

The Use of GAMLET Pictionary to Improve English Vocabulary Acquisition among a Group of ESL Learners in a Chinese National-Type School in Malaysia

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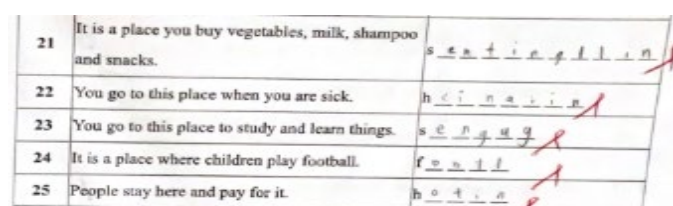
GAMLET Pictionary, English as Second Language (ESL), vocabulary, spelling

Abstract

English vocabulary is a fundamental component of the English language and is essential for ESL learners to master. However, many ESL learners in Malaysia cannot spell English vocabulary correctly due to limited exposure to English as posited by Gu and Lornklang (2021). To address this issue, a self-directed learning module called GAMLET Pictionary was developed to help ESL learners acquire targeted vocabulary using context clues, namely definitions, visuals, and descriptions. The module is aligned with the latest format of the Final Academic Session Test (UASA), which requires pupils to understand the definition of words. GAMLET Pictionary was implemented with five pupils in a Chinese national-type primary school for a month. The findings showed that their English vocabulary mastery improved after the intervention. The findings from the questionnaire found that they held positive perceptions on GAMLET Pictionary. They enjoyed the activities designed in the module and hoped to use it to acquire more English vocabulary in the future. Overall, GAMLET Pictionary is a promising innovation that can help ESL learners improve their English vocabulary mastery. It is engaging, effective, easy to use, and aligned with the latest format of the UASA.

1. Introduction

Final Academic Session Test (UASA) is a summative assessment that is conducted at the end of the academic calendar to test pupils' cognitive level and gather information about their academic performance. One of the most difficult sections of the UASA English language paper is Part 5, which tests vocabulary and spelling (see Figure 1). Pupils are given a dictionary-style definition of a word and must identify and spell the word. However, many pupils find this section difficult because they have a narrow vocabulary range and are not motivated to learn English.



21	It is a place you buy vegetables, milk, shampoo and snacks.	s e t e r i e n t e r i e n
22	You go to this place when you are sick.	h o s p i t a l
23	You go to this place to study and learn things.	s c h o o l
24	It is a place where children play football.	f o o t b a l l
25	People stay here and pay for it.	h o t e l

Fig. 1 Sample of pupil's work in word completion section

To address this issue, GAMLET Pictionary was developed. It is a self-directed learning module that uses context clues to help pupils acquire English vocabulary with the integration of Gamified Home-Based Learning (GAMLET) Model. GAMLET Model is a flipped learning and gamified learning model that is based on mastery learning, constructivism, flipped learning, and gamified learning theories (see Figure 2) to foster active learning and improve learners' motivation and learning achievement.

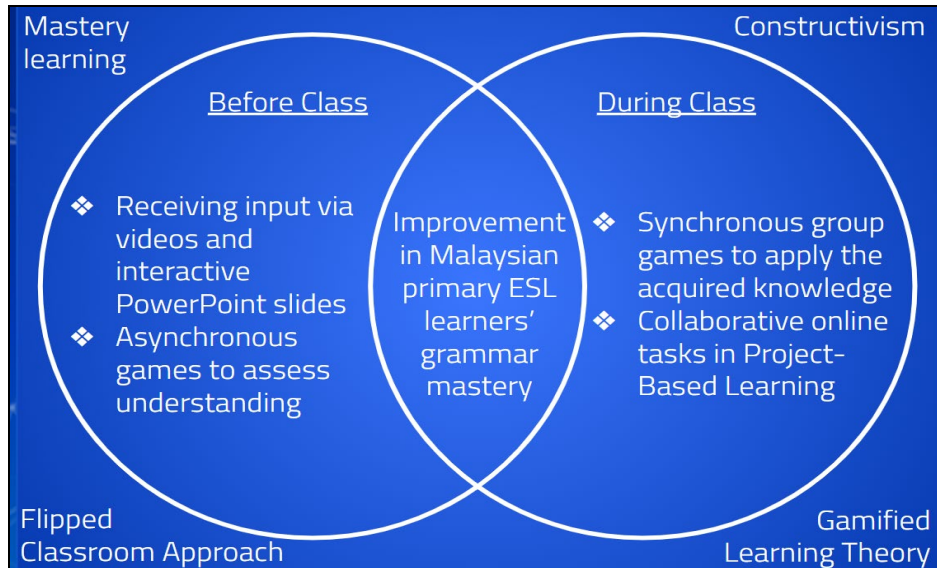


Fig. 2 GAMLET Model Framework (Teo et al., 2021)

Thus, GAMLET Pictionary was aimed to assist pupils in acquiring English vocabulary. It is engaging, effective, and easy to use. A small-scale study was conducted in a national-type primary school to investigate its effectiveness and usefulness. This study aimed to achieve the following objectives using GAMLET Pictionary:

- a. To assist pupils in spelling English vocabulary accurately based on the context clue(s) given
- b. To develop positive attitude towards learning English among pupils

2. Research Methodology

2.1 Design and Development

Action research design was used in this study as it involves the process of studying a real school or classroom situation to understand and improve the quality of actions or instruction (Johnson, 2012). This action research was conducted using Kemmis and McTaggart's (1988) model that involved four main processes namely observe, reflect, plan and act. This study was conducted in one cycle where the pupils showed improvement after the intervention.

2.2 Implementation

This intervention took four weeks to be implemented at both school and home after UASA. Throughout the implementation, the pupils were given adequate guidance and technical support on either face-to-face interactions or online helpdesk. Table 1 shows the process of GAMLET Pictionary to enhance pupils' mastery of English vocabulary.

Table 1 GAMLET Pictionary Implementation Steps

Week	Activities Done	Form
1	a. GAMLET Pictionary was devised and produced in booklets. b. Pupils were briefed on the process of intervention using GAMLET Pictionary. c. Pupils sat for the pre-test to identify their mastery level before intervention.	Face-to-face
2	a. Pupils learnt the vocabulary via shared reading activity. b. Pupils participated in collaborative physical games to consolidate their understanding of the vocabulary learnt.	Face-to-face

Pictionary fun, effective and enjoyable (n=5, 100%) and they wish to use GAMLET Pictionary in future (n=5, 100%). This corresponds to the findings of Teo et al. (2021) and Jo et al. (2018) which claimed that the incorporation of flipped learning and gamification would lead to a fun and active learning environment among learners.

4. Conclusion

GAMLET Pictionary is feasible in rectifying the target pupils' problems in learning English vocabulary. It is cost-effective, user-friendly, self-directive, and effective in developing the pupils' vocabulary range. Moreover, the pupils hold positive perceptions towards learning English vocabulary via GAMLET Pictionary. They are also more interested and intrinsically motivated in learning English after the intervention. Thus, it is hoped that GAMLET Pictionary could be disseminated all over Malaysia to assist ESL learners acquiring English vocabulary better. Further studies are suggested to investigate its effects in acquiring other categories of English vocabulary for other age groups of ESL learners.

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Conflict of Interest

Authors declare that there is no conflict of interests regarding the publication of the paper.

Author Contribution

The authors confirm contribution to the paper as follows: **study conception and design:** TWC; **data collection:** TWC; **analysis and interpretation of results:** TWC, RS; **draft manuscript preparation:** TWC, RS. All authors reviewed the results and approved the final version of the manuscript.

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