



# The Use Of Board Game In Vocabulary Learning For The Eleventh-Grade Students

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## Abstract

This qualitative descriptive study investigated the impact of using board games into English vocabulary instruction for eleventh-grade students at MA Miftahul Ulum Bettet. Data were collected through classroom observations, structured interviews with five students and the teacher, and document analysis (lesson plans, student reflections). Thematic analysis revealed that board games significantly enhanced student engagement and motivation, fostering collaborative learning and contextualized vocabulary acquisition. Students reported increased enjoyment and improved vocabulary retention compared to traditional methods. While challenges related to time management and instructional alignment were identified, the findings strongly suggest that board games offer a valuable and effective supplementary approach to vocabulary instruction, aligning with constructivist and experiential learning principles.

**Keywords:** Board Game, Vocabulary Learning

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## INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary acquisition is a cornerstone of language proficiency, playing a pivotal role in communication, comprehension, and language learning. In second language acquisition (SLA), the mastery of vocabulary enables learners to decode complex texts, articulate thoughts effectively, and engage in meaningful interactions (Dimpleby & Burton, 2020). Vocabulary extends beyond the mere accumulation of words; it involves understanding their meanings, contexts, and appropriate applications in both receptive (listening and reading) and productive (speaking and writing) language skills (Schmitt & Schmitt, 2020). However, the path to achieving robust vocabulary knowledge often poses challenges, particularly for second language learners who struggle with retention, contextual usage, and confidence (Rakhimova, 2024).

Traditional vocabulary learning methods, such as rote memorization, have proven inadequate for fostering long-term retention or meaningful application. Recent studies emphasize the importance of active, context-based approaches that engage learners and create opportunities for practical use (Eichstaedt et al., 2021). Interactive strategies, including the use of multimedia tools and games, are increasingly recognized as effective alternatives for enhancing vocabulary learning. These methods not only foster engagement but also address diverse learning styles and promote collaborative learning environments (Volodina et al., 2020).

One promising strategy is the use of board games, which combine education with entertainment (Gkouzioti, 2024). Board games create a dynamic and stress-free atmosphere where students can practice vocabulary in context, collaborate with peers, and develop confidence in using new words (Tabassum & Naveed, 2024). By incorporating elements of competition and cooperation, board games motivate learners to participate actively and enhance their vocabulary retention contexts (Carpenter et al., 2022). Moreover, the integration of narrative texts with board games offers a contextualized approach to vocabulary learning, allowing students to associate new words with meaningful stories and real-life scenarios (Ningrum et al., 2024).

In the context of MA Miftahul Ulum Bettet, vocabulary mastery has been identified as a significant challenge for the first grade students. Observations reveal that traditional teaching methods, which rely heavily on written texts and exercises, provide limited opportunities for students to apply vocabulary in interactive and communicative settings. This often results in a lack of confidence and motivation among learners. Recognizing these challenges, this study explores the use of board games as a novel approach to enhance vocabulary acquisition and retention. By focusing on narrative texts, the research aims to create a meaningful learning experience that aligns with the principles of constructivist and experiential learning theories. The research objectives are to know the use of board games in vocabulary mastery at the eleventh-grade students of MA. Miftahul Ulum Bettet and to know the students' perceptions of using board games to enhance their vocabulary in narrative texts

## METHOD

This study adopts a qualitative descriptive design to explore the implementation of board games in vocabulary learning among eleventh-grade students at MA Miftahul Ulum Bettet. The qualitative approach allows for an in-depth understanding of how the teaching method impacts student engagement and vocabulary acquisition (Mertler, 2024). The research was conducted at MA Miftahul Ulum Bettet, involving 44 students of the eleventh-grade and the English teacher as participants. The school was selected due to its innovative use of board games in language learning.

### Data Collection Procedures

Data were collected using three main techniques:

1. Observation:

Direct classroom observations documented how board games were integrated into vocabulary lessons, focusing on student engagement and interaction.

2. Interviews:

structured interviews with 5 students and the teacher provided insights into their experiences and perceptions.

3. Documentation:

Supporting materials, including photographs, lesson plans, and student reflections, were analyzed to validate findings.

### Data Analysis

Data analysis is the process of systematically searching and compiling data obtained from interviews, field notes, and documentation, by organizing data into categories, breaking it into units, synthesizing it, arranging it into patterns, choosing what is important and what is not important. required, studied and conclusions drawn. To make it easy for one self and others to understand, the data analysis process carried out in this research used several steps such as (Olesti et al., 2023)

Thematic analysis was used to process the data, involving three steps:

1. Data Reduction: Relevant information related to board game implementation was categorized.

2. Data Display: Organized summaries and visual presentations highlighted key patterns and themes.

3. Conclusion Drawing: Insights were synthesized to address the research questions.

### Data Triangulation

To ensure validity, triangulation was applied through multiple sources (students), methods (observation, interviews, documentation), and timeframes.

This method provides a comprehensive view of how board games can enhance vocabulary learning in a classroom setting (Carless et al., 2020).

## FINDING AND DISCUSSION

This study investigates the implementation of board games in vocabulary learning among eleventh-grade students at MA Miftahul Ulum Bettet. The findings are presented based on data collected through observations, interviews, and documentation, followed by thematic analysis.

### Finding

#### The Use of Board Games in Vocabulary Learning

The observation revealed that the use of board games significantly improved classroom dynamics. The teacher integrated board games into the vocabulary lessons by dividing students into small groups, where they competed and collaborated to complete vocabulary-related tasks. For example, students matched words with their meanings, constructed sentences using target vocabulary, and solved puzzles based on narrative themes. During the sessions, the teacher acted as a facilitator, guiding students and providing immediate feedback. The integration of game elements, such as time limits and rewards, fostered a competitive yet enjoyable atmosphere. The structured design of the games ensured that all students actively participated, regardless of their initial vocabulary mastery.

#### Student Engagement and Interaction

Data from observations and interviews demonstrated high levels of student engagement and interaction during the implementation of board games. Students reported feeling more motivated to learn vocabulary through games compared to traditional methods. They expressed that the games were enjoyable and made it easier to remember new words. The researcher interviewed 5 students as samples from the research regarding student responses after learning vocabulary using board games techniques. with a question sentence like the following:

Researcher: "what is your response after carrying out vocabulary learning using board games techniques.?"  
The first student mentioned, "Playing board games helped me understand the meaning of words faster. I also enjoyed working with my friends to complete the tasks." The second student mentioned, "I find that board games help me learn vocabulary in a more enjoyable way, so I can remember the meanings of words more easily." The third student

mentioned, “ I like how we can cooperate with friends, and it makes the classroom atmosphere more exciting. The fourth student mentioned, “ Sometimes I have trouble understanding the rules of the game, but my friends help, so I can still learn.” The fifth student mentioned, “Board games keep me from getting bored during class, unlike the usual memorization methods.” Similarly, the teacher noted that the students displayed increased enthusiasm and confidence during vocabulary activities.

### Challenges in Implementation

Despite the positive outcomes, several challenges were identified. Managing time effectively during the game sessions was a recurring issue, as some students required additional time to grasp the instructions or complete tasks. Additionally, the teacher highlighted the need for careful planning to ensure that the games aligned with the learning objectives and curriculum requirements.

### Discussion

The findings align with previous research emphasizing the effectiveness of board games in vocabulary learning (ChePa et al., 2022). Board games provide a contextualized and interactive learning experience, promoting active engagement and meaningful application of vocabulary.

#### 1. Effectiveness of Board Games

The use of board games supports the principles of constructivist and experiential learning, which emphasize active participation and social interaction as key components of language acquisition. By incorporating narrative texts into the games, students were able to associate new words with meaningful contexts, enhancing both retention and application.

#### 2. Engagement and Collaborative Learning

The findings highlight the role of board games in fostering a collaborative learning environment. Group-based activities encouraged peer interaction, allowing students to learn from each other. This aligns with Vygotsky's theory of social constructivism, which underscores the importance of social interaction in cognitive development.

#### 3. Addressing Challenges

The challenges identified, such as time management and instructional alignment, underscore the need for careful planning and adaptation. Teachers should allocate sufficient time for explanations and ensure that the game design aligns with specific learning goals. Providing differentiated tasks for students with varying proficiency levels can also enhance the effectiveness of board games in diverse classrooms.

#### 4. Practical Implications

This study provides valuable insights for educators seeking innovative methods to enhance vocabulary learning. Board games can be a powerful tool to engage students, especially in environments where traditional methods have proven less effective. However, their success depends on thoughtful integration into the curriculum and active teacher facilitation.

## CONCLUSION

The use of board games in vocabulary learning at the eleventh-grade students of MA Miftahul Ulum Bettet significantly enhanced student engagement, interaction, and vocabulary retention. While challenges remain, teachers should allocate sufficient time for explanations and ensure that the game design aligns with specific learning goals. The findings highlight the potential of board games to transform vocabulary instruction into an enjoyable and effective learning experience.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The researcher would like to express his deepest gratitude to Universitas Islam Madura which has provided invaluable support during the research towards the completion of this research. The researchers also expressed their deepest gratitude to MA Miftahul Ulum Bettet Pamekasan for providing the opportunity to conduct research within their institution. The researchers thank the teachers and students for their warm cooperation and active participation, which was integral to the success of this research.

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