performed much better than those in the control group suggests that using digital games to teach children English vocabulary has a beneficial impact. Besides that, (Alrajhi, 2020) investigated the perceptions of

English learners to show how bachelor's degree programs in English and translation at Saudi public universities use video games as a medium to encourage English language learning. 101 Arabic-speaking English majors were asked to complete an online survey with 29 questions posed by 101 Arabic-speaking students. Thus, the skills and education of English majors can effectively enable them to assess, assess, and evaluate the many learning environments they encounter for L2, including play environments. Compared to non-English majors, they are therefore able to provide more accurate and detailed comments based on their experience.

Moreover, (Kayaalt, 2018) studied a research review on vocabulary learning to show how online games are used by English at Khoja Akhmet Yassawi University. Along with the development of the internet, games in the form of online simulations with quantitative and qualitative metrics for vocabulary mastery from Iran, Turkey, and China began to appear. As a result, using online games to teach language is more effective for acquiring vocabulary than memorizing. Success, however, depends on gender. When playing online games to acquire vocabulary, male students performed better than female students.

Education and skills are the main keys in gaining social status in community life (Lubis *et al*, 2019). In addition (Khan et al., 2018) investigate ways to improve the social skills of poor children to show how Saudi Arabian schools use educational video games. By evaluating poverty levels using pre-post measurements Twenty poor kindergarteners who were five years old and did not own an iPad were randomly selected from one of the public schools in the city of Riyadh (56 schools for girls) to take part in this study. Ten of them were allowed to play instructional video games for the first time using Android iPad to improve their social skills. In addition to (Nguyen & Terry, 2017) also examines vocabulary learning to show how students at Bac Lieu University in Vietnam who are not majoring in English use games effectively. 580 freshmen without English as their major will take a test and fill out a questionnaire to see how their vocabulary learning improves during the experiment. As a result, games produce settings aimed at language development. The more they use the language, the more proficient they become. They then gain better knowledge and see improvement in their academic performance.

The researcher would like to present some brief explanations related to these theories.

2.1 Vocabulary

The ability of second language learners to communicate effectively is generally seen as highly dependent on their vocabulary development. (Meyer & Schmitt, 2002) highlights that lexical knowledge is essential for communicative competence and second language learning when considering the importance of vocabulary acquisition. Therefore, the relationship between vocabulary knowledge and linguistic practice is characterized by Nation (2001) as complementary: Language use is made possible by vocabulary ability and vice versa. Vocabulary knowledge grows as a result of language use.

Every day, both on and off-campus, the value of words is described. The highest performing children in the class have the most extensive vocabulary. Researchers like (Barron et al., 2017; Olinghouse & Wilson, 2013; Susanto & Ab Halim, 2016; Tellier, 2008) have recognized that learning vocabulary is essential for the proficient use of a foreign language and plays an important role in the creation of coherent spoken and written texts. Learning vocabulary is essential for developing all language skills, including speaking, listening, reading, and writing (Nation, 2001). A language learner will not be able to use the structures and functions they may have learned for comprehensible communication without a large vocabulary, according to Alqahtani (2015), who also

argues that developing an adequate vocabulary is necessary for the successful use of a foreign language. According to some studies, vocabulary knowledge is the single biggest barrier that second language readers have to overcome because they rely so heavily on it (Alqahtani, 2015).

2.2 Game

The term "game" has come to denote an activity that is fun and interesting, often difficult, and in which students play and usually engage with other people. Moreover, it assists the teacher in creating a relevant and practical context for the language. You cannot learn a language and then use it. Only through actual use can it be taught. Their study of second language learning, (Krashen, 1989) identified four main implications for second language teaching: the better the input, the more comprehension aids it offers, the more speaking and listening practice, and the less stress and boredom. The following four ideas refer to game-based teaching and learning. Games are powerful tools for language learning and should be used at every level of the process (Tuan & Doan, 2010). Games provide a fun element to any language education, give students goals to aim for and require them to follow rules. A book on language learning through game-based learning has been edited and for that (Reinder, 2012), a supporter of game-based learning for language acquisition, participated. Reinders (2012) investigated the pedagogical potential of game-based learning and its benefits for language acquisition along with 18 other subject matter specialists. Students are forced to be actively involved in their studies while interacting with language, peers, and subject matter through games. Levine (2006) also notes the fact that games, more than books, movies, or music, force students to make choices, an important part of learning.

2.3 Teaching Using Games

Teaching using games is used to enhance language learners in their studies. They maintain effort and attention while entertaining the class. Learners speak before, during, and after the play in an environment where meaningful communication is fostered (Inman et al., 2010). This environment helps in developing understandable input, including what they understand when they read and listen (Krashen, 1989), and understandable output, including writing and speaking (Swain, 1993). Moreover, when language education becomes serious and emotionless, games help (Drakhshan & Khatir, 2015). Especially if the games are played in small groups, they help reduce their shyness and trepidation (Master, Doan, 2012). In addition, games can combine speaking, writing, listening, and reading—four language skills (Simpson, 2015). While playing the game, students take an active part, encouraging student-centered activities. Small group activities can help children practice polite disapproval, asking for help, and cooperating with others. They promote collaboration, friendship, competition, and turn-taking. According to Kismullah (2019), games combine multiple intelligences, including kinesthetic cognitive, visual intelligence, and interpersonal intelligence while playing with other people and sketching.

III. Research Method

This section describes the research design. It includes information about study participants, data collection, and data analysis and procedures.

3.1 Research Design

This study uses a quantitative approach. The research design used in this study was an experiment in the form of a pre-experimental design with a pre-test and post-test group design. In this study, the sample used for the experimental and control classes consisted of 20 students each in the seventh grade which was the pre-test and post-test experimental group for the control class. Researchers gave a pre-test to students, to determine their ability of students before getting treatment, after that the researchers gave treatment students, then a post-test was conducted to determine whether or not there was an effect after treatment.

3.2 Study Participants

Participants are groups that are of interest to researchers, groups that researchers want to generalize their research results. The population has at least one characteristic that distinguishes it from other groups. In this study, researchers took the seventh-grade students of SMP Maubesi, East Nusa Tenggara Province, which amounted to 112 students as the population. And this is a very important step in conducting a research study showing that the goodness of sampling determines the generalizability of the results. In other words, the extent to which the selected sample represents the population is the extent to which the results are generalized. In this study, the researcher took a random sample consisting of 40 students and divided it into two groups, one for the control group consisting of 20 students and the other for the experimental group consisting of 20 students. The tests used in this study were Multiple Choice (MC), Matching Words (MW), and True – False (TF). This is to answer the effect of using games in teaching vocabulary.

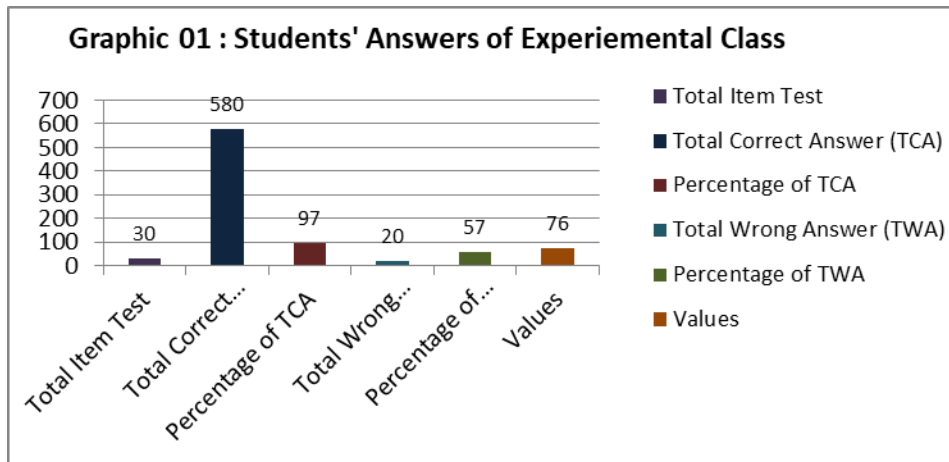
3.3 Data Collection and Analysis Procedure

This research will be conducted in a classroom consisting of three stages. First, a pre-test was given to measure students' mastery of learning vocabulary before using the game. Second, the study started an experiment in which games were used previously and others were not. Third, a post-test was given to determine whether teaching vocabulary using games was effective. The test questions measure students' knowledge and understanding of vocabulary in several ways, including 1) Examining student work. 2) Word activities are intended to determine students' ability to combine words into two parts: (1) Understanding the meaning of words, (2) Understanding ideas, (3) Organizing ideas, and (4) Interpreting ideas. And to analyze the data, the researcher wanted to know the average difference between the two groups' control and experiment at the level of $P \leq 0,05$ had used the t-test.

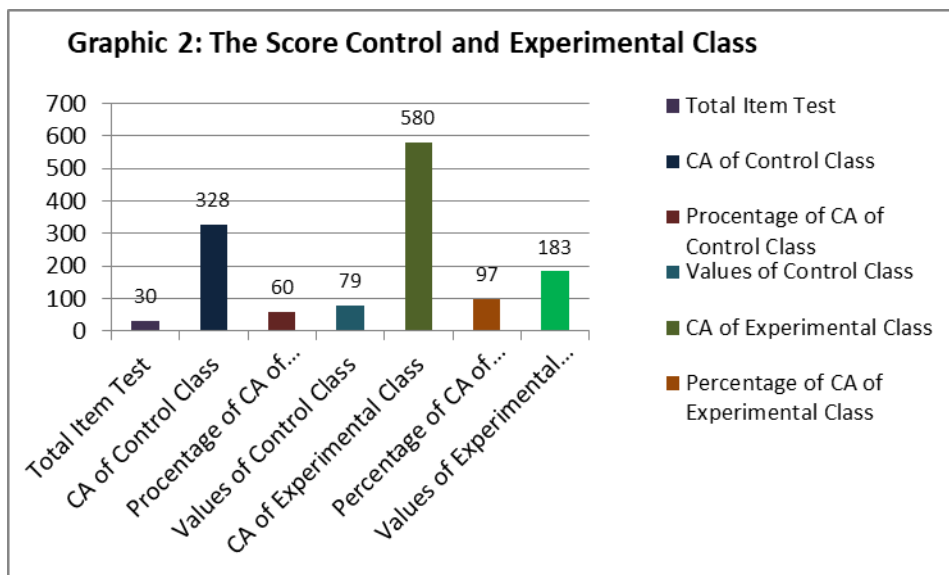
IV. Results and Discussion

To get the data needed, the researcher took a sample of seventh grades students in Secondary School. The researcher described the importance of games in improving students' vocabulary mastery in teaching by using games. To measure students' vocabulary in teaching vocabulary by using games, the researcher gave tests to the control and experimental classes. The analysis and discussion are based on data consisting of scores for

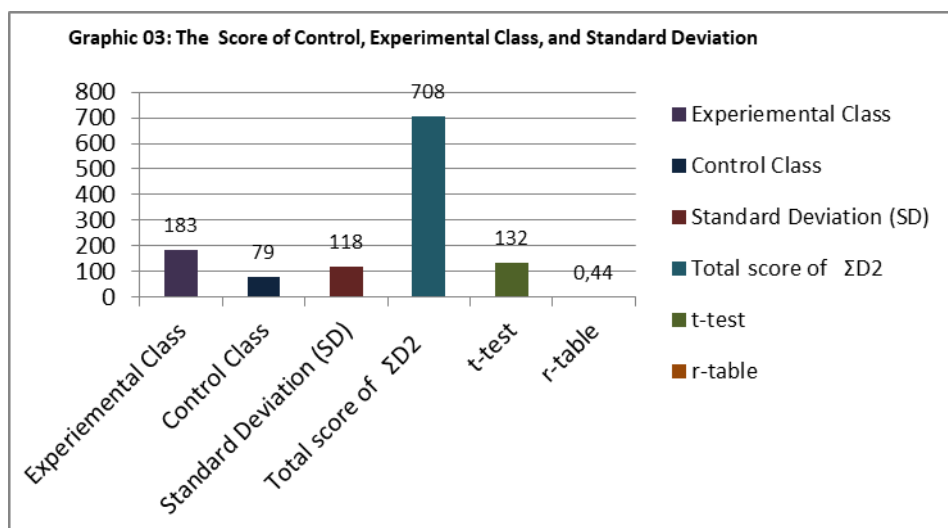
each test item. The researcher presented the number of correct answers as the basis for the analysis which was shown on the graph in the next type.



Based on this tabulation, a total score of $X1 = 183$ was obtained. It was obtained from the number of correct answers divided by the number of questions for each student individually. Figure 1 shows that there are 580 (97%) correct answers, and 20 (57%) incorrect answers. And now, it shows the control and experimental class scores on graph 2 below:



To find out whether it is statistically significant or not, we need to test it. The method used to determine the significance of teaching or not is to use games. And now, it shows the control and experimental class scores and standard deviation on graph 3 below:



Based on the required data, the researcher looked for the number $D = 118$. It was obtained from the number of $X1$ minus $X2$ for each test item. While the total score $D2 = 708$. It is obtained from the sum of $D2$ multiplied by D .

From these data, it is known that the t-score obtained from the t-test is 132 to determine the significance of the score obtained from the calculation. This score should be compared with the score obtained from the t-table. To find the t-table value is (1) knowing the number of research subjects, and (2) examining the t-table in the table using a significance level of 0.05. From this procedure, the researcher found that the r-table score was 0.44.

The conclusion is $132 > 0.44$. T-score is higher than the t-table. Thus, the t-score is higher. This means that the effectiveness of using games in teaching vocabulary helps students to understand and memorize vocabulary. This implies that teaching vocabulary by using games is more effective to be applied in teaching vocabulary, especially for students based on this finding.

V. Conclusion

This study collects the effectiveness of teaching vocabulary by using games. The findings show that using games effectively increases students' vocabulary. The t value is calculated using the formula $132 > 0.44$. T-score exceeds t-table. As a result, it was proven that using games to teach vocabulary was successful. This shows that the t-test is higher than the t-table. As a result, teaching vocabulary by using games can affect the vocabulary mastery of students in the seventh grade of Secondary School. This proves that students' mastery of teaching vocabulary using games is significant.

Suggestion

Based on the results obtained from this study, it is highly recommended that vocabulary teaching using games be used in various schools throughout Indonesia. Training and dissemination of the benefits of using games are needed so that teachers do not feel unfamiliar with this learning approach.

References

- Alqahtani, M. (2015). The Importance of Vocabulary in Language Learning and How it is Taught. *International Journal of Teaching and Education*, III(3), 21–34. <https://doi.org/10.20472/te.2015.3.3002>
- Alrajhi, USA (2020). Perceptions of English Learners about Video Games as Learning Media and Integration into the English Curriculum. *Journal of Mextesol*, 44(4).
- Baksh, SA (2016). Using Games as a Tool in Teaching Vocabulary to Young Learners. *Teaching English*, 9(7), 120. <https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v9n7p120>
- Barron, A., Gu, Y., & Steen, G. (2017). The Routledge Pragmatics Handbook. In *The Routledge Handbook of Pragmatics*. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315668925>
- Biesaga, M. (2017). Dictionary Tradition vs. Pictorial Corpora: Which Thematic Areas of Vocabulary to Illustrate? *Lexikos*, 27 (November), 132-151. <https://doi.org/10.5788/27-1-1397>
- Cahyati, P., & Madya, S. (2019). Teaching English in Primary Schools: Benefits and Challenges. January. <https://doi.org/10.2991/iccie-18.2019.68>
- Cam, L., Minh, T., & Tran, T. (2017). Evaluation of Game Use in Teaching English Grammar for First-Year Students of English Department at Dong Nai Technology University. *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Education Research*, 16(7), 55–71. <https://www.ijlter.org/index.php/ijlter/article/view/962>
- Derakhshan, A., & Khatir, ED (2015). Journal of Applied Linguistics and Language Research. *Journal of Applied Linguistics and Language Research*, 2(3), 39–47. http://jallr.com/index.php/JALLR/article/view/40/pdf_38
- Habibi, A., & Sofwan, M. (2015). English Teachers for Young Learners: Analysis of English Proficiency and Profiles of Factors influencing data-sharing behavior of STEM researchers: Structural equation modeling View project Integrated, Multidisciplinary, and Technology-Enhanced S. December 2020. <https://www.researchgate.net/publications/324184294>
- Inman, C., Wright, VH, & Hartman, JA (2010). The Use of Second Life in K-12 and Higher Education: A Research Review. *Journal of Interactive Online Learning*, 9(1), 44–63.
- Juhana. (2014). Teaching English to young learners: Some Points to Consider. *Asian Journal of Education and E-Learning*, 02(01), 43–46. www.ajouronline.com
- Kayaalt, M. (2018). Literature Review on the Impact of Online Games in Vocabulary Learning. In *International Journal of Scientific Publications and Research* (Vol. 8, Issue 2, p. 312). www.ijsrp.org
- Khan, R., Radzuan, N., Shahbaz, M., Ibrahim, A., & Mustafa, G. (2018). The Role of Vocabulary Knowledge in the Development of Speaking Saudi EFL Learners. *Arab World Journal of English*, 9(1), 406–418. <https://doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol9no1.28>
- Krashen, S. (1989). We Gain Vocabulary and Spelling by Reading: Additional Evidence for the Input Hypothesis. *Journal of Modern Languages*, 73(4), 440–464. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4781.1989.tb05325.x>
- Kusuma, IPI, Adnyani, NLDS, & Taharyanti, GAP (2017). Developed 10 Interesting Games As a Breakthrough in Applying Monotone Flashcards to Vocabulary Learning and Assessment. *Journal of Scripts: Journal of Linguistics and English Teaching*, 2(1), 68. <https://doi.org/10.24903/sj.v2i1.65>
- Lubis, R., et al. (2019). Survival Strategy for Lokan Seekers in Paya Pasir Village, Kec. Marelan, Medan, Indonesia. *Budapest International Research and Critics Institute-Journal (BIRCI-Journal)*. Volume 2, No 1, Page: 293-303.

- Mertler, CA (2013). Classroom-Based Action Research: Revisiting Processes as Customizable and Meaningful Professional Development for Educators. *Journal of Pedagogic Development*, 3(3), 38–42. <http://uobrep.openrepository.com/uobrep/bitstream/10547/335968/1/Classroom-based+action+research+revisiting+the+process+as+customizable+and+meaningful+professional+development+for+educators.pdf>
- Meyer, LL, & Schmitt, N. (2002). Vocabulary in Language Teaching. *TESOL Quarterly*, 36(2), 235. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3588334>
- Nabhan, S. (2019). Bringing Multiliteracy into the Writing Process Approach in ELT Classes: Implementation and Reflection. *EduLite: Journal of English Language Education, Literature and Culture*, 4(2), 156-170.
- Nguyen, H., & Terry, DR (2017). English Language Learning Strategies Among EFL Learners: A Narrative Approach. *IAFOR Journal of Language Learning*, 3(1), 4–19. <https://doi.org/10.22492/ijll.3.1.01>
- Olinghouse, NG, & Wilson, J. (2013). Relationship of Vocabulary and Writing Quality in Three Genres. *Reading and Writing*, 26(1), 45–65. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11145-012-9392-5>
- Permana, IGY (2020). Teaching Vocabulary to Elementary School Students. *The Art of Teaching English as a Foreign Language*, 1(2), 1-4. <https://doi.org/10.36663/tatefl.v1i2.56>
- Reinders, H. (2012). Digital Games in Language Learning and Teaching. *Digital Games in Language Learning and Teaching*. <https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137005267>
- Simpson, A. (2015). Playing a card game (Dixit)'. *Using Games in Language Class*, 25.
- Sinhaneti, K., & Kyaw, EK (2012). Study of the Role of Memorization Learning in Burmese Students' Vocabulary Learning Strategies. *US-China Education Review A*, 12, 1548–6613.
- Smith, S., Sanchez, C., Betty, S., & Davis, S. (2016). Processing Academic Language through the Four Corners Vocabulary Chart Application. *CATESOL Journal*, 28(1), 69–80.
- Susanto, A., & Ab Halim, F. (2016). English Vocabulary Acquisition through Vocabulary Learning Strategies and Socio-Educational Factors: An Overview. *Applied Science and Technology*, 1(1), 166-173.
- Teller, M. (2008). The Effect of Gestures on the Memorization of Second Language by Young Children. *Cue*, 8(2), 219–235. <https://doi.org/10.1075/gest.8.2.06tel>
- Tuan, Doan, LT (2012). Vocabulary Collection through Games. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 2(2), 257-264. <https://doi.org/10.4304/tpls.2.2.257-264>
- Tuan, Doan, LT, & Nguyen, TM (2010). Literature and Language Studies Teaching English Grammar Through Games. *CS Canada. Literary and Language Studies*, 1(7), 61-75. <https://url2.cl/fEvBY>
- Ulfa, F. (2018). Teaching Vocabulary Using Cartoon Films. *Journal of Language and Language Teaching*, 5(1), 23. <https://doi.org/10.33394/jollt.v5i1.330>
- Utku, ., & Dolgunsöz, E. (2018). Teaching EFL Vocabulary To Young Digital Natives: Study With Turkish Grade 5 EFL Students. *International Journal of Online Education and Teaching*, 5(1), 115-130. <http://iojet.org/index.php/IOJET/article/view/228/223>
- Vitasmoro, P., Jatmiko, & Iwan Candra, A. (2019). Improving Students' English Vocabulary Mastery through Cartoon Animation. *383(Icss)*, 505–509. <https://doi.org/10.2991/icss-19.2019.32>

Wu, TT (2018). Increase the Effectiveness of English Vocabulary Review by Integrating ARCS with Mobile Game-Based Learning. *Journal of Computer Assisted Learning*, 34(3), 315–323. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jcal.12244>