Fun English Games for ESP Students (Best Practices)

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ABSTRACT
Abstract: Games are always heard to be fun, exciting, and adventurous to students. Everyone likes playing games, including fun English games for the students of the Nursing Department at Poltekkes Kemenkes Malang. This study explored the best practices of fun English games as an innovative pedagogical approach to enhance vocabulary acquisition among nursing students in higher education. The significance of this study lies in addressing the evolving landscape of nursing education and the need for dynamic teaching strategies aligned with the preferences of the digital-native generation, as emphasized by Prensky. The rationale for incorporating fun English games is grounded in principles of experiential learning and gamification, aligning with the ideas of scholars that playing games while learning English was very effective and efficient in improving vocabulary. This study reported that using games to learn English vocabulary is very useful and meaningful to the students. They showed a positive attitude towards the use of games in the classroom. Anticipated positive outcomes hold implications for nursing educators, curriculum developers, and policymakers, offering evidence-based recommendations to bridge the gap between theoretical insights and practical applications in nursing education.
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INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary landscape of higher education, nursing students face the dual challenge of mastering both the intricacies of medical terminology and the English language for effective communication in the healthcare domain. Recognizing the need for engaging and effective language learning methods, this study explores the integration of fun English games as a pedagogical tool to enhance vocabulary acquisition among nursing students. Experts such as Michael Wesch, an advocate for innovative education, argue that incorporating play into learning can foster deeper engagement and understanding, making it an ideal strategy for specialized fields like nursing (Wesch, 2009).

The significance of this study is underscored by the evolving landscape of nursing education and the imperative for educators to adopt dynamic and effective teaching strategies. Prensky (2001) emphasizes the importance of aligning educational methods with

the preferences and learning styles of the digital-native generation. This study responds to this call by investigating the potential impact of fun English games on vocabulary retention, offering insights that can inform educators in creating engaging and relevant curricula for nursing students in higher education.

A robust body of research and educational theories supports the efficacy of using English games as a potent tool for vocabulary acquisition. First and foremost, scholars like James Paul Gee and Jane McGonigal argue that games provide a context-rich environment that fosters active learning and problem-solving skills. The interactive nature of games compels players to engage with language in meaningful ways, enhancing vocabulary retention through immersive experiences (Gee, 2003; McGonigal, 2011). Additionally, studies conducted by Sitzmann (2011) demonstrate that computer-based simulation games, often characterized by their interactive and immersive qualities, exhibit higher instructional effectiveness compared to traditional methods. This evidence underscores the potential of game-based approaches to create an engaging and effective platform for language learning.

Furthermore, neuroscientific research supports the idea that enjoyable and stimulating activities, such as those found in well-designed English games, trigger the release of neurotransmitters like dopamine, enhancing memory and information retention. As stated by Howard Gardner, the renowned cognitive psychologist, learning is optimized when it aligns with multiple intelligences, including spatial, interpersonal, and intrapersonal aspects. English games often tap into these intelligences by providing a multisensory and social learning experience, thereby catering to diverse learning styles and preferences (Gardner, 1993). In summary, the converging evidence from educational theories, empirical studies, and neuroscience suggests that incorporating English games into language learning holds immense potential for bolstering vocabulary acquisition in an engaging and effective manner.

The rationale for incorporating fun English games into nursing education draws from the principles of experiential learning and gamification. Gee (2003) contends that games provide a context-rich environment conducive to active learning and problem-solving skills. In the nursing context, where mastery of medical terminology is essential, the integration of fun games aligns with the ideas of scholars such as James Paul Gee and Jane McGonigal, who argue that games can create a more motivating and effective atmosphere for language acquisition (Gee, 2007; McGonigal, 2011). Anticipating positive outcomes, this study aligns with the perspectives of Huizinga (1938), who posits that play is fundamental to human culture and learning.

The expected implications of this research extend to nursing educators, curriculum developers, and policymakers. By offering evidence-based recommendations for incorporating enjoyable language learning methods into higher education curricula, this study seeks to bridge the gap between theoretical insights from experts and practical applications in the dynamic context of nursing education.

METHOD

This article is the format of Best Practice in which it shares the best strategies/methods/techniques of teaching and learning English in the context of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) in the field of the Nursing and Midwifery Department. The procedures of best practice include activities procedures, challenges, impacts, and reflections. According to Warsono et al, (2020), best practice is a type of scientific writing and it also has some useful characteristics. Santoso et al, (2020) and Jihad (2013) reported that Best Practices improved the quality of the learning process, students' abilities, students' and graduates' performance, the quality of the teachers, and acknowledgment.

This study revealed the use of fun games for ESP students of the Nursing and Midwifery Department at Poltekkes Kemenkes Malang in the process of learning English. The strategy was implemented in each meeting of the English course for the second semester of the Nursing students of Trenggalek, Ponorogo, and, Blitar, and the sixth semester of the Midwifery Department of Kediri, East Java, Indonesia. Both departments are called PSDKU (Program Studi di Luar Kampus Utama) of Poltekkes Kemenkes Malang. The fun games were administered as warming-up activities, ice breakers, or evaluation meetings to help the students achieve the learning goals optimally.

In applying this strategy, the teachers used an observation checklist and documentation to collect data regarding the challenges faced in the process of fun games implementation and the impacts of the use of fun games in ESP classrooms. All data were collected and analyzed descriptively to be reported in this study.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In this section, it reported the procedures, the challenges, the impacts, and the reflection of fun games for ESP students of the Nursing and Midwifery Department at Poltekkes Kemenkes Malang.

1. **Procedures**
   A. **Bingo Game**
      Level   : Beginner & Intermediate
      Materials   : a piece of paper and pen
      Procedures :
      − Students are given examples of 9 bingo boxes and they make bingo boxes on their respective pieces of paper. Each box contains sentences according to the desired topic. For example: the bingo box contains the present tense: like banana so much (box 1), completed up to the 9th box
      − It was explained that they would have to go around asking their classmates about the contents of the bingo box
      − Students start their questions with the phrase "Do you... " (Do you like bananas so much?). If anyone answers "yes", the bingo box is crossed. If the answer is "No", they have to go around again.

- For anyone who successfully crosses all the bingo squares, say "BINGO". She/he will be the winner of the day.

B. Is it …?
   Level   : Beginner & Intermediate
   Materials   : No preparation
   Procedures:
   - The teachers explain the language use in this game (yes/no question using is it …?) and the goals of learning
   - The teacher will hold a picture of animal/fruit/person/or others
   - The students have to guess what the picture is by asking "Is it ….?" Starting from the general questions to the specific questions, for example: is it animal? Is it fruit? Is it popular person? Is it vegetable? Is it food? ===➔ if the teacher say "YES", the students can continue with the specific questions, for example: is it cat? Is it chicken? Is it banana? Is it strawberry? Etc.
   - When the teacher say "YES" to the specific question, the student referring to the question will be the winner.
   - It can be done in several rounds of games.

C. Words Chain
   Level   : Beginner – Intermediate
   Materials   : No preparation
   Procedures :
   - The teachers explain the rules of the game of "Words Chain"
   - The students have to stand up by their seat
   - Each student that the teacher points out has to call out a new word start with the last letter of previous word.
   - No repeated words
   - The time to think is only 5 seconds, if they can not mention any word, the lose and have to sit down again.
   - Five students who remain standing up will be the winner

D. Picture Flash (PPT)
   Level   : Beginner – Intermediate
   Material   : PPT with picture flash (game mode)
   Procedures   :
   - This in individual games
   - Each student prepares a piece of paper or notebook and a pen
   - They have to focus on the screen of picture flash displayed by the teacher
   - The teacher tells the students that they have to guess the six pictures displayed on the screen with the fast mode

- The students who can guess all six pictures in order and correctly for the first time win the game
- The teachers can play this game in several rounds with different categories of pictures.

E. Paper Sentence Games

Level : Beginner – Intermediate

Materials : A piece of paper and pen

Procedures:

- The teachers tell the students that they will learn how to make a sentence in English
- The teachers set a language target, for example, present tense, past tense, or others
- The first step is the students must write their nickname on the top of their paper, and then they fold the paper.
- Play or sing a nursery song and turn/move the paper clockwise until the song ends
- After that, the students must write any verbs based on the target language (Vs/V2/ or others). Fold the paper, and then play or sing a song again and turn/move the paper until the song finishes
- The third step is the students must write any objects/nouns on the folded paper and fold again to cover the object. Next, play or sing a song again while turning the paper.
- The next is the students have to write one adverb of place and fold the paper again. Play a song while turning the paper to other students.
- The last is the students must write one adverb of time on the folded paper, fold again, and turn/move the paper while playing/singing a song.
- After finishing writing the each word as the instruction given, now the time to check the sentence. Each student has a piece of paper that may be not his/her own paper.
- The teachers ask the students in turn to read the sentence based on the result of the above steps. The students who have a sentence grammatically and in meaning correct win the game.
- At last, the students and teacher make a conclusion about the pattern of creating English sentences based on the target language determined.

F. Scavenger Hunt

Level : Beginner – Intermediate

Materials : Paper/notebook and pen

Procedures :

- The teachers tell the students that they will have a fun game to enrich and recall vocabulary in English

- The students work in pairs/groups if it is a big class.
- The students must write as many as possible based on the categories determined by the teachers, for example, *things in your bag, things that start with the letter S/B/others, things that make you happy, things you find in the classroom, or other categories*.
- The time allotment is
- The students/the pair/group with the most correct answers win the game and deserve some points.

G. Web-Based Games (Bamboozle and Learningapps.org)

Level   : beginner – Intermediate
Materials   : no preparation
Procedures :
Bamboozle

- The students are divided into two big teams (teams A and B).
- The teachers select the available game in Bamboozle based on the target languages
- Each team has to answer the questions on Bamboozle. If they can give the correct answer, they will earn some points.
- Some of the questions contain power-ups that make the game more challenging and fun
- The team with the highest score wins the game.

Learningapps.org

- The teachers create a quiz on the learningapps.org platform via the website
- The links of quiz distribute to the students based on the topic of the lesson
- The students do the quiz at their own pace
- The quiz has various templates, such as matching pairs, group assignments, true-false, simple orders, matching pairs on the image, multiple-choice quiz, close text, guess the word, pairing game, crossword, word grid, etc.
- The teachers can select the template to make the quiz a challenging game in the classroom.
- The students can be divided into pairs or teams adjusted to the goal of classroom activities.

2. Challenges

According to the observation and documentation stage in the implementation of fun games for ESP students at Poltekkes Kemenkes Malang, the writer found some

challenges faced by both the teachers and students in the classroom. These challenges are presented in Table 1 as follows:

Table 1. The Challenges of Fun Games for ESP Students

NO	Teachers	Students
1	Teachers are challenged to be creative teachers in providing learning for students so that students are interested in learning English.	The students are getting bored with the same games or repeated games
2	Games usually take a long time, so the teachers need to manage their time very well	They are not staying on a task or tend to join the games all the time
3	The teachers have to control the class management very well to anticipate possible risks during the implementation of fun games	The students have no motivation to join the game due to a lack of vocabulary, understanding, complicated situations, and no preparation in advance.

According to Table 1, one of the challenges of teaching and learning English in the classroom is teachers' creativity to motivate the students to engage in the learning activities, especially for ESP students of the Nursing and Midwifery Department. It is in line with Amalia et al, (2023), that one of the difficulties faced in the world of instruction is growing teacher creativity. For effective learning, teachers need to be creative in their instructional methods to enhance student engagement. The importance of teacher creativity in the learning process cannot be overstated, as it directly contributes to the overall quality of teaching. Teachers should consistently generate creative ideas for each lesson to make learning more engaging and enjoyable. Additionally, they should facilitate student activities to create a conducive and comfortable learning environment. Challenges such as limited teacher creativity, insufficient training, and inadequate school facilities often hinder this process. Moreover, teachers must leverage their creativity to overcome student limitations and obstacles, thereby reducing barriers that can lead to failures in English language instruction. Teachers in the field of ESP tend to face more problems in preparing the English materials that meet students' needs of the Nursing and Midwifery Department. There are no specific books suitable to the background of the students, so the teachers have to modify the available materials to help the students achieve their learning goals.

The second challenge is the time limit of English learning in the classroom. Most teachers face difficulty in managing the time of teaching English, especially in the classroom of ESP. The course credit is very short, so the teachers have to determine and divide the activities in the classroom proportionally to keep the learning process engaging and interesting. This result is in accordance with the previous studies which revealed the same challenges faced by the teachers. According to Brown (2001), a limited amount of time or insufficient time for English teachers can hinder and render learning ineffective, as

vocabulary instruction demands significant attention. Brown also emphasized that teachers must be adept at managing and optimizing class time during vocabulary lessons.

The last challenge faced by the teachers to apply fun games in the class of ESP, the Nursing and Midwifery Department, is class control management. The teachers have to decide well what games they use in the classroom while considering the potential risk in the classroom, for example, if they have to use stirrers or settlers activities for the games. The teachers can choose the stirrers games to stimulate the students and the atmosphere is enjoyable. They tend to do psychomotor activities so it might be a busy class. While the settlers' games tend to calm learners and settle them into a routine.

For the students of ESP, the Nursing and Midwifery Department, fun games in the classroom may have other challenges. The first challenge is boredom when the teachers are not creative in using the games or repeated games. The students usually like to do various and challenging activities that make them enthusiastic and feel like on a roller coaster. So, being creative teachers is very important in the language classroom, particularly in the context of ESP class. The students of the Nursing and Midwifery department need strong motivation, both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, to learn English to support their future careers in the field of health.

A limited student vocabulary can impede teachers from effectively implementing vocabulary games in the classroom. When students lack sufficient vocabulary, it becomes challenging for teachers to explain learning materials, and students struggle with communicating or speaking in English. This aligns with Sari's findings (2019, p. 183). Common obstacles in teaching vocabulary games include limited student vocabulary, insufficient techniques, time constraints, and word choice difficulties.

Lazy students are often present in class; these are students who show indifference, rely on copying their peers' answers, and do not make an effort to understand the subject matter or complete assignments independently. According to Wang (2000), some students are so lazy that they merely imitate others' work instead of taking responsibility for their own. This behavior typically stems from a lack of student motivation.

3. Impacts

Learners generally prefer activities that are active, enjoyable, and engaging to boost their motivation for learning. Research highlights several benefits of incorporating games into language teaching. According to Tuan and Doan (2010), games emphasize the meaning in language learning, helping learners better retain what they have learned. Read (2007) notes that games support children's physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development while being enjoyable, whether through competition or cooperation, with clear goals and rules. Additionally, Wright et al. (2006) assert that games create a fun and comfortable environment that encourages learners to take risks in language practice. This study revealed that the students of ESP, the Nursing and Midwifery Department, also want an active, meaningful, fun, and attractive learning of English. It is expected that the materials will last for long memory and they can implement the knowledge in the real world of health. The fun games in the classroom of ESP of the Nursing and Midwifery Department

give a big impacts to the students, such as increase students' motivation, engagement, and willingness to learn English.

These findings indicate that games significantly enhance students' attitudes toward learning English. They show that using games helps learners engage with the target language effectively and enthusiastically, while also increasing their willingness to communicate when the lesson topic is interesting. Additionally, games provide opportunities for students to ask questions in class, highlighting their educational value beyond mere entertainment. These results align with the studies by Modirkhameneh and Firouzmand (2014) and Lee and Drajati (2020). However, some students believe that playing games in class leads to disliking their classmates and reluctance to participate in pair activities, and they are less inclined to speak when the teacher incorporates games.

4. Reflection

The study found that the majority of students enjoyed learning English through games. They were eager to participate in the process when games are incorporated into each lesson. Games helped students to acquire language more effectively. Some obstacles were encountered while producing games for students in the classroom setting, some of them were attributed to time consumption and resource limitations. The way teachers delivering the games had a significant role in overcoming these obstacles and making sure that the maximum learning outcomes were attained.

CONCLUSION

Language learning is a tough process that requires consistent effort, strong motivation and focus, particularly for foreign language learners. Game offers alternative ways of learning a language by increasing the learner focus on some aspects of the language. Games can be incorporated into language teaching and not only employed them as diversion during teaching hours since they involve various variables, including rules, teamwork, and pleasant learning experiences. Not only that, to conduct games in classroom setting, they need proper instructional planning and delivery. Competition as the nature of games keeps the learners' interest until the end of the process.

In order to make game delivery in class runs smoothly, it is crucial to consider the game's difficulty level. Teachers must determine if a game is appropriate for students' language level. A game can become challenging or uninteresting if it is too easy to follow. Teachers typically utilize grammar games for practice or reinforcement, but only if they are appropriate for the learners' level and allow for easy application of grammatical information during gameplay.

In conclusion, games can facilitate learning in a pleasant way, leading to effective outcomes. Learning games sometimes demand teamwork and social engagement, which many students like. Combining cooperation, interaction, and fun can lead to more effective

learning outcomes. It can be argued that games have significant pedagogical value for teaching and learning foreign languages, regardless of how they are described.

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