

## INCREASING ENGLISH VOCABULARY OF GRADE VIII STUDENTS THROUGH WORD GAMES

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### ABSTRACT

*Teaching English vocabulary has its own challenges. This is why teachers have to be creative in order for the students to understand and increase their English vocabulary. One of the way to teach English vocabulary is through Word Games. This research aims to find out whether or not the use of Word Games can effectively increase English vocabulary of grade VIII students at SMP Negeri 10 Palu. This research applied a quasi-experimental design that involved two classes, the experimental class and the control class. The sample of this research was the grade VIII students at SMP Negeri 10 Palu; VIII A consisted of 25 students as an experimental class and VIII B consisted of 25 students as a control class were selected by using simple random sampling. The data were collected through pretest and posttest. The data were analyzed by using SPSS application version 29. The result of the mean score in the experimental class on pretest is 53.44 and the control class is 50.08. The mean score of the posttest in the experimental class is 90.04 and the control class is 61.12. Independent samples t test showed that the significance is 0.000 and the standard significance is 0.05 which means that the value of significance is lower than the standard significance ( $0,000 < 0,05$ ). It can be concluded that the use of Word Games can increase English vocabulary of the grade VIII students.*

**Keywords:** *English Vocabulary, Increasing, Word Games*

### INTRODUCTION

English is a language used as a means of communication among nations all over the world. There are three language components in English, namely grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary. Grammar is all the rules of the way the sentences of a language are constructed. Pronunciation refers to the manner in which a word or a language is articulated and vocalized. Vocabulary is all the words in a language applied by an individual or a group. According to Bintz (2011), vocabulary refers to the words that a person has to know to speak successfully. Based on that statement, students' vocabulary is their primary tool for using English effectively. The broader the vocabulary, the communication will be more effective.

Most of the students have problems in memorizing vocabulary which leads to lacking of vocabulary. Grade VIII students of SMP Negeri 10 Palu do not know the meaning of words in English and they also do not know the spelling. The reason why it is difficult for the students to memorize and learn English vocabulary is

because of the way the teacher delivers the material. In addition, lack of motivation can be one of the factors why students are difficult to memorize new vocabulary. The teacher always uses the conventional method. It is reading a passage or material from the students' textbook and asking them to write down the words that they do not know the meaning and then the teacher will explain the meaning of the words. The students find this method is boring and not entertaining. According to Rohaizat & Aziz (2022), uninteresting courses and challenging assignments without adequate explanation lead to students being less engaged and performing poorly academically. Therefore, they will not remember the words that the teacher provides.

Relating to the problems, the researchers realize that the students require new media to help them increase their vocabulary. There are two word games that the researchers applied to the students, namely Word Association and Word Chain. Word association is a game which a word is given to students and the students must write a related or associated word. According to Terasne et al. (2018), Word Association is one of the well-known learning technique method. Learners are encouraged to produce their own associations or find out possible associative relationships through game-based tasks. The teacher writes a theme word on the whiteboard and then one of the students writes a related word based on the theme word written by the teacher. Word chain is the game that is played by using the last letter of the previous word to create a new word. According to Abbas & Fadhly (2014), Word Chain can be played individually or in a group. The teacher can divide the class into two groups and set the timer. The members of both groups take turns to write the words on the whiteboard until the time is up and the group that write most words will be the winner.

There was a research conducted on vocabulary which are relevant to this research. The research was conducted by Sabila & Niswa (2023). The title is "Using Scrabble Word Game to Improve Student's Vocabulary Mastery". The purpose of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of using the Scrabble word game to improve students' vocabulary mastery. The researcher applied CAR (Classroom Action Research) as the method for this research. The population of this research was first-grade students of SMP Negeri 1 Bahorok. The results indicated that

students' vocabulary learning outcomes increased significantly, as evidenced by the pretest and posttest scores showing a notable improvement.

Based on the previous research, the sample and the population were first-grade students and the method was Classroom Action Research. This research focused on using Word Games to teach English vocabulary to grade VIII students. This research can be used as a reference for teachers at schools to teach English vocabulary using Word Games.

## **MATERIALS AND METHOD**

In this research, the researchers used a quasi-experimental research design. The researchers used this research design because there were more than one class at SMP Negeri 10 Palu. According to Leavy (2017), quasi-experimental research design is a research design that involves two classes (Experimental class and control class). One class received a pretest, experimental treatments using Word Games, and a posttest. The second class received a pretest, treatments using conventional method by reading a material from the textbook and translate the words to the students, and also receives a posttest.

The population of this research was grade VIII students at SMP Negeri 10 Palu. In this research, the researchers used a simple random sampling technique to select the sample. It is a randomly selected part of a population. Thus, each class within the population has an equal opportunity of being selected using this sampling technique.

Test items and treatments were the instruments for collecting data in this research. The test was divided into pretest and posttest. It administered in the form of multiple choice and matching test. The researchers used treatment as a chance to apply the technique in accomplishing the research goal. In conducting the treatment, the researchers provided one topic to discuss and 6 meetings based on the English subject schedule.

Data analysis is a statistical process of utilizing and evaluating research data. After completing all the treatment, the test results were evaluated. The results of the pretest and posttest for the students were analyzed using SPSS version 29 application. The results were used to prove whether word games can or cannot effectively increase English vocabulary.

## RESULTS

### *Results of the Pretest and Posttest in Experimental Class*

Table 1. Pretest and Posttest Results of Experimental Class

	<b>N</b>	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Maximum</b>	<b>Mean</b>
Pretest of Experimental Class	25	20	72	53.44
Posttest of Experimental Class	25	76	100	90.40
Valid N (listwise)	25			

Table 2. Scoring Range of Pretest Experimental Class

	<b>Classification</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Valid	Very Good	90-100	-	0
	Good	80-89	-	0
	Fair	70-79	2	8.0
	Poor	60-69	9	36.0
	Very Poor	0-59	14	56.0
	<b>Total</b>		0	25

Table 3. Scoring Range of Posttest Experimental Class

	<b>Classification</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Valid	Very Good	90-100	14	56.0
	Good	80-89	8	32.0
	Fair	70-79	3	12.0
	Poor	60-69	-	0
	Very Poor	0-59	-	0
	<b>Total</b>		0	25

Based on the table 1. the total number of students in experimental class is 25. The mean score of pretest in experimental class is 53,44 which in category very poor. The highest score for the pretest is 72 and the lowest score is 20. Relating to the scoring range of pretest, there were only two students (8%) who achieved the category fair. Nine students (36%) who gained the category poor and fourteen students (56%) in the category very poor. There were no students who achieved category good and very good. The passing standard of the school is 75. This implied that the students' knowledge about English vocabulary was still relatively low. It means that the mean score of pretest in experimental class is still below the standard passing score of the school .

Meanwhile, in the posttest the mean score is 90,40 in category very good which indicated that there was a significant improvement in students' knowledge about English vocabulary. The highest score achieved is 100 and the lowest score is 76. Regarding the scoring range of posttest, there were fourteen students (56%) who gained the category very good, eight students (32%) in the category good and three students (12%) in the category fair. It can be looked in the table that the mean score was improved from 53,44 to 90,40 which means the score is already passed the standard passing score of the school.

***Results of the Pretest and Posttest in Control Class***

Table 4. Pretest and Posttest Results of Control Class

	<b>N</b>	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Maximum</b>	<b>Mean</b>
Pretest of Control Class	25	32	72	50.08
Posttest of Control Class	25	40	84	61.12
Valid N (listwise)	25			

Table 5. Scoring Range of Pretest Control Class

	<b>Classification</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Valid	Very Good	90-100	-	0
	Good	80-89	-	0

Fair	70-79	1	4.0
Poor	60-69	7	28.0
Very Poor	0-59	17	68.0
<b>Total</b>	0	25	100.0

Table 6. Scoring Range of Posttest Control Class

	<b>Classification</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Valid	Very Good	90-100	-	0
	Good	80-89	3	12.0
	Fair	70-79	5	20.0
	Poor	60-69	7	28.0
	Very Poor	0-59	10	40.0
	<b>Total</b>	0	25	100.0

Based on the table 4, the total number of students in control class is 25. The mean score of pretest in control class is 50,08 which in category very poor. The highest score for the pretest is 72 and the lowest score is 32. Relating to the scoring range of pretest, there were only one students (4%) who achieved the passing standard. Seven students (28%) who gained the category poor and seventeen students (56%) in the category very poor. There were no students who achieved category good and very good. The passing standard of the school is 75. This indicated that the students' knowledge about English vocabulary was still very low. It can be looked that the mean score of pretest in control class is still below the standard passing score of the school.

Moreover, the mean score of posttest in control class is 61,12 in category poor which indicated that there was also a significant improvement in students' knowledge about English vocabulary. The highest score achieved is 84 and the lowest score is 40. Regarding the scoring range of posttest, there were three students (12%) who gained the category good, five students (20%) in the category fair, seven students (28%) in the category poor and ten students (40%) in the category very

poor. It can be looked in the table that the mean score was slightly improved from 50,08 to 61,12.

### **Normality Test**

In this research, the researchers used the Shapiro-Wilk normality test using SPSS application. The purpose of this test is to know whether the data have a normal distribution.

Table 7. Tests of Normality using Shapiro-Wilk

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup>		Shapiro-Wilk			
	Statistic	Df	Sig.	Statistic	Df	Sig.
Pretest of Experimental Class	.137	25	.200*	.934	25	.108
Posttest of Experimental Class	.151	25	.145	.890	25	.011
Pretest of Control Class	.157	25	.112	.932	25	.098
Posttest of Control Clas	.102	25	.200*	.945	25	.188

\*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

According to the table 7, it shows that the Shapiro-Wilk significance value (Sig.) of experimental class and control class  $> 0.05$ . Hence, it can be determined that all of the data in this research are distributed normally.

### **Homogeneity Test**

After applying the normality test, the researchers applied the homogeneity test in order to know if the data is homogeneous or not homogeneous. This test was carried out using SPSS application.

Table 8. Test of Homogeneity

	Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Result	5,62	1	48	,022

The significance value is 0,022. In order to determine if the data is homogeneous the significance value must be higher than the standard significance (0,05). As it can be looked from the table, the significance value is lower than the standard significance (0,022<0,05). Hence, the data is not homogeneous.

***Hypothesis Testing***

The researchers analyzed the data using SPSS version 29 application. The result is in the following table.

Table 9. Independent Samples T Test

Independent Samples Test		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
Result		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Result	Equal variances assumed	5,62	,022	8,95	48,00	,000	29,28	3,27	22,70	35,86
	Equal variances not assumed			8,95	39,57	,000	29,28	3,27	22,67	35,89

The result of analysis revealed that the significance (2 tailed) is 0.000 and the standard significance is 0.05. The degree of freedom (df) is 39,57 where the t count is 8,95 and the significance value is 0.000 < 0.05. It can be concluded that the alternative hypothesis (H<sub>1</sub>) is accepted and the null hypothesis (H<sub>0</sub>) is rejected. This means that there is a significant difference in posttest of experimental class and control class after receiving treatments using Word Games to increase students English vocabulary.

**DISCUSSION**

The aim of this research is to find out whether or not the implementation of Word Games can increase English vocabulary of grade VIII students at SMP Negeri 10 Palu. Based on the results, there is a significant improvement after applying Word Games to the students. This is supported by the statistical result the sig. (ρ) was lower than alpha (α). The sig. was 0.000 and the alpha was 0.05 (0.000<0.05).

Hence, the use of Word Games can effectively increase English vocabulary. In other words, the alternative hypothesis ( $H_1$ ) is accepted.

Playing Word Games can have a positive effect on increasing English vocabulary. According Wahyudi & Kusumawardani (2024), playing word search games provides students with an opportunity to engage in imaginative thinking, contributing to the development of their creativity. This creativity can enhance students' cognitive abilities. Fun and enjoyable activities in classroom can motivate the students to learn and memorize English vocabulary. Applying word games in teaching and learning process can a engaging and interesting way to make students interested in learning vocabulary.

Word games are versatile enough to be applied into many kinds of activities for individuals and groups. Playing games not only allows students to practice their English but also connects them to the real-world application of the language outside of the classroom (Eryilmaz, 2015). Games provide plenty of opportunities for students to comprehend and create new words. According to Amato (1995), games are often highly motivating, relevant, and comprehensible. It can be said that games can motivate and bring fun and relaxation for students to learn new vocabulary. Using games is a helpful tool which students can learn English vocabulary with a mix of entertainment.

## **CONCLUSION**

The use of Word Games can increase English vocabulary of the grade VIII students. There is a significant difference in the mean score of posttest in the experimental class and the control class. It can be proven by the independent samples T test to test the hypothesis, the value of significance is 0.000 which is lower than the standard significance 0.05. Playing Word Games can make students memorize new English vocabulary easily. Due to time constraint, the scope of this research is limited to only concrete nouns and descriptive adjectives and for the next researchers can conduct a research about Word Games that focuses on other parts of speech such as verbs, pronouns, etc.

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