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Revitalizing Vocabulary Instruction: Integrating the K.I.M Strategy with Baamboozle in the Digital Classroom

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Abstract

This study explores the implementation of the K.I.M (Keyword, Information, Memory Clue) strategy combined with the Baamboozle digital game in learning English comprehension for eighth grade junior high school students. Using a qualitative case study approach, data were obtained through observation, interviews, and documentation. The results show that the K.I.M strategy helps students understand and remember vocabulary through the combination of keywords, information, and visual clues. Baamboozle creates a competitive and fun learning atmosphere that increases student motivation and engagement. This combination complements each other: KIM provides a structure for understanding, Baamboozle reinforces it through interactive practice. The KIM strategy, which was initially conventional, becomes more contextual and modern with the support of technology, making it relevant to the needs of 21st century learning.

Keywords: K.I.M Strategy; Baamboozle;Vocabulary Learning

INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary mastery is one of the most crucial aspects in learning a second or foreign language because vocabulary is the basis for other language skills such as reading, writing, listening, and speaking (Alqahtani, 2015; Nation, 2001). Without adequate vocabulary mastery, students will have difficulty understanding texts or expressing ideas effectively. However, the reality in the field shows that many students in Indonesia still face challenges in memorizing, understanding, and using English vocabulary sustainably (Sanica, 2021; Wulandari, Susanto, & Hawa, 2023). Some of the main causes of low vocabulary mastery include the lack of active student involvement in the learning process, the dominance of conventional methods such as lectures and memorization, and the lack of interesting and contextual learning media. Therefore, an interactive and meaningful vocabulary learning approach is an urgent need to answer these challenges. One relevant strategy is the K.I.M (Keyword, Information, Memory Clue) strategy, which was introduced by Goodman (2005). This strategy uses a three-column table, namely keywords, information, and memory clues to help students understand and remember vocabulary systematically. Several studies have shown that KIM is effective in improving understanding of the meaning and classification of words, as well as supporting students' visual learning styles (Erniwati, Arid, Novenasari, & Manurung, 2024; Sanica, 2021). In addition to cognitive strategies such as KIM, the application of technology in the form of learning gamification has also been shown to increase student motivation and participation in foreign language learning. One popular platform is Baamboozle, an online quiz application designed interactively with features such as a point system, random challenges ("Boom" or "Bonus"), and group games. Research by Arini and Suwarso (2024) and Banham (2024) shows that Baamboozle can create a fun, competitive learning atmosphere, and encourage students' emotional involvement in learning vocabulary. However, most previous studies have only examined the effectiveness of the KIM or Baamboozle strategies separately. The study by

Erniwati et al. (2024), for example, focused on improving vocabulary through the implementation of KIM without digital elements, while the study by Arini and Suwarso (2024) only reviewed students' perceptions of the use of Baamboozle. There have not been many studies that have tried to integrate these two approaches simultaneously in one comprehensive and structured learning design, especially in the context of learning at the Junior High School level. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by exploring the integration of KIM strategies and Baamboozle digital media in English vocabulary learning. This approach is believed to be able to improve understanding of word meanings, strengthen memory through visualization, and encourage active student involvement and reflection through interactive games. Thus, the integration of this strategy not only answers the challenge of vocabulary mastery, but is also in line with the characteristics of 21st-century learning which is collaborative, contextual, and technology-based.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach because it aims to understand the meaning, experience, and responses of participants in depth in a natural context (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Case studies were chosen because they allow researchers to understand the phenomenon of learning in a bounded system in depth and in a real context, through data collection from various sources such as observation, interviews, and documentation and also to explore in depth the experiences, perceptions, and responses of students and teachers to the implementation of the KIM strategy combined with Baamboozle media in vocabulary learning. The study was conducted at one of the State Junior High Schools in Karawang Regency which has technology-based learning facilities. The research participants consisted of 32 grade VIII students and one English teacher who was actively teaching. The instruments used in this study included an observation guide to record student and teacher activities during the learning process, an interview guide in the form of open-ended questions in a semi-structured format, and documentation including student work results (KIM tables), screenshots of the Baamboozle game, and teacher notes. The entire learning process took place in three sessions: the first session focused on the introduction of procedural texts and demonstrations of the KIM strategy; the second session students filled in the KIM table in groups and presented the results; The third session focused on vocabulary reinforcement through the Baamboozle game and joint reflection. Data collection was carried out through direct observation in class, interviews with students and teachers, and collection of relevant documentation. All data was collected directly by researchers to maintain the authenticity and depth of the information obtained. Data analysis used a thematic analysis approach according to Braun and Clarke (2022) which includes the stages of understanding data, conducting initial coding, developing themes, reviewing themes, naming themes, and compiling final reports. To increase validity, data triangulation was carried out by comparing the results of observations, interviews, and documentation to ensure the accuracy and consistency of the findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

These findings respond directly to the research question, "How does the implementation of the KIM strategy combined with the use of Baamboozle facilitate students' vocabulary learning?" The answer lies in the interplay between structured learning (KIM), motivation and reinforcement (Baamboozle), social support (group work), and metacognitive development (reflection). Before explaining the research results based on interviews, it is necessary to first

explain the theoretical basis and learning flow of the application of the KIM and Baamboozle strategies based on the teaching module. In the implementation process, the teacher first prepares learning tools in the form of KIM worksheets and digital quiz games on the Baamboozle platform. The activity begins with a prayer, greeting, and trigger questions that link vocabulary material to the context of students' lives, such as songs or social media. After the learning objectives are conveyed, students are divided into small groups. In the core stage, students are introduced to the types of vocabulary found in procedural texts, especially language features such as imperative verbs (cut, mix, pour), adverbs (slowly, carefully), nouns (ingredients, tools), and connecting words (first, then, finally). Then they fill in the KIM table consisting of the Keyword, Information, and Memory Clue columns. Each group discusses their answers and presents them. After that, the activity continues by playing Baamboozle in groups, with quizzes arranged based on the vocabulary and structure of the procedural text. Questions in the game include the meaning of imperative verbs, antonyms, synonyms, word usage in procedural sentences, and choosing images that match the action words. Questions in the game include synonyms, antonyms, word usage in sentences, and image associations. The teacher provides feedback and clarification during and after the game. In the final stage, students and teachers reflect on difficult words, the most interesting words, and the strategies used to answer. The learning process ends with appreciation and closing prayer. Based on the student and teacher observation checklist, all activity indicators have been fully implemented: from explaining learning objectives, filling in the KIM table, using Baamboozle, to the final reflection. This confirms that the learning flow is carried out according to the plan in the module. The data demonstrate that this combination enables a multifaceted vocabulary learning process that is not only systematic and memorable but also enjoyable and empowering for students. Each theme below reflects a specific aspect of the implementation that contributed to students' vocabulary learning experience.

1. **The implementation of the KIM Chart to support clarity of learning**
   The use of KIM tables with three main columns (Keyword, Information, and Memory Clue) is a very effective tool in clarifying learning objectives. The teacher systematically explains how to fill in the three columns, and students show high enthusiasm when trying to fill in the table independently. The results of observations show that the existence of KIM tables helps students to be more focused and directed in understanding the structure of understanding. Visualization in tables makes information easier to digest and neatly arranged, making it easier to memorize and interpret. From interviews, several students stated that the gradual and structured table format made them more confident in understanding the meaning of words. This format not only focuses students' attention on word structure, but also builds systematic thinking routines. By arranging information visually and in a directed manner, students find it easier to follow the learning flow and understand the contents of the material. This strategy also makes it easier for students to clearly distinguish between word meaning and word function. This finding supports the scaffolding theory proposed by Goodman (2005), where structural aids such as KIM tables can improve students' focus and understanding during the learning process.

2. **The implementation of the KIM strategy supports the understanding of collaborative learning**
   The implementation of collaborative learning through the KIM strategy provides students with opportunities to actively engage in group discussions while completing the KIM table and participating in Baamboozle-based activities. These group

interactions allow learners to exchange ideas, clarify vocabulary meanings, and construct understanding collectively. Such social collaboration fosters not only vocabulary acquisition but also the development of communication and interpersonal skills. The learning environment becomes more dynamic, with students supporting one another and negotiating meaning through peer-assisted learning. These findings align with Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, which emphasizes that cognitive development is largely mediated through social interaction and scaffolding provided by more capable peers (Vygotsky, 1978). In line with this, research by Ramli and Rivaldi (2021) also demonstrates that cooperative learning enhances conceptual understanding and increases student motivation in language learning contexts.

3. **The implementation of Baamboozle Game boosts students' enthusiasm and motivation**

The third finding in this study highlights the important role of gamification in increasing students' enthusiasm and intrinsic motivation in learning vocabulary. All students interviewed stated that the use of the Baamboozle game during vocabulary learning made the classroom atmosphere more interesting, fun, and enthusiastic. The integration of digital game elements into learning activities made vocabulary learning no longer monotonous, but instead triggered students' curiosity and enthusiasm. The results of the observation showed that students appeared very active and enthusiastic, especially when it was their turn to answer questions. Students' body language, such as sitting up straight, smiling, and attentive facial expressions, indicated strong emotional involvement in the learning process. Teachers also contributed to maintaining a healthy competitive atmosphere, by giving clear instructions, setting fair game rules, and encouraging cooperation between group members. In addition to cognitive involvement, the atmosphere created through Baamboozle also created affective involvement. Based on interviews, several students admitted to experiencing a change in their perspective on vocabulary learning. Activities that were previously considered boring now felt more interesting because they were packaged in the form of interactive challenges. In fact, there were students who expressed positive nervousness, which indicated a higher level of emotional investment when participating in the game. Teachers also observed a significant increase in student enthusiasm, even in students who previously tended to be passive in English lessons. According to teachers, Baamboozle was able to bridge students' interest in academic content in a fun and motivating way, so that they became more active and showed greater interest in the vocabulary being taught. This finding reinforces the results of previous research by Arini and Suwarso (2024) which stated that a gamified learning environment through Baamboozle can increase students' long-term motivation and vocabulary retention. Game features such as point systems, team competitions, and attractive visual displays make students more deeply involved in the learning material. Research by Redjeki and Muhajir (2021) also shows that gamification in English learning is able to transform conventional activities into more interactive and memorable learning experiences. In addition, Baamboozle creates a psychologically safe space, where students feel more confident to participate without fear of making mistakes. Thus, the application of Baamboozle as a gamification tool in vocabulary learning contributes positively to students' affective and motivational domains. Game elements such as fun, competition, and visual interaction make students more enthusiastic and emotionally involved in learning. This is in line with the principles of gamification learning, where engagement and motivation are important prerequisites for achieving deeper learning and long-term retention.

4. **The implementation of KIM reflects students' weaknesses**
   Reflection plays an important role in helping students identify their weaknesses in vocabulary mastery. At the end of each learning session, teachers encourage students to reflect on the most difficult vocabulary and what strategies helped them remember and understand the words the most. This activity provides space for students to internalize the learning they have gained and increase their awareness of the gaps in knowledge they still have. Observations show that many students appreciate this reflective moment because it gives them the opportunity to recognize their own difficulties and successes during learning. Some students even stated that reflection helped them in dividing the memorization burden so that it did not feel too heavy, and provided clarity about words that they did not fully understand. Teachers also noted that through the KIM strategy, students became better able to identify types of vocabulary such as nouns, verbs, and adjectives more systematically. This finding is in line with Nation's (2001) view that metacognitive reflection supports vocabulary development by helping students assess their own understanding and design future learning strategies. When implemented with proper guidance, reflection can transform vocabulary learning into a more meaningful and self-regulated learning process.

5. **The implementation of visual clues help retain vocabulary**
   The interview results showed that the use of the Memory Clue column in the KIM strategy, especially in the form of images, greatly helped students in remembering vocabulary. Most students said that visual associations through images made it easier for them to understand and remember foreign words. This shows that visual elements are not just a complement, but an important component in students' cognitive processes during vocabulary learning. From the results of class observations, it was seen that students were very enthusiastic in drawing visual representations for each word. The drawing activity was not only carried out seriously, but also showed a high level of creativity. The teacher also played an active role by providing guidance and feedback during this process, ensuring that the images created really supported the understanding of the meaning of the word. This strategy proved effective because students could create personal associations with the words being studied, thus strengthening their long-term memory. This finding is in line with the Dual Coding theory by Paivio (1986), which states that information presented verbally and visually simultaneously will be easier to process and remember. In this context, the visualization in the Memory Clue column functions as a memory anchor that strengthens the meaning of the word conceptually and emotionally. In addition, these results are also supported by research by Erniwati et al. (2024), who found that visual media in the KIM strategy strengthens long-term memory and supports various learning styles of students, especially visual learners. Interviews with teachers also showed that students were able to create memory cues effectively and creatively, and teachers considered this method very helpful in accelerating vocabulary mastery. Overall, the KIM strategy with the support of visual elements has been shown to improve students' vocabulary retention abilities. The use of images not only makes the learning process more interesting, but also deepens conceptual understanding and creates a meaningful and lasting learning experience.

6. **The implementation of KIM Strategy and Baamboozle Were More Effective than Traditional Methods**

Most students stated that the combination of KIM strategy and Baamboozle media was much more effective and enjoyable than traditional methods such as reading textbooks or memorizing. They appreciated the balance between the systematic structure offered by KIM and the game nuance presented by Baamboozle, which made learning more interesting and easy to understand. Students felt that this approach made it easier for them to understand the meaning of words, especially because of the visual aids in the form of tables and pictures and the interactive learning experience through games. Teachers also gave positive responses to this strategy, stating that the method made it easier for students to recognize word forms and increased their interest in learning. In fact, teachers expressed their desire to use this method again because of its real benefits in the vocabulary learning process.These findings support the results of research by Arini and Suwarso (2024), which found that combining structured learning strategies with game-based platforms can improve students' learning motivation and learning outcomes. The visual and interactive character of both strategies is able to reach various learning styles of students, making vocabulary learning more inclusive and impactful.

The findings from the six themes above indicate that the KIM strategy provides a systematic and visual basis for learning, while Baamboozle complements the motivational and emotional interaction aspects of students through game-based interactions. The integration of these two strategies makes the learning process more interactive, contextual, and relevant to the needs of 21st century students, and encourages the development of students' metacognitive awareness to assess their learning strategies reflectively. The implication is that teachers can adapt a similar model to improve the quality of vocabulary learning not only at the junior high school level, but also at other levels of education. These results also encourage the use of technology-based approaches to enrich conventional learning methods to align with the characteristics of today's digital learner generation. Thus, the KIM strategy and Baamboozle media are a complementary combination, providing a systematic structure as well as fun interactive reinforcement, which ultimately supports more cognitive, emotional, social, and meaningful learning.

Discussion

The results of this study indicate that the application of the KIM strategy combined with Baamboozle media has a positive contribution in improving junior high school students' vocabulary mastery. The KIM table helps clarify the objectives and structure of learning, in accordance with the scaffolding approach (Goodman, 2005). Strengthening memory through visual elements also strengthens students' memory, as explained in the Dual Coding theory (Paivio, 1986). Meanwhile, the use of Baamboozle encourages students' motivation and active participation through a fun gamification approach (Redjeki & Muhajir, 2021). Interaction in groups and reflection activities strengthen students' collaborative aspects and metacognitive awareness (Nation, 2001). In the researcher's experience when conducting classroom observations, it was seen that students became more open in asking questions and discussing the meaning of words spontaneously, which showed an increase in self-confidence in speaking English. The researcher also noted that this strategy helped create a more positive and supportive classroom atmosphere. Even students who initially tended to be passive began to show initiative in group discussions and game activities. The final reflection conducted openly provides an overview that this approach is able to reach various learning styles of students effectively. Thus, this strategy has proven to be suitable to support contextual and interactive vocabulary learning in the context of the 21st century.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results and discussions that have been described, it can be concluded that the integration of the KIM strategy with Baamboozle media effectively answers the main problems in junior high school students' vocabulary learning. The problems raised in this study are related to low motivation, involvement, and retention of students in understanding English vocabulary. The combination of these two approaches has been proven to be able to provide a clear structure, strengthen memory through visualization, increase motivation through gamification, and encourage active and reflective student involvement. The six main themes found from the analysis results indicate that this strategy not only answers the challenges of 21st century learning but also strengthens the pedagogical foundation of effective vocabulary learning. Thus, the simultaneous application of the KIM and Baamboozle strategies can be an innovative solution that has a direct impact on improving student learning outcomes, especially in vocabulary mastery. This study also provides practical contributions for teachers to apply structure-based and technology-based strategies in a more meaningful learning process.

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