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3Ps-Based Game for Teaching Vocabulary to Young Learners

Abdul Malik Hakim[*]
English Education Department, Universitas PGRI Semarang,
Indonesia, hakimmalik92@gmail.com

Ngasbun Egar
English Education Department, Universitas PGRI Semarang,
Indonesia, ngasbunegar@upgris.ac.id

Siti Musarokah
English Education Department, Universitas PGRI Semarang,
Indonesia, sitimusarokah@upgris.ac.id

*Corresponding Author's Email: hakimmalik91@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This study highlights the importance of building strong self-regulated motivation in EFL learners before engaging them in academic writing tasks. Motivation plays a vital role in helping learners handle the challenges of academic writing and develop effective learning strategies. This small-scale library research aimed to explore how self-regulated motivation supports the improvement of EFL learners' writing skills. A thematic analysis was conducted on 25 studies related to self-regulated motivation and academic writing to ensure the relevance and reliability of the findings. The results revealed two main outcomes: (1) self-regulated motivation helps learners become more organized in their writing process, and (2) it enables them to achieve better academic writing outcomes. These findings emphasize the need for educators to promote self-regulation in writing instruction to support learners' long-term academic growth.

Keywords: 3Ps, game-based learning, language acquisition, vocabulary instruction, young learners

Introduction

Vocabulary acquisition plays a crucial role in language learning, as it serves as the foundation for developing reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills. For young learners, a strong vocabulary is essential for effective communication and comprehension. However, traditional vocabulary instruction methods, such as rote memorization, often lead to disengagement and limited long-term retention. As a result, researchers and the teacher have increasingly explored game-based learning as an alternative approach to enhance vocabulary acquisition. Game-based learning provides an interactive and engaging environment that fosters motivation and improves learning outcomes.

Recent studies have highlighted the benefits of game-based learning for vocabulary instruction. Ling and Abdul Aziz (2022) conducted a systematic review indicating that game-based learning strategies significantly enhance vocabulary retention and engagement among primary ESL learners. Similarly, Utami et al. (2021) found that the integration of games, such as "Word Guess," with flashcard media contributed to improved vocabulary acquisition and comprehension. Furthermore, research by Jia et al. (2024) demonstrated that digital game-based learning positively influences both receptive and productive vocabulary knowledge in EFL learners.

Despite the growing body of literature supporting game-based vocabulary instruction, limited research has examined the structured implementation of game-based learning through the Presentation, Practice, and Production (3Ps) concept. While various studies have explored different game-based strategies, there remains a gap in understanding how the 3Ps model can be effectively applied to vocabulary instruction for young learners.

This study aims to address this gap by investigating the effectiveness of 3Ps-based games in teaching vocabulary to young learners. Specifically, it seeks to assess the impact of this approach on student engagement and vocabulary retention, identify challenges faced by both the teacher and students, and explore strategies to overcome these obstacles. By providing a deeper understanding of the practical application of the 3Ps concept within game-based learning, this research contributes to the development of more effective and engaging vocabulary instruction methods for young learners.

Literature Review

Game-based learning has been widely recognized as an effective strategy for vocabulary acquisition, particularly among young learners. Research indicates that games enhance motivation, engagement, and retention of new words by creating an interactive and enjoyable learning environment (Rahman et al., 2020). Games provide learners with opportunities to use new vocabulary in meaningful contexts, reinforcing word recognition and recall. Through active participation, students are encouraged to practice language skills in a low-stress environment, which can significantly improve their confidence and willingness to communicate (Gee, 2013). The integration of digital

tools and multimedia elements further enhances the effectiveness of game-based learning, making it a preferred method for modern classrooms (Prensky, 2001).

This aligns with the 3Ps Concepts—Provision, Protection, and Participation—which serves as a foundational approach in child-centered education (UNICEF, 2019). Provision ensures that children have access to appropriate learning resources, including age-appropriate games, visual aids, and interactive exercises. Protection safeguards them from harmful educational practices by promoting a structured yet flexible learning environment, ensuring that games do not lead to unnecessary competition or stress. Participation emphasizes their active engagement in the learning process, fostering autonomy and motivation (Smith & Johnson, 2021). By integrating game-based learning with the 3Ps concept, the teacher can create an inclusive and dynamic vocabulary instruction model that fosters meaningful student involvement.

Several studies have demonstrated the positive impact of game-based learning on vocabulary acquisition. According to Nation (2013), students who engage in interactive language games exhibit higher retention rates and improved contextual understanding of new words. Additionally, research by Cameron (2001) emphasizes that vocabulary learning should be interactive and meaningful to young learners, which aligns with the participatory nature of game-based instruction. The use of educational games allows students to associate new vocabulary with images, sounds, and real-life scenarios, facilitating deeper cognitive processing (Schmitt, 2014).

However, while many studies highlight the benefits of game-based learning, there is limited research on its implementation within the 3Ps concept. Existing literature focuses on general game-based approaches without explicitly examining how Provision, Protection, and Participation influence vocabulary instruction. Additionally, challenges such as varying student proficiency levels, instructional time constraints, and difficulty understanding game instructions can hinder the effectiveness of these methods (Nguyen & Habók, 2022). Younger learners may struggle with understanding complex game mechanics, requiring the teacher to provide additional scaffolding and differentiated instruction. Addressing these challenges requires the teacher to adopt adaptive teaching strategies, such as providing additional explanations, incorporating visual aids, and fostering peer collaboration (Brown & Lee, 2019). Furthermore, research by Wright, Betteridge, and Buckby (2006) suggests that the teacher should carefully select games that align with language learning objectives and ensure that they are appropriate for the students' developmental levels. Another key aspect of game-based learning is its impact on students' motivation and engagement. Studies by Deci and Ryan (2000) on self-determination theory suggest that game-based activities promote intrinsic motivation by providing a sense of autonomy, competence, and relatedness. When students feel a sense of ownership over their learning process, they are more likely to participate actively and develop a positive attitude toward vocabulary learning. Similarly, Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory emphasizes the role of social interaction in cognitive development. In this context, game-based learning provides opportunities for collaborative learning, allowing students to support one another in vocabulary acquisition through cooperative play and peer feedback.

Given the need for more research on 3Ps-based game implementation, this study aims to bridge the gap by exploring how this approach enhances vocabulary learning and identifying challenges encountered in its application. By examining how the principles of the 3Ps concept interact with game-based learning, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of its effectiveness in vocabulary instruction. Furthermore, its findings can provide valuable insights for the teacher seeking to optimize game-based learning strategies within structured educational concept. Future research could further investigate the long-term effects of game-based vocabulary instruction on language proficiency, as well as explore the integration of digital and online learning platforms in 3Ps-based methodologies.

Methodology

This study employed a qualitative research design to explore the implementation of 3Ps-based games in teaching vocabulary to young learners. A case study approach was chosen to provide an in-depth analysis of student engagement, learning outcomes, and challenges encountered during implementation. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), qualitative research enables researchers to explore participants' experiences in depth by collecting rich, descriptive data through various instruments. The research was conducted at BBC ETS Tlogosari Semarang, involving third-grade students as participants. A total of 25 students, aged 8–9 years, and one teacher participated in the study. The teacher, who facilitated the implementation, was also involved in data collection to provide insights into instructional strategies and challenges.

The primary materials used in this study were 3Ps-based games designed to enhance vocabulary acquisition through Provision, Protection, and Participation. Provision activities focused on introducing new vocabulary in a structured and engaging manner, such as through crossword puzzle, storytelling, matching games, flashcards, role playing, discussion, and interactive media. Protection activities reinforced learning by providing structured practice opportunities, including matching games, crossword puzzles, and guided exercises that allowed students to use the vocabulary in meaningful contexts while receiving support from the teacher. Participation activities encouraged students to apply their vocabulary knowledge in interactive and communicative settings, such as role-playing, group discussions, and collaborative problem-solving tasks. These activities aimed to create an engaging and supportive learning environment where students could actively build and retain their vocabulary knowledge.

The instruments for data collection included classroom observations, student worksheets, and teacher interviews. Observations focused on student engagement, participation levels, and difficulties encountered during the learning process. Teacher interviews provided additional insights into instructional adaptations and student responses. The study followed a structured three-phase data collection process.:

1. Pre - Implementation: The teacher was briefed on the research objectives and trained in game facilitation. A preliminary assessment of students' vocabulary proficiency was conducted.

2. Implementation: The 3Ps-based games were integrated into classroom instruction over four weeks. Classroom observations were conducted, and student worksheets were collected for analysis. Teacher interviews were conducted at the end of each session to document reflections.

3. Post-Implementation: A final assessment measured vocabulary retention, and a follow-up interview with the teacher gathered insights on the overall effectiveness and challenges of the approach.

The data collected in this study were analyzed using a qualitative approach. The research instruments included an observation sheet, a questionnaire, and interviews. These instruments were used to examine three key aspects: (1) the implementation of 3Ps-based games in vocabulary instruction, (2) the challenges encountered by both the teacher and students, and (3) the solutions applied to address these challenges. Thematic analysis was employed to identify patterns and recurring themes within the collected data. Thematic analysis, as described by Braun and Clarke (2006), was employed to identify patterns and recurring themes within the collected data. Thematic analysis is a flexible qualitative method used to systematically analyze textual data by identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) that emerge. Observations were documented and analyzed to assess student engagement, instructional effectiveness, and classroom interactions. Questionnaire responses were reviewed to understand students' and the teacher' perspectives on the learning process. Interviews provided further insights into the challenges faced and the strategies implemented to overcome them. The findings were then presented descriptively, highlighting the impact of 3Ps-based games on vocabulary mastery without employing statistical analysis.

Findings

This study investigated the implementation of 3Ps-based games in teaching vocabulary to young learners, focusing on their effectiveness, challenges, and the strategies used to overcome difficulties. The findings indicate that the Provision, Protection, and Participation (3Ps) concept played a significant role in enhancing students' vocabulary acquisition. The structured stages provided a clear and engaging learning process, encouraging active participation and improving word retention.

Implementation of 3Ps-Based Games

The implementation of 3Ps-based games followed a structured approach to ensure students effectively learned new vocabulary. During the Provision stage, the teacher introduced new words through visual aids, storytelling, and contextual examples to build foundational understanding. Result obtained from the observation sheet stated that Students responded positively to visual and interactive teaching aids, showing high levels of engagement. Many students pointed at the images and repeated words enthusiastically. This stage was crucial in helping students establish initial word associations and meanings. The use of pictures, flashcards, and interactive storytelling helped make the learning experience more engaging and memorable. In the Protection

stage, students engaged in controlled practice through guided exercises and structured game-based activities. In line with the data obtained from the observation sheet which stated that some students struggled with the exercises at first but improved after repeated practice. The teacher guided them by giving hints and examples. the teacher facilitated vocabulary-related drills, matching exercises, and word puzzles that reinforced learning in a structured environment. This stage provided learners with opportunities to practice new vocabulary in a safe and monitored setting before applying it in interactive activities. The Participation stage encouraged independent and collaborative use of vocabulary in interactive games, allowing students to reinforce their learning through real-life applications. Activities such as role-playing, board games, and digital learning games provided students with meaningful contexts to apply the vocabulary they had learned. This approach created an engaging learning environment where students were actively involved in the learning process rather than passively memorizing words. Furthermore, peer collaboration and group-based tasks encouraged communication and teamwork, making learning more interactive and dynamic.

Challenges in the Implementation

Despite the overall success of 3Ps-based games, several challenges emerged during implementation. One of the primary issues was students' difficulty in understanding game instructions, which sometimes led to confusion and disengagement. This problem also lined with the excerpt from the observation sheet that some students looked confused when new games were introduced and required additional explanations. Younger learners, in particular, struggled with complex rules, requiring the teacher to simplify explanations or demonstrate gameplay multiple times. Language barriers also contributed to the difficulty in comprehending instructions, particularly for students with lower proficiency levels. Additionally, differences in students' language proficiency levels created an uneven learning pace, where some students grasped new vocabulary quickly while others needed additional support. This discrepancy often resulted in frustration among learners who required more time to understand and apply new words. Some students hesitated to participate actively due to their limited vocabulary knowledge, making it necessary for the teacher to provide additional motivation and encouragement.

Time also posed a significant challenge. As stated by the teacher in the interview, "we had limited class time, so I had to skip some parts of the game-based learning process." the teacher had to manage limited class periods effectively to ensure that all stages of the 3Ps concept were executed without rushing the learning process. Balancing game-based learning with curriculum demands required careful lesson planning and time management. Some the teacher found it difficult to allocate enough time for each stage, especially when students needed extended practice before moving on to the next phase. Another challenge was the availability of resources and materials. While some games required specific props or technology, limited access to such resources sometimes hindered the implementation. Additionally, classroom space and seating arrangements

needed adjustments to accommodate interactive activities, which was not always feasible in traditional classroom settings.

Strategies to Overcome the Challenges

To address the challenges encountered in the implementation of 3Ps-based games, the teacher employed a range of strategic interventions aimed at enhancing student engagement, improving comprehension, and optimizing instructional time. These strategies were designed to ensure that all learners, regardless of their proficiency levels, could actively participate in vocabulary learning and derive maximum benefit from the game-based approach.

One of the primary strategies involved simplifying game instructions through step-by-step demonstrations and the incorporation of visual representations. Many young learners struggled to comprehend complex game mechanics, leading to confusion and reduced engagement. To mitigate this issue, the teacher provided explicit, scaffolded instructions, supported by pictorial aids, flowcharts, and real-life objects. As stated by the teacher "When I used pictures and step-by-step examples, students understood the games much faster." Demonstrating the gameplay before initiating the activity enabled students to familiarize themselves with the rules, thereby reducing cognitive overload and fostering confidence in participation. Additionally, pre-game practice sessions were introduced to allow students to engage with the game in a structured setting before its full-scale implementation, ensuring a smoother transition into interactive learning.

Another critical intervention was the use of peer-assisted learning (PAL) techniques to address the varying levels of language proficiency among students. By pairing more proficient learners with those who required additional support, the teacher facilitated a collaborative learning environment that promoted peer mentoring and cooperative learning. Observation sheet also reveal that Students in mixed-ability groups interacted more, helping each other with words. This proved that she approach not only aided struggling students in grasping new vocabulary but also reinforced the understanding of higher-achieving learners through the act of teaching. Furthermore, the teacher employed differentiated instruction, wherein game difficulty was adjusted to align with individual learner capabilities. For students with lower proficiency levels, simplified tasks, additional scaffolding, and extended practice opportunities were provided, while more advanced students were given higher-order cognitive tasks to enhance their vocabulary application in complex linguistic contexts.

In addition to differentiated instruction, the teacher sought to increase student engagement through multi-sensory learning approaches. Given that young learners benefit from kinesthetic and auditory stimuli, game-based activities were supplemented with movement-based exercises, role-playing, and storytelling elements. These strategies enabled students to contextualize vocabulary within real-world scenarios, thereby reinforcing retention and practical application. Moreover, technology-enhanced learning tools, such as interactive whiteboards, digital flashcards, and language-learning applications, were integrated to provide a diverse and stimulating learning experience. These technological interventions not only increased student motivation but also

facilitated individualized learning opportunities beyond the classroom setting. Time constraints posed a considerable challenge, necessitating strategic lesson planning and time management. To optimize instructional time, the teacher carefully structured game sessions, ensuring that each stage of the 3Ps concept was implemented within designated timeframes. Task segmentation was employed, wherein games were divided into shorter, more focused activities, allowing for efficient vocabulary acquisition without disrupting the overall lesson flow. Additionally, transitional techniques were utilized to ensure that game-based learning was seamlessly integrated into the broader curriculum. the teacher also introduced self-directed learning initiatives, such as interactive homework tasks and vocabulary reinforcement exercises, encouraging students to engage with the material beyond the classroom environment. By implementing these pedagogical strategies, the teacher successfully mitigated challenges associated with the use of 3Ps-based games, fostering a more inclusive and effective vocabulary learning experience. These approaches underscore the necessity of adaptive teaching methodologies, ensuring that game-based learning remains a viable and impactful instructional tool for vocabulary acquisition among young learners.

Discussion

The findings of this study highlight the significant role of the 3Ps-based game concept in enhancing vocabulary acquisition among young learners. The structured stages of Provision, Protection, and Participation provided a clear and engaging learning process that encouraged active participation, improved word retention, and facilitated meaningful vocabulary application. The integration of visual aids, structured exercises, and interactive activities contributed to an engaging learning environment where students were actively involved rather than passively memorizing words. The effectiveness of this approach is supported by data from observations and teacher interviews, indicating that students demonstrated high engagement when exposed to visual and interactive storytelling techniques. Additionally, peer collaboration within the Participation stage reinforced learning, as students practiced vocabulary in meaningful, real-world contexts. However, despite its benefits, the implementation of 3Ps-based games was not without challenges.

One of the primary difficulties encountered was students' struggle to understand game instructions, leading to confusion and disengagement, particularly among learners with lower language proficiency. As noted in the observations, some students required additional explanations and demonstrations before fully grasping the rules of the game. This challenge aligns with previous research on young learners' cognitive development, which emphasizes the need for clear, structured guidance when introducing new activities (Ellis, 2019). To address this issue, the teacher employed step-by-step demonstrations, pictorial aids, and flowcharts to scaffold learning and enhance comprehension. The effectiveness of this strategy was evident in the improvement of students' participation rates and their ability to navigate the games with greater confidence after guided instruction. Additionally, implementing pre-game practice

sessions allowed students to engage in structured practice before transitioning into independent gameplay, reducing cognitive overload and fostering smoother engagement.

Another challenge identified in the study was the disparity in language proficiency levels among students, which led to an uneven learning pace. Some students quickly grasped new vocabulary, while others required additional support and scaffolding. This discrepancy was managed through the use of peer-assisted learning (PAL) techniques, where higher-achieving students assisted those with lower proficiency levels. The observational data supported the effectiveness of this approach, revealing that students in mixed-ability groups engaged in more interactions and helped each other with vocabulary-related tasks. This finding aligns with Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory, which emphasizes the importance of social interaction in cognitive development. Recent studies further confirm that peer collaboration in language learning environments enhances comprehension and retention, particularly among young learners (Shintani, 2020).

Time constraints posed another significant challenge in implementing the 3Ps-based game approach. The teacher interview revealed concerns regarding the limited class periods, which often led to the omission of certain stages of game-based learning. This issue required strategic lesson planning and efficient time management to ensure that all aspects of the 3Ps concept were effectively executed. Task segmentation, in which games were divided into shorter, more focused activities, proved to be a practical solution. Additionally, self-directed learning initiatives, such as interactive homework and vocabulary reinforcement exercises, were introduced to extend learning beyond the classroom. These strategies align with previous studies on instructional time optimization, which suggest that breaking down tasks into manageable segments enhances students' ability to retain and apply new knowledge effectively (Shin, 2021).

Resource limitations and classroom space constraints further hindered the full implementation of game-based learning. Some games required specific props or technological tools that were not readily available, limiting the diversity of activities that could be conducted. To overcome these barriers, the teacher integrated multi-sensory learning approaches, utilizing movement-based exercises, role-playing, and storytelling elements to engage students without relying on extensive resources. The integration of technology, such as digital flashcards and interactive whiteboards, also played a crucial role in maintaining student engagement despite resource constraints. Recent research highlights the growing role of technology in supporting game-based learning, particularly in contexts where physical resources may be scarce (Zhao & Shute, 2022). These findings emphasize the importance of flexibility and adaptability in instructional methodologies, demonstrating that effective vocabulary acquisition can be achieved through creative and resourceful teaching strategies.

Conclusion

The implementation of the 3Ps-based game concept in vocabulary instruction provided a structured and engaging learning process. The Provision, Protection, and Participation stages helped students build, practice, and apply vocabulary effectively. Observations and teacher interviews confirmed high engagement and enthusiasm. However, challenges such as comprehension difficulties, proficiency gaps, time constraints, and resource limitations required adaptive strategies. Simplified instructions, peer-assisted learning, and digital tools helped mitigate these issues. These findings emphasize the need for flexible teaching approaches and further research on technology integration and long-term vocabulary retention.

In light of the findings, future research could explore digital adaptations of 3Ps-based games to assess their feasibility in various learning contexts. Additionally, investigating long-term vocabulary retention through game-based learning would provide valuable insights into its sustained benefits. This study contributes to the existing literature by emphasizing the practical aspects of implementing 3Ps-based games and the necessity of addressing challenges to optimize their effectiveness in vocabulary instruction.

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