

IMPROVING STUDENTS' VOCABULARY MASTERY THROUGH Pictionary GAME

Aisa Dara Fonna^{1*}, Zuhri Efendi²
¹fonaaisa@gmail.com, ²zuhrisps@gmail.com

STKIP MUHAMMADIYAH ACEH BARAT DAYA

Received: June 24, 2024; Accepted: January 10, 2025

ABSTRACT

The vocabulary mastery of students at SMP Negeri 1 Blangpidie remains poor. To address this issue, this study investigates the effectiveness of the Pictionary game in enhancing students' vocabulary mastery. An experimental method was employed in this study. The subjects of this study were 28 students (12 are boys and 16 are girls) from class VII.B at SMP Negeri 1 Blangpidie. The data were collected through pre-tests and post-tests and analyzed by using a paired-sample t-test to see the improvements in students' vocabulary mastery after treatment. The findings showed that the use of Pictionary card games significantly improves students' vocabulary mastery, as indicated by an increase in the mean scores from 46 in the pre-test to 63 in the post-test. In addition, the data from the pair sample T-test revealed that t-score of 9.48 with a significance level of 0.000. Since the significance value (sig) is 0.000, which is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis (Ho) is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis (Ha) is accepted. Therefore, it can be concluded that the use of Pictionary game is effective in improving students' vocabulary. This means that the use of the Pictionary game is recommended to be applied in teaching vocabulary.

Keywords: Improving, Mastery, Pictionary game, Vocabulary

A. INTRODUCTION

Learning and mastering English is essential because it is a means to develop effective communication with people from different parts of the world. Proficiency in English helps students to make a connection with others and share ideas more easily. Many jobs and opportunities require a good understanding of English, so by mastering English, students increase their chances of success in academic and job fields. While mastering English provides numerous benefits for communication, education, and career advancement, the foundation of effective language use lies in vocabulary mastery. Without a strong vocabulary, students may struggle to fully harness the advantages of learning English. Thus, vocabulary mastery is crucial for effective communication in English, enabling students to express their thoughts and ideas more precisely and choose appropriate words for different situations, which enhances the overall quality of their communication (Jackson, 2007).

A well-developed vocabulary helps students accurately convey emotions, avoid misunderstandings, and understand others' messages comprehensively, facilitating smoother and more meaningful conversations. For English Language Learners (ELL), a strong vocabulary is essential for competency in listening, reading, speaking, and writing, making it easier to engage in academic tasks and everyday interactions (Graves et al., 2012). Vocabulary mastery is also key to academic success, as it enables students to decipher meanings, engage with various texts, and articulate complex ideas in written assignments (Kame'euni & Baumann, 2012; Schmitt & Schmith, 2020). The role of vocabulary in English language learning is multifaceted. It aids in effective communication, supports reading comprehension, enhances writing skills, and contributes to overall language and cultural development. As students build and expand their vocabulary, they equip themselves with the tools necessary for success in English language learning. Therefore, it is important to adopt appropriate strategies in teaching vocabulary.

However, an observation at SMP Negeri 1 Blangpidie revealed that students struggle with limited vocabulary mastery, hindering their ability to communicate effectively in English. They often rely on basic words like 'like,' 'enjoy,' or 'do,' particularly when discussing topics such as their favorite hobbies. This limitation affects their ability to articulate ideas clearly in class, leading to difficulties with complex explanations and a lack of confidence in speaking or writing. Consequently, their participation in class activities is reduced, further slowing their progress in learning English. To address this issue, incorporating engaging and interactive teaching strategies becomes essential. Teaching vocabulary to students involves various strategies that aim to make learning new words engaging and effective. One commonly used strategy is contextual learning, where words are introduced within a specific context or theme (Carter & Mccarthy, 2014). Another effective strategy is the use of visuals such as flashcards, images, or even physical objects to illustrate the meaning of words. This visual reinforcement creates a lasting impression in the students' minds and aids in better understanding (Redman & Gairns, 1999).

Moreover, according to Nunan (2016), repetition is a fundamental strategy in vocabulary teaching. Repeating words in different contexts, sentences, or activities helps reinforce their meaning and usage. It also gives students multiple exposures to the words, increasing the likelihood of retention. Repetition can be incorporated into games, exercises, or daily routines, providing varied approaches to reinforce vocabulary (Sanchez, 2022). Encouraging students to read books and articles or engage in discussions exposes them to a wide range of words naturally. Teachers can also introduce challenging words during lessons, providing opportunities for students to ask questions and explore meanings, thus expanding their vocabulary in a more organic way (Randall, 2007). Thus, the use of games in language learning can be a solution. This strategy has been shown to create a fun and supportive environment that motivates students to expand their vocabulary and actively participate in learning activities.

Game plays an important role in teaching vocabulary because they make learning more enjoyable and engaging for students. When using games to teach vocabulary, it feels less like traditional studying and more like a fun activity. This can help students stay focused and motivated, making the learning process more effective. According to Wallace (2008), using games in teaching vocabulary has proven to be an effective and engaging strategy because it makes the learning process enjoyable and fun, which is particularly important for students, as it helps maintain their interest and motivation. When students are having a good time,

they are more likely to participate and invest effort in the learning activity actively. The game often incorporates competition or collaboration, fostering a positive social environment. Whether students work together as a team or compete against each other, the social aspect of games encourages communication and interaction in the target language (Cameron, 2001). This not only enhances their vocabulary but also promotes language use and fluency. In addition, the game provides a context for meaningful language use. As students play, they naturally apply the vocabulary they've learned in a practical setting. This contextual learning is crucial for understanding how words are used in real-life situations, improving retention and application. The games not only aid in vocabulary retention but also contribute to creating a more enjoyable learning environment. Among these strategies, the Pictionary game stands out as a promising tool to improve students' vocabulary mastery effectively. Pictionary is a fun and interactive word-guessing game where players split into teams and take turns drawing and guessing words from a set of cards, promoting creativity and vocabulary building (Hinebaugh, 2019). Additionally, Pictionary fosters a lively and social environment, encouraging animated discussions and laughter as players attempt to interpret each other's drawings (Chen, 2012).

The implementation of Pictionary games into vocabulary learning provides an engaging approach that not only enhances students' retention of words but also fosters a positive and enjoyable learning experience (Harmer, 2015). Pictionary Games create an interactive environment for English classes, making the process of acquiring new vocabulary more memorable and effective. Interactive and competitive elements inherent in games stimulate students' interest and motivation, driving them to participate in the learning process actively. Furthermore, Pictionary games offer a contextualized application of vocabulary, enabling learners to see how words are used in different situations and contexts. This contextual understanding promotes a deeper comprehension of word meanings, usage, and nuances, which is essential for effective language communication. Some previous studies have figured out the effectiveness of the Pictionary game in teaching vocabulary. A study conducted by Odang et al, (2023) showed that the Pictionary word game is quite effective in helping students remember vocabulary in the English language. Similarly, Fatmawati et al., (2022) in their study found that the use of the Pictionary game can help the student's vocabulary mastery and make the students more interested and enthusiastic to memorize new words.

To address the vocabulary challenges observed at SMP Negeri 1 Blangpidie, this study proposes the implementation of the Pictionary game as an innovative strategy to improve students' vocabulary mastery. Pictionary is a word-guessing game played in pairs, where one player guesses the word being illustrated by their partner. This game not only facilitates the understanding of English words and phrases but also develops students' communication skills and creative thinking. Building on these considerations, this study investigates the effectiveness of the Pictionary game in enhancing students' vocabulary mastery.

B. METHOD

This study employed an experimental research design, which is suitable for examining the causal relationship between interventions and outcomes (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The research aimed to investigate the effectiveness of the Pictionary game in improving students' vocabulary mastery. The research was conducted at SMP Negeri 1 Blangpidie during the 2023/2024 academic year. The participants of this research were 28 students from class VII.B at SMP Negeri 1 Blangpidie. The research instrument used in this study was a

vocabulary test, a widely accepted method for assessing language proficiency (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2019). The test was administered in two stages: pre-test and post-test. The pre-test was conducted before implementing the Pictionary game to assess the students' baseline vocabulary knowledge. It consisted of 20 multiple-choice questions designed to evaluate their initial vocabulary mastery. After the intervention, a post-test using the same set of questions was administered to measure the students' vocabulary improvement.

C. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

1. Pre-test and Post-test Results

This study proposes to determine whether the Pictionary game is effective in enhancing students' vocabulary. The researcher organizes three teaching sessions and carries out pre-tests to assess the baseline of students' vocabulary prior to the intervention and post-tests to evaluate the advancements in students' vocabulary mastery. The outcomes of the pre-test and post-test are presented in the following table:

Table 1. The data of the re-test and post-test

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
Pre-test	28	30	60	46	9.19	84.49
Post-test	28	50	75	63	8.15	66.40

Table 1 highlights that the scores on the pre-test ranged from a minimum of 30 to a maximum of 60, with a mean (average) score of 46. This indicates that students have varied vocabulary knowledge before implementing the Pictionary card game, with some students performing relatively better than others. The standard deviation of 9.19 showed the extent to which individual scores deviate from the mean score. Additionally, the variance, which is the square of the standard deviation, stands at 84.49. These statistics are crucial for understanding the students' initial vocabulary proficiency before introducing the Pictionary game as a teaching technique. The relatively wide range of pretest scores points to a diverse set of vocabulary mastery among the students, indicating that some students had decent vocabulary command while others lagged significantly.

Moreover, the data from the post-test with a minimum score of 50 and a maximum of 75. The mean score achieved by the students is 63, indicating a generally positive outcome from the treatment. The standard deviation of the post-test scores is 8.15, reflecting moderate variability in students' vocabulary mastery. This indicated that while the majority of students benefited from the Pictionary game, the extent of improvement varied. The variance was calculated at 66.40. Overall, the results indicated that the Pictionary game is an effective technique for enhancing vocabulary mastery, though individual differences in learning outcomes should be considered when interpreting these results.

The comparison between the pre-test and post-test scores of first-grade junior school students at SMP Negeri 1 Blangpidie revealed a significant improvement in vocabulary mastery after implementing the Pictionary game intervention. The pre-test scores ranged from 30 to 60, with a mean of 46 and a standard deviation of 9.19, indicating moderate vocabulary mastery among the students before the intervention. However, after the intervention, the post-test scores showed an increase in students' vocabulary mastery, ranging from 50 to 75, with a mean of 63 and a standard deviation of 8.19. This result showed a substantial improvement in vocabulary mastery among the students following the

implementation of the Pictionary game. It is in line with the statement of Dwi (2017) that the Pictionary Card game can attract students to learn and make it easier to remember vocabulary.

In conclusion, comparing the pretest and post-test scores demonstrates the effectiveness of using the Pictionary game can enhance vocabulary mastery among first-grade junior school students. The significant increase in post-test scores indicates that the implementation of the Pictionary game positively impacted the student’s ability to learn and retain new vocabulary. As stated by Jumartini et al., (2022) that the efficacy of incorporating interactive and engaging activities like the Pictionary game into educational practices and the importance of employing innovative approaches to foster learning and development, particularly in foundational skills such as vocabulary acquisition. Therefore, based on these results, it can be inferred that the Pictionary game was successful in enhancing vocabulary mastery among the first-grade junior school students at SMP Negeri 1 Blangpidie.

2. Paired Sample-Test

The paired sample t-test determines the disparity between each pair of observations (pre-test and post-test scores for each participant) and then examines whether the mean of these differences significantly deviates from zero. Table 2 presents the outcome of the paired t-test sample. It evaluates the mean score between the pre-test and the post-test. Following the application of the Pictionary Card Game in teaching vocabulary, the mean of descriptive statistics for both variables is derived, as illustrated in the table below.

Table 2. Paired Sample Statistics

		Mean	N	Standard Deviation	Standard Error Mean
Pair 1	pretest	46	28	9.19	1.82
	posttest	63	28	8.15	1.75

The data in Table 2 showed that the statistical data for the vocabulary mastery study at SMP Negeri 1 Blangpidie shows that the mean score of the pretest was 46, with a standard deviation of 9.19 and a standard error mean of 1.82, among 28 students. After the intervention using the Pictionary game, the mean score of the post-test increased to 63, with a standard deviation of 8.15 and a standard error mean of 1.75, for the same group of students. This indicates a significant improvement in vocabulary mastery, with the reduced standard deviation and standard error mean in the post-test suggesting more consistent performance among the students.

After determining the paired sample statistic, the next step is to calculate a paired sample correlation to determine to what extent the correlation between the pre-test and post-test is. To further understand the relationship between the pre-test and post-test scores, a paired sample correlation was calculated, as shown in Table 3

Table 3. Paired Sample Correlation

		N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1	Pre-test and post-test	28	0,74	0.00

Table 3 presents a statistical analysis contrasting the pretest and posttest scores of 28 students, with a correlation coefficient (r) of 0.74 and a significance level (p -value) of 0.00. The high correlation coefficient of 0.74 shows a strong positive association between the pre-test and post-test scores, implying that students who performed better on the pre-test also generally achieved higher scores on the post-test. The significance level of 0.00 ($p < 0.05$) signifies that this association is statistically significant, verifying that the observed relationship is unlikely to occur by chance. This outcome validates the intervention's effectiveness, indicating that there was a consistent enhancement in students' vocabulary mastery from the pre-test to the post-test.

The last step is the analysis of the paired sample t -test. This requires determining the mean difference and the standard deviation of the differences and then applying these to derive the t -statistic. Assume the resulting p -value is below the selected significance level (commonly 0.05). In that scenario, it signifies that the observed variation in scores is improbable to have happened by chance, implying a meaningful impact of the intervention between the pre-test and post-test.

Table 4. Paired Sample T. 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	-17.321	9.668	1.827	-21.07	-13.57	-9.48	27	.000

Based on Table 4, it can be seen the significance value (sig) is 0.00 and it is under 0.05, the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected and the alternative hypothesis (H_a) is accepted. It can be concluded Pictionary Card Game can improve students' vocabulary mastery. These results suggest that the Pictionary Card Game positively impacts students' vocabulary mastery. The rejection of the null hypothesis, coupled with the high t -score, suggests that students who engaged with the Pictionary Card Game showed substantial improvement in their vocabulary skills compared to those who did not use this method. This finding supports the effectiveness of interactive and engaging teaching tools in enhancing language learning outcomes.

The result of this study provides compelling evidence that the Pictionary Card Game can significantly enhance students' vocabulary mastery. The data revealed a t -score of 9.48 and a significance level of 0.000, clearly indicating that the observed improvements in vocabulary skills were not due to chance. The use of the Pictionary Card Game appears to be an interactive approach to vocabulary learning. Therefore, the Pictionary Card Game promotes active learning, which is crucial for effective education. Instead of passively receiving information, students actively create and interpret visual representations of words. This activity helps reinforce their understanding and memory of vocabulary. The act of drawing helps students think critically about the meaning and characteristics of words, while guessing encourages them to recall and apply their knowledge. This active engagement helps solidify their learning and makes vocabulary mastery more effective.

The study's results showed a significant improvement in vocabulary mastery for students at SMP Negeri 1 Blangpidie by using Pictionary card games as evidenced by the substantial increase in mean test scores from pre-test to post-test. The engaging and interactive nature of the Pictionary game stimulates students' interest and motivation to learn new words. This

indicates that interactive learning activities such as games can significantly boost vocabulary acquisition by providing students with meaningful and enjoyable contexts for practice. This aligns with the findings of this study, where the mean score of the pretest was 46 and improved to 63 in the posttest, indicating that the game effectively reinforced vocabulary learning among the students. Furthermore, the strong positive correlation between pretest and posttest scores ($r = 0.74$) highlights the consistent improvement in students' vocabulary skills across the board. This statistically significant correlation ($p = 0.00$), indicates that students who engaged more with the Pictionary game experienced greater vocabulary gains. Nation (2001) argued that repeated exposure to vocabulary in varied contexts is crucial for retention and mastery. The Pictionary game provides such repeated exposure by allowing students to encounter and use new words in different scenarios, thereby enhancing their retention and understanding.

D. CONCLUSION

This study aimed to explore the effectiveness of Pictionary card games in improving students' vocabulary mastery within the context of EFL learning at SMP Negeri 1 Blangpidie. The findings of this study indicate that the use of Pictionary card games significantly improves students' vocabulary mastery for students at SMP Negeri 1 Blangpidie, as demonstrated by the substantial increase in mean scores from 46 on the pre-test to 63 on the post-test and a strong positive correlation of 0.74 between the pre-test and post-test scores. These results suggest that the Pictionary game not only improves vocabulary acquisition but also supports long-term retention. Based on these findings, it can be concluded that incorporating Pictionary card games into language teaching practices is a highly effective strategy for boosting vocabulary skills and creating an engaging, interactive learning environment.

E. REFERENCES

- Brown, H. D., & Abeywickrama, P. (2019). *Language assessment: Principles and classroom practices*. Pearson.
- Cameron, L. (2001). *Teaching Languages to Young Learners*. Cambridge University Press & Assessment.
- Carter, R., & McCarthy, M. (2014). *Vocabulary and language teaching*. Routledge.
- Chen, J. (2012). *50 digital team-building games: Fast, fun meeting openers, group activities and adventures using social media, smart phones, GPS, tablets, and more*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2017). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Sage publications.
- Dwi, L. E. (2017). Improving Students Vocabulary Mastery through Pictionary Board Game at Grade IV B Of Elementary School 36 Pekanbaru. *Al-Ishlah: Jurnal Pendidikan*, 9(2), 1-15.
- Fatmawati, A. Y., Miranty, D., & Hamer, W. (2022). The implementation of Pictionary games to improve vocabulary comprehension. *Journal of linguistics, literacy, and pedagogy*, 1(1), 35-39.
- Graves, M. F., August, D., & Mancilla-Martinez, J. (2012). *Teaching vocabulary to English language learners*. Teachers College Press.
- Harmer, J. (2015). *The practice of English language teaching (With DVD)*. Pearson.
- Hinebaugh, J. P. (2009). *A Board Game Education*. R&L Education.

- Jackson, H. (2007). *Words, meaning and vocabulary: an introduction to modern English lexicology*. Continuum International Publishing Group.
- Kame'enui, E. J., & Baumann, J. F. (Eds.). (2012). *Vocabulary instruction: Research to practice*. Guilford Press.
- Nation, I. S. P. (2008). *Teaching Vocabulary: Strategies and Techniques*. Heinle.
- Nunan, D. (2016). Teaching English to young learners. In *Handbook of Research in Second Language Teaching and Learning* (pp. 68-81). Routledge.
- Odang, A. S., Uran, S. I. G., & Janggo, W. O. (2023). Pictionary Game for Vocabulary Mastery: Best Practice From a Rural School Context. *KLAUSA (Kajian Linguistik, Pembelajaran Bahasa, Dan Sastra)*, 7(1), 28–36.
- Randall, M. (2007). *Memory, Psychology and Second Language Learning*. John Benjamins Pub.
- Redman, S., & Gairns, R. (1999). *Working with Words: A Guide to Teaching and Learning Vocabulary*. Cambridge University Press.
- Jumartini, S., Sadapotto, A., Usman, M., Manda, I., & Hermansyah, S. (2022). The effect of Pictionary game toward student's vocabulary mastery in mental lexicon. *La Ogi: English Language Journal*, 8(2), 162-167.
- Sanchez, H. (2016). *The education revolution: How to apply brain science to improve instruction and school climate*. Corwin Press.
- Schmitt, N., & Schmitt, D. (2020). *Vocabulary in Language Teaching*. Cambridge University Press.
- Wallace, C. (2008). Vocabulary: The key to teaching English language learners to read. *The Education Digest*, 73(9), 36.