



INNOVATIVE: Journal Of Social Science Research

Volume 4 Nomor 5 Tahun 2024 Page 7229-7241

E-ISSN 2807-4238 and P-ISSN 2807-4246

Website: <https://j-innovative.org/index.php/Innovative>

## Improving Student's Vocabulary Mastery by Using Three Word Games at Grade VIII SMP Islam Kader Bangsa Bekasi

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### Abstract

The objectives of this research is to study 1) The instructional process of word games in teaching English vocabulary in SMP Islam kader Bangsa 2) The result of the implementation of word games in improving SMP Islam Kader Bangsa student's vocabulary. This study used classroom action research in SMP Islam Kader Bangsa's VIII class in Bekasi in 2024. The model employed in this investigation was Kurt Lewin. This inquiry was divided into two cycles: planning, activity, observation, and reflection. For data collecting, the author employed both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Qualitative data was gathered by means of observations and interviews. Pre- and post-test techniques were used to gather quantitative data. The results of the study demonstrate a notable improvement in the vocabulary instruction of English through word games. While students' average score on the post-test was 89.12, their average score on the pre-test was only 64.41. With a score of 0.29 on the Sample Paired Test, all students passed the KKM.

Keywords: *Word Games, Vocabulary, Teaching English*

## Abstrak

Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mempelajari 1) Proses instruksional permainan kata dalam pengajaran kosakata bahasa Inggris di SMP Islam Kader Bangsa 2) Hasil penerapan permainan kata dalam meningkatkan kosakata siswa SMP Islam Kader Bangsa. Penelitian ini menggunakan penelitian tindakan kelas di kelas VIII SMP Islam Kader Bangsa di Bekasi pada tahun 2024. Model yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah model Kurt Lewin. Penelitian ini dibagi menjadi dua siklus: perencanaan, kegiatan, observasi, dan refleksi. Untuk pengumpulan data, penulis menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dan kuantitatif. Data kualitatif dikumpulkan melalui observasi dan wawancara. Teknik pre-test dan post-test digunakan untuk mengumpulkan data kuantitatif. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan peningkatan yang signifikan dalam pengajaran kosakata bahasa Inggris melalui permainan kata. Skor rata-rata siswa pada post-test adalah 89,12, sedangkan skor rata-rata mereka pada pre-test hanya 64,41. Dengan skor 0,29 pada Sample Paired Test, semua siswa lulus KKM.

Kata Kunci: *Permainan Kata, Kosakata, Pengajaran Bahasa Inggris*

## INTRODUCTION

All over the world, people use English as an international language. In Indonesia, English is referred to as a "foreign" or "second" language. Moreover, English is taught in a structured way from elementary school to high school. In other words, English is highly valued in Indonesia as it is the most important language to learn in Indonesian schools. Moreover, to be able to speak English fluently, people need to learn the following four language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing (Gulo et al., 2022).

Vocabulary is the primary key aspect of a language learning which students are required to master in order to achieve the successful practice of communication, to master and learn vocabulary is very important since through vocabulary, people are able to convey the thoughts, emotions, and wishes that they want to communicate (Rahman et al., 2024). Vocabulary refers to all the words in a language, the writing style of an author or artist, the words used in a discipline, and word lists analysed and explained in a clear and practical way, similar to a textbook (Tampubolon et al., 2022).

According to Harmer (2007: 229) in (Matruty & Que, 2021), vocabulary teaching process can be classified into two stages, namely: 1. Introduce Vocabulary. In this stage, the teacher introduces the new vocabulary with correct pronunciation. 2. In the second stage, the teacher gives the students practice on the subject material they are learning, such as matching, word classifications, vocabulary games, using a dictionary, etc.

Therefore, vocabulary teaching in the classroom must be effective to ensure that students receive vocabulary teaching well. As stated by Destika (2022), vocabulary education is the foundation of English education. Many problems arise during the learning

and teaching process faced by teachers and students. For example, some students have unstable vocabulary, which makes it difficult for them to define and use vocabulary. Thus, they become hesitant to express their ideas and feelings. There are several reasons for this, such as the fact that students find it difficult to understand new vocabulary and experience difficulties when using language while learning new vocabulary. In particular, low motivation, monotonous teaching methods, and lack of willingness to learn.

Based on the author's observation from class VIII of Kader Bangsa Junior High School, the author concludes that the students have poor writing skills. When they learn to write a vocabulary word, they take a long time to anticipate what will happen; some of them even fail to understand what will happen. Teachers at Kader Bangsa Junior High School teach students in a traditional way. The author asserts that to improve student satisfaction, it is necessary to consider other methods.

Playing games is one way to improve the level of vocabulary mastery. Educational games offer an engaging and fun learning experience for students that can encourage them to become more active learners in the learning process. Teachers have learnt how to integrate classroom teaching and games to help students become more responsible and able to acquire the necessary academic knowledge and skills (Li et al., 2021). In this way, encouraging players from games can help them maintain a positive attitude in their growth and give them positive feelings. Three types of educational games that can be used include word match games, flash games, and matching games.

One effective and interesting method to improve vocabulary acquisition is word matching games. Word matching is a method aimed at vocabulary courses. This technique is very helpful for learners in understanding a word or phrase without the need to make a dictionary. This technique will be more effective if applied in the form of games or other forms of play, because in general children enjoy games more when learning (Muhimmah, 2023). Word matching games can be played by one or more people. To play this game, students have to match pictures and text. This game begins with the creation of a game book, where players will see pictures and text. It is expected that the application of this game will increase student satisfaction (Aswandi, 2020). Another word games that can be used are flashcards.

Flashcards are learning media in the form of picture cards that are about 25×30 cm in size. The images in this media are a series of messages presented with captions (Saputri, 2020). Flashcards are a type of educational resource consisting of small, angled cards. These cards are usually made using pictures, photos, or symbols that are placed on the back side of the card and have words or numbers on them (Wahyuni, 2020).

The last games is mimes games. The history of mime goes back to the time of the Ancient Greeks. Pantomime, or mimicry, is a form of performance arts in which mute actors must convey feelings or scenes using only their facial expressions and body language (Kucuk, 2023). Hornby in Elmi (2022) defines mime as a technique or method of telling a story by using facial expressions and body movements or gestures without saying anything to express something without speaking to communicate.

Some previous studies have shown that this method can improve student performance. based on the findings of previous studies and analyses. According to the study by Sultan (2022) the researchers found that using games to practice vocabulary in English can help students improve their writing ability, which is shown by the students' corresponding post-test scores. In addition, according to research by Fatmawati (2021), students become more focused when following the learning process by using games involving word matching games, flash cards, and pantomime. In addition, word games can help students provide interesting subject matter and present lessons in an interesting and entertaining way.

Based on the mentioned background, this study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of using the three word games to increase vocabulary skills, specifically in the formal education at Kader Bangsa Junior High School Bekasi.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study used a Classroom Action Research. Classroom Action Research according to Hopkins is research that combines research methods with substantive methods, or an action in the discipline of inquiry or a person's attempt to understand what is happening, while engaging in the process of research and change (Asrori & Rusman, 2020). Classroom action research came from the English term Classroom Action Research, which is popularly known by the following abbreviation: PTK. Which is research that is conducted in the classroom by the teacher or researcher to identify the effects of the research. The means research that is conducted in a class to know the effects of action applied to a research subject in the class (Azizah, 2021). The model of Classroom Action Research that researcher use is the Kurt Lewin model. Kurt Lewin stated that action research has three different categories. In one round there are (four) steps, namely: 1. Planning. 2. Action 3. Observation 4. Reflection. The subjects of this research are grade VIII students at Kader Bangsa Islamic Junior High School for the academic year (2024-2025). There are about seventeen students in class VIII. The techniques of collecting data are: 1. Observation. 2. Interview. 3. Test.

Techniques of Data Analysis are: 1. Observation data were analyzed qualitatively. 2. Test result data is analyze through calculating the scores of pre-test and post-test.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### A. The Result of Pre-Implementation of the Action.

#### 1. The Result of Interview



Picture 1. Interview with Drs. Syamsul Arifin

The interview was conducted on Saturday, 16 July 2024, starting at 09.00 and ending at 09.45. The author poses a few questions to the teacher, which include the general conditions in the classroom regarding students' ability to memorize English vocabulary, difficulties in learning English vocabulary, and teaching strategies used by the teacher to teach English vocabulary.

First, the general condition in the class. The teacher stated that most of the students dislike learning English since they find it difficult and their proficiency in the language is not very good. Additionally, the teacher mentioned that the hardest material to learn in grade VIII is vocabulary since most of the students aren't able to meet the minimal KKM criteria.

Secondly, the difficulty of learning English vocabulary. According to the teacher, students have difficulty with vocabulary in the class. The majority of students have difficulty understanding the words because they are unable to understand the material well. In addition, students are also unable to understand unfamiliar vocabulary. The students are usually bored with some words and phrases that are similar to English.

The third category is the strategies used by teachers to teach vocabulary to students. Teachers use objects in the classroom and around the school environment as English learning aids for students. In contrast, regarding the strategies offered by teachers to improve students' English vocabulary, teachers stated that the current situation is not ideal and still needs a lot of improvement and enhancement.

## 2. The Result of Observation

Observations are used to monitor the process of vocabulary learning prior to action execution. Observations will take place at SMP Islam Kader Bangsa during the 2024 academic year. There is seventeen students in the class. The pre-observation will take place on July 16, 2024. Generally speaking, throughout the teaching process, the instructor dominates the class so that the students essentially have no time to participate actively in the class. Next, the teacher asks the students to observe various shapes in the classroom before asking them to mention the name of the objects. After that, the teacher also asked students to repeat the vocabulary they had learned before. In addition, the teacher asked the students to write it in their books. Then the teacher reads it out loud, and asks the students to repeat what the teacher has said. As a result, the students look bored and they don't learn the vocabulary.

## B. The Implementation of The Action

### 1. Cycle 1

#### a. Planning

At this point, the teacher is creating a learning plan that is centered on increasing student understanding through word games. Besides making lesson plans, the author also checks whether the lesson plans have been made before or not.

#### b. Acting

The author greets the students in the classroom. Since this is the first step before starting the learning activity, the author and students doing the prayer. After that, the author checks the students' attendance and makes sure the students' names are correct. The author teaches the students by mentioning the activities done on Independence Day, along with teaching vocabulary in English. The author tries to clarify the students' understanding of the vocabulary they have learnt. The teacher and students evaluate each other's vocabulary and pronunciation together.

The author then uses a pre-test to measure students' comprehension and understanding. The pretest will be conducted on 21 July 2024, to measure students' vocabulary ability, and will be conducted before the completion of the Classroom Action Research. During the pre-test, students' vocabulary skills were not very good. This can be seen from the table below regarding the vocabulary pre-test results.

Table 1. Vocabulary Pre-Test Score

No	Name	Score
1	Alif Husein Al-Fattah	70
2	Alfyano Sanshan Prathama	35
3	Alwi Maqnun Fatoni	40
4	Andika Putranto	50
5	Annisa Amilia Putri	90
6	Fina Nur Hasanah	65
7	Maulana Rizky	65
8	Muhammad Zehan	75
9	Muhammad Agung	75
10	Nayyara Salma Syawallia	60
11	Raihanah Septiani	55
12	Repan Rama Pratama	75
13	Sakira Julia Putri	65
14	Shava Haryanti	95
15	Teguh Praka Putra	50
16	Vikram Grib Syah	80
17	Yanuar Erlangga	50
Total		1095
Average		64.411765

According to the data, the pre-test of average score is 64,41 based on the results that the students had already completed. Only six students, or 35.29% of students, meet the minimal criteria for KKM. After analyzing the Pre-Test results, it can be concluded that the majority of the junior high school students at SMP Kader Bangsa experience difficulty when mastering vocabulary. Because of this, a solution to this problem needs to be found. In this regard, the authors employ the strategy by applying the words games in cycle 2 of the Classroom Action Research to address the issues raised above and to enhance the students' ability in English Vocabulary.

c. Observing

At the observation stage, the author considered students' responses, participation, and performance. Based on the results, some students seemed less motivated and confused in carrying out their tasks. The class condition was still a bit unstable, there were some students who made mistakes and disturb other students during the learning process.

d. Reflecting

In this section, the authors and the teacher discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the pre-test and the test. Based on collected and analyzed data, it was determined that only six students who had met the Minimal Criteria (KKM)

were considered. The results of observation and testing indicate that the first cycle did not succeed. Thus, teachers and students need to continue to the next cycle.

## 2. Cycle 2

### a. Planning

The purpose of cycle 2 was to address the problem discussed in cycle 1, namely, students' relatively low vocabulary ability. At this stage, the author and teacher arranged the procedure of the word game.

### b. Acting

The second action was conducted on 17 July 2024. The action was carried out in accordance with the previously discussed procedures. The learning process began with the author greeting the students in the classroom. As this was the first step before starting the learning process, the author asked the leader of the class to come forward to lead the prayer. And then, the writer would check the attendance of students and ensure that their names were accurate. After that, the author gave the game instructions and encouraged the students to play the game.



Picture 2. Students doing the word matching games

First games is word matching games, the writer give the picture with vocabulary and the student must match the picture and vocabulary correctly. In the learning activity, the teacher introduces the word matching game with the predetermined theme, which is Independence Day. After that, the teacher gives the paper with picture of Independence Day games. The teacher then asks the student to match the game's name to the picture correctly.



Picture 3. Students doing flashcard games

Second games is, flashcard. The writer gives some flash cards to the students that contain vocabulary about the games played in the Indonesian Independence Day, then the teacher shuffle the cards and ask students to say the vocabulary in the picture on the flash card.



Picture 4. Students doing the mime game

Third games is mime games. The writer introduce the mime game technique by demonstrates the body language movement to describe the game. Then the writer asked the students to play this game with their peers. One student demonstrates the movements of the vocabulary on the flashcards and the other students guess the correct vocabulary and after that they switch position with each others.

Writers ask students to raise their hand in the game they are playing to ensure that students understand the material. Before beginning instruction, the teacher should find out what difficulties the students are having during the learning process. If there are questions related to the material, the author will briefly explain and answer them. Some advice is given to students to encourage them to be consistent in learning English as it will be useful for them in the future. To end the lesson, the teacher saying a goodbye greetings.

c. Observing

There is a significant developments of the acting phase in cycle 2. From the observation, the students' situation has started to stabilise. As a result, after the game finished, the students were more eager to participate. Students appear more serious and self-assured while using English vocabulary words.

d. Reflecting

Based on observational data and post-test results for cycle 2, the authors and the teacher are pleased with the action results since the results of the words game in the English language learning program indicate a significant improvement from cycle 1.

C. The Result of Post-Implementation of the Action

Table 2. Vocabulary Post-Test Score

No	Name	Score
1	Alif Husein Al-Fattah	85
2	Alfyano Sanshan Prathama	90
3	Alwi Maqnun Fatoni	85
4	Andika Putranto	90
5	Annisa Amilia Putri	95
6	Fina Nur Hasanah	90
7	Maulana Rizky	90
8	Muhammad Zehan	85
9	Muhammad Agung	85
10	Nayyara Salma Syawallia	90
11	Raihanah Septiani	90
12	Repan Rama Pratama	90
13	Sakira Julia Putri	90
14	Shava Haryanti	100
15	Teguh Praka Putra	85
16	Vikram Grib Syah	90
17	Yanuar Erlangga	85
Total		1515
Average		89.11764706

Based on the results of the calculation, the author found that the average score of the post-test results of both students was 89.11. This finding also indicates that all 17 students meet the Minimum Completion Criteria (KKM).

Table 3. Paired Samples Statistics

		Paired Samples Statistics			
		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	pre_test	64.41	17	16.572	4.019
	post_test	89.12	17	4.045	.981

From the Paired Sample Statistics above, we can see the difference in scores from the pre-test and post-test.

Table 4. Paired Sample Correlations

Paired Samples Correlations		N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1	pre_test & post_test	17	.528	.029

Finally, it can be seen from the Paired Sample Correlation that there is a significant result for the students' average. Prior to beginning the words games in the vocabulary lesson, the writer analyzes the pretest results. In the pretest, the average class score prior to the implementation of the action was 64,41. More specifically, the authors found that around 35,29% of students who were passed the KKM. According to the results, there are six students passed the KKM (75) and eleven students below the KKM.

From the calculation, the writer found that the mean of the students second post test result is 89,11, it also showed that all 17 students passed the minimal mastery level criterion (KKM). Furthermore the students mean score improvement from the pre test to post test would be 24.71. So, it means the action has made the requirement of action success which was 100% students passed the minimum mastery criterion (KKM) in the score 75. In this case, those scores showed the successful of the classroom action research toward student of VIII grade at SMP Islam Kader Bangsa. So, it has met a criterion of the action success.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the results of data analysis, the authors conclude that using words games in English language teaching can increase student vocabulary ability. This can be proved by the results of the pre-test and post-tests. The pre-test results show that the students' average score is only 64,41, and the post-test results show that the students' average score is 89,12, with 100% of the students meeting KKM. Therefore, this shows a significant improvement in the English learning process by using word games. In addition, by increasing students' participation through the three word games, students gain the ability to be proactive and co-operative in classroom activities, which enables them to learn; this is supported by observational and qualitative evidence.

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