

FOSTERING ENGLISH VOCABULARY ACQUISITION THROUGH THE "KNOW YOUR DICTIONARY" GAME

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Abstract: *Vocabulary mastery is the most critical element in learning English, and it can be obtained by applying games in teaching-learning activities designed for millennial teens. This study aims to identify whether the eight-grader students taught using the "Know Your Dictionary" game had higher vocabulary mastery than those who did not. Using a quasi-experimental design, the study was conducted on the eighth grade of Junior High School of Ma'arif 2 Pamekasan. It had two groups to be investigated; they were A class as experimental group and B class as the control group. The instruments of this study were tests and documentation. The study verified Wright's theory that students could foster their vocabulary through games. The research results indicate a significant impact of treatment on the students' vocabulary mastery. The students given treatment using the "Know Your Dictionary" game had higher vocabulary mastery than those taught conventionally. The experimental group's post-test results are proven to be higher than their pre-test scores and those of the control group. It confirms that the game effectively fostered the students' vocabulary mastery.*

Keywords: *Vocabulary mastery, "Know Your Dictionary" game*

INTRODUCTION

In today's globalization, countless millennial children are hypnotized by online games. Today, with covid-19 online gaming users growing 75% during rush hour and people downloading game applications, 1.2 billion in a week. That figure is 20 percent over the past 2019, while estimates of the total cost that players spend around the world is about 274,7 billion a week (Indonesian CNN, April 1, 2020). Thus it can be said that millennial children love games. Not even a day goes by without playing a game. Games are already filling the lives of our young generations. This condition can be exploited by teachers, researchers, and other educational developers in all kinds of subjects, such as English, for example.

One of the highlights of students' learning English is vocabulary. Developing a vocabulary with different types of games such as "know your dictionary" can be said to be quite effective. Because the game may make students enjoy learning activities and help them improve their English vocabulary. Vocabulary mastery was especially needed in learning English (Thornbury, 2006) expressed that there was very little to develop without grammar, but there was nothing without vocabulary. Learning English without vocabulary mastery would make students struggle to present their ideas or opinions orally or in writing.

This study departs from the assumption that using "know your dictionary" games is an alternative to increase students' vocabulary. They can mention vocabulary though the dictions were seldom used before. Nowadays, some researchers study games, especially for vocabulary, and the results are relatively satisfactory because most studies improve students' vocabulary mastery. The research used Word Find Puzzles game, Word Square Model, Spot It! Card games, through Boggle Games, Puzzles, Anagrams, and Chinese Whispers games in which four are investigation studies that involve experimental research design, and the treatment used successfully enhance students' vocabulary mastery (Syaukani & Pane, 2020; Hasibuan & Juliana, 2020; Kurniah et al., 2020; Hutabarat, 2020;

Sitompul, 2020; Sihombing, 2020; Pasaribu, 2020). Then there was gaming research in the vocabulary class by using Team games. It can either enhance the students' vocabulary or, in other words, by applying this game in a classroom capable of raising the students' vocabulary mastery and class more alive than before (Nasution, 2018; Sunarti et al., 2019; Hidayat & Fauzi, 2020).

Vocabulary is the core component of language competence, and it provides the basics of how students speak, listen, read, and write (Richards & Renandya, 2002). When students have few words and do not have the techniques to acquire new ones, they will not be confident in taking the opportunity to learn the language around them, such as English on radio, song, and on television. Then this vocabulary had two kinds: productive vocabulary and receptive vocabulary. A productive vocabulary is a set of vocabularies that one can use when writing and speaking. It was the most familiar word and also used most frequently. Whereas receptive vocabulary is a set of words that can be used when listening or reading, and this vocabulary is seldom known and very seldom used by students (Hiebert et al., 2019).

Vocabulary is essential for English students. In learning English, there is very little that students can express without grammar, whereas without vocabulary, there is nothing to be presented by them (Thornbury, 2006). It deals with the statement in a journal article in which it states that the development of the students' vocabulary is an essential aspect of the development of their language (Alqahtani, 2015; Barclay & Schmitt, 2019). Thus, a student should develop their language skills. Therefore, this vocabulary learning becomes crucial for the students.

Language learning can be done in various ways; one of them is using games. Games are activities with rules, purpose, and fun elements (Hadfield, 2003). In addition, games are also entertaining, often challenging, and they are activities that make students play and usually interact more with other friends (Wright, 2006). So by this game, students will increasingly

have time to communicate with their friends and remain in the vocabulary learning realm. There are many games that teachers can use to teach vocabulary in class and out of class, such as "Know Your Dictionary" (Danarti, 2008). With this game, teachers can create a fun class atmosphere not to feel burdened by studying and enjoy their learning activities. This game is also viewed as effective in promoting vocabulary, especially Verbs and Nouns in 8th grade of junior high school (Husni, 2014). So, even if the students play in the classroom, they can still achieve the first learning goal.

The above indicates that the researcher was indeed conducting game studies in the student vocabulary. Yet, it still needs more empirical finding that "Know Your Dictionary" games effectively improve the English vocabulary of middle school children in rural areas. Hence, it is hoped that this study contributes as a practical technique to help students achieve their goal of learning English. It helps teachers, especially those in rural areas with limited teaching media. It can also help them see that technology does not make teaching and learning fun. Using this "Know Your Dictionary" game can apply learning that is not boring and likable but can still achieve the first learning goal. So, this study aims to find out whether the eighth grade of Junior High School Ma'arif 2 Pamekasan students taught vocabulary by using "Know Your Dictionary" games had higher vocabulary mastery than those taught not using it.

METHOD

Research preparation may involve conducting a check or pre-research to identify the students' problems in an educational institution, formulating a problem, determining the location of the study, deciding its objects, and selecting research methods. This study used the quantitative method, particularly Quasi-Experimental research, since it involved two classes. Therefore, a quasi-experimental research design was used when a researcher could only handle the random treatment of two different classes (Charles in Latif, 2019). The two groups used in this study were the

experimental group and the control group. There were twenty students for those experimental and control groups in which A class for experimental while B class was for control group. Both of those classes had the same ability and level of study. While, they have different class just because of quantity of the students in the class. Before getting the treatment, both of those classes got a test namely pre-test for measuring their ability in English related with material have been learnt before by the students. After that one of those groups got a treatment, that is experimental group, the experimental group used the "Know Your Dictionary" game, while the control group was taught conventionally. The study is to check whether students taught vocabulary using "Know Your Dictionary" games had higher vocabulary mastery than those taught not using that game. After giving a treatment for three meetings to the experimental group, both of experimental and control group got a test again namely post-test for measuring their mastery of English vocabulary. In other words, there are two variables in this study: "Know Your Dictionary " games as an independent variable and the student's vocabulary mastery as a dependent variable.

The study was conducted on the 8th grade of Ma'arif 2 Pamekasan located in Baddurih village, Pademawu district, Pamekasan Regency, Madura. Then for data collection obtained from pre-test and post-test tests and documentation. Tests were made to check the students' vocabulary mastery before applying the " Know Your Dictionary " game afterward. The documentation is used to collect student attendance lists, Lesson plans, syllabus, and students' test scores. A pre-test is given to students before researchers apply the treatment. Then post-test itself is given to students after applying the treatment of " Know Your Dictionary " games. Both of these tests were also tested for the validity and reliability of the test. First, the researcher matched the lesson plan used by the teacher to check the validity levels because the researcher used content validity. Then for checking the reliability of the test, the researcher used the Kuder

Richardson 21 or KR21.

Once the data has been collected, it will be analyzed. In this study, the data analysis is done using a T-test to measure the effect of the " Know Your Dictionary " game on the students' vocabulary mastery. The T-test formula used is:

$$t = \frac{M_x - M_y}{\sqrt{\left(\frac{\sum X^2 + \sum Y^2}{N_x + N_y - 2}\right)\left(\frac{1}{N_x} + \frac{1}{N_y}\right)}}$$

t : Different value between an experimental and control group

M_x : Mean score of the experimental group

M_y : Mean score of the control group

N_x : The member of the experimental group

N_y : The member of the control group

∑x² : The sum of the squared score of the experimental group

∑y² : The sum squared score of the control group (Arikunto, 2013).

The research conclusions will eventually be drawn if the t value is higher than the t table, so the " Know Your Dictionary " game has a significant impact on the student's vocabulary mastery or, in other words, the game is compelling. Similarly, if the t value is less than the t table, the game is ineffectual to enhance the student's vocabulary mastery.

FINDING

There are such things as validity and capability testing, and data analysis in the study. When checking the validity of the test, it is known that the pre-test and post-test in the study are valid because they match the materials on the lesson plan used by teachers. Then the results of this study also demonstrate the reliability levels of both pre-test and post-test.

Table 1. Reliability Levels

| Group | Pre-test | Post-test | 95% | 99% |
|-------|----------|-----------|-----|-----|
|-------|----------|-----------|-----|-----|

| | | | | |
|------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Experimental (X) | 0,513 | 0,612 | 0,444 | 0,561 |
| Control (Y) | 0,534 | 0,449 | | |

Based on table 1 about pre-test and post-test reliability levels, it is known that the value of accounting was higher than the value of critics 95%. In this case, r_{11} of the pre-test in experimental groups was higher than the r table ($0.513 > 0.444$) and also r_{11} of the pre-test in control groups was higher than r table ($0.534 > 0.444$). In addition, r_{11} of the post-tests in experimental groups was higher than the r table ($0.612 > 0.444$) and also r_{11} of the post-test in the control group was higher than r table ($0.449 > 0.444$). Therefore, the researcher assumes that both of these tests are reliable.

In this study, both pre-test and post-tests have 20 multiple-choice questions. Each of these questions has four choice answers: a, b, c, and d. The following are the results of pre-test and post-tests in the experiment and control group.

Table 2. The Comparison of Pre-test dan Post-test Score

| No | Experimental Group | | | Control Group | | |
|------|--------------------|-----------|------|---------------|-----------|------|
| | Pre-Test | Post-Test | Gain | Pre-Test | Post-Test | Gain |
| 1 | 75 | 95 | 20 | 80 | 65 | -15 |
| 2 | 85 | 90 | 5 | 75 | 80 | 5 |
| 3 | 90 | 80 | -10 | 85 | 70 | -15 |
| 4 | 95 | 95 | 0 | 90 | 75 | -15 |
| 5 | 50 | 75 | 25 | 40 | 50 | 10 |
| 6 | 90 | 85 | -5 | 80 | 70 | -10 |
| 7 | 85 | 90 | 5 | 85 | 75 | -10 |
| 8 | 75 | 85 | 10 | 70 | 70 | 0 |
| 9 | 80 | 75 | -5 | 90 | 85 | -5 |
| 10 | 80 | 80 | 0 | 70 | 85 | 15 |
| 11 | 85 | 85 | 0 | 85 | 85 | 0 |
| 12 | 55 | 70 | 15 | 50 | 35 | -15 |
| 13 | 85 | 75 | -10 | 80 | 60 | -20 |
| 14 | 70 | 80 | 10 | 80 | 70 | -10 |
| 15 | 45 | 65 | 20 | 45 | 45 | 0 |
| 16 | 80 | 80 | 0 | 80 | 80 | 0 |
| 17 | 80 | 70 | -10 | 75 | 85 | 10 |
| 18 | 90 | 85 | -5 | 85 | 75 | -10 |
| 19 | 75 | 85 | 10 | 75 | 75 | 0 |
| 20 | 75 | 90 | 15 | 80 | 60 | -20 |
| N=20 | 1545 | 1635 | 90 | 1500 | 1395 | -105 |

| | | | | | | |
|--|-------|-------|--|----|-------|--|
| | 77,25 | 81,75 | | 75 | 69,75 | |
|--|-------|-------|--|----|-------|--|

Table 2 summarizes the results of the pre-tests in both experimental groups and control groups that had almost the same scores. It means that both groups had the same vocabulary mastery or were not significantly different. But that changed in the post-test. After giving a post-test to the students in the control group, the average value of 75 is 69.75. Thus it could be said that their vocabulary mastery was not improving. At the same time, the experimental groups experienced a very significant increase in their vocabulary mastery from an average value of 77.25 to 81.75.

DISCUSSION

The application of the "Know Your Dictionary" game does indeed provide positive energy for the students of SMP Ma'arif 2 Pamekasan, especially since the stages of implementation are very easy for educators to understand. In applying this game, the teacher first divided the students into six groups and asked them to gather with their groups immediately. She explained the "Know Your Dictionary" game and its rules. Then she gave a blank paper to each group representative. After that, she wrote some letters on the blackboard, for example (D N O L E I G) and asked students to form these letters into several meaningful vocabulary within ten minutes. Then the group representatives bring their answer papers to the front and write them on the blackboard. The teacher checked the correctness of all the vocabulary lists made by the students and determined the winner. The winner of this game is the group that has the most vocabulary. In this process, it appears that the collaborative work of each group is needed to improve vocabulary learning performance (Karaaslan et al., 2018).

On the second day of application of this game, the teacher continued to carry out the stages as the previous day. Yet, students were no longer provided with blank paper but instead wrote directly on the blackboard in front of the class. Because there were six groups, the teacher asked each

of the two groups to come forward and then make a vocabulary list from some of the letters provided. The two groups competed to get an extensive vocabulary list in ten minutes. Afterwards, the teacher asked students to put down all their markers and stop writing the vocabulary list. After that, she checked whether or not the vocabulary was correct and determined the winner of this game. Students were very enthusiastic and worked well in teams to produce more vocabulary when making vocabulary lists. Teamwork is proven to boost student's enthusiasm in language learning, particularly to improve vocabulary (Hidayat & Syahrizal, 2020; Nasution, 2018; Sunarti et al., 2019).

In learning English, vocabulary is one of the most important things to sustain a student's ability. Then the success of this vocabulary learning depends on the atmosphere in the teaching-learning activity. In findings of this study indicate that the use of the "Know Your Dictionary" game greatly helps students to improve the students' vocabulary mastery and can also increase student interactions with other students. It confirms the theory that the game is an entertaining and exciting activity, often challenging, and an activity where learners play and usually interact with others (Wright, 2006). In addition, this game is ideal for improving the students' vocabulary mastery (Danarti, 2008). Well-designed games will develop students' abilities in some circumstances, just as they did in learning a language (Silalahi, 2019).

In addition to the above, the activity of the "Know Your Dictionary" Game is also supported by the responses of teachers and students at SMP Ma'arif 2 Pamekasan. The class teacher who teaches English is enthusiastic and curious about the "Know Your Dictionary" Game. It is evidenced by the teacher's desire to learn techniques in applying this game. Therefore, the teacher asked to explain how to play the game and began to practice it in the teacher's room with the researchers. In addition, information was also obtained that the teacher also supports the application of the game in vocabulary learning. Because this game is proven to help students improve their vocabulary either by reviewing vocabulary they often hear,

recalling vocabulary that they rarely use in everyday life, or forming new vocabulary. According to the findings of other studies, games make it very easy for students to remember acquired vocabulary (Jassim & Dzakiria, 2019; Karaaslan et al., 2018). In addition, the application of games for vocabulary enrichment also produces a positive attitude for students (Abdulrahman & Jullian, 2020). Thus, the teacher was very enthusiastic and wanted to apply it to other classes in the future.

Then, from the responses of students who were taught vocabulary using the "Know Your Dictionary" game, they were very enthusiastic in learning vocabulary in class. They enjoy the learning process and they can work in a team so that the class becomes active and not passive from their enthusiasm. They compete to make vocabulary from the letters that have been provided. However, it is constrained by the limited vocabulary of students. Students have limited vocabulary, making it difficult for them to make a vocabulary list in this game. In addition, they are still in the adjustment stage because this game is a new thing for them. They sometimes get confused with playing this "Know Your Dictionary" game. However, these things do not affect their enjoyment of this game. It can be seen from their enthusiasm and joy in the learning process. It is in line with the research finding that games motivate students to be more active in participating in the collaborative and creative learning process (Reyes-Chua & Lidawan, 2019; Lakkham & Kulsirisawad, 2020).

The enthusiasm and joy of students participating in the vocabulary learning process in the classroom is a good thing that can help students enjoy the ongoing lessons. When students can enjoy vocabulary lessons comfortably, they will easily understand the material presented. In addition to strengthening the bond between teachers and students, maintaining a pleasant classroom atmosphere also constructs conducive learning and spurs students to perform better (Lee & Mak, 2021). In contrast to classes where students do not enjoy the atmosphere, they may feel uncomfortable or compelled to participate in teaching and learning activities. When they

are not enthusiastic, it will affect their learning outcomes. That way, they can't achieve the initial goal of learning vocabulary.

Some early studies have also been conducted on similar concerns. For example, Word Find Puzzles for eighth-graders, card games for eleventh graders, Boggle Palopo game for seventh graders, puzzle games for university students of Technique Information, and Chinese Whispers games carried out for eighth graders. These studies focus on fostering the students' vocabulary mastery (Syaukani, 2020; Hasibuan, 2020; Kurniah, 2020; Hutabarat, 2020; Sitompul, 2020, Sihombing, 2020; Pasaribu, 2020). In addition, classroom Action Research on Team games also focuses on vocabulary mastery and interactions between students (Hidayat & Fauzi, 2020). It is known from studies that both these studies and previous studies have successfully improved the student's vocabulary mastery by using games.

Based on this explanation, the null hypothesis on the study was rejected, and the alternative hypotheses were accepted. In other words, the students who were taught a vocabulary used "Know Your Dictionary" games had a higher vocabulary mastery than those who were taught vocabulary not using it. Furthermore, the game positively affected students as they increased their vocabulary. Not only were their vocabularies increasing, but teamwork among the students was also developed. Because in this game, students collaborate with their classmates to make as much vocabulary and correct them together. If any of them have anything wrong with both pronunciation and writing, they correct each other. In addition, the classroom atmosphere became more comfortable, and most of the students were more active in the class.

CONCLUSION

The study of games to foster English vocabulary in the Indonesian context varies from teacher-made to technological-based games. The one

that is still appropriate for teaching activities is the "Know Your Dictionary" game. Unfortunately, it is one that educators, primarily English teachers, seldom use. Still, the implications of this game to the enrichment of the English vocabulary for students are no less critical than those widely used recently. Findings presented in this study indicate that the use of "Know Your Dictionary" games positively affected the development of the student's vocabulary mastery. The game made it easier for students to improve their English vocabulary, which was of great importance to them in mastering English. Hence, the results of this research are significant and can be seen in terms of teachers and students, learning strategy developers, English-learning bookmakers, and other education developers.

From these findings, it is recommended for further researchers to research "Know Your Dictionary" game technology-based applied. The researchers can treat "Know Your Dictionary" using the currently available technology or social media. That may help determine the game's effectiveness in the student's development and follow the age. As technology is rapidly expanding in urban and rural areas, students are already adept at using technology and social media. Thus, the use of these games is not only done by using the traditional way or technique but also applied by using modern way, that is, technology-based uses. The study will benefit many parts and make teaching-learning more fun. Besides that, the game can be used in offline classes and online classes.

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