

USING MATCHING GAMES IN BUILDING ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS' THREE-LETTER WORD ENGLISH VOCABULARY

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Abstract. As the basis of learning language skills, vocabulary mastery plays a crucial role. For students to understand and produce the language, they should have sufficient vocabulary knowledge and other language components to express their thoughts, feelings, and ideas. To accommodate students in mastering the target vocabulary, a word-matching game was used to help students learn vocabulary learning and acquisition. To do so, a classroom action research was conducted. The research took 27 students as the research participants. They were in their third grade of primary school. A pre-test and two post-tests were conducted to evaluate students' vocabulary mastery in two cycles of the classroom action research. Students gained 17.29 of the average score in the pre-test with only 7 % of students being excellent, then improved the score in post-test 1 by 61.03 with 15% of the students getting excellent results, and got an even higher score in post-test 2 by 79.17 with 53% of them got excellent score. By using the word-matching game technique, students' vocabulary mastery has shown significant improvement.

Keywords: matching games; three-letter word; vocabulary

INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary is important in learning English and improving mastery of the four English skills: speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Therefore, mastery of vocabulary in learning English is the main thing that must be mastered before learning other language components. Mittal and Tathore (2015: 3) say that "vocabulary is the basic tool of language which makes communication smooth among us". Based on this explanation, learning English without adequate vocabulary mastery means that the communication process will not run smoothly. Another expert, Thornbury (2002) suggests that learning vocabulary is important. He states that "without grammar, very little can be communicated, without vocabulary nothing can be communicated". Thus, vocabulary is crucial in learning English.

During their observation at Danau Ina Elementary School, the researchers found some problems related to vocabulary teaching and learning. The teacher still carried out learning and teaching vocabulary by writing vocabulary in English and its meaning on the board. Students had to write and memorize this vocabulary. Seeing this situation, the researchers were motivated to conduct a vocabulary teaching and learning process at Danau Ina State Elementary School by implementing a learning strategy by applying game.

The researchers believe that games are activities can be used to involve students more actively in the teaching and learning because the process can become more interesting. Wright, Betteridge, & Buckby (2005) mention four reasons why

teachers should use games in language learning: (1) Learning a language is hard work, which is why games are needed to help and encourage learners to sustain their interest, work, adapt language, and to use it; (2) Games provide one way of improving the learners to experience the language, rather than merely studying it; (3) Many games caused as much use of particular language items as more conventional drill exercises; some games do not. What matters, is the quality of practice. Many games similarly provide repeated occurrence and use a particular language form; 4) Games can provide intense and meaningful practice of language, so they can be regarded as a center for learning. Based on those reasons, the researchers then decided to use games to vocabulary teaching and learning.

Researchers chose a game to apply, namely the Word Matching game. The matching game is one of many instructional games suitable for someone to make or see a connection between words and words, definitions, and pictures. This game is one of the techniques to make students more active in the teaching and learning process. Rahmawati (2019) claims that using word matching game can help improve students' vocabulary. Therefore, with this game, learning vocabulary will be more fun and make the words taught by the teacher easier for students to remember.

Word matching game is a kind of game that requires the students to match either the words in the target language with some pictures that describe the definition of the word or the word in the target language with its definition in the students' language. Furthermore, word-matching games can be done individually or in groups. This game is appropriate to enrich the students' vocabulary mastery. Curran (in Huda 2013: 251) states that word-matching games have become one strategy frequently applied in teaching vocabulary in the classroom. This strategy can help students deepen and excavate the material in a fun learning environment. There are some steps to run in a word-matching game. First, the teacher prepares some cards that contain some concepts or a suitable topic for the review session, one part contains questions and the other is the answer. Second, every student gets a card. Third, every student thinks of the answer or the question from the card that they hold. Fourth, every student finds a partner who has a matching card with his card. Fifth, every student who finds a suitable card before the time up will get a point. Sixth, after the first session, the card is changed, so the students will get a different card in the next session. It is continued until this activity is ended. Last, the teacher together with the students concludes the material that has been learned.

By conducting this study, the researchers hope that the results of this study can be useful for the following: 1) English teachers to serve as a reference for designing effective learning strategies to increase students' vocabulary, 2) Other researchers who are interested in the same or similar topics as a reference.

METHOD

This research used classroom action research design. The Classroom Action Research (CAR) procedure was applied by Kurt Lewin's design. Classroom action research is research conducted by teachers in the classroom to solve the problem of students in the classroom and repair the performance of the teacher so that it can improve the results of teaching and learning. Kurt Lewin in Kunandar (2008: 42) describes the procedure of classroom action research into four steps. They are planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. The relations among them are called a cycle. It means that a cycle consists of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. All

steps will always be repeated. The result of reflection from previous actions that have been used will be used again with additional improvement to overcome the various obstacles that were discovered before.

The research was conducted at Danau Ina Elementary School which is located on Jl. Suratim KM.10, Kelapa Lima District, Kupang Regency, East Nusa Tenggara Province. The population of this research was the students in the third grade of Danau Ina Elementary School. Two classes were consisting of 56 students. Purposively taken, the sample of this research was class III B consisting of 27 students.

The instrument used was a test. The tests used in this study were pre-test and post-test. It was used to get data concerning the student's prior knowledge and progress in vocabulary. The pre-test was given to the students before Word word-matching game was applied. Meanwhile, the post-test was given after the implementation of the Word word-matching game. Both pre-test and post-test are presented in the form of fill-the-blank and multiple choices.

In the research, the researcher modified the Words Matching Game activity as follows:

1. The teacher wrote a list of three-letter words on the board. It was written in two parts. The left side is in English and the right part is in Indonesian.
2. The teacher asks each student to come forward to match each English word according to its Indonesian meaning.

The procedure of this research is performed by administrating two cycles. Each cycle contains four steps which are planning, action, observation, and reflection.

1. Cycle I

a. Planning

- 1) The researcher prepared vocabulary material about three-letter words that were given to the students.
- 2) The researcher made a lesson plan based on the curriculum.
- 3) The researcher prepared the test for students in cycle I.

b. Action

- 1) The researcher taught students some three-letter words. After that, the teacher asked back the three letter words that had been given.
- 2) The teacher reviewed the vocabulary that has been learned by playing matching games. The teacher wrote down those three letter words (in English and Indonesian) on the whiteboard and then asked students one by one to match those words correctly.
- 3) The teacher corrected students' mistakes
- 4) The teacher provided opportunities for students to ask when the students get confused.
- 5) At each end of the meeting the teacher always gives the students motivation.

c. Observation

- 1) The researcher evaluated to know the students' improvement.

d. Reflection

After collecting the data, the researcher evaluated the teaching-learning process and the vocabulary test. Then, the researcher did a reflection by seeing the result of the observation, whether teaching the learning process of vo-

cabulary using the Word-Matching Game was a good to imply in teaching learning process or not.

2. Cycle II

a. Planning

The activities were done in these stages as follows:

- 1) The researcher evaluated the result of reflection, discussed and found the improvement to be applied for the next learning process.
- 2) The researcher designed the lesson planning of cycle II
- 3) The researcher repaired the weakness of the action in the first cycle.
- 4) The teacher prepared the test for the students in cycle II

b. Action

The teacher used the Action Learning Strategy. The steps were as follows:

- 1) The students paid attention to their mistakes in the first cycle that the teacher explained.
- 2) The teacher gave material about new three-letter words and applied it in a word-matching game to attract students' interest.

c. Observation

In this phase, the researcher observed the situation of teaching learning the students' activities in the teaching-learning process, and the vocabulary test given at the end of the second cycle. The researcher evaluated the students' vocabulary mastery.

d. Reflection

Reflection was done to see the whole second cycle action process. The researcher analyzed the second action as a consideration matter of whether the cycle has reached success criteria based on test results and observation. In the second cycle, the researcher concluded the implementation of a Word Matching Game to improve students' vocabulary in the III/B Class of students at Danau Ina Elementary School.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The research findings indicate a clear improvement in students' vocabulary mastery, as evident from the results of the pre-test and the subsequent cycles. The mean scores for the pre-test, post-test in cycle I, and post-test in cycle II were 17.29, 61.03, and 79.17, respectively. These results suggest that the word-matching game technique effectively enhances students' vocabulary mastery.

By employing the words matching game as a learning technique, students' vocabulary skills have shown significant progress. The initial pre-test score of 17.29 indicates the starting point of students' proficiency in vocabulary. Table 1 shows that from the 27 students participated in the test, there were 11% of the students were excellent and satisfactory, 7% of them were good, and most of them (70%) were still poor in mastering the vocabulary tested.

Table 1. Pre-Test Results

No	Classification	Score	Frequency	Percentage
1	Excellent	76 - 100	3	11%
2	Good	51 - 75	2	7%
3	Satisfactory	26 - 50	3	11%
4	Poor	0 - 25	19	70%
Total			27	100%

Then, after implementing the technique in the first cycle, the average score rose to 61.03, demonstrating a considerable improvement. Table 2 indicates that from the 26 students participated in the post-test of cycle 1, there were 58% of students were good at the vocabulary test, and none were at a poor level.

Table 2. Post-Test conducted in Cycle 1

No	Classification	Score	Frequency	Percentage
1	Excellent	76 - 100	4	15%
2	Good	51 - 75	15	58%
3	Satisfactory	26 - 50	7	27%
4	Poor	0 - 25	0	0%
Total			26	100%

Then, in the second cycle, the mean score further increased to 79.17, indicating continued growth in vocabulary mastery. Table 3 shows that from 15 students participated in the second post-test there was none of the students at the poor level and there were 53% of them who got excellent results in the second pot-test. The results might be slightly different if all students participated in the test. However, the researchers believe that it would still show a significant increase.

Table 3. Post-Test conducted in Cycle 2

No	Classification	Score	Frequency	Percentage
1	Excellent	76 - 100	9	53%
2	Good	51 - 75	7	41%
3	Satisfactory	26 - 50	1	6%
4	Poor	0 - 25	0	0%
Total			15	100

These findings strongly support the conclusion that the word-matching game

technique positively impacts students' vocabulary mastery. The technique effectively engages students interactively and enjoyably, facilitating the development and retention of vocabulary.

This research was conducted in two cycles consisting of four meetings. The first meeting is for the pre-test, the second meeting is for treatment, the third meeting is for post-test I, and the fourth meeting is for treatment and post-test II. The researcher described each meeting as follows:

1. First Meeting

During the initial gathering, the researcher administered a pre-test. Before this, the researcher welcomed the students and requested them to pray collectively. Following the prayer, the researcher checked the students' attendance list and introduced herself, inquiring about her main role. Subsequently, the researcher distributed the pre-test and allowed the students some time to respond to the questions. Once the students had completed and submitted their tests, the researcher discussed the upcoming material and concluded the meeting by praying together.

2. Second Meeting

The second meeting was for the treatment. In this meeting, the researcher greeted and asked the students to pray together, and checked students' attendance. After that, the researcher gave material about three letter words. The researcher gave examples of three-letter words. The researcher discussed with the students the three-letter words so that the students understood what was meant by three-letter words. After that, the researcher asked the students to mention and memorize those three-letter words. After that, the researcher asked the students about Simon Says Game. To make students enjoy themselves and not feel bored in memorizing the vocabulary, the researcher introduced Word the matching Game to the students. After introducing this game, the researcher explained how to play that game on the whiteboard so that students can understand how to play it. Then, the researcher gives opportunity to the students to play one by one in front of the class.

First, the researcher starts the Word-Matching Game by writing down the three-letter words on the whiteboard. The researcher writes all the vocabulary on two sides randomly. The left side is in English and the right side is in Indonesia. Then, the researcher asked the students to match those words.

3. Third Meeting

In the third meeting, the researcher gave Post-test cycle I. Before the researcher gave the pre-test, the researcher greeted the students and asked them students to pray together. After praying, the researcher checked the students' attendance. After that, the researcher gave a post-test and gave the students 60 minutes to answer the question. After the students had done the test and collected it, the researcher told the students about the material for the next meeting.

4. Fourth Meeting

The fourth meeting was treatment and post-test cycle II. In this meeting, the students were more active in the learning process. They began competing to come in front of the class. The activity in this meeting is the same as the activity in the second meeting, which teaches three-letter words through the word-matching game.

Before teaching, the researcher greeted students, asked students to pray together, checked student attendance, and asked students about previous material. After that, the researcher gave students material about the Three latter words and applied them using words matching game. In this meeting, the word-matching game is played differently. First, the researcher drew the table on the whiteboard. Then, the researcher fills the columns on the table with vocabulary in the form of three-letter words with their meanings. After that, the researcher gave numbers in each column. Then, the researcher asked students to match those words by choosing the three-letter words and their correct meanings. After applying the treatment, the researcher continued to give the post-test cycle II to measure students' vocabulary mastery.

After conducting the study, the researchers believe that word matching game has carried some benefits. First, it can make students more engaged in the learning. This fun activity can help them cognitively and physically get into the learning materials. Second, the game can significantly improve the students' vocabulary mastery on the target materials. The increased motivation and confidence of the students help them perform well during their presentation while doing the matching activity. The last benefit is that students also learn about the time discipline. The timing given in each activity has encouraged them to think and work quickly before running out of time.

CONCLUSION

Based on the result of data analysis, the researcher found that applying the Words Matching Game could improve students' vocabulary mastery. The achievements of students on vocabulary taught by using the Words Matching Game can be seen from the mean score of the pre-test, post-test cycle I, and post-test cycle II. In the pre-test, the mean score was 17,29, in the post-test cycle I was 61,03, and in the post-test, cycle II was 79,17.

In conclusion, the data analysis showed that using the Words Matching Game in the third grade of SDN Danau Ina had a positive impact on improving students' vocabulary skills. This was evident from the average scores of the pre-test, post-test cycle I, and post-test cycle II. The students' mean score significantly increased from 17.29 in the pre-test to 61.03 in the post-test cycle I, and further improved to 79.17 in the post-test cycle II. Therefore, implementing the Words Matching Game can effectively enhance students' mastery of vocabulary at the third-grade level.

This research has shown that using word-matching games is effective for improving students' vocabulary. Therefore, researchers suggest that teachers, students, and other researchers consider this research. For teachers, the study's findings can be helpful for English teachers to learn about teaching techniques for vocabulary and provide an alternative method using the Word Matching Games app. It encourages teachers to be more creative and innovative in their English teaching, particularly for vocabulary. Using word-matching games can be an option for students to learn and remember new vocabulary. As for students, it is expected to make the learning process more enjoyable, fun, and interactive, which can enhance their motivation and vocabulary skills in learning English. Students can also try using suitable words at home to help them remember their vocabulary. Moreover, other researchers are encouraged to observe and retest this research, identifying any weaknesses and providing new insights on improving students' vocabulary through Word Matching Games.

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