




Improving Students' Vocabulary by Using Vocabulary Board Game in Grade 3 MI Miftahul Ulum Rejosari Bantur

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to improve the vocabulary mastery of third-grade students at MI Miftahul Ulum Rejosari Bantur through the use of a vocabulary board game. The study used the Classroom Action Research (CAR) method developed by Kemmis & McTaggart, which was implemented in two cycles, each consisting of the planning, action, observation, and reflection stages. The research subjects consisted of 23 students. The research instruments included tests (pre-test and post-test) to obtain quantitative data, as well as observation sheets for qualitative data. In cycle I, a vocabulary board game themed "objects in the classroom" was used to increase student engagement and motivation. The post-test results of Cycle I showed an increase in the average score to 66.21 from 56.43 in the pre-test, but it did not yet meet the Minimum Competency Criteria (MCC) of 70. Based on the reflection, improvements were made in Cycle II by adding clearer illustrated vocabulary cards, changing the theme to "professions," and incorporating additional interactive elements. The post-test results of Cycle II showed a significant improvement with an average score of 81.30, exceeding the MCC. This conclusion is supported by the observation data, which demonstrates high motivation, active involvement, and an improvement in students' memory and application of new terminology. According to the study's findings, vocabulary board games help primary school pupils become more proficient in English vocabulary. For best outcomes, teachers should incorporate this approach into regular lessons, adjust themes according to the needs of students, and mix it with other approaches

Keywords: Vocabulary Board Game, Vocabulary Mastery, English Language Learning, Elementary School Students, CAR.

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INTRODUCTION

The language encompasses four fundamental skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Rifai & Yuniarti, 2024). The language can be effectively utilized by students if it possesses a substantial amount of vocabulary (Berta & Swarniti, 2020). One of the most important skills to have if one wishes to communicate effectively in English is vocabulary mastery (Chotimah & Astiyandha, 2022). The importance of English language proficiency has been recognized as increasingly vital in today's globalized world, particularly in the context of elementary education (Sartika et al., 2021). In the process of acquiring English, there are generally several competencies that must be learned. Some additional components or abilities are deemed essential for the enhancement of these four skills, including grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary (Dyah & Sari, 2023). In striving to enhance the students' English language abilities, vocabulary must be imparted to the students (Aufa et al., 2023).

Traditional approaches, which typically include looking up difficult concepts, having pupils look up in a dictionary, and then remembering, make learning ineffective and often leave teachers and students feeling bored and uninspired (Brigitta, 2021). The poor learning outcomes seen in the field are directly caused by the failure of such approaches. Proficiency in vocabulary is a key

criterion that influences the success of an individual who is adept in language. Vocabulary is regarded as a fundamental aspect of using the English language, as it influences the meaning of the language in its application (Vitasromo, 2019). Vocabulary consists of words that are utilized as teams within grammatical structures (Humairo et al., 2024). One of the most crucial aspects of learning English is expanding one's vocabulary; however, many students find this to be challenging and tedious, particularly when instruction is given through conventional means (Harpia et al., 2020). The educational condition at MI Miftahul Ulum indicates that vocabulary mastery is a crucial factor in the development of students' language skills. Many students encounter difficulties in comprehending texts and articulating students ideas effectively, attributed to the limited vocabulary students possess (Syamsiyah & Ma'rifatulloh, 2023).

A change to a pedagogical strategy that better fits the traits of elementary school pupils is required in response to these difficulties vocabulary. Teaching strategies that allow kids to play while learning can be utilized to improve the teaching and learning process and increase student learning outcomes because elementary school pupils are often young and energetic (Amalia, 2020). One way to increase students' vocabulary is through games. A variety of communicative games that can be used to increase students' vocabulary are available, and one of them is board games. Board games can be defined as a medium that provides many advantages for teachers and students. Board games are used to motivate students to follow the teaching and learning process because students are made more focused on learning by these board games, which allows students to feel less forced to learn (Luh & Rapiasih, 2024).

In an effort to enhance students' vocabulary mastery, the potential of game-based learning has been investigated by several studies. According to Malik (2020), the back to the board game method is used to enhance students' vocabulary mastery. The game consists of two teams, with one member from each team sitting with students, back to the board, while the other team members provide clues to help students guess the word written on the board. This technique is intended to make the learning activity more engaging and interactive, allowing students to participate more actively in the learning process. Meanwhile, according to Dwi (2017), the Pictionary Board Game is used as an interactive and fun teaching method, where words are guessed by students based on pictures painted by team members. This technique is aimed at increasing students' interest and participation in the English learning process, as well as improving students' vocabulary skills. It is shown by this study that the use of this game is effective in improving students' vocabulary acquisition.

According to Chotimah & Astiyandha (2022), the Race to the Board game, an interactive learning method, is used that engages students in the activity of writing answers on the board. Students are divided into teams, and questions have to be answered or words related to a certain topic have to be written down. This method was proven effective in improving students' motivation and learning outcomes in English vocabulary acquisition. Each of the three studies above was conducted using a different approach. In addition, the aforementioned studies were carried out in diverse settings and conditions. Even though these three studies show how effective game-based learning may be, they each concentrate on distinct mechanisms like word guessing or drawing that do not yet completely combine tactile, kinesthetic, and visual elements in a single game board. Despite the effectiveness of this research, there is still an opportunity to create a game that precisely combines tactile and visual components to improve language retention. Therefore, the focus of this study is placed on the use of a vocabulary board game, which integrates pictures and words, in which movements on the board are made by students, and answers are provided by pasting pictorial vocabulary to earn points. In addition to providing a more engaging and dynamic learning environment, this strategy seeks to positively impact students' vocabulary comprehension and growth at the MI Miftahul Ulum Rejosari Bantur level. This type of classroom action research (CAR) aims to pinpoint real problems that students in the classroom face and devise solutions (Malik, 2020).

Classroom Action Research (CAR) is the most pertinent methodological strategy to accomplish this goal. Classroom Action Research (CAR) was selected due to its reflective and practical aspects, as well as the fact that it is a means of enhancing the quality of instructors in addressing actual classroom issues. (Amalia & Wilis, 2021). Through Classroom Action Research (CAR), researchers who, in this case, also serve as teachers, can methodically pinpoint issues like poor language knowledge. Then, in order to make cyclical improvements, teachers create and carry

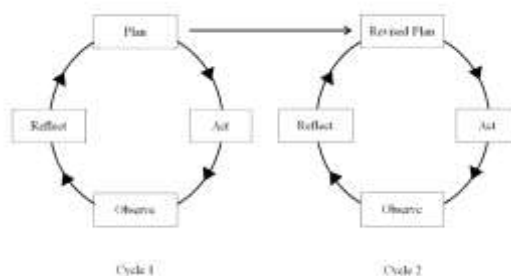
out an intervention like a vocabulary board game, observe its effects firsthand, and then consider the outcomes. One of the features of Classroom Action Research (CAR) is this multi-cycle procedure. (Putra, 2023). Because it permits flexibility in altering game design and instructional strategies in response to student responses and needs noted throughout the study, this technique is ideal. As a result, this study will record the vocabulary board game's development and ongoing enhancement in addition to evaluating its efficacy. This supports the conclusion that it has a positive and significant impact on teacher professionalism. (Yusron et al., 2023). As a result, this study can be used as a useful example for other educators who are dealing with comparable issues. Based on the above description, this study aims to answer the following questions: (1) How can the use of vocabulary board games improve third-grade students' vocabulary mastery? (2) How do students respond and participate during the learning process using this game medium?

METHOD

The research was conducted at MI Miftahul Ulum Rejosari Bantur during the second semester of the 2024/2025 school year, from January to March 2025. The subjects of this study were 23 students from the 3rd grade of MI Miftahul Ulum Rejosari Bantur. This research was classified as classroom action research (CAR). Classroom Action Research (CAR) is a type of research that is aimed at developing new skills and applying new approaches or strategies to solve learning problems with direct application (Agistiani et al., 2023). This study uses the Classroom Action Research (CAR) methodology. This approach was chosen because of its high relevance to the research objectives, namely, to solve real problems encountered in the classroom learning process while improving the researcher's teaching practices as a teacher. CAR is a cyclical, reflective, and collaborative investigation process, in which researchers systematically implement an action (intervention), observe its impact, and reflect on the results to plan better subsequent actions. The CAR model adopted in this study is the spiral model from Kemmis & McTaggart, which is known for its systematic and comprehensive flow. Each cycle in this model consists of four main interrelated stages: Planning, Acting, Observing, and Reflecting. This study was conducted in two cycles, with Cycle II being an improvement on Cycle I based on the findings and reflections made.

Additionally, this research also utilizes mixed methods, namely qualitative and quantitative research. Mixed methods research is defined by (Regnault et al., 2018) A study in which investigators use both qualitative and quantitative approaches or methodologies to gather and analyze data, integrate findings, and draw conclusions.

Quantitative data in the form of tests are used to determine the assessment and improvement of students' vocabulary mastery. Quantitative data were collected using pretest and post-test techniques. The purpose of the pre-test was to ascertain the pupils' prior level of language proficiency before the treatment began. The post-test was administered following the treatment to determine whether the pupils had improved students vocabulary and reached the desired level. The post-test technique included assessments at the end of cycle I and cycle II. The pre-test and post-test consist of 20 multiple-choice questions based on relevant vocabulary. The average score from each test, including the pre-test and post-test, was used to verify the students' scores. The average results of each test were utilized to assess the students' vocabulary improvement. The test results can clarify whether the use of vocabulary board games can facilitate vocabulary growth among students, as indicated by the average difference between the pre-test and post-test. Qualitative information obtained through observation is employed to track students' activity during the learning process using vocabulary board games.



Game Procedure

The game was divided into three groups, each consisting of seven to eight students. Each group stood in line according to its respective group. Before the game began, the researcher gave instructions and explained the meaning of several cards in Indonesian. Next, the researcher attaches several picture cards to the board in each group. The students' task is to attach the word that matches the picture. The game continues even if there are still pictures that have not been filled in, until all pictures have the correct word pair. Students who successfully attach the correct answer will earn points.

Data Analysis Techniques

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The analysis began by calculating the individual scores of each student using the formula $\text{Score} = (\text{Number of Correct Answers} / \text{Total Number of Questions}) \times 100$, with each item valued at 5 points. After obtaining all individual scores, the researcher calculated the class average (mean) for each stage—pre-test, post-test I, and post-test II—using the formula $\text{Mean} = \Sigma X / N$, where ΣX represents the total score of all students and N is the number of students. The next step was determining the classical learning mastery percentage, which shows the proportion of students who reached the Minimum Competency Criteria ($\text{KKM} \geq 70$). Finally, the average scores across the cycles were compared to observe the trend of improvement in students' vocabulary mastery.

Qualitative Data Analysis to capture data on the learning process, the researcher used a structured observation sheet. The observed aspects included: (1) Student Activeness: participation in the game, willingness to ask and answer questions. (2) Motivation and Enthusiasm: facial expressions, spirit, and focus during learning. (3) Interaction and Collaboration: teamwork within groups and communication among students. The data from these observations provided a rich context for interpreting the quantitative data.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study will be presented by the researchers both before and after the research was conducted. The purpose of this study was to enhance the vocabulary mastery of third-grade Mi Miftahul Ulum students through a board game-based learning approach.

Analysis Pre Test

The pre-test was conducted before the first cycle, or before the treatment, using vocabulary board games were administered to assess the vocabulary skills of the students. In this pre-test, vocabulary related to objects in the classroom was provided by the researcher. The researcher gave 20 questions.

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean
pre test	23	40	80	56.43

At this juncture, it was ascertained by the researcher that the knowledge of the provided language among the third-graders was inadequate. An average total score of 56.43 out of 23 pupils was recorded, with the lowest pre-test score being 40 and the highest score being 80. Remedial measures are being undertaken by researchers through the development of games designed to facilitate vocabulary acquisition and expansion among the students. Consequently, games were formulated by the researcher that are intended to assist students in the acquisition of English vocabulary.

The vocabulary skills of grade 3 students were found to be low before instruction using board games. The low vocabulary abilities of the students are attributed to an environment that is not conducive to teaching and learning activities. The learning process is not focused on by the students, as students are preoccupied with activities outside of academic engagement, such as chatting with peers and playing. It has been observed that students tend to exhibit passive behavior and disregard teacher instructions. Observations conducted by the researcher revealed that the memorization method employed by the teacher in the vocabulary learning process is ineffective, as students frequently forget previously practiced material. It can be concluded that the memorization techniques utilized in grade 3 are still ineffective. Consequently, there is a need for other, more

engaging teaching strategies. In this context, the implementation of the learning process must be evaluated by teachers. One of the effective methods identified for teaching vocabulary to students is the use of board games. Through this approach, increased motivation among students is facilitated, and a deeper understanding of vocabulary acquisition is achieved by utilizing vocabulary board games to enhance English vocabulary proficiency.

Cyle I

Planning

The researcher created a vocabulary board game during the planning stage that was appropriate for the curriculum and student-relevant teaching resources. This required developing a game that combines words and pictures, emphasizing language associated with everyday classroom items. The required supplies, such as word cards and glue for pasting responses, were ready. The structure of the game was created to make sure that it encourages student motivation, engagement, and interaction throughout the learning process.

Action

Following the planning phase, the plan was put into action by the researcher using a vocabulary board game that incorporates words and pictures as tangible objects in the classroom. The board was moved on by the students, and responses were made by pasting translations of the new vocabulary to earn points. Clear instructions were given by the researcher, and assistance was provided to help students understand the new vocabulary used. It was also ensured by the researcher that every student actively participated in the game, which added fun and interaction to the learning environment.

Observation

The researcher watches every activity that takes place during the learning process during the observation stage. Students' participation in the game, their reaction to it, and their capacity to use the newly acquired language were all observed. To offer precise information on the efficacy of the applied learning approach, these observations were carried out methodically.

Reflection

The researcher evaluated the outcomes of the actions that had been carried out by conducting a reflection after the action and observation. The researcher examined the pre-test and post-test data in this reflection to see how much the students' vocabulary had improved. The researcher also took into account students' feedback experiences studying through board games. The primary foundation for development in the following cycle was the students' specific complaints that the "objects in the classroom" topic lacked difficulty and that the visuals on the cards were unclear. The researcher can utilize this reflection to assess whether the approach was successful in reaching the desired outcomes and whether advancements or modifications can be made for the upcoming cycles.

Analysis Post Test Cycle I

The pre-test results of the pupils were then gathered. After that, the data was examined using descriptive statistics.

Descriptive Statistics				
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean
Post Test	23	50	82	66.21

The accompanying table illustrates the importance of the students' language proficiency following therapy. It has been shown that the mean score for all 23 students on the post-test was 66.21. Students' scores ranged from 50, which was the lowest, to 82, which was the highest. Because the (MCC) Minimum Completeness Criteria have not been met, the vocabulary knowledge of grade 3 MI Miftahul Ulum children has not been classified as improved in this cycle I post-test. According to reports, Madrasah Ibtidaiyah's average score on the (MCC) Minimum Completeness Criteria is higher than 70. The researchers proceeded to the second cycle stage as the students' average scores had not been attained.

Cycle II

Planning

Based on Cycle I reflection, the vocabulary board game was improved during the design phase of Cycle II. In order to improve comprehension, more word cards with clearer illustrations were created, and the subjects were modified to be more attractive. In Cycle II, the theme was occupational professions. To increase student engagement and improve vocabulary recall, the game was also changed to include more interactive components.

Action

The researcher employed a vocabulary board game that had been upgraded with the addition of picture cards that were clearer and more engaging during the cycle II implementation phase. Types of vocations were the game's topic for this cycle, as it was connected to the students' goals. Following the steps students had earned, the students went around the game board. To score points, students replied by adhering image cards with word translations to the board. The researcher made sure that every student was actively engaged, helped those who needed assistance, and gave more thorough instructions. To boost students' excitement and willingness to study, the game was played in a more competitive and participatory setting.

Observation

Researchers looked at how involved students were in the learning process, how students responded to activities, and how well students remembered and applied new words. The findings demonstrated that students were more eager to participate in activities, asked questions aggressively, and were more attentive. Members of the group also cooperated more than students had in the last round. Researchers observed that pupils were starting to grasp and pronounce profession-related terminology with ease.

Reflection

After cycle II was put into practice, the researcher reflected by contrasting cycle II's post-test findings with cycle I's. The findings demonstrated that pupils' command of language had significantly improved. Additionally, students stated that playing vocabulary board games helped retain the words and made studying English more enjoyable. With an average score over the Minimum Completeness Criteria (MCC), the researcher assessed that the vocabulary board game's use in Cycle II had effectively met the learning objectives. This is also evidenced by the achievement of 100% classical learning completeness, where all 23 students exceeded the predetermined minimum passing grade.

Analysis Post Test Cycle II

Descriptive Statistics				
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean
Post Test	23	72	92	81.30

The average post-test score for cycle II, as shown in the above table, was 81.30; the lowest score was 72, and the highest was 92. This score was higher than the required passing score of 70, suggesting that the third-grade pupils at MI Miftahul Ulum Rejosari Bantur were able to improve students vocabulary mastery with the usage of vocabulary board games.

The results demonstrate a clear improvement in students' vocabulary mastery after the implementation of the vocabulary board game. The pre-test mean score of 56.43 reflected limited initial vocabulary knowledge. Following the first cycle, the use of a board game on objects in the classroom increased student engagement, raising the mean score to 66.21, though it remained below the Minimum Competency Criteria. Enhancements in Cycle II such as clearer visuals and a more relevant theme further strengthened learning outcomes. Students showed higher motivation, better collaboration, and improved recall, which corresponded with a substantial increase in the post-test mean score to 81.30, with all students meeting the required standard. These results indicate that the vocabulary board game effectively supports active, multisensory learning and significantly enhances vocabulary acquisition among elementary students.

CONCLUSION

This Classroom Action Research (CAR) has conclusively demonstrated that the implementation of a vocabulary board game is a highly effective pedagogical strategy for improving English vocabulary mastery among third-grade students at MI Miftahul Ulum Rejosari Bantur. The

study was initiated to address the critical issue of low vocabulary knowledge, which was evidenced by a pre-test average score of 56.43, well below the established Minimum Competency Criteria of 70. Through a systematic and reflective two-cycle process, this research successfully transformed a passive and ineffective learning environment into one characterized by active engagement, motivation, and tangible academic progress. The findings from Cycle I already indicated a positive trend, with the average score increasing to 66.21, but more importantly, it revealed a significant shift in student attitude from disinterest to enthusiasm. The refined intervention in Cycle II, which featured a more relevant theme and enhanced materials, yielded remarkable results, elevating the class average score to 81.30. This substantial quantitative leap, supported by qualitative observations of increased student participation and collaboration, validates the action hypothesis. The success of the vocabulary board game can be attributed to its foundation in sound educational principles; it facilitates a shift from rote memorization to active, multisensory learning. By engaging students visually, tactilely, and kinesthetically, the game caters to diverse learning styles and strengthens memory retention. Furthermore, the inherent elements of play and friendly competition effectively lowered learning anxiety and fostered an intrinsic motivation to learn. Therefore, this study concludes that the well-designed and cyclically refined vocabulary board game was not merely an enjoyable activity but a powerful educational tool that successfully achieved its objective of enhancing vocabulary mastery and creating a more dynamic and meaningful learning experience.

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