

THE USE OF ONLINE BRITISH COUNCIL APP TO IMPROVE INDONESIAN EYL STUDENTS' VOCABULARY MASTERY

PENGUNAAN APLIKASI BRITISH COUNCIL ONLINE UNTUK MENINGKATKAN PENGUASAAN KOSAKATA BAHASA INGGRIS UNTUK PEMBELAJAR MUDA SISWA INDONESIA

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Abstrak

Semua jenis game online, dari yang lebih praktis hingga yang lebih sulit, terdengar asing bagi masyarakat umum, terutama bagi anak-anak. Karena itu, artikel ini akan fokus pada Aplikasi British Council for Kids, yang mempunyai beberapa manfaat dari bermain game online ini. Studi ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji dampak penggunaan game online yang dikembangkan oleh British Council for Kids untuk meningkatkan kosakata bahasa Inggris pada anak-anak sekolah dasar. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif dengan mewawancarai tiga siswa sekolah dasar untuk pengumpulan datanya. Setelah mempelajari cara menggunakan kegiatan yang ada di dalam permainan game online ini, para peserta dalam penelitian ini menyampaikan bahwa mereka merasa lebih baik karena selain menyenangkan mereka juga mendapatkan kosakata-kosakata baru setelah belajar melalui game online ini,. Mereka memiliki keinginan yang kuat untuk belajar bahasa Inggris, terutama dasar-dasarnya, yang mencakup kosakata. Game ini tidak hanya membantu dalam meningkatkan kosakata tetapi disertai dengan mendengarkan, memahami, dan mengucapkan kata-kata dengan benar. Game ini juga dapat dengan mudah diakses di ponsel dan komputer. Menurut hasil penelitian ini, game online yang dikembangkan oleh British Council for Kids dapat menjadi alat yang menyenangkan, menarik, dan berhasil memperkenalkan serta memperluas kosakata bahasa Inggris anak-anak.

Kata kunci: EYL; *Game Online*; Kosakata; *British Council for Kids*

Abstract

All kinds of online games, from the more practical to the more frivolous, sound strange to the general public, particularly to kids. Having said that, this article will focus on the British Council for Kids App, one of many advantages of playing games online. This study aims to examine the impact of using online games developed by the British Council for Kids to enhance English vocabulary on elementary school children. This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach by interviewing three primary school pupils for its data collection. After learning how to use these activities, the participants in this study reported feeling better. They have a strong desire to learn English, particularly the basics, which include vocabulary. This game not only helps with vocabulary but also with listening comprehension and pronouncing words correctly. It's also convenient that the game can be accessed on mobile phones and desktop computers. According to

the results of this study, the online game developed by the British Council for Kids can be a fun, engaging, and successful tool for introducing and expanding children's English vocabulary.

Keywords: EYL; Game Online; Vocabulary; British Council for Kids

INTRODUCTION

One of the fundamental points in language learning, especially for young students, is vocabulary mastery, which includes the ability to recognize and understand words as well as the ability to apply them successfully in various situations (Pavita & Nirmala, 2021). Effective vocabulary acquisition is essential for total language proficiency, according to research, especially in circumstances where learners learn English as a foreign language (EFL), where they often face significant difficulties with the use and ability to remember vocabulary (Elshahawy, 2020).

This learning involves a pleasant learning experience especially in learning English to young learners (EYL) in the context of EFL, adding digital tools in teaching and learning processes or activities have emerged as a promising way or strategy to increase engagement and provide motivation among young learners (Khan et al., 2024). The integration of digital tools in language learning has received a lot of attention lately, especially when it comes to teaching EYL (Guillén et al., 2020; Jabali & Walker, 2021). The British Council for Kids, as an online platform, offers a unique opportunity to explore how digital resources can improve vocabulary acquisition among young learners. Previous research investigations have demonstrated the efficacy of various digital tools and approaches in language acquisition, emphasizing the value of dynamic and captivating settings for vocabulary growth (Ardina et al., 2019; Oxford & Scarcella, 1994).

According to Dincer (2020), digital behaviors can have a significant impact on language learning outcomes. He talks about how the use of digital tools can make it difficult to distinguish between learning in and out of the classroom and suggest that teachers should integrate students digital experience outside the classroom into formal education. This perspective is particularly important because with the increasing reliance on technology for language learning, especially in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, there is a need to move to online learning environments. Studies have shown that online learning can increase motivation and engagement among EYL students, as shown by Jiang et al., (2023) who studied the psychological effects of online learning on English learners during the pandemic. In addition, game design elements and digital applications have been shown to have a positive impact on language acquisition. According to Klimova et al., (2023) student engagement and vocabulary acquisition can be improved through the motivational elements of digital games.

This is particularly important for sites like the British Council for Kids, which uses a gamification component to make learning fun. Research by Zamborova & Klimova, (2023) on the benefits of collaborative technology in language learning suggest that using such interactive tools not only helps with vocabulary retention but also creates a more dynamic learning environment. Despite research on digital tools in language teaching, there is severe lack of information on how these tools used to improve vocabulary among EYL students Hong et al similarly stated that, despite the increasing integration of digital tools in language education, there is still a significant gap in understanding their specific applications and effectiveness in improving vocabulary mastery

among early childhood learners (Qalati, 2020), while many studies have examined the effectiveness of other internet services such as Quizlet and YouTube, there is little empirical data specific to the British Council platform. This gap presents an opportunity for researchers to investigate how these platforms can be used to improve vocabulary acquisition, thereby expanding the existing body of knowledge on digital language learning.

The novelty of this study is that targeted survey was conducted by the British Council for Kids as a means of improving vocabulary among young learners. The study focused on online games to gain insight into how engaging they appear and how they can be used to support vocabulary acquisition. This is consistent with the findings of Yu & Liu (2024), who highlighted the importance of learning environments that incorporate informal digital content for developing language skills and intercultural openness. In summary, while there much research supporting the use of digital tools in language learning, the British Council for Kids' dedicated app for improving vocabulary among EYL students represent a new area of research. This study seeks to fill a gap in the literature by providing empirical evidence on the effectiveness of using these online resources, thereby enriching the understanding of how digital platforms can be optimized to promote vocabulary learning among young learners. This study was designed to answer the following questions: (1) How did you feel when about using the British Council for Kids platform? (2) What specific features of the platform where helpful to you in learning new vocabulary the most? (3) What impact do you think using the platform had on your vocabulary acquisition?

METHODS

Council for Kids platform in increasing vocabulary acquisition among young students. A qualitative approach is well suited for this study as it provides in-depth insight into students' experiences and perceptions of these digital platforms.

Participants

Participants in this study were selected from a group of young students aged from 7 to 12 years old who are included in the English as Foreign Language (EFL) program. A total of 3 students were involved in the research located on Jalan KH. Malik, Rt. 01 Rw. 07, Buring, Kedungkandang, Malang Regency, represents a variety of backgrounds and levels of English proficiency. The selection criteria ensure that participants have previously studied with digital learning tools and are familiar with the British Council for Kids platform.

Data Collections

Data were collected through two main methods: Practice sessions and semi-structured interviews.

1. Practice Sessions

The Participants participated in a training course activity for about a week using the British Council for Kids platform. In this unit, students will be supported to explore various activities or activities or games designed to improve vocabulary. In this case, the researchers also observed the of students' interactions and reactions when using this platform, the types of vocabulary they learned, and the challenges they encountered while learning through this platform. These observational data provided valuable insight into the actual application of the platform in life learning contexts.

2. Semi-structured Interview

This Practice session was followed by a semi-structured interview with each participant with the goal of collecting qualitative data about their experiences feelings or reactions after using this

game-based learning platform. This interview was designed to get clearer and more precise answers to the students' feedback on the effectiveness of the platform in improving vocabulary skills. The questions were as follows: 1). How did you feel using the British Council for Kids platform? 2). What features really helped you improve your new vocabulary? 3). How did this platform help you to improve your newly acquired vocabulary?

In this study, the interview process was conducted in an informal manner and therefore not rigid in order to help students respond based on their own experiences of participating in activities or gaming activities while learning through online games. The interview lasted between 15 and 20 minutes and was conducted between the researcher and each student, in addition with the consent of the participants, the interview was audio-recorded to ensure accuracy or thoroughness in data analysis.

Data Analysis

Data collected from training sessions and interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis. This method involves several steps:

1. Identity

The researcher transcribed the audio recordings of the interviews and reviewed the observation notes to familiarize themselves with the data. This habituation process is important as it helps the researcher immerse themselves in the material, better understand the participants' perspectives. As Braun and Clarke (2006) noted, the presentation of the data is essential to gaining insight into emerging themes (Zhang & Graham, 2020).

2. Coding

Initial codes were generated from the data and key themes related to vocabulary acquisition, engagement, and user experience of the platform were identified. This entailed identifying key themes related to vocabulary acquisition, engagement, and user experience of the British Council for Kids platform. Through an iterative coding process, the researcher methodically organized the data into relevant categories.

3. Theme Development

These criteria were then compiled into a broader theme that reflected the participants' experiences and perceptions. This theme development involved grouping related codes and identifying overarching patterns that emerged from the data. Thematic analysis enables researchers to create narratives that capture the essence of the participants' experiences (Ahluwalia et al., 2020).

4. Reviewing Themes

The themes were considered and refined to ensure that they accurately represented the data and answered the research questions. This step reviewed the data to verify to ensure that the themes were supported by the participants' responses. The findings were collated into a coherent narrative that focuses on the effectiveness of the British Council for Kids platform in increasing vocabulary acquisition among young learners.

5. Reporting

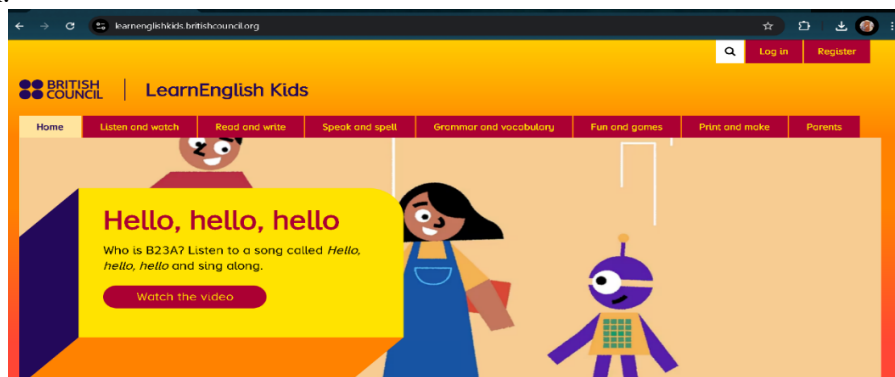
The findings were collated into a coherent narrative that focused on the effectiveness of the British Council for Kids platform in increasing vocabulary acquisition among young learners. The reporting phase involved a structured presentation of the themes, supported by direct quotes from participants describing their experiences. This approach ensured that the results were not only descriptive but also provided insight into the participants lived experiences.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

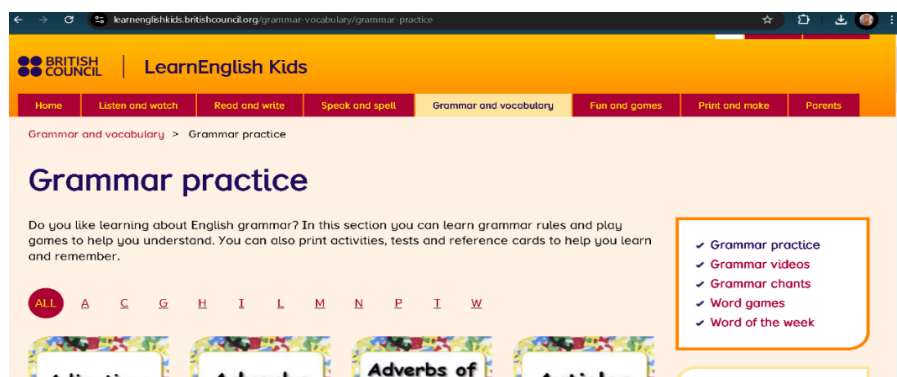
Learning English through online games on the internet is part of an interesting and fun way of learning and can increase students' motivation to learn, especially learning vocabulary which is the first and most important thing to learn a language (Yudha & Mandasari, 2021) Therefore, the researchers wanted to show that learning English through online games to improve vocabulary is one of the most important ways to learn English through online games that are fun and easy to understand online games (Octaberlina & Rofiki, 2021).

British Council for Kids game app

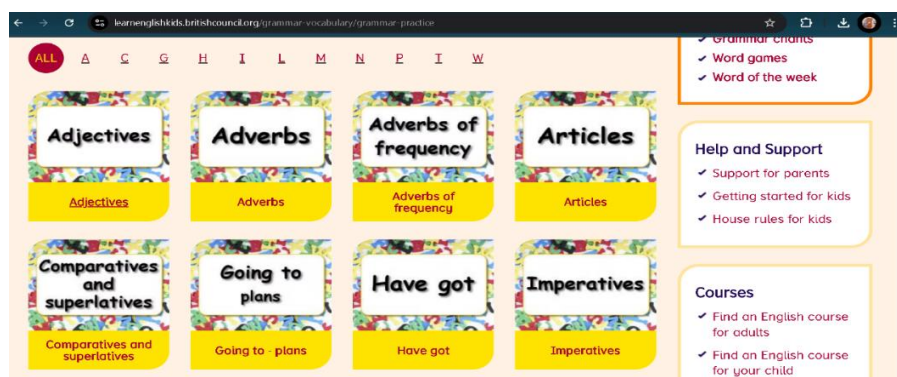
The British Council for Kids App is a program used as a learning medium in the form of a game and can be accessed through the British Council website or the App. The British Council website can be accessed through <https://learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org/>. The British Council app can be used on various devices such as Google. In this game, the features are designed to attract players who want to learn while playing this online game This website is one of the websites that contribute to the world of learning, especially for children between the ages of 5 to 12 because it is equipped with fun entertainment facilities and can be accessed for free through mobile phones or laptop without subscription. This website also makes it easier for children to learn because when they use this online game, they seem to be playing but without them realizing it they are learning according to one of Stephen Krashen's (1982), the monitoring hypothesis, in the theory of acquisition in the journal (Bahruddin & Febriani, 2020) which explains that unconscious learning such as through playing can help children in the learning process, And this can also be applied to the world of children because according to this world children themselves have their own personality that likes to play. Therefore, the researchers encourage children to play and accompany learning through playing this game. In this game, children can not only learn vocabulary but also learn to listen, speak, write, and read correctly and learn pronunciation because this game has many interesting features that can train children's skills and thus motivate them to learn English.



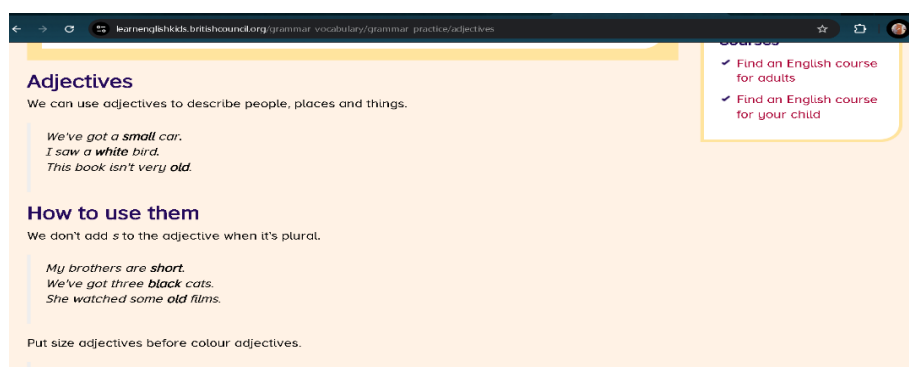
Picture 1.



Picture 2



Picture 3



Picture 4

The first thing children do when playing this game;

Access the app or open the website. If you are using a laptop, open the Google app and then visit the British Council website <https://learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org/>. After logging in to the homepage of this app, there are various options as shown in Picture 1.1. There are options for "Listen and Watch", "Read and Write", "Speak and Spell", "Grammar and Vocabulary", "Fun Games", "Print and Create", and the last option is "Parents".

Select an activity: Click on one of the of activity types. Since this study explores the improvement of vocabulary, the researchers invited children as research subjects to click on the “Grammar and Vocabulary” section

The researchers then guided the children to choose a vocabulary they wanted to learn as shown Pictures 2 and 3.

Once they called the function, they chose, each game had its own instructions or commands. The commands were as follows: One of them was to choose the correct answer, complete the vocabulary and insert the picture, or follow other instructions. Before they started playing, there was material or knowledge about the meaning of the material they chose, as shown in Picture 4.

After completing the instructions or when the game is over, conducting an assessment and correction, allowing the child to see the correct and incorrect answers and the points or results obtained in the game. If they want to add new vocabulary by playing the game again at a higher level, they can do so as well.

In this study, the respondents' reactions to learning English vocabulary through the British Council for Kids were obtained through interviews. This section provides information on the respondents' responses in the semi-structured interviews to answer the questions in this study.

How do they feel when using the British Council for Kids platform?

From the interview results of the first respondent, he expressed his feelings when he first used the platform: "I was confused at first because I had just seen such an online game platform, but when I was guided and instructed on how to use it, I became in it, and became more and more fun to play through this platform". The second respondent's opinion on the platform was almost the same: "My feeling was that when I saw this online game, I thought I would be invited to play the game because I like to play, but it turned out that this online game was for learning while playing, but I can learn while playing like this, I am very happy". The last respondents: When I first saw this game. I was curious about what we would do with it. It turned out that we were invited to play while learning".

The above statements by the respondents show that they were curious and confused because they first saw the platform. When they first saw the game, curiosity, was aroused and they were curious about how to use it. Although they were confused, when they received instructions on how to use it, they became interested in following the methods or steps taken to learn through this online game. This way entertaining approach makes the learning process more interesting and interactive, thereby avoiding boredom and increasing learning motivation. (Nadeem, Oroszlanyova, & Farag, 2023) stated that game-based learning can increase students or children's motivation and engagement. (Baguio, Rama, Rico, & Salazar, 2021) also stated in his study that online game platforms such as Kahoot! can provide exciting new opportunities to assess and improve English learning.

A platform-specific features that they find most helpful for learning new vocabulary.

"I think the most helpful for me is to watch videos where the children mention a certain vocabulary over and over again. This feature is in the "Grammar and Vocabulary→Words of the Week", There are many vocabulary options in these boxes. I will click on one of the boxes" (1) "At first, I thought that all parts of the game would help me learn vocabulary, but when I was asked to check them one by one, I found that I was particularly interested in and helped by the "Grammar

and Vocabulary→Word Games" part. Because there are many choices field in this game, when you choose one of them, the game consists of matching words in the vocabulary with pictures. In addition to learning new vocabulary, I can also hear its pronunciation. At the end of the game, after you match each word with the picture, there will be a score or score and correction to see the accuracy of the game result we answered." (2)

"I saw a lot of options in this online game, but what interested me was that when I checked the "Grammar and Vocabulary→ Singing Grammar→section, and then selected the wrong box, " there were many games, such as: Match the vocabulary with the box in the picture below, then each vocabulary, has a pronunciation method, and then there will be a correction after the game is completed to see if your answer is correct. In addition, there is a short but clear video, because the explanation is with pictures, there are texts below the video to help us. So, I picked up some of the vocabulary I just learned in the game.

All answers have the same answer. Almost all the features in this game allow you to learn vocabulary or add new vocabulary. You can try all the interesting features, but the more specific ones can be found in the "Grammar and Vocabulary" section. In addition to learning vocabulary this online game allows you to learn reading, speaking, writing, listening in a non-boring way.

The use of these online games affects the acquisition of vocabulary for children

"Since the launch of this online game, I have been curious about what we will do with this game. At first, I was confused and worried whether I would be able to participate in this game. It turned out that after the guidance and introduction of the game, I became interested and wanted to continue playing. In addition, I have learned some words by playing " (1)

"I am very happy because the gameplay has become easy and fun, and I am learning new vocabulary " (2)

"I want to play it again, because it does not get boring and it actually makes me want to continue playing this game, I like this game because I can learn while playing and it is easy to remember the vocabulary I have learned because I can it at any time without restrictions" (3)

There are actually several options or choices in this online game that can be clicked or selected to improve vocabulary such as "Listen and Watch", "Read and Write", and "Grammar and Vocabulary" which provide a better learning experience than learning from regular books or workbooks used in school. These online game learning media can also help to increase the interest or motivation of students or young people to continue learning in a fun way instead of making them feel that English class is a difficult subject. Aside from the fact that they do not find it difficult, they will not feel bored while learning this online game (Nadeem et al., 2023). The willingness or interest of student to repeat learning through this game will also help children to remember the learned vocabulary in a more fun way (Octaberlina & Rofiki, 2021).

The advantage of this game is that children can learn in a fun, interactive way using the features of the game itself. In addition, the game can be accessed for free on a variety of devices, including computers, laptops, and mobile phones, so it can be played anytime, anywhere. The game also comes with text, sounds, and pictures to help children understand and remember vocabulary easily. Children can play this game at their own pace or according to their abilities, either alone or under the guidance of a teacher or someone who knows more about this game, this self-paced ability-based progression is particularly beneficial, as it acknowledges the diverse learning speeds and capabilities within a classroom or learning group, permitting each child to

master concepts before advancing to more complex material (Lasala, 2022). Not only can improve their vocabulary, but they can also learn other things because there are many options for different materials, such as reading, listening, writing, and educational games that can encourage them to continue learning through this game, this is in line with Shabaneh & Farrah who said that by combining elements of play, interaction, and contextual relevance, this game can stimulate the interest and motivation of young learners, thus creating a more conducive environment for developing their vocabulary (Shabaneh & Farrah, 2019). Although this game has many advantages, there are limitations to this platform, such as: The features are not suitable for all ages, as there may be some age groups that still have difficulty getting out of the age-appropriate activities on this platform. In addition, this platform is also dependent on the Internet, this pervasive integration underscores the vital role the internet plays in facilitating seamless connectivity and access to wide array of services and resources specifically for use in this game (Al-mashhadi, Anbar, Hasbullah, & Alamiyedy, 2021). If you do not have an Internet connection, you will not be able to access the game, which can be one of the barriers to using this platform, as stated by Ying-Wei and Milikich in their paper which states ensuring easy access allows children to benefit from these online games (Cheng & Milikich, 2023). Although it seems simple, they are still confused at first when learning about this platform. Therefore, teachers or someone who already knows about this game must guide children through the learning process of this game.

CONCLUSION

The results of this study showed that the students' response to the British Council for Kids platform was positive. The results of this study showed that learning while playing through the British Council for Kids platform can expand the vocabulary of young learners. The activities or activities in this game not only make them learn things that bore them but also while playing which is the nature of young learners and can motivate them to learn. This study also highlights the need to find new ideas through learning strategies, both inside and outside the classroom so that young learners do not get bored but on quiet, opposite especially when learning English such as: Learning through other games while playing. It is recommended that future researchers should study the student's response to not only British Council for Kids platform to improve their vocabulary but also to improve "Reading and Spelling", "Listening and Watching", and many other features of the British Council for Kids platform.

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