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Students' Perception of Vocabulary Mastery

by Using Baamboozle Game

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Abstract

This study explores vocational high school students' perceptions of using Baamboozle for vocabulary learning. While gamification is effective, research on students' perspectives remains limited. Using a qualitative case study, 20 students completed a questionnaire, and five participated in interviews. Thematic analysis identified key trends. Findings show Baamboozle enhances engagement, motivation, comprehension, and retention, making learning enjoyable. However, some students noted unequal participation in group activities. These results align with Constructivist Learning Theory, emphasizing interactive learning. This study contributes to game-based learning research by providing insights into Baamboozle's impact. Future studies should explore long-term effects and compare it with other digital tools. Educators should integrate Baamboozle with structured strategies for optimal results.

Keywords: Baamboozle, gamification, student perception, vocabulary learning, vocational high school.

Introduction

Technology and interactive learning are essential for enhancing students' language proficiency in modern education. Digital game-based learning, like Baamboozle, provides dynamic and engaging environments that improve participation and retention (Nadeem, 2023). Baamboozle, as one of the gamification platforms, provides interactive quizzes that can be used to improve vocabulary mastery through teamwork and point-based competition. Research highlights that game-based learning fosters positive attitudes, enhances vocabulary, and increases motivation (Salim et al. 2020);(Vnucko 2023). However, students in rural areas face access challenges, limiting their engagement (Salazar et al., 2024).

Vocabulary mastery is essential for language learning, impacting comprehension and communication. Recent studies highlight that receptive and productive skills are key factors in vocabulary acquisition (Al Indra & Syarfi, 2024). emphasizes the importance of repeated exposure and engagement for effective vocabulary retention. Gamification has been found to enhance motivation and learning outcomes, with tools such as Kahoot!, Quizizz, and Baamboozle improving retention and student engagement (Putri et al., 2023). As an interactive platform, Baamboozle encourages collaboration and participation, making vocabulary learning more effective. Students' positive perceptions towards digital game-based learning indicate increased motivation and improved vocabulary acquisition. However, challenges such as technical issues should be considered. Overall, integrating Baamboozle into vocabulary learning supports interactive, studentcentered approaches, enhancing retention and engagement.

Though several researches have examined how much game-based learning and mobile assisted applications support vocabulary development, studies concentrated on students' perspectives are uncommon. Little research on vocational high schools (SMK) has been done, earlier studies largely focus on educational achievement, engagement metrics, and motivational elements in elementary and junior high school environments. Moreover, research on Baamboozle as a tool for vocabulary development have largely focused on its efficacy rather than on how well students think it to have expanded their vocabulary. This study intends to bridge these gaps by offering insights on students' experiences and responses to game-based vocabulary training in a specialized educational context, therefore analyzing students' opinions of vocabulary learning using Baamboozle in a vocational high school (SMK) environment.

Multiple studies confirm the effectiveness of game-based learning for vocabulary acquisition. Wahyuningsih & Maretha (2024) found Narrative Crossword Puzzles significantly boosted participation and proficiency. Setyawan (2024) showed Duolingo improved vocabulary learning, while Daulay (2023) highlighted Scrabble's role in increasing retention and motivation. Research on platforms like Baamboozle consistently demonstrates their value in vocabulary learning (Daulay & Pasaribu, 2023); (Munasarah, 2024). Daulay et al. (2021) found that the Beyond Centre and Circle Time (BCCT) method significantly improved vocabulary mastery. Andini & Salmiah (2024) showed that Duolingo enhanced engagement and retention. Harahap & Kembaren (2023) highlighted how songs, movement, and videos boosted motivation and comprehension. These studies support gamification as an effective tool for vocabulary learning.

Games like Word-Connection (Tanasy, 2019) and interactive mobile apps (Tang, 2023); (Zou et al., 2021) improve retention, motivation, and long-term learning. Studies specifically on Baamboozle show its effectiveness at primary (Sari et al., 2024), junior high (Hariyanto & Andanty, 2024) and higher education levels

(Aeni et al., 2024). Comparative studies (Sagita, 2024) also highlight Baamboozle's fast feedback and engaging features that enhance vocabulary and reading comprehension.

Gamified tools like Baamboozle motivate students and enhance vocabulary mastery across educational levels (Azzahra et al., 2024); Lestari et al., 2024). This is especially true in underfunded schools (Hariyanto & Andanty, 2024). Baamboozle also encourages speaking practice and enthusiasm (Aeni et al., 2024). Broader research on mobile-assisted vocabulary learning confirms digital tools' accessibility and effectiveness (Rezaei et al., (2019); Deutschman, (2023); Klimova & Polakova, (2020); Basal et al., (2020).

Constructivist Learning Theory, which emphasizes active knowledge generation by interaction with the learning environment, stresses in this paper especially the need of involvement, teamwork, and social engagement in the learning process Piaget (1973), Vygotsky (1978). This study focuses on understanding students' perceptions of using Baamboozle in vocabulary learning. Additionally, the study investigates how Baamboozle influences students' motivation to actively improve their vocabulary through its interactive and gamified features. This study aims to identify students' perceptions of using Baamboozle in vocabulary learning.

Method

This study employed a qualitative case study approach to explore students' perceptions of using Baamboozle for vocabulary learning. A case study design was chosen to provide an in-depth understanding of students' experiences and viewpoints within a specific educational context. Descriptive qualitative research, according to Creswell (2014), helps to grasp events within a larger framework depending on the viewpoints of the participants. The study was conducted at a vocational high school where the researcher was an intern. One class was selected as the research sample, consisting of 20 students who had previously learned vocabulary using Baamboozle.

From this group, five students were purposefully selected for interviews based on their willingness to participate and their varying levels of engagement with Baamboozle. Baamboozle was implemented over a period of four weeks, with a total of eight vocabulary learning sessions (two sessions per week). Each session lasted approximately 45 minutes and focused on different vocabulary themes, such as daily activities, workplace terminology, and technical terms relevant to vocational students. The game was used to reinforce vocabulary through interactive quizzes, competition-based learning, and collaborative team play.

Semi-structured interviews and a Google Form helped data be gathered. The instruments comprised five open-ended questions in the interview and five closed-ended questions on the Google Form. Students' impressions were gauged using

closed-ended questions; the open-ended questions in the interview sought to confirm the Google Form's findings. Strongly Agree (1), Agree (2), Neutral (3), Disagree (4), and Strongly Disagree (5) five-point Likert scale was used to gauge students' impressions of their vocabulary performance over the Baamboozle game.

Following Braun & Clarke's six steps data transcription, coding, theme grouping, in-depth analysis, interpretation, and result reporting data analysis was done using the thematic analysis approach. Descriptive statistical analysis was used to examine the closed-ended question replies and then show them via diagrams. A thematic technique was used to examine the open-ended replies, therefore spotting trends or themes in the perspectives of the pupils. Miles & Huberman (1994), claimed that qualitative analysis consists in three phases: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drafting.

This study used source triangulation that is, a comparison of closed-ended and open-ended question answers to guarantee data veracity and therefore get a more complete knowledge. Triangulation is a method Lincoln & Guba (1985), said improves validity in qualitative research. Ethical approval was obtained from the school administration. Participants provided informed consent, and confidentiality was ensured through anonymized data and secure storage. The small sample and short study period limit generalizability and long-term impact assessment. The researcher acted as an observer and facilitator, guiding gameplay and monitoring engagement as an intern familiar with the students.

Results

This section presents the results of data analysis derived from questionnaires and interviews, which aimed to explore students' perceptions of using Baamboozle in enhancing their vocabulary knowledge, as well as how the platform influences their motivation to improve vocabulary skills. The questionnaire, completed by 20 students, consisted of five closed-ended statements measured using a five-point Likert scale. In addition, five students were selected for in-depth interviews to gain further insights into their experiences and opinions regarding Baamboozle in vocabulary learning.

No	Statements	SA	А	N	SD	D
a.	Baamboozle helps me learn vocabulary in a more interactive and enjoyable way.	75%	25%	0%	0%	0%
b.	Using Baamboozle in learning motivates me to be more active in improving my vocabulary	60%	35%	5%	0%	0%
C.	The use of pictures and a variety of	60%	35%	5%	0%	0%

Table 1. Results of the survey questionnaires

	questions in learning helps me enhance my vocabulary comprehension.					
d.	I believe that using Baamboozle	65%	35%	0%	0%	0%
	improves vocabulary retention					
e.	Playing in teams through	10%	40%	50%	0%	0%
	Baamboozle enhances my					
	collaboration and communication					
	with classmates					

SA= Strongly Agree; A= Agree; N= Neutral; SD= Strongly Disagree; D= Disagree

The analysis highlights five key aspects related to students' perceptions and experiences: enhancing vocabulary learning through interactive and enjoyable methods, increasing motivation, enhancing vocabulary comprehension, improving vocabulary retention, and enhancing collaboration and communication. These findings help answer the research questions by providing a comprehensive understanding of how students view Baamboozle as a learning tool and how it supports their vocabulary development.

a. Enhancing Vocabulary Learning Through Interactive and Enjoyable Methods

Most students said they enhance their vocabulary by utilizing Baamboozle. Of all the pupils, 75% (15 students) strongly agreed and 25% (5 students) agreed that this game helps them pick up more fresh vocabulary. In the process of learning English, vocabulary mastery plays a crucial role. One of the learning tools used by students is digital-based games, such as Baamboozle. To find out how much this game contributes to students' vocabulary development, questionnaires and interviews were conducted.

The questionnaire results revealed that most students experienced positive benefits from using Baamboozle to expand their vocabulary.

"When studying with Baamboozle, it is more fun and not boring. So, when studying I focus more on remembering and understanding more vocabulary compared to regular learning." (S.2)

"Every time I study to memorize vocabulary, I often feel sleepy. But when I study using Baamboozle, I am more interested in studying and pay serious attention to the lesson." (S.3) "When I study using Baamboozle, I am more interested in studying, especially when I play games, I try to remember all the vocabulary so I can win the game. I really enjoyed the learning process." (S.5)

The interview results showed that the use of Baamboozle in vocabulary learning had a positive impact on students. S.2 said that learning with Baamboozle felt more fun and not boring, so he could focus more on remembering and understanding vocabulary compared to conventional learning methods. This was also supported by S.3's statement, which stated that he usually felt sleepy when memorizing vocabulary, but with Baamboozle, he became more interested and paid more attention to the lesson. In addition, S.5 added that the game elements in Baamboozle increased his motivation to remember more vocabulary in order to win the game. From this interview, it can be concluded that Baamboozle makes learning more interactive and enjoyable.

b. Motivating Vocabulary Improvement

In addition to enriching students' vocabulary, Baamboozle also plays a role in increasing their learning motivation. To explore this aspect, questionnaires and interviews were conducted to gather students' perspectives. Based on the questionnaire results, 60% (12 students) strongly agreed, 35% (7 students) agreed, and 5% (1 student) remained neutral that Baamboozle motivates them to actively improve their vocabulary. This indicates that the game not only serves as a learning tool but also functions as a motivational trigger that encourages students to be more enthusiastic in mastering vocabulary.

> "When playing Baamboozle, I feel like I want to memorize all the vocabulary. Each quiz has challenges and points, so I get more excited to answer correctly" (S.1)

> "When playing the game Baamboozle, I try to remember all the vocabulary lessons so that my team's points are the highest." (S.2)

"I always focus on learning Miss taught me so that, when I play the game later, I would know that my team has the best score." (S.4)

The interviews further reinforced these findings. Students admitted that playing Baamboozle made them more eager to memorize vocabulary, especially because the game offers competitive elements like points and team challenges. The

sense of competition and the desire to achieve high scores motivated them to pay closer attention during lessons and review vocabulary more seriously. Several students also mentioned that they became more prepared and focused during English lessons because they wanted to perform well in the game. These responses highlight how interactive games like Baamboozle can effectively foster students' intrinsic motivation to enhance their vocabulary skills.

c. Enhancing Vocabulary Comprehension

Baamboozle's usage of visuals and question variants is one of its key elements as it aids in improved word meaning understanding for pupils. A total of 60% (12 students) strongly agreed, 35% (7 students) agreed, and 5% (1 student) were neutral that the visual features of the game help them to remember and comprehend vocabulary. In the process of learning English vocabulary, the use of visual media such as pictures is often considered an effective way to help students remember and understand new words. Through interactive games like Baamboozle, students not only learn through written text but also benefit from engaging visuals and exciting quizzes. To explore how visuals, contribute to students' vocabulary retention, interviews were conducted to gather their direct experiences and opinions.

> "The picture makes it easier to remember words because I can connect them with visuals. Sometimes, just reading a word is not enough, but when I see a picture, I understand it faster" (S.1)

> "We were always asked to write down and memorize new vocabulary words. But with Baamboozle, we learn through images, and there are quizzes with points. It makes me excited to learn and try to answer quiz questions correctly" (S.2)

The interview results revealed that visuals in Baamboozle play a significant role in helping students understand and remember new vocabulary. Students expressed that connecting words with images made it easier for them to recall meanings, compared to just reading plain text. In addition, the combination of pictures and a quiz system with points created a more exciting learning atmosphere, motivating students to actively learn and answer questions correctly. These findings highlight that interactive visual media can effectively enhance students' ability to absorb and retain vocabulary.

d. Improving Vocabulary Retention

Apart from knowing terms, pupils claimed that Baamboozle improves their memorizing and retention of vocabulary compared to conventional teaching strategies. 65% (13 students) overall strongly agreed, while 35% (7 students) agreed with this statement. Memorizing vocabulary has always been a challenge for students, especially when they rely solely on repetitive reading and writing techniques. In modern learning approaches, the use of visual aids and educational games like Baamboozle is believed to make the process more effective and enjoyable. To gain deeper insights into how students experience vocabulary retention through these methods, interviews were conducted to capture their personal perspectives.

"If I only read words, I tend to forget them. But if there are picture and quizzes like in bamboozle, I can immediately visualize the meaning, making it easier to remember" (S.2)

"I like baamboozle because learning while playing is more relaxed, so new words that often appear in the game are easier to remember without realizing it. It's not like memorizing vocabulary from student worksheets." (S.3)

"In baamboozle, the words often appear in the game, so without realizing it, I became more familiar with the words. Compared to writing vocabulary, memorizing it, and then submitting it, I'll forget it." (S.4)

The interview results revealed that Baamboozle offers a more relaxed and effective learning experience for students. Students admitted that when they only read words, they tend to forget them easily. However, with pictures and quizzes in Baamboozle, they can instantly visualize the meaning of the words, making them easier to remember. Moreover, the fun and stress-free learning atmosphere makes students feel more comfortable during the learning process. New words that frequently appear in the game become easier to remember unconsciously, unlike memorizing vocabulary through student worksheets, which they found less engaging.

e. Enhancing Collaboration and Communication

Particularly in group projects, Baamboozle improves students' capacity to use language in real world situations in addition to helping them to grasp and memorize words. Still, each student finds different value in this quality. 10% (2 students) strongly agreed, 40% (8 students) agreed, and 50% (10 students) were

Neutral about Baamboozle improving their teamwork abilities. In addition to enhancing vocabulary and increasing motivation, learning with Baamboozle also involves teamwork. During the game, students are encouraged to discuss and make collective decisions before answering questions. To better understand students' experiences in working as a team while playing Baamboozle, interviews were conducted to gather their direct feedback.

> "Sometimes, yes, because we have to discuss before answering. But sometimes, some people are too dominant in talking, so I just follow along" (S.1)

> "Sometimes it's fun because you can discuss with friends, but sometimes there are those who answer too quickly, so not everyone can join. It also depends on the team." (S.4)

The interview results indicated that some students found team discussions enjoyable because they could share ideas before giving an answer. However, some students also pointed out that not everyone always gets the chance to actively participate. In some cases, certain students dominated the discussion, leaving others to simply follow along without contributing much. This shows that while teamwork in Baamboozle can foster communication and collaboration, it is also essential to ensure equal participation from all team members.

Discussion

The findings of this study provide valuable insights into students' perceptions of using Baamboozle for vocabulary learning. The results indicate that Baamboozle significantly enhances students' vocabulary acquisition, motivation, comprehension, retention, and collaboration. These findings align with previous studies that emphasize the effectiveness of gamified learning tools in fostering student engagement and improving language proficiency (Aeni et al., 2024) ;(Wahyuningsih & Maretha, 2024).

A key finding of this study is that Baamboozle facilitates vocabulary acquisition in an interactive and enjoyable manner. The majority of students agreed that the game-based learning experience made vocabulary learning more engaging and less monotonous. This supports the notion that digital games create an immersive learning environment, reinforcing the importance of repeated exposure and active participation in language retention (Nadeem, 2023). The use of visuals and various question types in Baamboozle was particularly effective in enhancing comprehension, as students could associate words with images, leading to better recall and understanding (Tang,(2023); Zou, Huang, & Xie,(2021).

Additionally, Baamboozle played a significant role in increasing students' motivation to learn vocabulary. The game elements, such as scoring and competition, encouraged students to actively engage in the learning process. These findings align with studies that highlight how gamification enhances intrinsic motivation and fosters positive attitudes toward language learning ((Salim et al., 2020);(Putri et al., 2023)). However, some students expressed concerns about unequal participation within teams, where dominant students tended to take control, leaving others with limited opportunities to contribute. This suggests that while gamification is effective, it requires structured implementation to ensure fair participation among students (Sagita, 2024).

Moreover, vocabulary retention was notably improved through Baamboozle, as students reported that repeated exposure to words in a gamified format helped them remember vocabulary more effectively compared to traditional memorization techniques. This supports the principles of Constructivist Learning Theory and Dual Coding Theory, which emphasize active learning and the role of visual stimuli in enhancing memory retention (Paivio & Lambert, 1981);(Piaget, 1973);(Vygotsky, 1978).

Although Baamboozle encouraged teamwork and communication, findings suggest that its impact on collaboration was mixed. While some students appreciated the opportunity to discuss and strategize within teams, others felt that their participation was overshadowed by more dominant peers. These findings indicate the need for educators to implement structured guidelines to maximize collaborative benefits while ensuring equal participation (Seymour, 1995).

Overall, the study confirms that Baamboozle is an effective tool for vocabulary learning in vocational high school settings. However, to maximize its effectiveness, educators should integrate additional strategies such as structured team roles and supplementary activities that reinforce vocabulary use in realworld contexts. Future research should explore the long-term effects of Baamboozle on vocabulary retention and compare its effectiveness with other gamified learning tools to further understand its potential in different educational contexts.

Conclusion

This study explored vocational high school students' perceptions of using Baamboozle in vocabulary learning. Using a descriptive qualitative method, the findings showed that Baamboozle created a more interactive learning environment and was generally well received by students. However, some challenges were noted, such as unequal participation and the need for additional activities to reinforce real-world vocabulary usage. The results suggest that gamified tools like Baamboozle can enhance students' perceptions of vocabulary learning by making it more enjoyable and engaging. This study contributes to research on game-based learning, particularly in vocational education, and aligns with Constructivist Learning Theory and Dual Coding Theory. Limitations include a small sample size and a focus on short-term retention. Future research should examine long-term effects and compare Baamboozle with other gamified tools. Educators should integrate Baamboozle with diverse teaching strategies to maximize student engagement and ensure equal participation.

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