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Students' Perceptions of Baamboozle Gamification in Vocabulary Learning: A Case Study of 5th Grade Students' of MI Darul Ulum Semarang

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini dilakukan dengan tujuan untuk mengeksplorasi persepsi siswa kelas 5 MI Darul Ulum Semarang terhadap penerapan aplikasi Baamboozle dalam pembelajaran kosakata bahasa Inggris dan dampaknya terhadap motivasi dan keterlibatan siswa selama pembelajaran di kelas. Metode dalam penelitian ini menggunakan kualitatif dimana instrumen wawancara digunakan sebagai instrumen primer dan observasi serta dokumen sebagai instrumen sekunder. Data wawancara tersebut mendapatkan respon yang sangat positif karena penggunaan baamboozle sendiri dipandang sangat positif ketika diterapkan sebagai alat pembelajaran. Mereka menyatakan bahwa baamboozle sangat menyenangkan, menarik, dan tidak membosankan. Anak-anak menjadi lebih aktif dan terlibat dalam kegiatan kelas ketika pembelajaran berlangsung. Guru juga dinilai berperan penting dalam mengenalkan dan membimbing selama penerapan baamboozle. Kesimpulannya, penerapan baamboozle sangat efektif dalam pembelajaran kosakata Bahasa Inggris, terbukti dari persepsi positif dan keterlibatan aktif siswa selama proses pembelajaran.

Kata Kunci: *Baamboozle, Motivasi Siswa, Pembelajaran Kosakata, Persepsi Siswa*

Abstract

This study was conducted with the aim of exploring the perceptions of 5th grade students of MI Darul Ulum Semarang towards the application of Baamboozle application in English vocabulary learning and its impact on student motivation and engagement during classroom learning. The method in this study used qualitative in which the interview instrument was used as primary and observation and documents were secondary. Interview data was taken from 6 grade 5 students, who were randomly selected to be fair. The results of the interview received a very positive response because the use of baamboozle itself is seen as very positive when applied as a learning tool. They stated that Baamboozle is very fun, interesting and not boring. Children became more active and involved in class activities when learning takes place. Teachers were also seen as playing an important role in introducing and guiding during the implementation of Baamboozle. In conclusion, the implementation of Baamboozle is very effective in learning English vocabulary, as evidenced by students' positive perceptions and active engagement during the learning process.

Keyword: *Baamboozle, Students' Motivation, Students' Perceptions, Vocabulary Learning*

INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary is a collection of several words that must be mastered by individuals to form a good sentence that will later be applied in everyday life. The ability to master vocabulary is the foundation of successful foreign language learning (Esraa Mostafa Fadl Abdelmageed, 2024). Vocabulary has a very important role because it has a direct influence on students' understanding in terms of understanding instructions, expressing ideas coherently, and achieving academic success in higher education and professional environments (Zanuar et al., 2024). Their research on elementary school students in Indonesia proved that students with a stronger vocabulary base performed better in understanding English lessons and were also more confident in participating in class. When learning English as a foreign language, vocabulary skills are crucial as a lack of vocabulary knowledge can be a barrier to effective communication and academic progress. Vocabulary plays an important role in language acquisition, yet it remains a major obstacle for many learners (Azzahra et al., 2024).

While neighborhood interactions can provide real exposure to new words through daily interactions and community activities, technology platforms like Baamboozle make it easier for students to engage in more structured vocabulary learning both at school and at home. However, integrating the use of technology in the vocabulary learning process can be a challenge. However, integrating the use of technology in the vocabulary learning process can complement, not replace, traditional pedagogical approaches. Face-to-face

interaction between teachers and students is still important to provide contextually appropriate explanations, help meet individual learning needs, and develop more meaningful collaboration between students, which technology cannot replicate. The challenge lies in finding the optimal balance between innovative digital tools and established teaching methodologies. Increased student engagement when teachers combine Baamboozle activities with direct instruction and peer discussion, suggests that technology functions more as a tool rather than a stand-alone solution (Wulandari et al., 2024). Having sufficient and adequate ability in phrasal verbs can develop language skills and weak vocabulary mastery can make it difficult for students to learn the language (Rifda Arini & Suwarso, n.d.). Empirical studies of EFL learners have shown that game-based learning tools such as Kahoot effectively improve vocabulary recall when integrated into teacher-facilitated lessons, although they recognize potential challenges including an over-reliance on entertainment value and a reduced focus on deeper language comprehension (Ahmed et al., 2022). In recent decades, the world of education has undergone many important changes, which are characterized by a move from routine writing and speaking strategies to more active and intuitive strategies. This increase indicates an increase in student capacity and the increasing influence of innovation in lifestyles (Martalia Sinaga et al., 2025).

Baamboozle presents a promising gamification platform for vocabulary learning through interactive quizzes and collaborative team activities. This quiz-based platform supports group work, provides immediate feedback, and has flexible access across different learning environments. With the challenges of teaching and learning in the era of globalization, all parties directly or indirectly involved must be able to recognize and use technology as a learning platform (Rahayu & Rukmana, 2022). Bamboozle is a revolutionary tool for education that combines comprehension assessment with dynamic data acquisition, it is an effective strategy in imparting vocabulary to early learners, as well as providing a sense of fun and participation in the learning process (Azzahra et al., 2024). Using a game-driven format where the teacher organizes the content while students participate in teams, Baamboozle facilitates structured learning and interaction between students (Andrea Rojas Sáez & Angie Quintanilla Espinoza, 2023). While gamification has clear advantages for vocabulary learning, there are some considerations to be made. Potential drawbacks include the risk of students focusing more on game mechanics than language learning, the need for reliable internet connectivity, and the need for ongoing teacher training to effectively integrate such platforms. Furthermore, while games can help increase motivation, they may not be sufficient to address deeper aspects of vocabulary acquisition such as semantic relations and contextual variations in usage. As an effort to realize the functions and goals

in education, of course the government regulates the curriculum which is a tool or means in assisting the implementation of learning that has been planned in such a way and in which contains various ideas that are educational in nature, which are designed and compiled as much as possible adapted from changes and advances in the times and technological sophistication so that it becomes a design that is feasible and can be used as a guide to run in the educational process (Winaningsih et al., 2022). This study aims to explore the perceptions of grade 5 students of MI Darul Ulum Semarang regarding the application of Baamboozle as a gamification method in vocabulary learning. It is important to understand students' perspectives as this will directly affect their interactions and learning achievements. This research discusses the potential and limitations of game-based vocabulary teaching, providing insights that can guide educators in making informed decisions about technology integration in language learning contexts.

To analyze this, it is necessary to investigate further to ascertain the effect of the improvement. The research questions to be answered and developed are as follows

1. What are the perceptions of 5th grade students of MI Darul Ulum Semarang in using Baamboozle in vocabulary learning?
2. How is student's motivation and engagement in using Baamboozle in learning vocabulary?
3. How do students perceive their teachers' roles in encouraging using Baamboozle in learning process?

RESEARCH METHOD

This study used qualitative research methods to explore the challenges and opportunities of using Baamboozle in English vocabulary teaching at the Islamic elementary school level from students' perspectives. In this study, the researchers used classroom observations. Observation was a method of obtaining data by observing events in the field. Unstructured observation is one such method used by researchers as it allowed the researcher to explore in free flow, record interesting observations, and interact with them to make a decision (Wulandari et al., 2024). Documentation, observation, and interviews were research instruments used to collect research data and contained questions and statements answered by respondents.

The object of this research was 5th grade students of MI DARUL ULUM Semarang, Central Java, Indonesian in the academic year 2025/2026. The participants in this study were 23 students (9 males and 14 females). The monitoring started when students played the bamboozle game to learn vocabulary, when the bamboozle was shown on the screen and

students are grouped into groups to solve the questions until they answered and the final result of the game will be considered in this study. When bamboozle was applied in the classroom, the classroom situation was continuously controlled, as well as the enthusiasm of students in responding and the expansion of their vocabulary. To get students to become active, it is important to incorporate games in the learning process, some people might think that games are a waste of time and have no outcome, but when the methods and materials are suitable, it can be a big boost for learners (Sabila & Niswa, 2023).

In this study, researchers used open-ended questions in their interviews, in which respondents or students will be asked questions that were free to explain whatever they wanted to say without restrictions. Learning through recreations made a fun environment and gave a boost for learners to create comprehension aptitudes, increased self-confidence, and made accomplishments. In expansion, the form of the game can be combined with desires and learning styles of each learner, making it the proper device for ability learning (Deni Kurniawan et al., 2024). To find out the opinions of the bamboozle game, interviews will be conducted as primary data. In the interview, the researcher chooses randomly by selecting 3 girls and 3 boys. The 6 participants were interviewed with several questions that had been prepared by the researcher, the interview was conducted in the classroom with the conversation being recorded as evidence that the researcher had conducted research with several participants at the school. As for secondary data, it was by observing the class and examining documentation. This method aims to provide detailed insights into intermediate learners' experiences with Bamboozle for learning English vocabulary, captured different aspects across multiple data sources, and increased the reliability of the analysis.

In this research, there were several steps that were applied to this research so that it ran well. The first step that had to be applied was to introduce the bamboozle application to students so that they can understand and later be able to follow directions properly. The second step was to divide students into groups in order to provide an explanation of the task and solve the questions that already exist in the Bamboozle application. Furthermore, when the game has been implemented, the researcher conducts class observations. Then interviews were conducted after participants completed the game, by randomly selecting 6 students. For documentary evidence, such as photos, videos, final results of the game, and recordings should be organized as well as possible. After all was done, reflections and conclusions on this research were organized as well as possible. Learning outcomes were largely determined by factors such as student acceptance of the applied learning methods, understanding of the material taught, and also the evaluation given to measure the extent

of student ability and progress (Swasti Lumbanraj et al., 2023). Student acceptance showed how much student involvement and motivation there was, while student understanding described the level of student ability in receiving and applying the information provided. On the other hand, student evaluation not only acted as a measuring tool for ability, but also as useful and important feedback to improve learning methods and rearrange learning strategies to be more effective and suitable for student characteristics. These three things were interrelated in determining research results.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

This research has found that the majority of grade 5 students at MI Darul Ulum Semarang responded positively to the application of Baamboozle in English vocabulary learning. Observation and interview data revealed some key findings:

1. Perception of Grade 5 Students

Grade 5 students at MI Darul Ulum Semarang consider the application of Baamboozle in vocabulary learning as an interesting and fun way to boost their language skills.

In general, grade 5 students of MI Darul Ulum Semarang rated the application of Baamboozle in vocabulary learning very positively. Most students described their learning experience as "fun", 'enjoyable' and "not boring". They enjoyed the game-based and interactive approach, which made learning English vocabulary seem more like play than practice. The students mentioned that their favorite moments were when the games were being actively played, and they appreciated the opportunity to learn new words in an engaging and effective way. The app is also considered easy to use and helps to understand and remember vocabulary quickly. The application is favored for its fun games and more exciting way of learning compared to traditional methods. Students are more enthusiastic when undergoing learning because the entertainment aspect in the baamboozle application is high so that students are not easily bored to learn English vocabulary.

Additionally, the students focused on the collaborative aspect of Baamboozle, noting that working in groups made the learning process much more enjoyable and supportive. They felt that the app fostered teamwork and made it easy for them to ask for help from their peers when faced with challenges. Through this active interaction, students are more confident to express or give ideas, and help each other. This approach makes them more responsible when learning takes place. besides the entertainment aspect and ease of use of the app, collaboration in its use is equally important. the sense

of teamwork builds a sense of community and mutual support. In addition to fostering cooperation between teams, they are also not shy to ask questions and ask for help from teammates when facing challenges. This increases their confidence level in participating in class. Overall, the students expressed a strong desire to continue using Baamboozle in the future, as it makes vocabulary learning something to look forward to, rather than just a routine classroom task.

2. Students's Motivation and Engagement

The use of Baamboozle greatly boosts students' motivation and engagement in learning English vocabulary, making the learning process more interactive and fun.

By using Baamboozle, students' motivation and participation in learning English vocabulary significantly increased. The effectiveness of learning and teaching depends strongly on student engagement (Jonathan & Recard, 2021). Most students reported that they felt more enthusiastic and more eager to engage in class when Baamboozle was used. This game-like method encouraged them to stay focused, be willing to answer questions, and be willing to collaborate with their classmates. The interactive and engaging nature of Baamboozle motivated them to study harder and be more active during the lesson. This learning media makes the classroom atmosphere active and there is more interaction with each other. This learning method is interesting and fun because it presents a variety of games that can be accessed by students and is very easy to play anywhere and anytime. This highly interactive approach encourages students to be more active in expressing ideas and be more courageous in expressing them. Healthy competition activities among students will be more advanced and more sustainable if this implementation is always maintained and implemented optimally. Baamboozle helps students to retain the new skills they have acquired in a more effective way.

In addition, the immediate feedback and sense of satisfaction provided by the game encourage students to continue improving their vocabulary skills. With a supportive and competitive environment, Baamboozle makes initially shy students more courageous to participate, reducing their anxiety and increasing their confidence. Thus, students not only enjoy the learning process but also retain new understanding more effectively. By using Baamboozle, students' motivation and participation in learning English vocabulary significantly increased. Most students reported that they felt more enthusiastic and more eager to engage in class when Baamboozle was used. This game-like method encouraged them to stay focused, be willing to answer questions, and be willing to collaborate with their classmates. The interactive and engaging nature of Baamboozle motivated them to study harder and be more active during the lesson.

3. Students' Views on the Teacher's Role

Learners perceive their teachers as important facilitators in encouraging the use of Baamboozle, appreciating their mentorship in making vocabulary learning more challenging and effective.

The students considered their mentor teachers to be very supportive and enthusiastic facilitators in the use of Baamboozle. They greatly appreciated the way the teachers introduced the app, explaining the benefits, objectives and how to play clearly and patiently. The students also reported that their teachers were easily approachable and helpful, being on hand to assist with any difficulties encountered during the activity. For instance, students reported that they could easily ask their teachers for assistance if they did not understand something, both in class and at home.

In addition, the teachers' enthusiasm and positive attitude in practicing Baamboozle was also perceived as a boosting factor for the students. Most students felt more enthusiastic to learn because their teachers were actively involved and encouraged them throughout the session. This supportive environment makes them feel comfortable and more willing to participate, which further enhances the effectiveness of Baamboozle as a classroom learning tool. The teacher not only supervises the course of the game, but praise for students is inseparable from the role of the teacher, this continues to be applied so that students feel more encouraged and always feel fully supported by the teacher. The positive attitude in the role of the teacher is contagious to students so that students feel more enthusiastic when learning and do not give up easily when facing challenges in this baamboozle game. An inclusive and supportive learning environment is important when learning takes place, so that a positive response will always be there. The teacher's approach is given as much as possible to students, the aim is to maximize the potential of each individual. The main factor is the student's assessment of the presence and role of the teacher as a determinant of the effectiveness of using baamboozle in the classroom. The role of the teacher as a modern facilitator is currently highly appreciated by students because it can change the traditional learning paradigm into an innovative and inspiring learning experience.

To conclude, Baamboozle significantly positively affects students' perceptions of vocabulary learning by rendering it more attractive, collaborative and more effective. The teacher's interactive nature and active role contribute to a stimulating classroom environment that supports language development.

CONCLUSION

The application of baamboozle in English vocabulary learning in Grade 5 has brought positive changes. Based on students' responses, baamboozle has transformed vocabulary teaching into a more fun, dynamic and highly engaging experience. The majority of students described their learning process as fun, interesting and not boring. The variety of games in this game has helped to maintain students' attention and enthusiasm. The main finding was an increase in students' motivation and active engagement. The group-based approach is very effective in building teamwork. In addition, the teacher's role as a facilitator was also successful in the implementation of baamboozle. In summary, integrating baamboozle in learning has proven to be an effective strategy to improve students' motivation and vocabulary acquisition. This perception shows that game-based educational instruments such as baamboozle are very promising to improve learning outcomes especially in Islamic primary schools.

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