

CHAPTER 13

RETENTION OF VOCABULARY THROUGH VOCA-ME WITH QUIZIZZ

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ABSTRACT

In Malaysia, English acts as the second language and is taught as a compulsory subject in schools. Despite the fact that pupils begin to learn English at a young age, they have a limited repertoire of vocabulary because they are having difficulty in vocabulary retention. Besides that, conventional teaching and learning strategies, such as chalk and talk, rote memorising and spelling test, have caused the pupils to have less interest in learning vocabulary. Previous studies had proven that mastering English vocabulary had always been a major challenge for language learners. Therefore, this study was conducted with the aim to strengthen pupils' retention of vocabulary and motivate them to learn vocabulary in a fun way. The innovation of this research, VOCA-ME, is an interactive PowerPoint game that uses a contextual story containing audio narration while Quizizz is an online learning platform that promotes individual assessment. To investigate the effects of VOCA-ME, 30 Year Three pupils from Sarawak's national and national-type sub-urban primary schools participated in the study. Data obtained from the document analysis (School-Based Assessment results, pre-test and post-test), observation checklist and survey questionnaire were analysed quantitatively and qualitatively. The finding of the research revealed that most of the Year Three pupils had improvement in the retention of vocabulary and were driven to learn vocabulary. This is a good indicator that showed the potential use of VOCA-ME in assisting pupils to retain the vocabulary learnt better. Nevertheless, VOCA-ME is useful not only for Year Three pupils but also beneficial to pupils who have the same issue, especially Year One and Year Two pupils.

Key Words: VOCA-ME, vocabulary retention, motivation, interactive PowerPoint, Year Three pupils

1. INTRODUCTION

In this midst of Fourth Industrial Revolution (Industry 4.0), English has become a common lingua franca across the globe. It is crucial for Malaysian pupils to master English at a very young age. In Malaysia, English is regarded as the second language and is a compulsory subject to be taught in schools. Currently, Malaysian government implemented the Primary School Standard Curriculum (KSSR) aligned with the Common European Framework of References (CEFR) in English. One of the aims of this curriculum is to elevate Malaysian pupils' proficiency in four basic English language skills - listening, speaking, reading and writing. They must be skilful at these four skills in order to be a successful language user.

Parallel to this, Kunnu, Uiphant & Sukwises (as cited in Chai et al., 2020) said that vocabulary is one of the core elements of language aptitude and reflects how well listeners listen, speak, read and write. Pupils need to have a bank of words which they can select to convey the meanings that they intend to express. However, most of the primary school pupils are having difficulty in retaining the vocabulary learnt due to conventional teaching and learning strategies. Upon realising this, it had prompted the researchers to look for an alternative approach, which is utilising games to teach vocabulary so that it can motivate pupils to learn vocabulary and retain it in their memory.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Vocabulary

For most pupils in Malaysia, studying English is like learning a foreign language and to begin the language learning journey, pupils need to embark with learning vocabulary. According to Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2010), vocabulary means all the words in a particular language. Therefore, pupils need to build up and retain a list of English vocabulary in order to understand and use the language. Vocabulary learning plays a vital role in mastering the English language. This is further proven by Viera (2017) who said that to become successful users of English, we need to have a solid foundation of vocabulary knowledge. In fact, our Ministry of Education Malaysia has continuously put emphasis on vocabulary learning by producing an English language syllabus from Year 1 to Year 6. In that syllabus, it consists of a list of words that need to be mastered by the pupils in that particular year. From here, it is undeniably that vocabulary is important to be learnt and grasped by the pupils.

2.2 Games

In this ongoing globalisation era, games are still a useful tool to be applied upon the pupils because they are student-centred activities requiring active involvement of learners (Sevik and Bostancıoğlu, 2020). Game-based approach is a kind of instructional activity, which integrates games into teaching for educational purposes (Zhang, 2018). Through games, it can provide a reactive atmosphere to the pupils and motivate pupils to learn

extrinsically and intrinsically (Lukas et.al., 2020). Furthermore, incorporating captivating games through Information and Communication Technology (ICT) tools, particularly during this COVID-19 pandemic, will attract pupils' attention to learn because it provides them with contents in interactive ways. Apart from that, playing games will surely influence pupils' cognitive advancement as individuals need to be a thinker or a problem solver to win a game.

2.3 Vocabulary and Games

For an individual to be proficient in the English language, basics of vocabulary and meanings must first be attained. However, in Malaysian context, teachers tend to teach vocabulary using methods such as decoding the word meaning or providing synonyms (Saad, Yaacob & Shapii, 2017). As for pupils, most of them find it challenging to acquire the English vocabulary due to the difficulties in remembering and retaining the new vocabulary learnt (Chai and Yunus, 2020). According to Stav, Subon and Unin (2019), vocabulary retention means the ability to store or remember as many words as possible. Hence, teaching and learning English vocabulary is not an easy task. Pupils must first engage in their learning so that a comprehensive learning experience can be created.

To achieve this, utilizing the use of games would be one of the good alternatives for the teachers because it caters to different types of learners: visual learners, auditory learners and kinaesthetic learners. This is further supported by a study conducted by Lukas et al. (2020) upon Year One pupils whereby the results showed that the U-NO-ME card game could help pupils to retain the vocabulary learnt better. In another study done by Chai et al. (2020) upon Year Four pupils using ICT tools, their findings indicate that the use of Pocable Game and Pear Deck can help to enhance the pupils' vocabulary skills. Thus, without doubt, acquiring and retaining English vocabulary through games would be an effective approach to be applied upon the pupils.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study employed the mixed-method approach which involved 30 Year Three pupils from Sarawak's national and national-type sub-urban primary schools. Purposive sampling was used to choose 15 pupils from each school who had low to intermediate levels of proficiency in the English language. Their English proficiency level was determined through the School-Based Assessment (SBA) results. To investigate the effects of using VOCA-ME in enhancing pupils' retention of vocabulary, the researchers had used pre-test and post-test, observation checklist and survey questionnaire.

The first step of this study was to ask the pupils to sit for a pre-test using Quizizz. In that test, pupils need to recall back the vocabulary that they have learnt and spell ten words (10 marks each) based on the pictures given. The results were then gathered and analysed. Based on the analysis, the researchers introduced VOCA-ME, an interactive PowerPoint game that uses a contextual story containing audio narration, to the pupils. At the same time, the researchers requested help from their family members to record a short video so that the researchers were able to observe pupils' participation in the game.

Observation checklist was used and it consisted of three statements and remarks for the researchers to take note of pupils’ behaviour while playing the game.

After three days, pupils were given a post-test again with the same questions to identify if there were any improvements in their results. In the meantime, pupils can play the game as many times as they want. Lastly, pupils were given a survey questionnaire to answer, gauging on the improvement in retention of vocabulary and motivation aspects. The survey questionnaire, adapted from Chai et al. (2020), consisted of five statements and the pupils were given the option to choose “Agree” or “Disagree”.

4. RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Table 1 and Figure 1 below display the results of the pre-test and post-test.

Table 2: Results of the Pre-test and Post-test

Score	Descriptor	Number of Pupils	
		Pre-test	Post-test
80 – 100	Excellent	2	22
40 – 79	Satisfactory	17	8
0 – 39	Poor	11	0

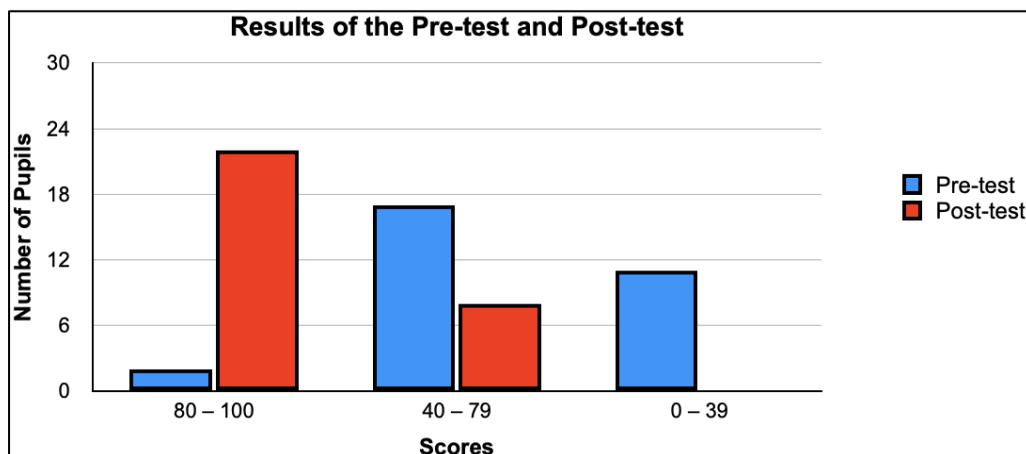


Figure 2: Pupils’ Scores in the Pre-test and Post-test

In Table 1 and Figure 1, the data obtained indicates that there was a significant improvement in the pupils’ post-test result. In the pre-test, there were only 2 pupils who could score 80 – 100 but in the post-test, 22 pupils managed to score 80 – 100. As for scores 40 – 79, the number of pupils reduced from 17 to 8 in the post-test as compared to the pre-test. In the post-test, none of the pupils scored 0 – 39 as compared to 11 pupils in the pre-test. Overall, we can see a clear remarkable improvement in the post-test which indicates that VOCA-ME and Quizizz are effective in improving pupils’ retention of

vocabulary. The observation checklist was then triangulated between two researchers of the two different schools.

Table 2: Data Collected from the Observation Checklist

Observation Checklist Items	Remarks from Researchers	
	Researcher A	"Pupils could explore and play the game independently."
Pupils can play VOCA-ME well by themselves.	Researcher B	"Yes, pupils were able to play the game by themselves after guidance was given to the pupils due to technical problems."
	Researcher A	"Pupils were reciting along with the jazz chant, "Ding Dong Dong; Ding Dong Dong; ..." while playing the game."
Pupils are engaged in playing VOCA-ME.		"Pupils were focused while playing the game."
	Researcher B	
	Researcher A	"Pupils liked to use "Crack the code" clue to solve the questions."
Pupils use clue(s) to solve questions.		
	Researcher B	"Pupils attempted both of the clues given to answer the questions."

From the observations, the pupils involved in this research were seen playing VOCA-ME actively by themselves while using the clues provided to play the game. Table 3 below shows the descriptive statistics of the data collected from the survey questionnaire.

Table 3: Data Collected from the Survey Questionnaire (n = 30)

	Statements	Agree n (%)	Disagree n (%)
1	I had fun while playing VOCA-ME and Quizizz.	28 (93.3)	2 (6.7)
2	VOCA-ME and Quizizz make me feel excited to learn more vocabulary of English.	29 (96.7)	1 (3.3)
3	I think using VOCA-ME and Quizizz help me to remember the vocabulary better.	29 (96.7)	1 (3.3)
4	I can remember the spelling of the vocabulary learnt.	29 (96.7)	1 (3.3)
5	I am interested to play again VOCA-ME and Quizizz.	28 (93.3)	2 (6.7)

As shown in Table 3, Questions 1, 2 and 5 concentrated on pupils' motivational level while Questions 3 and 4 focused on the improvement of pupils' retention in vocabulary. For the aspects of motivational level, 93.3% of the pupils agreed that they had fun with VOCA-ME and Quizizz (Question 1), 96.7% agreed with the statement "VOCA-ME and Quizizz made me feel excited to learn more vocabulary in English." and 93.3% agreed that they are interested in playing VOCA-ME and Quizizz again. These three data indicate that pupils were highly motivated to learn vocabulary using VOCA-ME and Quizizz rather than the conventional teaching and learning methods. On the aspects of pupils' improvement in the retention of vocabulary, 96.7% of the pupils absolutely agreed with the statements "I think using VOCA-ME and Quizizz help me to remember the vocabulary better." and "I can remember the spelling of the vocabulary learnt." (Question 3 and Question 4). Thus, it is relevant to say that VOCA-ME and Quizizz is practical and useful in helping the pupils to remember the vocabulary and the spelling better.

5. CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATION

The implementation of VOCA-ME is indeed helpful in retaining Year Three pupils' vocabulary. VOCA-ME had also successfully motivated pupils in participating themselves actively in learning vocabulary. These results can be seen clearly from the data collected from document analysis, observation checklist and survey questionnaire whereby most of the pupils had positive experience in learning and retaining vocabulary through VOCA-ME.

For further research, it is recommended to carry out this intervention upon Year One and Year Two pupils. It is also good if we can alter the game by changing the words learnt to high frequency words or synonyms which are not stated in the textbook. With this, a productive language environment can be created because pupils can play this game multiple times with different words each time. In addition, pupils can also learn and remember repertoire of vocabulary through a fun, meaningful and purposeful way.

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