

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SCRABBLE GAMES TO PROMOTE VOCABULARY ACHIEVEMENT OF MIGRANT WORKERS' CHILDREN IN MALAYSIA

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Article Info	Abstract
Article History Received: February 2024 Revised: March 2024 Published: April 2024	<i>Vocabulary skill is crucial for every English as foreign language (EFL) learners as it forms the foundation for effective communication, comprehension, and overall language proficiency. However, Indonesian migrant workers' children who attend school at PPWNI Klang that has only two teachers who are not experts in the field of English, resulting in a lack of enthusiasm among students to learn the language. The study aimed to examine whether the use of Scrabble games was effective in increasing students' vocabulary achievement or not. The research design was a pre-experimental research design, with one group pretest-posttest used by the researchers. The sample of the study was 21 students of grade 9 SMP PPWNI Klang Malaysia, selected using purposive sampling. The results of the pretest and posttest data were analyzed using the paired sample t-test through the SPSS software. The findings of the study showed that Sig. (2-tailed) of $0.000 < 0.05$. This means that there is a significant difference and effectiveness in learning outcomes after using the scrabble games method in learning English vocabulary. As the conclusion, a scrabble game is an effective strategy for teaching vocabulary especially to students facing various challenges, such as limited teacher resources and an unsupportive learning environment, they can be comfortable and motivated to continue learning due to the enjoyable game-based learning experience.</i>
Keywords Scrabble game; Vocabulary; Migrant workers' children; English language teaching; Game-based learning;	
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INTRODUCTION

English proficiency, as the lingua franca of international communication, holds unparalleled significance in the modern world, a compulsory subject to be taught to students today. Students will find it simpler to participate in global circles if they have proficiency in a foreign language like English (Asiyah & Maghfiroh, 2021). There are crucial components that students must master when they learn the language of English, one of which is vocabulary. It is due to the meaning of new words is frequently mentioned in books and in class, acquiring vocabulary is an essential component of learning a foreign language (Agassy et al., 2020). Vocabulary is also a language teaching center, which is important for language students (Surmanov & Azimova, 2020). According to Makhmudovna (2021), vocabulary skills are crucial for every student's academic success both inside and outside of the classroom. Additionally, vocabulary development is important since it contributes significantly to language competency and affects how effectively students can read, speak, listen, and write (Onasanya & Onasanya, 2021). It is necessary to have a rich vocabulary in order to express oneself more clearly and precisely in various situations when learning a foreign language (Akramovna,

2022). As a result, it is necessary to have students continuously practice exercises in order to master their vocabulary (Anisa Tarmusi & Maghfiroh, 2023).

Learning vocabulary proves to be a major challenge for students studying a foreign language (Gorgoz & Tican, 2020). It stands out as one of the most significant hurdles encountered during the language learning process. Rashid et al. (2022) research, students were found to neglect vocabulary and vocabulary mastery, making teaching English difficult and challenging. When it comes to vocabulary, students face a variety of challenges (Puspita Sari et al., 2021). There are many problems that learners experience when dealing with vocabulary. Oybekovna (2020) attempted to summarize some common vocabulary issues encountered by schoolchildren and students. They may encounter difficulties in learning vocabulary if they are (a) Unaware of the terms prefix and suffix; (b) Repeating the same word, due to a lack of descriptive words, adjectives, and adverbs, students must rely on the few words they know; (c) They may be unable to deliver new words to their vocabulary in real conversation; (d) Some students may have poor predictive skills, gaps in their reading, and miss so much information that they cannot distinguish the meaning of a new word from a sentence or paragraph. This is what happens to the migrant worker children who attend school at PPWNI Klang that has only two teachers who are not experts in the field of English, resulting in a lack of enthusiasm among students to learn the language. Consequently, the students' vocabulary skills are very limited. The information aligns with an article by (Nurdin, 2022) on viva.co.id, stating that Indonesia has a score of 469 out of 800, an increase of 3 points from the previous year's score of 466. Indonesia's score is classified as intermediate, equivalent to a B1 level on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). Similar to the previous year, this score remains below the regional average for Asia, which is 500.

Despite the fact that there are numerous learning obstacles, pedagogic competence is essential in addressing these challenges (Maghfiroh et al., 2024), involving proper management of student learning processes, organization, and implementation of learning programs, and utilization of various technologies and media (Maghfiroh et al., 2023). Comprehending the approaches employed by language learners in acquiring vocabulary is of significant importance (Al-Khresheh & Al-Ruwaili, 2020). Many earlier studies have found teaching English vocabulary using a variety of techniques or models. Nation (2021) believes that vocabulary can be learned in two ways: by paying attention deliberately and by fulfilling it through the use of message-focused language. Furthermore, there are numerous innovations or strategies for learning vocabulary. Abduramanova (2020) revealed that role play is very beneficial in the classroom when student must have a communication, because it allows students to practice communicativeness in different social roles and contextual, designed to allow their vocabulary skills to be honed. There are other interesting and fun ways to learn vocabulary, such as through games or entertaining visual media (Christopolus & Mystakidis, 2023). According to Akramy et al. (2022) study of an EFL classroom in Afghanistan, they believed that pictures, drawings, flashcards, and other pictorial materials could aid in the teaching and learning process. Games can reduce anxiety, making vocabulary input acquisition more likely to be successful (Izatullaevna, 2022). Most importantly, the teacher must teach students how to learn vocabulary so that they can continue to study independently outside of the classroom (Yu, 2020), allowing them to continue learning vocabulary indefinitely. Moreover, the ingenuity of English teachers in organizing learning activities fosters an optimal learning environment, enhancing students' comprehension of the learning material (Harmanto et al., 2021).

Following this, Hasbi et al. (2022) found that a game can naturally enhance students' language skills. Several educational games can assist students in acquiring and developing new vocabulary as well as comprehending and reading texts efficiently (Hashemi, 2021). Misa (2022) describes "Teachers and high school students can both benefit from teaching vocabulary through games. First, they are highly motivated to improve their English as students. Second,

because kids learn through playing games that are currently expanding and developing in Indonesia, they quickly begin to understand English. Third, using games to teach English vocabulary can benefit teachers in the teaching and learning process.” Following Saputri (2022), game-based vocabulary learning can greatly help in the acquisition of vocabulary for a number of reasons, including: 1) Boosting students' intrinsic motivation; 2) Containing rich textual input for language comprehension involvement; and 3) Lowering students' anxiety related to language learning.

For those reasons, in this study, the researchers use scrabble games as an effort to promote students' English vocabulary achievement. Scrabble is a word game in which players use lettered grid tiles to create words in a downward or sideways crisscrossing manner. Scrabble is one of the brilliantly engineered board games that continues to be authentic in the modern gaming group (Aung et al., 2021). It is obvious that the scrabble games system, which is related to arranging letters into a word, is very useful for practicing vocabulary skills. As a result, many educators are now using Scrabble to help students learn vocabulary. According to the findings of Chairani (2021) research, scrabble can improve students' vocabulary mastery in terms of spelling, reciting, and memorizing, as well as their speaking skills. By playing Scrabble online games, students can broaden their vocabulary (Yuliansyah, 2022), can direct the memory of new or foreign vocabulary that students have never heard of before (Fahlevi et al., 2022), can also be used to improve children's concentration, interactions with friends, and interactions with the material provided, and can improve the children's morale even more (Lubis et al., 2022). According to Chairiah & Perdana (2020) research, Scrabble was able to influence student vocabulary, such as memory skills, as evidenced by students who claimed that playing scrabble increased their pleasure and confidence and that their vocabulary mastery improved when learning with this game.

This research endeavors to explore the efficacy of Scrabble games as a pedagogical tool to promote the vocabulary achievement of 9th-grade Indonesian migrant students at SMP PPWNI Klang, Malaysia. By delving into the intricacies of this pre-experimental study, we aim to discern whether gamified language learning can offer a viable solution to the linguistic disparities experienced by these students. The research question of the study: What is the impact and effectiveness of incorporating Scrabble games into educational strategies in promoting vocabulary achievement among students? The findings of this study stand to reveal the potential of Scrabble games as an innovative and accessible means of enhancing vocabulary achievement, addressing the educational challenges faced by Indonesian migrant students at SMP PPWNI Klang, Malaysia. These results are expected to be helpful to English teachers, students, and future researchers.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

In this study, the researchers used a pre-experimental research design that employed a one group pretest-posttest. There were no control group in this design to compare with the experimental group. In this study, one group was examined, and treatments were made throughout the experiment. The processes of data collection, analysis, explanation, and presentation of research findings are all included in the implementation of this quantitative method. The conceptualization of the research design was visually represented in the following configuration: (O₁) representing the pretest, followed by the implementation of the treatment denoted by (X), wherein the Scrabble game was utilized. Subsequently, the posttest measurement (O₂) was carried out to evaluate and compare the outcomes that ensued after the completion of the treatment.

Figure 1
One Group Pretest-Posttest Design

Subject

The sample of the study were ninth-grade students at SMP PPWNI Klang, Malaysia, that consisted of 21 students using a purposive sampling procedure. Selecting a purposive sample involves choosing individuals from a population based on specific traits and the study's objectives. The inclusion of ninth-grade students offered specificity to the study, aiming to



understand the impact of the Scrabble game intervention within this particular grade level.

Instruments

A multiple choice test with 20 questions was used as the measurement technique in this experiment. The questions were on ordinary vocabulary commonly used in everyday life. This test was repeated twice with the same questions. The first step was to give students the first test (pretest). After the pretest, students were given treatment using a scrabble game. In this case, the researcher acted as a teacher, having to teach English vocabulary through scrabble game media. Two rounds of this game were played, with each round taking nearly 30 minutes. In the terminology of the scrabble games that researchers made, each round has its own theme. The first round has an "adjectives" theme, while the second round has a "verbs" one. In this game, students took turns arranging the given letters into a word that suits the provided theme. Each of these letters has a value point that was accumulated later based on the words obtained. After the treatment, the final step is to give a second test (posttest).

Data Analysis

The SPSS software was used to analyze the results of the pretest and posttest. The paired sample t-test was used by the researchers to determine if the use of scrabble game was effective in improving students' vocabulary mastery. To evaluate the distribution of data in the pretest and posttest, this test instrument had previously undergone a normality test. The statistical hypothesis of this study is as follows in order to measure the results of the paired sample t-test: 1) H_a : Scrabble games are effective in improving vocabulary learning outcomes; 2) H_o : Scrabble games are not effective in improving vocabulary learning outcomes.

In order to analyze the paired sample t-test results, one must understand the formulation of the research hypothesis and the rules for decision-making in the paired t-test. Santoso (2019) provides the following guidelines for decision making in the paired sample t-test based on the significance value (Sig.) of the SPSS output results as follow: 1) If the Sig. (2-tailed) value is less than 0.05, H_o is rejected and H_a is accepted; 2) If the Sig. (2-tailed) value is greater than 0.05, H_o is accepted and H_a is rejected. Additionally, data from the questionnaire were analyzed thematically to extract insights into students' experiences and perceptions of the Scrabble game intervention.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Research Findings

All teaching and learning activities with scrabble game media were conducted in this study. Due to the pre-experimental research approach used in this study, students must take

vocabulary tests both before and after the treatment. The results of this research lived up to expectations. The findings of the students' pretest and posttest vocabulary scores are presented in the chart below:

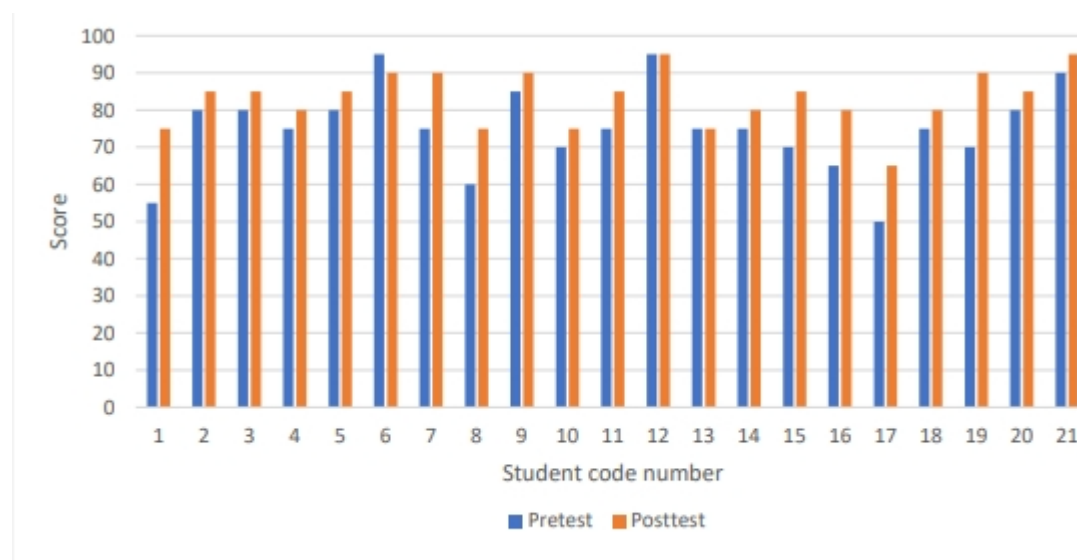


Figure 2. The Result of Pretest and Posttest

The findings of the pretest and posttest scores were then analyzed using SPSS software. To determine if the data was normally distributed or not, the researchers first tested it. The outcome will not be indicative of the researchers' data if the data is not normally distributed. As a result, it is necessary to ensure that the data is normal. The outcomes of the SPSS data normality test are listed below. In Table 1 below are the results of the normality test of data using SPSS.

Table 1
The Result of Normality Test

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Pretest	.167	21	.131	.953	21	.386
Posttest	.172	21	.107	.943	21	.252

According to Table 1 above, the pretest significance value (Sig.) is 0.131 greater than 0.05. The posttest's significance value (Sig.) is 0.107, which is greater than 0.05. So, based on the decision-making basis in the Kolmogorov-Smirnova normality test, it is possible to conclude that the pretest and posttest data are normally distributed. If the pretest and posttest data are known to be normally distributed, the paired sample t-test is used to test the research hypothesis. The purpose of testing this hypothesis is to see if there is an effect of using scrabble games on improving vocabulary learning outcomes in students.

Table 2
The Result of Paired Samples Statistics

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Pretest	75.00	21	11.511	2.512
	Posttest	83.10	21	7.496	1.636

Table 2 displays the descriptive statistics for the two samples studied, specifically the pretest and posttest scores. The average learning result or mean for the pretest value is 75.00. The average value of learning outcomes for the posttest score is 83.10. Because the pretest average value of learning outcomes is 75.00 and the posttest average value is 83.10, there is a descriptive difference in the average learning outcomes between the pretest and posttest results. Furthermore, in order to determine whether the difference is truly significant, researchers must interpret the results of the paired sample t-test.

Table 3
The Result Of Paired Samples Test

		Paired Differences		95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper		
Pair 1	Pretest - Posttest	-8.095	6.796	1.483	-11.189	-5.002	-5.458	.000

According to Table 3, the Sig. (2-tailed) value is 0.000, which means it is less than the probability value (significance level) of 0.05, so H_0 is rejected and H_a is accepted. As a result, there is a significant difference in the results of vocabulary mastery after using the scrabble game method in learning vocabulary in ninth grade students of SMP PPWNI Klang Malaysia, as seen by the difference in the average vocabulary learning outcomes of students based on the pretest and posttest.

Discussion

The research findings offer significant insights into the efficacy of integrating Scrabble games as a pedagogical tool to bolster vocabulary acquisition among ninth-grade students enrolled at SMP PPWNI Klang, Malaysia. By examining the outcomes of this intervention, the study sheds light on the potential benefits of gamified approaches in language education, particularly in the context of vocabulary learning. The results underscore the effectiveness of utilizing Scrabble games as a means of enriching vocabulary learning outcomes. Through the interactive and competitive nature of the game, students are provided with a dynamic and engaging platform for expanding their vocabulary repertoire. This gamified approach not only captures students' interest but also encourages active participation and collaboration, fostering a conducive learning environment conducive to language acquisition.

Furthermore, the findings contribute to the growing body of evidence supporting the integration of gamification strategies in educational settings. By offering a departure from traditional instructional methods, gamified approaches provide educators with a versatile toolkit for enhancing student engagement and motivation. In the context of language education, Scrabble games serve as an innovative means of scaffolding vocabulary development, promoting active learning, and reinforcing language skills in a stimulating and enjoyable manner (Akramy et al., 2022; Abduramanova, 2020). Therefore, the research findings affirm the viability of incorporating Scrabble games as a method for augmenting vocabulary learning outcomes among ninth-grade students. This underscores the broader potential of gamified approaches in language education, signaling a shift towards more dynamic and interactive instructional practices aimed at optimizing student learning experiences and outcomes.

The observed increase in average learning outcomes following the implementation of game-based learning signifies a substantial improvement in students' vocabulary skills. This

outcome underscores the potential of gamified approaches to exert a positive influence on educational outcomes, as highlighted by Li (2021). However, within the unique educational landscape of Malaysia, the challenges faced by migrant workers' children, particularly those enrolled at SMP PPWNI Klang, present distinct hurdles in accessing quality education. Migrant workers' children often confront multifaceted barriers to educational attainment, exacerbated by their exclusion from Malaysian schools. This exclusionary practice severely limits their access to formal English language instruction, which is indispensable for both academic success and social integration. Consequently, these students are at a disadvantage, lacking the necessary linguistic proficiency to navigate educational and societal contexts effectively. The significance of the research findings extends beyond mere statistical measures.

The Scrabble game intervention has emerged as a multifaceted tool that not only facilitates language acquisition but also fosters a positive and enjoyable learning experience for students, as evidenced by Chairani (2020) and Chairiah & Perdana (2021). Through the utilization of interactive and immersive gameplay, the intervention transcends traditional pedagogical approaches, encouraging active participation and enhancing knowledge retention among students. Moreover, the gamified nature of the intervention contributes to the creation of a supportive learning environment conducive to exploration, collaboration, and skill development. By integrating elements of competition and engagement inherent in games like Scrabble, educators can effectively capture students' interest and motivation, thereby enhancing the learning experience and promoting deeper engagement with the material. In essence, the research findings underscore the transformative potential of game-based learning in addressing the educational needs of migrant workers' children in Malaysia. By leveraging innovative and engaging pedagogical strategies, educators can bridge the gap in access to quality education, empowering students with the linguistic competencies necessary for academic success and social inclusion. Through the strategic integration of gamified approaches into language instruction, educators can effectively cultivate a supportive and inclusive learning environment, facilitating students' academic advancement and fostering their integration into broader societal contexts.

Game-based learning, particularly through activities like Scrabble, offers benefits that extend beyond mere academic proficiency. The interactive dynamics inherent in games like Scrabble foster collaboration, critical thinking, and strategic planning among students, as corroborated by research conducted by Harmanto et al. (2020) and Hasby et al. (2022). Through participation in Scrabble games, students are not only engaged in the process of acquiring and applying vocabulary but also in honing essential cognitive skills essential for success in various domains. The competitive yet cooperative nature of the game prompts students to strategize, analyze, and make decisions in real-time, thereby enhancing their problem-solving abilities and decision-making prowess. Moreover, the thematic rounds within the Scrabble game, such as those focusing on adjectives and verbs, offer a practical and contextualized approach to language learning. By aligning with everyday language use, Scrabble reinforces vocabulary acquisition in contexts relevant to students' daily communication needs. This integration of practical language use enhances students' comprehension and retention of vocabulary, facilitating their ability to apply learned words in authentic situations effectively. In essence, the Scrabble game serves as a versatile educational tool that not only promotes language proficiency but also cultivates essential cognitive and linguistic skills crucial for academic and personal success. By leveraging the interactive and contextualized nature of games like Scrabble, educators can create dynamic and engaging learning experiences that transcend traditional instructional paradigms, fostering holistic development and mastery of language skills among students.

The Scrabble game method presents itself as a culturally inclusive and accessible approach to language learning, particularly beneficial for students from diverse backgrounds.

Games inherently provide a common ground for learners of varied cultural and linguistic backgrounds, enabling them to actively engage and contribute to the learning process. By participating in activities like Scrabble, students are not only immersed in language acquisition but also afforded opportunities to interact with peers from different cultural contexts, fostering a sense of belonging and inclusivity within the educational environment. This inclusive approach to language learning is pivotal in addressing the diverse needs and experiences of students, particularly in multicultural settings (Hasby et al., 2022). By embracing gamified learning methods like Scrabble, educators create a platform where all students can participate and thrive, regardless of their cultural or linguistic backgrounds. This not only enhances language proficiency but also promotes cross-cultural understanding and appreciation among students. As educators increasingly seek innovative and engaging pedagogical strategies, the Scrabble game intervention emerges as a promising avenue for enhancing language skills while cultivating a positive and inclusive learning environment. Through the strategic integration of Scrabble games into language instruction, educators can effectively address the diverse needs of students while fostering collaboration, communication, and cultural exchange. Ultimately, the Scrabble game method represents a dynamic and versatile tool for promoting language learning and fostering inclusive educational practices in diverse classroom settings.

CONCLUSION

Learning English vocabulary for students is more effective when it is done in a fun way. The scrabble game that researchers used during vocabulary learning activities was really advantageous and beneficial to implement to ninth-grade students of SMP PPWNI Klang Malaysia. Based on the evaluation and analysis discussion of the research findings, it is stated that the scrabble game-based learning method is effective to improve students' vocabulary mastery in English learning. This is demonstrated by an increase in the average score of students' learning outcomes in vocabulary skills, with the posttest average score of 83.10 indicating a value greater than the pretest, which is 75.00. Furthermore, the results of the paired sample t-test analysis on the value of learning outcomes revealed that the Sig. (2-tailed) is $0.000 < 0.05$. This means that there is a significant difference and effectiveness in learning outcomes after using the scrabble method in learning English vocabulary for ninth-grade students at SMP PPWNI Klang, Malaysia. Moreover, students overwhelmingly expressed that the Scrabble game not only heightened their engagement but also fostered critical thinking as they strategically composed words within a limited timeframe. The collaborative nature of the game facilitated knowledge-sharing, enriching their vocabulary with words previously unfamiliar. The thematic alignment of Scrabble rounds with common conversational themes further enhanced the perceived relevance of the game in real-life language application.

While this study has successfully met its goal of examining the increase in students' vocabulary mastery through the use of Scrabble games, it is essential to acknowledge its limitations. Future researchers venturing into vocabulary research are encouraged to explore and employ creative strategies, techniques, or media to further stimulate and elevate students' vocabulary acquisition. By embracing innovation and diversity in instructional methods, educators can continue to enhance language learning experiences, ensuring a more comprehensive and lasting impact on students' linguistic development.

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