

Improving Student's English Vocabulary Mastery through Scattergories Game

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ABSTRACT

The intent of this study is to determine whether employing Scattergories Game is effective in order to enhance the vocabulary mastery of grade eighth students of SMP Negeri 2 Palu. The pre-experimental research design was utilized by the researcher. In determining the sample, the researcher employed a purposive sampling technique. The selected sample was class VIII B, comprising 32 students. Data were obtained through the use of both pre-tests and post-tests. The outcomes of the data analysis indicates that the mean score of student's post-tests 85.06 is higher than students pretest score 57.97. The research findings that the t-counted value (31.157) is higher than the t-table value (2.039). This indicates that the hypothesis of the study is accepted. In conclusion, scattegories game is effective to improve students' vocabulary mastery of the student's grade at SMP Negeri 2 Palu

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Improving, Scattergories Game, Vocabulary Mastery

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1. Introduction

Basic knowledge of a language, especially vocabulary, has a significant impact on one's ability to speak, listen, read and write in that language (Wangdi, 2022; Al-Obaydi & Rahman, 2021; Yaumi et al., 2024). The need for foreign language proficiency has increased due to the demands of modern times, especially in the face of globalization (Sotlikova, 2023; Jung et al., 2025; Karubaba et al., 2024; Sachiya et al., 2025). Among the many foreign languages that students must master, English is one of the most widely recognized languages. However, the process of becoming proficient in a foreign language requires considerable thought, one of which is vocabulary knowledge.

According to (Asyiah, 2017), vocabulary is a very important language skill and affects the way students speak, listen, read, and write. Vocabulary can be defined as the quantity of a language's vocabulary and the meaning of those words (Rahayu, & Ramdan, 2023; Ko et al., 2025; Rahman et al., 2019). (Guskey & Anderman, 2013) explain that "mastery" is a term often used by educators. Although they believe that they understand this concept, when asked to explain what is meant by "mastering" a concept or skill, everyone has a different definition. Tarigan (1984), cited by (Yudha & Mandasari, 2021), states that language ability is highly dependent on vocabulary mastery. In other words, the more vocabulary a person has, the more likely it is to be skilled in using language.

Based on various expert opinions above, therefore, it may be said that vocabulary is a collection of words in a language which is an important basis in language skills. Vocabulary includes single words, compound words, and idioms that act as the main foundation in communication. Without sufficient vocabulary, a person will have difficulty in expressing their ideas, feelings and desires to others. This happens to students of SMPN 2 Palu, where limited vocabulary makes it difficult for them to understand and use English. Therefore, vocabulary mastery is very important because it affects the four language skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing. The more vocabulary one has, the easier it is to communicate and understand information in the language.

Based on the preliminary results, it appears that SMPN 2 Palu students have a very limited English vocabulary. Student's have difficulty in understanding the meaning of words and using words in a sentence. This situation makes students less interested in learning English. When asked to name 3 words starting with the letter 'A', most students could only name a maximum of two words (Apple and Ant). The researcher opinion, teaching vocabulary to junior high school students requires a different approach from adults. Junior high school students tend to get bored easily and lose interest. So, teachers need to find appropriate and interesting techniques. One method that is considered effective is by using games, which may rise students' motivation and enthusiasm for study.

In this context, the researcher suggests using the Scattergories game as a tool for teaching vocabulary at SMPN 2 Palu. The Scattergories is a game that involves naming an initial letter where players have to list words that start with that letter. Before starting, the category of words to be used must be agreed upon, such as nouns, verbs or adjectives (Anggraini & Salmiah, 2024). (Siregar, 2023) added that the Scattergories game is one of the variations of category games that can help in general word learning. This game hones critical thinking skills and is considered a positive and beneficial game for students in learning English. According to Mike (2006:3) cited in (Pintubatu, 2021) Scattergories is a board game for two to six players, where participants attempt to list as many words as possible that start with a particular letter and fit into a predetermined category. The game is able to enjoyed with others and is said to be pleasurable and engaging, as well as an interactive learning method. The interactive nature of these games not only makes learning more captivating while also improving memorization and recall of new vocabulary.

The effectiveness of Scattergories game in vocabulary teaching has been demonstrated in previous research. The first (Lekawael & Meyer, (Lekawael & Meyer, 2022)2022) observed research the title "Using Scattergories Game To Improve Student's Vocabulary Mastery At The Seventh Grade Of SMP Negeri 2 Tiakur". The second previous research conducted by (M. Arif Arafah, 2023) observed research the title "The Effect of Using Scattergories Games on Enhancing Student' s Vocabulary Mastery".

Considering the earlier findings, the researcher concluded that stimulating and improving students' vocabulary can be achieved by using interesting vocabulary teaching approaches. The aforementioned studies' similarities is the use of games in English language teaching to enhance vocabulary elements. One of the things that distinguishes the two researchers above is that they each used different research methods; the previous studies used quasi-experiments and classroom action research, while the researcher study used pre-experiments. The researcher will use the Scattergories game to identify similarities and differences from the previous studies. They will offer students an alphabet and ask them to guess the word from the outset of the provided letter. The purpose of the game is to enhance learners' vocabularies and help them communicate and focus their ideas.

2. Methodology

This research will use quantitative research. This method is a traditional approach rooted in the philosophy of positivism, which aims to investigate a particular population or sample. This study will utilize research instruments for data collection and apply quantitative or statistical analysis to test the established hypotheses. This study will use a pre-experimental design. Considering (Sugiyono, 2010) "Pre-experimental design is the most basic experimental research because there are external variables that influence the dependent variable." In pre-experimental research, the focus is placed on a single group of students, with researchers administering a pre-test before the treatment and a post-test afterward. The intent of the treatment was to assess how effectively students could use the Scattergories game (Wiraldi, 2020).

The formula used by the researcher is based on the work of (Cohen et al., 2021)

O1 X O2

Notes :

O1 : Pre-Test

X: Treatment

O2 : Post- Test.

2.1 Population and Sample

The study population consisted of all students in grade VIII (A-K) at SMP Negeri 2 Palu, totaling 357 students. The researcher utilized purposive sampling technique to select the sample, namely class VIII B which was selected based on information from the English teacher that the class was experiencing difficulties due to lack of vocabulary mastery. The independent variable in this study was the use of Scattergories game, while the dependent variable was students' vocabulary mastery.

2.2 Instruments and Technique of Data Collection

The research instruments used were vocabulary tests consisting of pre-test and post-test. The pre-test was conducted at the beginning to collect initial data on students' vocabulary mastery, while the post-test was conducted after the treatment to evaluate the success of the Scattergories game implementation. The test consisted of 40 questions which included matching test (15 questions), Indonesian-English test (10 questions), English-Indonesian test (10 questions), and fill in the blank (5 questions). The scoring system used a score of 1 for correct answers and 0 for incorrect or unanswered answers.

2.3 Technique of Data Analysis

The treatment was conducted for six meetings by teaching English vocabulary through Scattergories game, covering materials about nouns (school area and home area), verbs (doing activities), and adjectives (descriptive adjective). The collected data were subjected to quantitative analysis by statistical computations and the SPSS 25 program:

Hypothesis testing was conducted by comparing t-count and t-table to determine whether the use of Scattergories game can enhance students' vocabulary mastery.

3. Result and Discussion

3.1 Result

a. The result of Pre-test

The pre-test was conducted to class VIII B on Monday, January 6th 2025 at 11:20-1:40 p.m. Researchers used SPSS 25 to calculate scores and present data in tabular form.

Table 1. Average Score of Students' Correct Answers on the Pre-Test

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
pretest	32	43	73	57.97	6.751
Valid N (listwise)	32				

b. The Result of Post-test

The post-test was conducted on Thursday, January 23th 2025 at 11.30-01.40 a.m after the treatment using the Scattergories game

Table 2. Average Score of Students' Correct Answers on the Post-Test

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
posttest	32	78	95	85.06	4.772
Valid N (listwise)	32				

c. Comparison of Pre-Test and Post-Test

Table 3. Paired Sample Statistics of Pre-Test and Post-Test

Paired Samples Statistics					
		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	pretest	57.97	32	6.751	1.193
	posttest	85.06	32	4.772	0.844

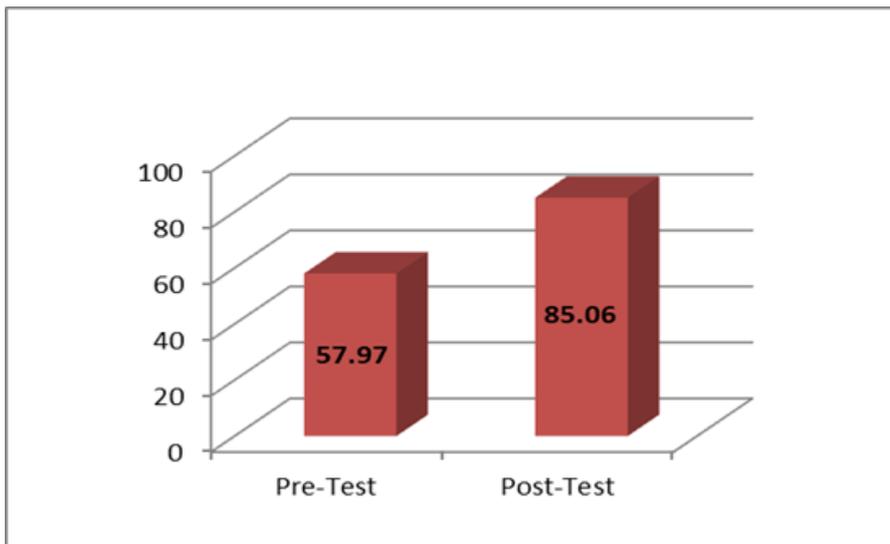


Chart 1. Chart of Improvement Students Mean Score

According to Tables 3 and chart 1, the students' pre-test mean score was 57.97, while their post-test mean score was 85.06. The pre-test standard deviation was 6.751, while the post-test standard deviation was 4.722. It indicates that student's vocabulary has improved as a result of playing the Scattergories game.

Table 4. The Paired Samples Correlations of Pre-Test and Post-Test

Paired Samples Correlations				
		N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1	pretest & posttest	32	0.660	0.000

The table 4 demonstrates a significant positive correlation between participants' pre-test and post-test scores, suggesting that the evaluation or intervention had a substantial effect.

Table 5. The Paired Samples Test of Pre-Test and Post-Test

Paired Samples Test									
		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	pretest - posttest	-27.094	5.082	0.898	-28.926	-25.261	-30.157	31	0.000

Hypothesis test results :

- $df = N - 1 = 32 - 1 = 31$
- $t\text{-count} = 30.157$
- $t\text{-table} = 2.039$ ($\alpha = 0.05$, $df = 31$)

$30.157 > 2.039$

Test criteria:

If $t_0 \geq t\text{-table}$: (H_a) Alternative hypothesis accepted

If $t_0 \leq t\text{-table}$: (H_a) Alternative hypothesis rejected

Considering the outcomes of statistical analysis showing t-count (30.157) > t-table (2.039), the alternative hypothesis is accepted. This shows that there is a significant difference in vocabulary teaching before and after utilizing Scattergories game. The researcher concluded that the Scattergories game is an effective tool for enhancing vocabulary, particularly among grade VIII students in SMP Negeri 2 Palu. The increase in the average score from 57.97 to 85.06 shows the success of the treatment given.

3.2 Discussion

Considering the preliminary results, the researcher found that many students had difficulty in vocabulary. Most students had limited vocabulary, which made it difficult for them to remember English words, understand their meaning and use them in sentences. This led to students' lack of interest in learning English. To overcome this problem, the researcher administered three types of tests to measure students' vocabulary, namely matching test, translating, and identifying random words. This study used a pre-experiment design and was conducted in class VIII B based on the recommendation of the English teacher.

The researcher conducted a pre-test on January 6th 2025 to measure students' vocabulary before the treatment. The standard score in the school was 58, and the pre-test results showed that no students scored below the standard. For six meetings, the researcher applied the Scattergories game with different vocabulary categories. In the game, the students were separated by the researcher into several groups and introduced the Scattergories game. If the previous researcher used paper to determine the initial letter randomly then researcher used a different media, namely using the "spin the wheel" application which made this educational game more interesting and fun then students will compete to write words based on the initial letter and category that has been determined. After the time is up, they read out their answers and the research will be conducted. Following treatment, a post-test was administered by the researcher on January 23th 2025 with the same test as the pre-test to ascertain the vocabulary of the kids improvement. The post-test results showed a significant increase, proving that the Scattergories game worked well for increasing students' vocabularies.

Statistical analysis showed an important difference between the findings of the pre-test and post-test. It demonstrates that the usage of Scattergories game technique effective in improving students' vocabulary acquisition. The game has a positive impact by making students more active and involved in the learning process. The researcher also gave the students tasks and helped those who were having difficulties by going around to ensure their understanding. Collaborative learning through this game allows students to discuss and exchange ideas, which ultimately increases their motivation. Despite some constraints related to time and curriculum, the implementation of the Scattergories game proved to be beneficial in the development of students' language skills. Therefore, it is recommended that teachers consider using this game to improve students' abilities and achieve the desired learning objectives. Overall, the Scattergories game is an effective method to learn and develop students' vocabulary. The Scattergories game provides many opportunities for students to expand their vocabulary. All activities in the game involve students actively, thus helping them to build their vocabulary recall ability. In addition, giving appreciation after answering questions correctly provides additional motivation and makes them enjoy the learning process.

4. Conclusion

The researcher came to the conclusion that the Scattergories game was successful in enhancing the vocabulary knowledge of the students at SMP Negeri 2 Palu based on the data analysis of this study. Following the treatment in the scattergories game, student's vocabulary grows in a noticeable way. The students' performance on the Pre-Test, with a mean score of 57.97, and the Post-Test, with a mean score of 85.06, might serve as evidence. The statistical calculation's outcome reveals that there is a substantial difference in the vocabulary of the students before and after using the Scattergories game, with the t-count (31.157) being bigger than the t-table (2.039). Students have several opportunities to increase their vocabulary using the Scattergories game. Students actively participate in every activity in the game, which helps them improve their language recall skills. Giving them praise after they successfully answer a question also boosts their drive and makes studying more enjoyable.

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