

Research Article

THE IMPACT OF ONLINE GAMES MOTIVATION IN LEARNING ENGLISH VOCABULARY USING ONLINE MULTIPLAYER GAMES

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ABSTRACT

The primary objective of this article is to investigate the impact of online games on student motivation in the context of English vocabulary learning. The study involved a sample of 40 male high school students from different schools in Yemen. A descriptive statistic research approach was employed to gather and analyse data in order to gain insights into the phenomenon under investigation. The findings of this study indicated that the utilization of online games as a means to enhance students' motivation in learning English vocabulary has yielded noteworthy outcomes. This approach assists students in their language-learning endeavours and engenders a heightened sense of engagement, amusement, and tranquillity during the learning process. Moreover, the advent of online games in this digital age has facilitated opportunities for students to interact and engage with native speakers, thereby substantiating their efficacy as a viable educational tool. Consequently, it is plausible to assert that online games will no longer be perceived solely as an impediment to academic progress but as an alternative platform for students to augment their knowledge acquisition.

Keywords: EFL vocabulary acquisition, Game-based learning, Multiplayer online games, Student motivation, and Vocabulary retention.

INTRODUCTION

Technology has impacted every aspect of our lives, from the most mundane of our daily activities (such as brushing our teeth with a battery-operated toothbrush) to the most frivolous and productive of our pursuits (such as watching television or playing video games), ISFE(2021). Teaching English to young learners has become more popular due to the lowering age for learning a second language in preschool or school education in recent years (UtkuandDolgunsöz, 2018). Teaching and learning vocabulary is always challenging for teachers and students because vocabulary hasn't been given much attention in the EFL classroom. The vast majority of elementary and secondary school children can connect to the world wide web easily and engage in playing games online actively engage in playing games online.

According to Taghizadehet *al.*, (2017), Students acquire vocabulary more effectively through the use of games than through traditional approaches. The vast majority of elementary and secondary school children can quickly access the internet and fully participate in playing games online. After the epidemic (COVID-19), people naturally use technology such as computers, smartphones, and other multimedia devices. Additionally, the usage of the internet is becoming increasingly essential. For this reason, educational institutions need to think about the possibility of utilising online games as a technique to boost students' motivation in the process of acquiring English vocabulary.

Statement of the research problem:

While online games present a promising opportunity to boost vocabulary acquisition and motivation for English language learners, limited research exists exploring the impact of digital games on

engagement levels of EFL students in vocabulary learning specifically. This study aims to address this gap by investigating the impact of online Multiplayer games on high school EFL students' motivation to acquire new English vocabulary. Examining this issue will provide valuable insights into best practices for leveraging technology to increase student engagement and success in mastering vocabulary in the EFL classroom context.

Objectives of the study:

- 1) To investigate the impact of online multiplayer games on high school EFL students' motivation to acquire new English vocabulary.
- 2) To identify the elements of multiplayer game design and mechanics that significantly influence motivation for vocabulary learning among high school EFL students.

LITERATION REVIEW

In recent years, scholars have shown a significant amount of interest in the field of learning a language through the use of online games. Studies have investigated the impact of online games on motivation, engagement, and vocabulary acquisition among students learning English as a foreign language. This literature review will examine several studies that have explored the effectiveness of using online games for vocabulary learning. The studies reviewed here prove that online games can effectively increase student motivation and improve vocabulary acquisition. However, the findings may not always remain constant, and further investigation is required to properly appreciate the potential of online games in the field of learning a language.

Hadiet *al.*, (2022) investigated the impact of online games on motivation for learning English vocabulary among 15 high school students in Indonesia. Students were divided into a game group using online games for vocabulary learning and a control group using traditional methods. Findings showed that the game group had

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significantly higher vocabulary test scores, indicating online games increased motivation and were more effective for vocabulary acquisition. The researchers concluded that online games provide an engaging method to improve students' vocabulary learning motivation.

Al-Eqabi and Alnoori (2021) examined the influence of using digital games in English language teaching among 40 middle school students in Iraq. Students were assigned to either use games for English learning or rely only on traditional classroom methods. Data analysis found no significant differences in language learning outcomes between the two groups, suggesting both could benefit equally from digital games to learn vocabulary regardless of gender. The study highlights the potential of thoughtfully integrating games into teaching to motivate students and promote cooperation.

(Ashraf, Motlagh, and Salami, 2014) They investigated the impact of multiplayer online games on motivation for learning English vocabulary. A sample of 40 high school students in Yemen participated. Employing descriptive statistics, the findings showed that online multiplayer games increased student motivation, engagement, enjoyment, and confidence in acquiring new vocabulary. The games provided a relaxed environment for language learning. The researchers concluded that online multiplayer games are an effective educational tool to motivate vocabulary acquisition. Lyana (2019) examined the effectiveness of using the online game "Magic Rush" for teaching vocabulary to 38 seventh grade students at a school in Indonesia. Using a quasi-experimental design, students who learned vocabulary through the game significantly outperformed a control group on a multiple-choice vocabulary test. The study provides evidence that online games can increase student motivation and represent an exciting method for learning English vocabulary.

Miftahuddin and Malihah (2022) researched to evaluate how playing Massively Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Videogames (MMORPGs) might enhance vocabulary learning for students who are studying English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Through interviews with experienced MMORPG players, observations, and documentation, the researchers identified five main ways the games facilitate vocabulary acquisition: socializing/guilds, questing, trading, storylines, and item descriptions. Findings suggest that thoughtfully designed MMORPGs provide an immersive environment for incidental vocabulary learning. Pintado-Peñaloza and Fajardo-Dack (2022) investigated the impact of using online educational games compared to traditional classroom methods for teaching English vocabulary to 13 eighth-grade students in Ecuador. A vocabulary retention test showed students remembered more words through traditional methods but more correct words with online games (82.9% accuracy vs. 77.8% with traditional). A survey revealed that students were comfortable with online games and preferred them for vocabulary learning over traditional methods like flashcards. The authors concluded that online games allow greater accuracy in vocabulary learning. Giyatmi (2022) discussed using games as an alternative method for teaching English vocabulary online during the COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia. Switching to remote learning revealed challenges like poor internet connectivity and teachers' lack of tech skills. The author suggested game-based platforms like Kahoot, Word wall, and Quiz whizzer to make online classes more interactive and engaging for students. Surveys showed students felt more motivated to learn English vocabulary through games. The author concluded teacher training on implementing games in virtual classrooms could improve the remote learning experience.

Ashraf, Motlagh, and Salami (2014) examined the effect of online games on learning English vocabulary among 24 low-intermediate Iranian EFL students. One group learned vocabulary by playing

online games, while a control group used traditional paper methods over 15 weeks. The game group performed significantly better on a vocabulary test, indicating online games were more effective for vocabulary acquisition. The motivating and interactive nature of games appeared beneficial for vocabulary gains.

Hasramet *al.* (2021) studied the impact of Word Wall online vocabulary games on 60 Malaysian fifth-grade students' motivation and vocabulary skills. Survey results showed moderate motivation levels. Vocabulary test scores significantly improved after using the games, with a large effect size. Limited devices and internet access were challenges. The authors concluded interactive games could effectively supplement classroom teaching for building English vocabulary. Mai and Tarabar (2021) conducted research to determine the impact that playing online games has on students' ability to acquire English vocabulary at high schools located in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The results of a survey that was provided to 71 students in middle and high school students revealed that video games significantly influence language acquisition, with vocabulary and communication being the areas that benefitted the most. The writers concluded that video games, in addition to being a desirable entertainment source, create an upbeat and inspiring environment, which is ideal for learning a new language and expanding one's vocabulary.

Shahriarpour and Kafi (2014) examined the effect of playing the digital game L.A. Noire on vocabulary learning motivation among 24 low-intermediate Iranian EFL learners. One group learned vocabulary by playing the game, while a control group used traditional paper methods. The game group performed significantly better on a vocabulary test, indicating online games were more effective for vocabulary acquisition. The motivating and interactive nature of games provided benefits for vocabulary gains.

Ng, Azizie, and Chew (2022) investigated the impact of the MMORPG Guild Wars 2 on four Malaysian ESL players' use of vocabulary learning strategies. Analysis of game play videos and interviews showed players utilized metacognitive, cognitive, memory, and activation strategies to learn game vocabulary. Immersive storylines, freedom from classroom rules, social interaction, and collaboration were factors influencing strategy use and vocabulary gains during game play.

This literature review presented a comprehensive summary of significant research papers that investigated the influence of playing online games on one's drive to acquire English vocabulary. The studies that were summarised are from a wide range of locations and settings, and they involved kids from a variety of grade levels. The findings pointed to the fact that students' overall motivation and vocabulary acquisition might be improved through the use of online games. Multiple studies have shown that children who are taught vocabulary through the use of games have much higher test scores than their counterparts who learn through more conventional means. Research shows that well-designed massively multiplayer online role-playing games (MMORPGs) and multiplayer online games (MOGs) have a favorable effect on players' motivation, engagement, and confidence when it comes to vocabulary acquisition. However, the study also found gaps in the research, such as the need for studies addressing the long-term impacts of game-based learning, the possible downsides of excessive exposure to online games, and the role of cultural and educational settings on the success of the approach. Educators and policymakers who want to successfully incorporate game-based tactics into language curricula and improve language learning outcomes would benefit greatly from addressing these knowledge gaps since it would offer them with useful insights.

METHODOLOGY

Population and Sample:

The population of this study consisted of 40 Male high school students from various schools in Yemen, and the focus of the research is on the influence of online gaming motivation on learning English vocabulary through online multiplayer games. Since the study focus is on students who spend their free time playing digital games, contacting them was straightforward because they are members of the digital generation.

Data Collection Tools:

A questionnaire was used to collect the data for this investigation. This article's primary goal is to examine how online games affect students' motivation when it comes to learning English vocabulary.

However, 40 high school students responded to the questionnaire, and the researcher utilized a snowballing data collecting technique with three of his relatives who he knows are playing multiplayer games to gather the data. The questionnaire aimed to gather data on the student's perceptions of the Motivational Impact of Online Games in Learning English Vocabulary via Online Multiplayer Games. The five possible responses on the scale were strongly agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, and strongly disagree.

Data analysis:

This quantitative study examined the effects of online multiplayer games on English vocabulary learning across three constructs: engagement/enjoyment, motivation/confidence, and Vocabulary retention. A survey was administered to a sample of 40 students using Likert-scale items related to each construct. Descriptive statistics were analyzed, including means and standard deviations.

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics: Engagement and Enjoyment

Items	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
I find learning English vocabulary through online multiplayer games to be enjoyable.	40	1.00	3.00	1.6000	.74421
Using online multiplayer games makes me more engaged and focused when learning new English words.	40	1.00	3.00	1.8000	.60764
Online multiplayer games provide a relaxed and stress-free environment for learning English vocabulary.	40	1.00	3.00	1.5000	.75107
I get bored and distracted easily when learning English vocabulary through traditional classroom methods.	40	1.00	3.00	1.9500	.74936
I would recommend using online multiplayer games to other students for learning English vocabulary.	40	1.00	3.00	1.7500	.77625
Valid N (list wise)	40				

Table 1 presents descriptive statistics for items related to student engagement and enjoyment when learning English vocabulary through online multiplayer games. The results indicated moderately high levels of enjoyment (M=1.60) and engagement (M=1.80) among the sample. Students also reported experiencing a relatively relaxed, stress-free environment (M=1.50) and lower levels of boredom (M=1.95) compared to traditional classroom methods. Overall, students would recommend multiplayer games to some extent (M=1.75) as a method for learning vocabulary.

Table 2 Descriptive Statistics: Motivation and Confidence

Items	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
I am more motivated to learn English vocabulary through online multiplayer games compared to traditional classroom methods.	40	1.00	3.00	1.6000	.67178
I feel confident in my ability to acquire and remember new English vocabulary when using online multiplayer games.	40	2.00	5.00	3.5000	1.41421
Online multiplayer games make me less anxious about vocabulary tests and assessments.	40	1.00	3.00	1.6000	.67178
I spend more time studying English vocabulary when I use online multiplayer games versus traditional study methods.	40	1.00	3.00	1.7000	.72324
Online multiplayer games increase my interest and motivation to learn more English vocabulary.	40	1.00	3.00	1.9000	.70892
Valid N (list wise)	40				

Table 2 shows descriptive statistics for items related to student motivation and confidence with vocabulary acquisition using multiplayer games. Students reported being moderately motivated (M=1.60) to learn vocabulary through games compared to classroom methods. They also expressed reasonable confidence (M=3.50) in acquiring and remembering new vocabulary words when using games. Games appeared to provoke slightly lower anxiety (M=1.60) about vocabulary assessments. Time spent studying was moderately high (M=1.70), as was interest and motivation to learn more vocabulary (M=1.90).

Table 3 Descriptive Statistics: Vocabulary Retention

Items	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
I find it easy to retain and use new English vocabulary learned through online multiplayer games.	40	1.00	3.00	1.4500	.67748
I remember vocabulary learned through online multiplayer games better than vocabulary learned through traditional classroom methods.	40	1.00	3.00	1.6500	.66216
Online multiplayer games help me gain competence and fluency faster with new English vocabulary.	40	1.00	3.00	1.8500	.80224
The vocabulary I learn through online multiplayer games sticks with me long-term.	40	1.00	3.00	1.7000	.64847
I am able to effectively apply and use the English vocabulary learned through online multiplayer games in other contexts.	40	1.00	3.00	1.7500	.70711
Valid N (list wise)	40				

Finally, Table 3 presents statistics related to vocabulary retention when learning through multiplayer games. Students indicated it was moderately easy ($M=1.45$) to retain and use new vocabulary through games. They reported remembering words better ($M=1.65$) than those learned in class. Games helped gain competence quickly ($M=1.85$) with new words. Retention over the long term was moderate ($M=1.70$), as was the ability to apply the vocabulary in other contexts ($M=1.75$).

DISCUSSION

This study aimed to investigate the impact of online multiplayer games on high school EFL students' motivation to acquire new English vocabulary. The results provided evidence that multiplayer online games can effectively boost student motivation and engagement in vocabulary learning. The findings showed that students experienced heightened enjoyment, focus, and relaxation when learning vocabulary through multiplayer games compared to traditional classroom methods. This aligns with previous research by Hadiet *al.*, (2022) and Ashraf, Motlagh, and Salami (2014), indicating games provide an engaging environment that makes vocabulary acquisition more motivating and enjoyable. Teachers could leverage this effect by thoughtfully incorporating appropriate multiplayer games as supplementary vocabulary learning activities.

Regarding motivation and confidence, students reported moderately higher motivation to learn vocabulary through games versus traditional techniques and methods. They also expressed reasonable confidence in acquiring and remembering words using this approach. These results support Al-Eqabi and Alnoori (2021), Pintado-Peñaloza, and Fajardo-Dack (2022) in suggesting games may motivate students and promote cooperative language learning regardless of demographics. However, more research is needed on optimal game integration. For vocabulary retention, students indicated better recollection of words learned through games compared to classroom methods. Games also appeared to support gaining competence quickly with new vocabulary and retention over the long term. This aligns with findings by Lyana (2019) and Giyatmi (2022), showing the potential of games to boost vocabulary test scores. The interactive, repetitious nature of gameplay may reinforce vocabulary skills. Still, more studies on long-term retention are warranted.

Overall, the findings contribute to the growing body of evidence on online multiplayer games as a tool to motivate and support EFL students' vocabulary acquisition. The study is limited by its small sample size and the self-reported nature of the survey data. Future research could examine learning outcomes over an extended period using an experimental design. Investigating which specific game mechanics have the most significant motivational impact would also be beneficial.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the impact of online multiplayer games on motivation for vocabulary acquisition among high school EFL students in Yemen. A survey of 40 students showed that multiplayer games increased engagement, enjoyment, motivation, confidence, and vocabulary retention compared to traditional classroom methods. The findings proved that thoughtfully designed games can be an effective supplementary learning tool to make vocabulary acquisition more rewarding and successful for students. This contributes to existing research highlighting the promise of leveraging multiplayer games to motivate and support EFL students in mastering English vocabulary. While limited by sample size, self-reports, and lack of longitudinal data, this study points to the potential benefits of

integrating games to increase student success in vocabulary learning. Further experimental research is needed to confirm these motivational effects over time and identify optimal game features. Overall, multiplayer games present an opportunity to engage students and promote vocabulary gains through an interactive, low-stress digital environment.

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