

The Use of Scrabble Game to Increase Students English Vocabulary Mastery

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to describe about the implementation of teaching vocabulary through Scrabble games and to identify the students' improvement in mastering of English vocabulary. The research was conducted with 29 students from Class A of the eighth grade. A classroom action research (CAR) methodology was employed, involving two cycles to complete the study. Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected. Quantitative data were prioritized, as the primary goal was to improve students' vocabulary mastery. Tests were administered in each cycle to evaluate progress. The results showed a significant increase in test scores. The average score rose from 60 (60%) in the pre-cycle to 70 (70%) in the first cycle, and further to 81.72 (82%) in the second cycle.

In the first cycle, students found it challenging to engage with Scrabble due to the complexity of its procedures and scoring system, which affected their ability to grasp the material and play the game effectively. Despite this, 18 students (62%) achieved the success criteria in the first cycle. By the second cycle, improvements were evident, with 28 students (96.55%) meeting the success criteria. These results demonstrate that students' achievement in mastering vocabulary through Scrabble improved significantly, reaching 96.55%. The study's success indicator of 65% was exceeded, confirming the effectiveness of this approach.

INTRODUCTION

Language is a vital tool for communication, playing a pivotal role in intellectual, social, and emotional development. Through language, individuals can express their thoughts, share emotions, and interact meaningfully within their communities. In an educational context, language mastery contributes significantly to academic achievement across various disciplines. English, as a global lingua franca, holds an essential position in education, preparing students to navigate a competitive and interconnected world. In Indonesia, English is included as a mandatory subject in the national curriculum, reflecting its importance in equipping students with skills to compete globally. However, despite years of formal education, many students struggle to achieve proficiency, particularly in vocabulary mastery. Vocabulary serves as the foundation of language learning, influencing the ability to read, write, listen, and speak effectively. Without adequate vocabulary, students face significant barriers in achieving overall language competence.

Vocabulary acquisition, while fundamental, is often viewed as tedious by students. Factors such as repetitive teaching methods, lack of engaging materials, and limited opportunities for active use contribute to this challenge. Teachers are tasked with finding innovative strategies to address these issues, ensuring that students remain motivated and engaged in their language learning journey. One such approach involves the integration of games as instructional media.

Educational games have been widely recognized for their ability to transform the learning process into an interactive and enjoyable experience. Games like Scrabble, for example, offer a creative and stimulating platform for vocabulary learning. By encouraging students to construct words and apply language rules, Scrabble promotes active engagement and enhances retention. Such approaches align with contemporary pedagogical principles that emphasize experiential and student-centered learning. Despite the potential benefits, implementing games like Scrabble in a classroom setting is not without challenges. Students may initially find the rules and mechanics of the game complex, requiring careful guidance and structured support from teachers. However, when effectively applied, this method has the potential to significantly improve students' vocabulary mastery, as it combines cognitive, social, and linguistic development in a single activity. This study aims to explore the use of Scrabble as a tool to enhance vocabulary acquisition among eighth-grade students. Specifically, it investigates the implementation process, the challenges encountered, and the resulting improvements in students' mastery of English vocabulary. By addressing these aspects, the research seeks to provide practical insights for educators striving to make language learning more effective and engaging.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Vocabulary serves as the foundation of language proficiency, enabling learners to effectively communicate in various contexts. Without sufficient vocabulary, mastering other language skills such as reading, writing, listening, and speaking becomes challenging. According to Thornbury (2004), communication is nearly impossible without an adequate vocabulary base, even when grammar is limited. This highlights the centrality of vocabulary in language acquisition, as a larger

vocabulary enables better comprehension and articulation of ideas. Similarly, Dakhi and Fitria (2019) emphasize that vocabulary knowledge directly correlates with overall language competence. Research indicates that students often face difficulties in acquiring new vocabulary due to monotony in teaching methods and limited exposure to meaningful practice. Factors such as lack of engagement, insufficient learning tools like dictionaries, and an overly rigid classroom environment further hinder progress. Qahtani (2015) notes that motivation plays a critical role in vocabulary acquisition, and the absence of engaging strategies can result in decreased interest and performance among learners.

The use of educational games has gained prominence as an innovative teaching strategy to overcome traditional learning challenges. Games provide an interactive and enjoyable platform for learners to actively engage with the material, fostering better retention and comprehension. Cameron (2000) highlights that games not only motivate learners but also create a conducive environment for practicing language skills. Moreover, integrating games into teaching aligns with experiential learning principles, which emphasize active participation and problem-solving.

Scrabble is a popular word game that has been widely utilized in educational contexts to enhance vocabulary mastery. Developed by Alfred Mosher Butts in 1938, Scrabble combines elements of word construction, critical thinking, and competition. According to Elliot (2000), Scrabble engages students by encouraging them to form words, analyze spelling, and apply language rules in a fun and stimulating way. This method has been particularly effective in improving spelling, reading, and memory retention among junior high school students.

Several studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of Scrabble in improving students' vocabulary mastery. For instance, Marzuki (2015) found that using Scrabble as a teaching tool significantly enhanced students' ability to memorize and apply vocabulary in written and oral tasks. Similarly, Joklová (2009) reported that students exposed to word games like Scrabble exhibited higher levels of engagement and achievement compared to those taught through traditional methods. These findings underscore the potential of Scrabble as a practical and impactful learning medium. While existing literature highlights the benefits of using Scrabble for language learning, limited studies have focused on its implementation in junior high schools in Indonesia. Moreover, few studies address the specific challenges faced by educators and students during the application of such games. This research seeks to bridge these gaps by examining the effectiveness of Scrabble in improving vocabulary mastery among eighth-grade students, identifying obstacles in its application, and providing practical recommendations for educators.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a Classroom Action Research (CAR) approach, which is designed to improve teaching practices and resolve classroom challenges. CAR involves iterative cycles of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting, as proposed by Kemmis and McTaggart. The primary focus of this research is to evaluate the effectiveness of the Scrabble game in enhancing students' vocabulary mastery. The study was conducted in two cycles, with adjustments made based on the results of each cycle to ensure continuous improvement.

The research subjects were 29 eighth-grade students from Class VIII A at SMPN 2 Metro during the academic year 2023/2024. This class was chosen because the students had prior experience with educational games, making them suitable participants for this study. The researcher also acted as a teacher and observer, facilitating the learning activities while monitoring students' progress and engagement. Data were collected using three methods: tests, observation, and documentation. Vocabulary tests were administered before the intervention (pre-cycle) and after each cycle to measure students' progress quantitatively. Observations were conducted during the learning process, using checklists to evaluate students' attentiveness, participation, and enthusiasm. Documentation, including photographs, attendance records, and student worksheets, provided additional qualitative insights into the learning process.

The data were analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative methods. Quantitative analysis involved calculating the mean scores of vocabulary tests to measure improvement. Qualitative data from observations and documentation were analyzed descriptively to identify patterns in student behavior and engagement. The study was considered successful if at least 65% of the students achieved a score of 65 or higher in vocabulary tests and showed observable improvements in their participation and enthusiasm during Scrabble-based activities.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Score of Observation at First Cycle

No	Aspect of Observation from the students' Participation	Poor (0-35%)	Fair (40-59)	Average (60-74%)	Good (75-84%)	Excellent (85-100)	Total Score
		1	2	3	4	5	
1	Students are seriousness in understanding the materials				√		4
2	Students pay attention to the teacher's explanation				√		4
3	Students show curiosity by asking the questions to clarify understanding				√		4
4	Students are active during the learning process			√			3
5	Students are enthusiastic in responding teacher's question			√			3
	Total Score	0		6	12	0	18

$$\begin{aligned}
 \text{Score} &= \frac{\text{Total score}}{\text{Max.score}} \times 100\% \\
 &= \frac{18}{25} \times 100\% \\
 &= 72\%
 \end{aligned}$$

From the observations conducted, the researcher noted that students' participation during the second cycle was generally average. The students were able to follow the researcher's explanations. When they became noisy or

inattentive, the researcher addressed this by asking them to come forward and construct additional sentences related to the material. Furthermore, students became more active in seeking clarification from the researcher if they encountered difficulties understanding the material or spelling words. This approach helped students apply their vocabulary knowledge effectively in written form. Although the students worked diligently on their assignments, some struggled with discipline due to boredom when the material extended over time.

Based on the test scores from the second cycle, the average score was 81.72 or approximately 82%. This demonstrated that the students achieved good results in improving their English vocabulary mastery through Scrabble. The minimum passing score set as an indicator of success was 65, and most students surpassed this benchmark. They were able to complete assignments and apply their vocabulary knowledge in written tasks. The researcher documented key observations during the second cycle, noting that Scrabble successfully motivated students to learn vocabulary. The researcher also effectively managed the classroom by arranging students' seats in a circular "O" shape. Teaching verbs using Scrabble improved students' mastery of English verbs, although a small number of students still struggled to achieve the expected outcomes.

After analyzing the results from the second cycle, the researcher concluded that the research objectives had been met, and the study was completed.

The goals of the study were to describe the implementation of teaching verbs using the Scrabble game and to determine the improvement in students' mastery of English verbs among eighth-grade students at SMPN 2 Metro during the 2023/2024 academic year. While the Scrabble game occasionally took longer than planned, students were able to play it effectively. The use of a large game board enabled the teacher to manage the class better during gameplay. The researcher also organized students in a circular "O" formation to facilitate observation of their engagement and activeness during the activity.

In playing Scrabble, students were encouraged to collect as many vocabulary words as possible, earning higher scores as a result. The game was implemented in accordance with the established procedures for playing Scrabble, and students successfully applied their vocabulary knowledge in written tasks. They also demonstrated improved vocabulary arrangement and spelling skills.

An analysis of the test results across all cycles revealed a consistent increase in scores, from the initial pre-cycle test to the first cycle test, and finally to the second cycle test. This progression confirmed the effectiveness of the Scrabble game in enhancing students' mastery of English vocabulary.

The result of whole tests as follows:

o		Pre Cycle	First Cycle/ First test	Second Cycle/ Second test
	The Mean of test	60	70	81.724138
		(60%)	(70%)	(82%)

From the analysis of test results across the pre-cycle, first cycle, and second cycle, an improvement in students' scores was observed. The average score in the pre-cycle was 60 (60%), which increased to 70 (70%) in the first cycle and further

improved to 81.72 (82%) in the second cycle. This indicates that the researcher's implementation of Scrabble in the learning process successfully enhanced the vocabulary mastery of eighth-grade students at SMPN 2 Metro. By using Scrabble to teach vocabulary, students improved their spelling skills, which helped them read and apply vocabulary, particularly verbs, in written form.

CONCLUSION

The research titled "Using Scrabble Game to Increase Students' English Vocabulary Mastery at the Eighth Grade of Junior High School (SMPN 2) Metro in the Academic Year of 2023/2024" demonstrated that the implementation of Scrabble significantly enhanced students' vocabulary mastery. Conducted over two cycles, the study focused on spelling, reading, and memorizing both regular and irregular verbs. Despite initial challenges with the game's complexity, systematic guidance and corrections from the teacher enabled students to adapt and engage actively in the learning process. The average test scores improved consistently across the cycles, starting from 60 (60%) in the pre-cycle, rising to 70 (70%) in the first cycle, and reaching 81.72 (82%) in the second cycle. By the end of the study, 96.55% of students met the success criteria, far exceeding the benchmark of 65%.

The findings confirm that Scrabble is an effective tool for improving students' English vocabulary mastery. Beyond enhancing their linguistic skills, the game motivated students to participate enthusiastically in learning activities. By combining cognitive engagement with interactive gameplay, Scrabble facilitated meaningful learning experiences, enabling students to achieve the research objectives successfully. This study highlights the potential of innovative educational media to overcome traditional learning challenges and foster better outcomes in language education.

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