




The Implementation of Word Clap Game in Teaching Vocabulary

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to determine whether Word clap game is able to improve English vocabulary of students of SMP Negeri 15 Gorontalo. This study uses a one-group pre-experimental research design. This study involved 29 students who were assessed through pre-test and post-test using multiple-choice instruments consisting of eight meetings including treatment. The results of data analysis showed that there was an increase between the results of the pre-test and post-test. The average score of students' pre-test was 58.28 and the post-test was 75. The results also showed that the t-test value (10.620) was higher than the t-table value (2.032). This means that the alternative hypothesis (H_1) is accepted, and the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected, so it can be concluded that the use of the Word clap game strategy can significantly improve students' English vocabulary in class VIII of SMP Negeri 15 Gorontalo.

KATA KUNCI

Bahasa Inggris
Sebagai
Bahasa Asing,
Pembelajaran
Berbasis
Permainan,
Studi Pra-
eksperimen,
Kosa Kata,
Permainan
Word Clap,

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui apakah Word clap game mampu meningkatkan kosa kata bahasa Inggris siswa SMP Negeri 15 Gorontalo. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain penelitian *one-group experimental* dan melibatkan 29 siswa yang dinilai melalui *pre-test* dan *post-test* menggunakan instrumen pilihan ganda yang terdiri dari delapan pertemuan termasuk perlakuan. Hasil analisis data menunjukkan bahwa ada peningkatan antara hasil *pre-test* dan *post-test*. Nilai rata-rata *pre-test* siswa adalah 58.28 dan *post-test* yaitu 75. Hasil penelitian juga menunjukkan bahwa nilai t-test (10,620) lebih tinggi dari nilai t-table (2,032). Dengan kata lain, hipotesis alternatif (H_1) diterima, dan hipotesis nol (H_0) ditolak, sehingga dapat disimpulkan bahwa penggunaan strategi permainan Word clap game dapat meningkatkan kosakata bahasa Inggris siswa kelas VIII SMP Negeri 15 Gorontalo secara signifikan.

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Introduction

Vocabulary plays a vital role in English language acquisition, particularly for non-native learners, as it underpins all four language skills, listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Gu, 2003; Alqahtani, 2015). Despite its significance, vocabulary development is often impeded by monotonous memorization practices and students' reluctance to seek word meanings independently (Schmitt, 2019; Webb & Nation, 2017). Various approaches, such as the use of subtitled films (Lestari, 2018) and English songs (Wardiman, Aminah, & Dewi, 2022), have been shown to support vocabulary acquisition. More recently, game-based learning has emerged as a powerful instructional strategy that enhances motivation, engagement, and retention by providing meaningful contexts and fulfilling learners' psychological needs (Sailer et al., 2017; Al-Mosawe et al., 2022; Al-Azzawi, 2023). One such method is the Word Clap Game, which blends rhythm, repetition, and peer interaction by requiring students to name vocabulary items in sync with clapping patterns, thereby enhancing memory, coordination, and confidence (Thornburry, 2002; Díaz García, 2024; Brown, 2002). This low-preparation activity also fosters cooperation and enthusiasm in the classroom (Felszeghy et al., 2019). Rooted in the challenges identified at SMPN 15 Gorontalo, where students struggle particularly with vocabulary, this study investigates the effectiveness of the Word Clap Game in improving eighth-grade students' mastery of key word classes, verbs, nouns, and adjectives. Grounded in literature that emphasizes vocabulary as a cornerstone of academic success (Huddleston & Pullum, 2002; Akhtar, 2020), the study incorporates Nation's (2001) Four Strands framework and objective assessment methods such as multiple-choice and translation tests (Coombe, 2013). Prior research has affirmed the game's effectiveness in fostering vocabulary mastery, pronunciation, and learner confidence (Lubis, 2022; Marhamah et al., 2019; Mirella et al., 2018; Karmila, 2020), though success depends on alignment with students' proficiency levels (Lahming, 2019). Unlike earlier studies that employed classroom action research (Setyaningsih, 2015; Ayuningtyas, 2016; Lestari, 2018), this research adopts a pre-experimental design to evaluate the Word Clap Game's impact. Accordingly, the hypotheses are: (1) Null Hypothesis (H_0): The implementation of the Word Clap Game does not result in a significant improvement in the vocabulary mastery of eighth-grade students at SMPN 15 Gorontalo; and (2) Alternative Hypothesis (H_1): The implementation of the Word Clap Game results in a significant improvement in the vocabulary mastery of eighth-grade students at SMPN 15 Gorontalo.

Method

This study employed a quantitative approach using a pre-experimental one-group pretest-posttest design to evaluate the effectiveness of the Word Clap Game in improving eighth-grade students' vocabulary at SMPN 15 Gorontalo (Gorard, 2013; Sugiyono, 2009). The population consisted of all students at SMPN 15 Gorontalo, and purposive sampling was used to select students with low vocabulary proficiency based on pre-observation (Palinkas et al., 2015; Patton, 2015). The instrument was a 19-item multiple-choice vocabulary test covering synonyms, antonyms, and translations,

categorized by word types: nouns, verbs, and adjectives. As a means of further displaying the instrument, below is the blueprint of the test.

Table 1: Indicator of Type Vocabulary Asked

KD	Topic	Indicator of Type Vocabulary Asked			Number of Test
		Synonym	Antonym	Translation	
3.11	Verb	15	9	16, 18	9, 15, 16, 18
	Noun	4	3	10, 14, 17	3, 4, 10, 14, 17
	Adjective	2, 7, 8, 12, 13	5, 19	1, 6, 11	1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 11, 12, 13, 19

Validity testing through item analysis resulted in 19 valid questions, while reliability testing using Cronbach’s Alpha yielded a value of 0.72, indicating a reliable instrument. The data collection process included a pre-test, a six-session treatment using the adapted Word Clap Game aligned with Recount text, and a post-test. During treatment, students clapped rhythmically in groups while recalling and translating target vocabulary, encouraging active learning and retention. The data analysis involved scoring students' answers, calculating the mean score and percentage rates, and classifying results into five performance categories (Dasar-Dasar Evaluasi Pendidikan, 2009). This methodology aimed to measure the vocabulary gains attributable to the game-based intervention in a structured yet interactive learning context.

Findings and Discussion

Findings

The findings of this study provide strong empirical support for the effectiveness of the Word Clap Game in enhancing vocabulary mastery among eighth-grade students at SMPN 15 Gorontalo. The quantitative data showed a significant improvement, with the average student score increasing from 58.28 in the pre-test to 75 in the post-test, indicating a gain of 16.72 points or 28%. Below are the results of the pretest presented in table and chart bar for the two main categories: vocabulary and question types. The table and bar chart below present the results of the pre-test total, and the percentage of each category based on two main categories of the test.

Table 2: Result of Pre-test for Topics

Topic	Pre-test total	Maximum	Percentage
Verb	83	116	72%
Noun	87	145	60%
Adjective	168	290	58%

Table 4.1 illustrate the pre-test performance of students across three vocabulary topics: Verb, Noun, and Adjective. The data in the table and the accompanying bar chart compare the total pre-test scores achieved by students to the maximum possible scores

for each category, along with the corresponding percentages representing the proportion of performance relative to the maximum scores. These percentages offer an analytical view of students' prior knowledge in each topic. In the Verb category, the pre-test total score was 83 out of a maximum of 116, resulting in the highest percentage of achievement at 72%. This suggests that students demonstrated relatively strong prior knowledge in this area. For the Noun category, students scored 87 out of 145, with a percentage of 60%. While this is a moderate level of performance, it is notably lower than the percentage for Verbs. The Adjective category presented the highest possible score of 290, with students achieving a total score of 168. However, this corresponds to the lowest percentage of achievement, at 58%. Despite the numerical total being the largest, the percentage indicates that Adjectives are the area where students exhibited the least prior knowledge, suggesting the need for significant instructional focus.

For the question types, the data reveal that the Translation category had the highest achievement, with students scoring 163 out of 232, yielding a percentage of 70%. This indicates that Translation tasks were the most successfully completed among the question types. The Antonym category followed, with students achieving 62 out of a possible 116, which equates to 53%. Meanwhile, the Synonym category recorded the lowest performance, with students scoring 81 out of 145, resulting in a percentage of 35%. These percentages suggest that Synonym questions posed the greatest difficulty for the students, whereas Translation tasks were relatively easier.

Table 3: Result of Pre-test for Question Types

Question Type	Pre-test total	Maximum	Percentage
Synonym	81	145	35%
Antonym	62	116	53%
Translation	163	232	70%

In the Table 4.2, the percentages emphasize the differences in achievement levels. The Translation category demonstrates the highest proportion of the maximum score, followed by Antonym and Synonym, respectively. These results highlight that the students displayed the strongest performance in Translation category, followed by moderate success in Antonym questions. However, the significant gap in the Synonym category suggests a need for targeted interventions to enhance students' ability to recognize and use synonyms effectively. Overall, the data underscore the importance of designing instructional activities that address these specific areas of weakness while building on students' strengths. The post-test was conducted following the completion of all six treatment sessions to evaluate the effectiveness of the Word Clap game in improving students' vocabulary skills. The results of the post-test are presented below in both tabular and graphical formats, reflecting the total scores and percentages achieved across the two main categories.

Table 4: Result of Pre-test for Topics

Topic	Post test total	Maximum	Percentage
Verb	109	116	94%
Noun	109	145	75%
Adjective	217	290	75%

Table 4.3 presents the post-test performance of students across three vocabulary topics: Verb, Noun, and Adjective. The data in the table and the corresponding bar chart compare the total post-test scores achieved by students to the maximum possible scores for each category, alongside the percentages representing students' performance relative to the maximum scores. These percentages provide insights into students' improvement and mastery of each vocabulary topic after instruction. In the Verb category, the post-test total score was 109 out of a maximum of 116, yielding the highest percentage of achievement at 94%. This significant increase from the pre-test indicates that students have developed a strong command of verbs and achieved near mastery in this area. In contrast, the Noun category also resulted in a total post-test score of 109, but out of a higher maximum score of 145, resulting in a percentage of 75%. Although this represents an improvement compared to the pre-test, it suggests that students' proficiency in nouns remains moderate and slightly behind their mastery of verbs. The Adjective category presented the highest maximum score of 290, with students achieving a post-test total score of 217. This corresponds to a percentage of 75%, matching the percentage achieved in the Noun category. Despite the higher total score, the percentage highlights that adjectives, similar to nouns, remain an area requiring further reinforcement, even though the students have shown notable improvement since the pre-test. Overall, the data from Table 4.3 suggests that students demonstrated the greatest improvement and mastery in the Verb category, while their understanding of Nouns and Adjectives, though improved, still requires additional focus to achieve comparable levels of proficiency.

Table 5: Result of Pre-test for Question Types

Question Type	Pre-test total	Maximum	Percentage
Synonym	109	145	75%
Antonym	87	116	75%
Translation	206	232	89%

The post-test data presented in Table 4.2 offers a comprehensive overview of student performance across three distinct question types: Synonym, Antonym, and Translation. When examining student performance through the lens of question type, several key observations emerge. Firstly, the Translation category demonstrates significant improvement, with students achieving a commendable 89% success rate. This is evident in the numerical data, where students scored 206 out of a possible 232 points. This high performance indicates a strong grasp of translation principles and the ability to

accurately translate texts. The effectiveness of the instructional strategies employed in developing translation skills is evident in this high performance. Secondly, while the Antonym and Synonym categories show improvement, with both achieving a 75% success rate, there remains potential for further development. In the Antonym category, students scored 87 out of 116 points, and in the Synonym category, they scored 109 out of 145 points. While these scores represent progress, they highlight the need for further targeted instruction to solidify students' understanding of antonyms and synonyms. Continued practice and explicit instruction in these areas may be beneficial to enhance students' vocabulary and language usage skills. In conclusion, the post-test results provide valuable insights into students' progress and highlight the need for ongoing support and instruction to ensure continued improvement in all question types. The data collected from the eighth-grade students of SMPN 15 Gorontalo before and after they were taught using Word Clap game.

Table 6: Result of Pre-Test and Post-Test

No	Samples	Pre-Test	Post-Test
1	Responde 1	55	70
2	Responde 2	65	75
3	Responde 3	70	80
4	Responde 4	60	75
5	Responde 5	75	80
6	Responde 6	50	70
7	Responde 7	45	65
8	Responde 8	55	70
9	Responde 9	65	75
10	Responde 10	60	80
11	Responde 11	60	80
12	Responde 12	60	80
13	Responde 13	55	70
14	Responde 14	40	75
15	Responde 15	45	75
16	Responde 16	40	75
17	Responde 17	45	65
18	Responde 18	65	70
19	Responde 19	70	75
20	Responde 20	50	70
21	Responde 21	50	65
22	Responde 22	60	70

No	Samples	Pre-Test	Post-Test
23	Responde 23	50	70
24	Responde 24	60	75
25	Responde 25	45	80
26	Responde 26	80	90
27	Responde 27	70	85
28	Responde 28	75	85
29	Responde 29	70	80
Average		58,28	75

Based on Table 4.5, there were 29 students who participated as the sample in the research. The researcher used the Word Clap game to examine the effects between the pre-test and post-test. The table above was considered the primary data of this research, which was then processed statistically using SPSS v.26. The following analysis is presented below. A normality test was conducted to determine whether the research data were normally distributed. Additionally, testing for normality was necessary to meet the requirements for analyzing the research data parametrically. In this research, the researcher tested normality using the Shapiro-Wilk test in SPSS v.26, as the sample size of this research was 29, which is less than 50.

Table 7: Tests of Normality

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Pre-test	0,118	29	.200*	0,960	29	0,336
Post-test	0,167	29	0,038	0,934	29	0,070

Table 4.6 presents the outcomes of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests. As previously mentioned, the researcher opted for the Shapiro-Wilk test since the sample size for this study was 29, which is less than 50. The significance values obtained from the Shapiro-Wilk test were 0,336 for the pre-test and 0,070 for the post-test. Both significance values are greater than 0.05. Therefore, it is safe to infer that the distribution of the test scores in both the pre-test and post-test phases followed a normal distribution pattern. The researcher used a statistical method with a paired sample test to convince the researcher that the use of the Word Clap game technique on the students' vocabulary is improved. The results are as follows:

Table 8: Paired Samples Statistics

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Post-test	75	29	6.268	1.164
	Pre-test	58.28	29	11.042	2.050

The table 4.7 above shows that the mean score of post-tests was 75, while there were 29 cells of N. Standard deviation for post-test was 6.268. The standard mean error of post-test was 1.164. Besides, the mean score of the pre-test was 58.28, while there were 29 cells of N. Standard deviation for pre-test was 11.042. The standard mean error for pre-test was 2.050. By the mean score in the table 4.3 above, it may safely be said that the students' vocabulary significantly improved after being taught Word Clap game technique.

Table 9: Paired Samples Correlation

		N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1	Post-test & Pre-test	29	0,645	0,000

The table of paired correlation shows that the large correlation between pre-test and post-test. The numeral of correlation was (0,645) and the significance is (0, 000). Where, if the correlation value $> 0,000$ then the correlation is positive. In the table above, it showed that the correlation value between pre-test and post-test is 0,645, therefore, one may conclude that between post-test and pre-test have correlation.

Table 10: Paired Samples Test

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Post-test – Pre-test	16,724	8,481	1,575	13,498	19,950	10,620	28	0,000

The results of analysis using the T-test were shown in Table 4.9. The mean pre-test and post-test were 16,724, standard deviation was 8,481, and standard error mean was 1,575. The lower different was (13,498), while the upper different was (19,950). The result of the of the t test is 10,620 with a df 28 and a significance of 0.000. The interpretation toward t-test conducted by two methods according to (Raharjo, 2017), firstly, if the value of significance (2-tailed) < 0.05 , then there is a significant difference

between learning outcomes in pre-test and post-test. Secondly, if the value of significance (2-tailed) > 0.05 , then there is no significant difference between learning outcomes in pre-test and post-test. As shown in Table 4.5, the significance value (2-tailed) is 0.000, which is less than 0.05. Therefore, this leads to a conclusion that there is a significant difference between the learning outcomes in the pre-test and post-test, indicating that the Word Clap game had a significant impact on the students' vocabulary at the eighth grade of SMPN 15 Gorontalo.

Table 11: Percentage Increase of Topics

Topic	Pretest total	Post test total	Percentage Increase
Verb	83	109	31,33%
Noun	87	109	25,29%
Adjective	168	217	29,17%

The table 4.10 above shows that the percentage increase in the Verb category was 31.33%, with a post-test score of 109 and a pre-test score of 83. For the Noun category, the percentage increase was 25.29%, with a post-test score of 109 and a pre-test score of 87. In the Adjective category, the percentage increase was 29.17%, with a post-test score of 217 and a pre-test score of 168. By analyzing the percentage increases in the table 4.6 above, it is deduced that the students' understanding of verbs, nouns, and adjectives significantly improved after the intervention.

Table 12: Percentage Increase of Question Types

Question Type	Pretest total	Post test total	Percentage Increase
Synonym	81	109	34,57%
Antonym	62	87	40,32%
Translation	163	206	26,38%

The table 4.11 above indicates that the percentage increase for Synonyms was 34.57%, with a post-test score of 109 and a pre-test score of 81. For Antonyms, the percentage increase was 40.32%, with a post-test score of 87 and a pre-test score of 62. In the Translation category, the percentage increase was 26.38%, with a post-test score of 206 and a pre-test score of 163. From the data presented in table 4.11, one may say that the students' ability to identify synonyms, antonyms, and perform translations showed a marked improvement following the applied teaching method.

Table 13: Hypothesis Testing

Variables	t-test	t-table	Description
Pre-test & Post-test	10,620	2.0484	Improved

Table 4.12 demonstrates that the t-test value is greater than the t-table value, with the t-test result being 10,620, which exceeds the t-table value of 2.0484. This indicates a significant improvement in students' vocabulary before and after using the Word Clap game for the eighth-grade students of SMPN 15 Gorontalo. The analysis shows that the

null hypothesis (H_0) was rejected, while the alternative hypothesis (H_1) was accepted. In other words, there was a significant improvement in students' vocabulary as a result of implementing the Word Clap game for the eighth-grade students of SMPN 15 Gorontalo.

Discussion

Besides the test results, classroom observations showed how the way the Word Clap Game was used helped students learn vocabulary. The game gave students the chance to practice vocabulary together in a fun and rhythmic way. This activity fits with social learning theory, where students learn from each other and work together in groups (Marhamah, 2020). The clapping rhythm helped students stay focused and remember words better through movement (Brodsky & Sulkin, 2011). The vocabulary used in the game was chosen based on what the students were learning and what they were interested in, which made the content more meaningful and easier to remember (Gu, 2006). Game features like collecting points, being recognized in front of the class, and team competition also helped increase student motivation and engagement (Sailer et al., 2017). Although the level of improvement was not the same for all students, many became more active, confident, and interested in learning vocabulary (Deci & Ryan, 2017; Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2021).

However, some challenges also appeared during the game. In the beginning, some students kept using the same words or were unsure what to say. Others felt shy or nervous to speak quickly (Nation, 2013; Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015). To help with this, the teacher gave word suggestions before the game and allowed students to use the "pass" rule or give other responses, like using pictures or phrases. Some students also became frustrated because the game felt too competitive (Slavin, 2014). As a means of solving this, the teacher added group challenges so students could work as a team instead of trying to win alone. These changes helped create a more inclusive and supportive learning atmosphere. In general, this study showed that while the Word Clap Game did not lead to very large changes for every student, it created a better learning environment and helped many students participate more actively in vocabulary learning. The game's combination of rhythm, teamwork, and practical use of words made it easier for students to stay engaged. With good planning and flexible rules, games like this can be useful in English classes. Future research could look at how this game works with other language skills or with students of different levels and backgrounds.

Conclusions and Recommendation

Conclusions

Based on the research findings, the Word Clap Game significantly enhanced the vocabulary mastery of eighth-grade students at SMPN 15 Gorontalo, with average scores rising from 58.28 in the pre-test to 75 in the post-test, an improvement of 16.72 points or approximately 28%. Statistical analysis confirmed the effectiveness of the intervention through a t-test value of 10.620 ($p < 0.05$) and a strong positive correlation of 0.645 between pre- and post-test scores. The most significant improvement was

observed in verbs (31.33%), followed by adjectives (29.17%) and nouns (25.29%), while antonyms showed the highest gain among question types (40.32%), followed by synonyms (34.57%) and translations (26.38%). Despite initial challenges such as limited vocabulary, anxiety, and competitiveness, adaptive strategies, such as dynamic vocabulary selection, inclusive participation formats, and team-based gameplay, helped create a supportive learning environment. Thus, the Word Clap Game proved not only statistically effective but also experientially valuable in promoting engagement, confidence, and retention.

Recommendations

Teachers may consider adapting the Word Clap Game to match classroom themes and students' vocabulary levels. Using familiar and relevant topics can help students stay more engaged. It is also helpful to make the game more collaborative than competitive, so that students feel supported rather than pressured. Including different ways for students to respond, such as using drawings or gestures, can give quieter or less confident learners a chance to join more comfortably. These small changes can make the game more inclusive and meaningful for different types of learners. Future researchers might explore how the Word Clap Game affects vocabulary learning over a longer period of time. It could also be interesting to look at how the game supports other English skills like speaking or writing. Studying how students from different backgrounds and learning styles respond to the game may also offer useful insights. Overall, this study shows that using interactive and flexible methods like the Word Clap Game could support vocabulary learning in a fun and supportive way.

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