

Enhancing Students' Vocabulary Mastery Through Dabble Game At The Eleventh Grade of MAS AL-Washliyah 22 Tembung

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Abstract

This study aimed to improve students' vocabulary mastery through the use of the "dabble" game. It was conducted using a classroom action research method, which was carried out in two cycles. Cycle I involved three meetings, while Cycle II also had three meetings. The research was conducted with the students of class XI-B at Madrasah Aliyah Swasta Al-Washliyah 22 Tembung, which had 36 students in total. Data collection involved both quantitative and qualitative methods. The quantitative data consisted of the students' scores, while the qualitative data was collected through observation sheets and diary notes. The results showed that students' vocabulary scores improved with each test. For example, the mean score in the initial "Orientation" test was 50.66, but by the first test in Cycle I, the mean score increased to 70.33. By the end of Cycle II, in the final test (Test II), the mean score rose further to 86.08, demonstrating steady progress. Additionally, based on the observation sheets and diary notes, it was found that the teaching-learning process proceeded smoothly, with no significant disruptions. This indicates that the implementation of the dabble game in the classroom contributed positively to enhancing the students' English vocabulary mastery, suggesting that game-based learning can be an effective strategy for improving language skills.

INTRODUCTION

Language is a fundamental skill that every human being must possess in order to communicate effectively. One language that is essential to learn is English, as it is recognized as an international language and has become a global means of communication. English is taught worldwide, including in Indonesia (Vina Novita Tambaritji, 2020). Research by Zalmansyah (2013), cited by Octaviana et al. (2023), indicates that when learning a language, whether it's Indonesian or a foreign language, several key factors contribute to success, and one of the most critical is vocabulary. Vocabulary is a crucial element in mastering English (Andriani, 2016). The larger the vocabulary students acquire, the easier it becomes for them to understand both spoken and written communication. On the other hand, students with a limited vocabulary face greater difficulty in comprehending the language, whether it is in oral or written form. Furthermore, vocabulary plays a vital role in all four core language skills: Speaking, Reading, Listening, and Writing (Firmansyah, 2016).

Mastering vocabulary is essential for students to effectively learn English. Without a strong vocabulary foundation, students struggle to use the language confidently and proficiently (Abbas, 2014). According to Richard and Renandya (2006), "without an extensive vocabulary and a strategy

for acquiring new vocabulary, learners often achieve less than their potential and may become discouraged from utilizing language-learning opportunities, such as listening to the radio, conversing with native speakers, using the language in different contexts, reading, or watching television.” Therefore, expanding one's vocabulary is crucial for students to feel comfortable and capable of using English fluently.

Given the critical role of vocabulary in language learning, teaching English vocabulary should not be done in isolation but should be integrated with broader language skills like grammar and pronunciation (Muhammad et al., 2022). Teachers can use various methods to help students improve their vocabulary, but it is vital to select effective techniques that engage students and make learning enjoyable. The right teaching strategies are those that encourage students' interest and participation, making vocabulary acquisition both fun and rewarding. By using engaging techniques, students are more likely to remain motivated and experience greater improvement in their learning (Suleman, 2021).

However, a study conducted on January 28, 2024, revealed challenges in the vocabulary teaching and learning process. Traditional teaching methods, commonly used in English classrooms, often hinder students' ability to master vocabulary. As a result, students struggle with correct pronunciation, writing errors, and a lack of enthusiasm for memorizing unfamiliar words. These challenges are influenced by both internal and external factors. Internal factors include lack of motivation, insufficient practice, personal learning styles, and low interest, while external factors encompass the learning environment, the teacher's performance, the teaching approach, peer influence, strategies, and resources.

These issues can be addressed through the use of appropriate teaching techniques. One effective approach is incorporating games into the classroom, which can make lessons more interactive and engaging. Traditional methods, focused heavily on theory, can create a monotonous atmosphere that makes learning tedious and uninspiring (Sabila & Niswa, 2023). In contrast, games are proven to boost cognitive function, improve concentration, and enhance problem-solving skills, as they often require quick and correct decisions. Using games in vocabulary instruction can be highly beneficial. According to Abbas (2014), “games allow students to work cooperatively, compete with each other, strategize, think in a different way, compare and share knowledge, learn from mistakes, and work in a less stressful, more productive environment—all while having fun.”

Additionally, Harmer (2001) argues that games can spark enthusiasm and increase student engagement in learning vocabulary. For this reason, the researcher has selected a vocabulary game called Dabble. Similar to Scrabble, dabble challenges players to form words from a set of letters. The game is designed for 2-4 players, each of whom receives 20 letters. The objective is to create five English words, ranging from two to six letters in length, within five minutes. The player who completes the task fastest wins the game. This interactive approach is designed to make vocabulary learning more dynamic and enjoyable for students.

The Dabble game is considered an effective tool for improving students' vocabulary skills (Agustin, 2023). In English language teaching, this game is one of the activities where college students have the opportunity to use and demonstrate their English vocabulary, particularly after engaging in the learning process. As students participate in the game, they are required to identify and present words, which helps reinforce their language acquisition. This interactive approach not only makes learning more engaging but also encourages active participation and practical application of new vocabulary. Via using this sport, the students will participate actively and suppose seriously in English mastering technique. From clarification above researcher interest to use increasing students' English vocabulary the usage of Dabble sport.

METHOD

This study was carried out using Classroom Action Research, a method that involves systematically observing and documenting teaching practices. Action research focuses on carefully observing activities that are consciously carried out during teaching, with the goal of collecting data from regular classroom practices. The collected data is then analyzed to inform decisions about how future teaching practices should evolve. This approach aims to improve the teaching process by reflecting on what works well and what needs to be adjusted. As described by Kemmis and McTaggart (1998), action research emphasizes a reflective cycle where educators actively participate in examining their own practices to foster ongoing improvement.

This study employed both quantitative and qualitative research methods. To collect quantitative data, a writing test was used to assess the students' vocabulary achievement. The treatment applied in this research involved the use of a game called "Dabble," which is designed to help enhance vocabulary learning in an engaging way. In contrast, qualitative data was gathered through the use of diary notes and an observation sheet. A diary note serves as a personal reflection by the researcher, providing an evaluation of the classroom dynamics during the teaching and learning process (Panjaitan & Amaniarsih, 2021). The observation sheet allowed the researcher to observe and document specific issues or challenges encountered during the class sessions, offering insights into the effectiveness of the teaching methods and students' engagement.

This study focused on second-grade students at Madrasah Aliyah Swasta Al-Washliyah 22 Tembung during the academic year 2023/2024. A total of 36 students participated. The class was chosen for this study because the students were facing challenges in their writing performance, particularly in achieving proficiency in writing descriptive paragraphs.

The data collection was carried out over two cycles, referred to as Cycle I and Cycle II, with each cycle consisting of four stages: planning, action, observation, and reflection. Cycle I involved three meetings, including an initial meeting aimed at assessing the current state of the teaching and learning process. This session helped to identify the students' prior knowledge and understanding of writing descriptive paragraphs. Cycle II also included three meetings, bringing the total number of meetings in the study to six.

During the planning phase, the researcher made preparations for the study, including gathering necessary materials and organizing the timeline for the entire process, from the preliminary study to its completion. The researcher also decided on the number of meetings required to carry out the study effectively. In the action phase, the researcher implemented the intervention or treatment. In this context, the treatment refers to the teaching techniques the researcher applied to address the specific issues the students were facing in their writing.

FINDINGS

The writer categorised the facts into two kinds, namely quantitative and qualitative records. The quantitative information had been scored of vocabulary test. It was orientation check in the first meeting, take a look at I in cycle I, and test II in cycle II. even as the qualitative facts were taken from commentary sheet and diary notes.

The progress in students' test scores can be observed by looking at the gap between the lowest and highest scores. This difference reflects how much students' performance has varied, with a larger gap typically indicating greater improvement. When students show higher scores across the board, it suggests that more individuals are achieving better results, which could be a sign of improved teaching methods, better understanding of the material, or more effective study strategies. Conversely, a narrow gap could suggest that students are scoring more similarly, which may point to either less improvement or greater consistency in their performance.

Table 1. Comparison Table of students' Writing Scores

Types Score	Orientation Test	Test in Cycle I	Test in Cycle II
Lowest Score	34	59	78
Highest Score	61	78	92

The table above shows a clear trend of improvement in the students' scores over time. Initially, in the orientation test, the lowest score recorded was 34, while the highest score reached 61. In Test I of Cycle I, the lowest score increased to 59, and the highest score rose to 78. By Test II of Cycle II, the lowest score further improved to 78, and the highest score climbed to 92.

This steady progress in individual scores is also reflected in the overall class performance. The class average score has shown significant improvement as well, which can be demonstrated using the following formula:

$$\bar{x} = \frac{\sum x}{N}$$

Where,

\bar{x} = the mean the students

$\sum x$ = the total score

N = the number of the students

In summary, the data indicates not just a rise in the highest and lowest individual scores, but a general enhancement in the overall academic achievement of the class.

In the orientation test, the students collectively scored a total of 1824 points, with 36 students participating in the test. To find the average score of the students, we need to divide the total score by the number of students. So, the mean score for the students is calculated as follows:

$$\text{Mean} = \frac{1824}{36} = 50.66$$

In the first test of Cycle I, the total score accumulated by all the students was 2532, and 36 students participated in the test. To calculate the average score for the students, we divide the total score by the number of students, resulting in:

$$\text{Mean} = \frac{2532}{36} = 70.33$$

This means the mean score, which represents the average performance of the students, was 70.33. The mean is a measure of central tendency, indicating that, on average, each student scored approximately 70.33 points on the test.

In the second test of Cycle II, the total score achieved by all the students was 3099, and 46 students participated in the test. To calculate the mean score for the class, we divided the total score by the number of students:

$$\text{Mean} = \frac{3099}{36} = 86.08$$

From this calculation, it is evident that the class's average score in vocabulary mastery, achieved through the Dabble game, has improved significantly. The average score increased progressively from 50.66 in the first test, then to 70.33 in the second, and finally reached 86.08. This indicates a positive trend in the students' performance, reflecting the effectiveness of the Dabble game in enhancing their vocabulary skills over time.

The range of the graps students was calculated as follows:

$$P = \frac{R}{T} \times 100\%$$

Where:

P = represents the percentage of students who score above 75 points.

R = the number of students whose scores are 75 or higher. This group includes students who achieve exactly 75 points as well as those who score higher.

T = the total number of students who achieve the highest possible scores in the class or on the assessment.

The proportion of the master's score in the orientation test:

$$1) P_1 = \frac{0}{36} \times 100\% = 0\%$$

The percentage of the master in test I in Cycle I:

$$2) P_2 = \frac{4}{36} \times 100\% = 11.11\%$$

The percentage of the master in test II in Cycle II:

$$3) P_3 = \frac{29}{36} \times 100\% = 80.55\%$$

From the table of The Comparison of Students' writing Score and the calculation above, it can be seen that the students' score kept improving. In the orientation test, the lowest score was 34, the highest score was 61, the mean was 50.66 while the KKM was 75. It mean that the students in orientation test could not reach the KKM. In the test I, the lowest score was 59, the highest score was 78, and the mean was 70.33 while the KKM was 75. It mean that there were some students have reached the KKM and it is very low. In the Test II, the lowest score was 78, the highest score was 92, and the mean was 86.08. It mean that almost the students have reached the KKM, though there were some students, which were still under KKM score. Those scores showed the improvement of the students vocabulary mastery. The improvement was shown in every cycle.

In the orientation test, the writer gave the students test without gave any treatment about vocabulary mastery, in order to measure the first knowledge of the students and know students' problem in vocabulary. But the fact showed that no one students got score up to 75. Most of students

thought that English was boring and lack of vocabulary was a reason why the students didn't like English course.

In test I of cycle I, the mean of the students' score was 70.33 and the percentage of students which got point up to 75 was 11.11%. It meant that there were 4 students have reached the KKM score.

The data showed that the ability of students in mastering vocabulary have increased. Although only some students have reached the KKM, all of the students' score got improvement. It could be seen from the mean. The improvement happened because in the orientation test the writer did not give the treatment of the students, while in Test I the writer explanation about vocabulary. But, it was not clear enough so that the students that achieved KKM was still low. So, the writer made Cycle II.

From the data of Test II in Cycle II, the mean of the students' score was 86.08 and the percentage of students which got point up to 75 was 80.55%. It meant that there were 29 students have reached the KKM score. In this Cycle, almost all the students reached the KKM. It is because the writer explain more about mastering vocabulary through dabble game. Beside it, writer gave more chance for the students to ask question if they still confused.

After reviewing the data, it can be concluded that in the Orientation Test of Cycle I, no students (0%) scored above 75 points. However, in Test I of Cycle I, 11.11% of students (4 students) achieved scores above 75. In Test II of Cycle II, 80.55% of students (29 students) scored above 75 points. This data shows a 11.11% improvement from the Orientation Test to Test I. Additionally, there was a significant improvement of about 69.44% from Test I to Test II. When comparing the Orientation Test to Test II, the improvement was even more notable, at around 80.55%.

This analysis suggests that the use of the dabble game has been effective in enhancing students' vocabulary skills, as reflected in the significant increases in test scores over time. The game likely played a role in increasing students' engagement and ability to retain vocabulary, as evidenced by the steady improvement across cycles.

The students' achievement was also improved from the observation sheet, and diary notes. It could be seen on the students' activities during teaching process. Based on the observation, almost all the students were focused on the teacher's explanation during the teaching learning process. The condition of the class is quite good although there were still some students that make noise and not give their attention. But, they did not disturb the teaching learning process because the writer tried hard to manage the classroom effectively.

DISCUSSION

Based on the finding above, it can be concluded that dabble game effected to increase the students' vocabulary at MAS Al-Washliyah 22 Tembung. There are several factors that contribute to the effectiveness of the Dabble game. One key aspect is that it helps students memorize a large number of new vocabulary words. By engaging with the game, students are exposed to words in an interactive context, making them easier to recall. Additionally, the researcher can boost students' motivation and self-confidence by giving them the opportunity to share their thoughts and ideas in front of the class. This public speaking element encourages students to participate more actively, fostering a sense of achievement and personal growth. Overall, the Dabble game not only enhances vocabulary retention but also supports students in building important communication skills and self-esteem.

The students' improvement can be seen in the quantitative and qualitative data. Both quantitative and qualitative data were organized from the whole meetings. In the first cycle, the writer gave the students an orientation test to know their current ability in vocabulary mastery. From the result of the orientation test, it was found that the students' score achievement in vocabulary

mastery was still low. After conducting test I in cycle I, students' writing scores was better than orientation test, but they did not improve significantly. After that, the cycle 2 was conducted and they were given more explanation how to increase their vocabulary through dabble game. The result of test II showed that students' vocabulary mastery showed improvements.

The students' progress was also evident through qualitative data, including observation sheets and diary notes. This improvement was noticeable in their behavior and engagement during the learning process. According to the observation sheet, the students appeared to enjoy the lessons and showed a positive response to mastering vocabulary. The diary notes further revealed that the students were enthusiastic about following the instructor's directions. They not only enjoyed the activities but also paid full attention, likely because they were given the opportunity to actively participate and complete tasks on their own.

By analyzing both the quantitative and qualitative data, it can be concluded that the "dabble" game effectively enhanced the students' vocabulary mastery.

CONCLUSION

After reviewing the data, the following conclusions were made:

1. The implementation of the Dabble game led to a notable improvement in the students' vocabulary skills. This is evident from the progression in their test scores: the mean score in the orientation test was 50.66, which increased to 70.33 in the first test, and then rose further to 86.08 in the second test. This shows a clear and consistent improvement in their vocabulary knowledge over time, likely due to the interactive nature of the Dabble game.
2. The use of the Dabble game also contributed to a significant boost in the students' motivation and enthusiasm for learning English, particularly vocabulary. By incorporating this game into their lessons, students found learning vocabulary to be more engaging and enjoyable. The game provided a fun and competitive element that sparked their interest, encouraging them to actively participate and invest more effort in mastering new words.

In essence, the study highlights not only the effectiveness of the Dabble game in enhancing vocabulary skills but also its positive influence on student engagement and interest in the subject. The gamified learning experience made the process of acquiring new words both more enjoyable and rewarding.

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