

Improving Students's Vocabulary Mastery Through "EsVoc" Game (a classroom action research)

Winarsih, M.Pd. B.I¹, Abdi Pandu Kusuma, S.Kom., M.T², Hesty Puspita Sari,
M.Pd³

¹English Department/Teacher Training Faculty, Balitar Islamic University

²Information and Technology Department / Balitar Islamic University

³English Department/ Teacher Training Faculty, Balitar Islamic University

Author's email: winponti96@gmail.com;

pans.uib1blitar@gmail.com; hestypuspita1403@gmail.com

*Corresponding author: hestypuspita1403@gmail.com

Abstract. *This research is aimed to overcome the problem in the classroom in improving students's vocabulary mastery trough game. The research is conducted in SMP Anharul Ulum Blitar for grade seventh. The game applied in this research was made by the researchers themselves. It is an "EsVoc" game stand for Escapade game, where the students play the game by running the icon and get the meaning of the words. The game application was created to help the students easily learn vocabulary, improve their vocabulary mastery and enjoy their English learning. To cater a new way in overcoming this issue, a classroom action research is focusing on intensifying the students' vocabulary mastery through game. The finding exemplify that the students show better vocabulary enrichment on the second cycle.*

Keywords: *Game, Vocabulary*

1. INTRODUCTION

Mastering and dominating several foreign languages are considerably necessary, especially English. English is covering not only listening, reading, speaking, and writing as the fourth language skill, but also it covers the others aspects of language such as vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation. The vocabulary is supposed as the important element in learning English to support the fourth English skills itself. The students will know and laern English well when they know much English vocabulary. By having much vocabulary, the ability to learn and communicate could be established. If the students have much vocabulary, they will be able to understand the utterance which they listened, they can speak fluently, and they can understand the content of the text easily.

The mastery of vocabulary is very important in language teaching. According to Zimmerman cited in (Baker et al., 1998) vocabulary is the central to language and of critical importance to the typical language learning. However, in English learning especially in SMP Anharul Ulum Blitar for seventh grade students, there were many problems which students faced in learning English, especially in vocabulary. Such as the lack vocabulary that they know and difficult to find those meaning. These problems made the students hard in mastering the English vocabulary.

The other problems which found in English class, especially at the seventh grade students of SMP Anharul Ulum were the students' habit in learning Vocabulary and the teaching technique and media which was used by teacher. Students did not change their habits in learning vocabulary, such as writing words on paper or learning

passively through the teacher's dictation. These habits make them difficult to mastering vocabulary. That's why the students need to change their habit, and the teacher was a person who had an important role to make students change their habits in learning English. That's why, the teachers should used the appropriate technique and media. By using the appropriate technique and media, the students were expected can learn vocabulary easily. One of the techniques used by the teacher was a game.

According to Morris & Whalen, (2005, p. 1) games was a wonderful and effective strategy of teaching and learning, because one of the goals for using games in a teaching learning was to have fun. Games promote a positive disposition toward learning. By using game in teaching vocabulary, the students expected be able to pronouncing and memorizing the words well. In this research, the writer studied about the material of the seventh grade students, they are animal, greeting and parting, hobby, job, clock, day-date & month and things in the classroom. So, the students not only study with their book but also use this game to help them memorizing, pronouncing and understanding the meaning of these words easily. Based on the explanation above, the writer want to conduct an observation to know how far "EsVoc" game enhanced the students' vocabulary. So, the writer conducted an action research with the title Improving Students's Vocabulary mastery through "Esvoc" game (A Classroom Action Research).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 The Importance of Learning Vocabulary

Vocabulary can be defined as "words we must know to communicate effectively; words in speaking (expressive vocabulary) and words in listening (receptive vocabulary)" (Wasik & Iannone-Campbell, 2012). While (UR, 1998) states: "Vocabulary can be defined, roughly, as the words we teach in the foreign language. However, a new item of vocabulary may be more than just a single word: for example, post office, and mother-in-law, which are made up of two or three words but express a single idea. A useful convention is to cover all such cases by talking about vocabulary "items" rather than "words". In addition, (Schmitt, 2010) defines vocabulary as "the stock of words which is used by a person, class or profession. Furthermore, Diamond and Gutlohn (2006) state that vocabulary is the knowledge of words and word meanings." From the definitions above, it can be concluded that vocabulary is the total number of words that are needed to communicate ideas and express the speakers' meaning. That is the reason why it is important to learn vocabulary.

Vocabulary is an important component to improve the skill of English. Because English is not only about writing and reading, it is mostly about communication. So the learners need to enlarge their vocabulary mastery to express their idea. Vocabulary is also an English component that support the English skill taught to junior high school students in the first and second semester. The importance of learning vocabulary is demonstrated daily in and out the school. In the classroom, the achieving students possess the most sufficient vocabulary. Some researchers such as Laufer & Nation, (1999), Maximo, (2000) and Nation & Webb, (2011) have realised that the acquisition of vocabulary is essential for successful second language use and plays an important role in the formation of complete spoken and written texts. In English as a second language (ESL) and English as a foreign language (EFL), learning vocabulary items plays a vital role in all language skills (i.e. listening, speaking, reading, and writing (P. Nation, 2009). Hashemifardnia et al., (2018), furthermore, argue that the acquisition of an adequate vocabulary is essential for successful second language use because without an extensive vocabulary, we will be unable to use the structures and functions we may have learned for comprehensible communication.

Many researchers argue that vocabulary is one of the most important-if not the most important- components in learning a foreign language, and foreign language curricula must reflect this. Other International Journal of Teaching and Education Vol. III, No. 3 / 2015 22 scholars such as (Laufer, 1986) and (Krashen, 1989), as cited in Maximo (2000) state many reasons for devoting attention to vocabulary. "First, a large vocabulary is of course essential for mastery of a language. Second language acquirers know this; they carry dictionaries with them, not grammar books, and regularly report that the lack of vocabulary is a major problem". On the other hand, vocabulary has been acknowledged as learners' greatest single source of problems (Meara, 1980). This remark may possibly reflect that the openendedness of a vocabulary system is perceived to be a cause of difficulty by learners. Furthermore, many learners see second language acquisition (SLA) as essentially a matter of learning vocabulary. As a result, language teachers and applied linguists now generally recognise the importance of vocabulary learning and are exploring ways of promoting it more effectively.

2.2 Games

In teaching English, in this case vocabulary, the teachers usually prepare some materials for their students to enrich their vocabulary by using drills or exercises, but if the teachers keep using this monotony methods of learning vocabulary of course will occur and it will make students get bored. The teachers have to plan some activities that make the students enjoy, convenient, comfortable, and interesting in learning vocabulary. This enjoyable situation will be found by the students when the teacher using fun activities such as games. As Andrew Wright said "It is generally accepted that young learners and adults are very willing to play game"

The meaning of game was interpreted in many different ways by the experts. According to Hornby & Hass, (1970) advance dictionary, games are "A form of competitive play or sport with rules". (Savignon & Berns, 1984), has stated that games are "Activities carried out by cooperating or competing decision makers, seeking to achieve within a set of rules, their own objectives". In his book entitled Elementary Vocabulary Games, (Hadfield & Hadfield, 1990) says, "A game is or activity with rules, a goal, and element of fun, which is divided into two kinds; competitive games, in which players or teams race to be the first to reach the goal, and cooperative games, in which players or teams work together towards a common goal".

According to Ersoz (2000), "Language learning is a hard task which can sometimes be frustrating. Constant effort is required to understand, produce and manipulate the target language. Well- chosen games are invaluable as they give students a break and at the same time allow students to practice language skills." From the explanation above, by using games in learning English can convey the meaning and make the students understand about the lesson easily, and games are very useful for the learners while they are learning English. Learning English can be easier and the students can be open mindedly. Even they do not understand about the meaning of the games it can make the students seek to understand how to play the game. So, all of the students take part to play the game. Schmitt (2000) states that "We can also take each type of knowledge from the list above and make students aware of its importance and usefulness in building up their knowledge of a word. For example, we can focus occasionally on how to express opposite or similar meanings for a set of vocabulary we are teaching, show students what is useful to learn about the forms of nouns or verbs, or how prefixes and suffixes can help build vocabulary knowledge quickly."

Games help to create a context in which children's attention is focused on the completion of a task without necessarily realizing that language items are being practice. As a result language learning takes place in a context that children can directly relate to. From the definition above, the writer can say that game is an activity to get fun and relax, which carried out by cooperating or competing with a set of rules, in this case, to develop students' vocabulary.

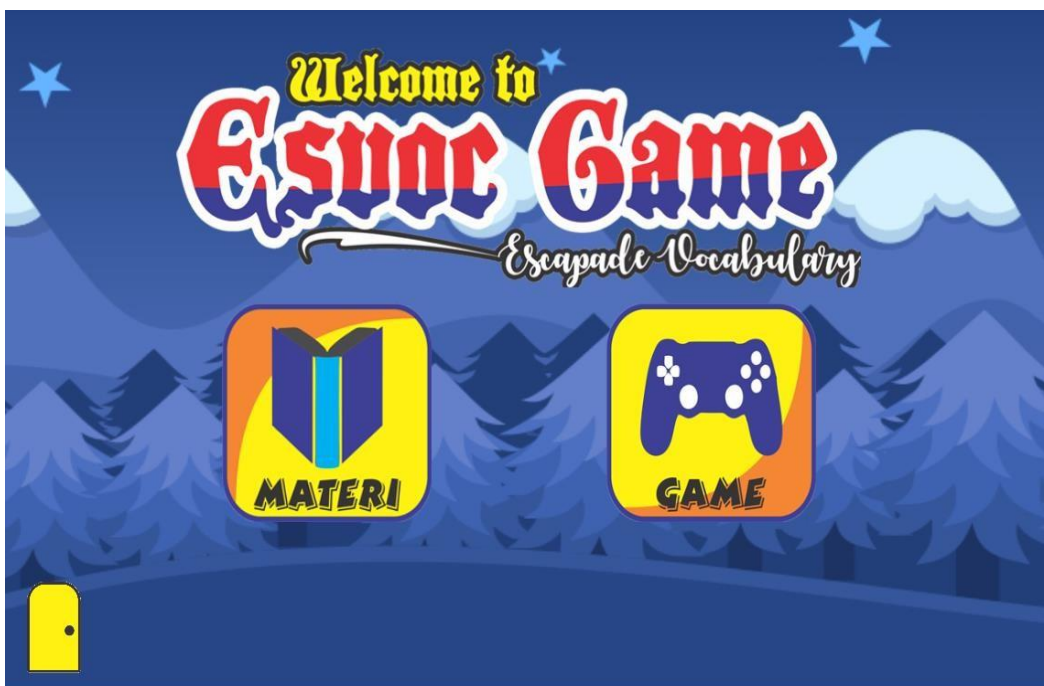
In this research, the researcher use an EsVoc Game to teach Vocabulary for the Seventh Grade Students. This game application insists of the material of the seventh



grade students and the vocabulary questions includes seven themes, they are Animal, Greeting & Parting, Hobby, Clock, Day-Date&Month, Things in the classroom, and Job.

Picture 1. The First Lay Out of EsVoc Game Application

The picture above is the first layout of the EsVoc Game application. The button PLAY is to start using (entering) the game application. And the button EXIT is to go out from the game application.



Picture 2. The Second Lay Out of EsVoc Game Application

The picture above is the second layout of the EsVoc Game application, after the user click on PLAY button. The *MATERI* button is to learn the materials. And the *GAME* button is to start playing the games.



Picture 3. The *MATERI* Lay Out of EsVoc Game Application

The picture above is the *MATERI* layout of the EsVoc Game application, after the user click on *MATERI* button. In this application, there are seven themes materials of the seventh grade students, they are; Animal, Greeting and Parting, Hobby, Clock, Day-Date-Month and Job.



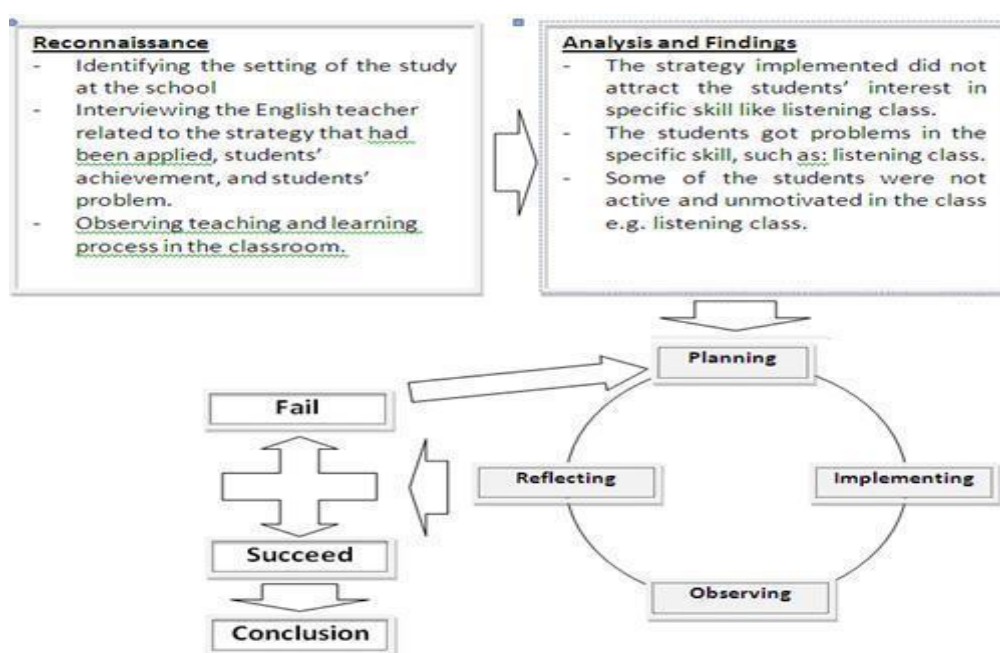
Picture 4. The *GAME* Lay Out of EsVoc Game Application

The picture above is the *GAME* layout of the EsVoc Game application, after the user click on *GAME* button. In this application, there are three levels questions, they are; Easy, Medium and Advance.

3. RESEARCH METHODS/METHODOLOGY

This study is designed to solve the problems in order to get the improvement of vocabulary mastery of the students of SMP Anharul Ulum in which they have lack of vocabulary in learning English. One of the clear reasons is due to the use of technology in EFL learning process. To cater a new way to overcome this issue, this research employs Classroom Action Research (CAR). The purpose of Classroom Action Research (CAR) is to improve teaching learning process and improve the situation and place where the research is conducted. Kemmis and Mc Taggart (1998) stated that Classroom Action Research (CAR) is trying out ideas in practice as a means of improvement and as a means of increasing knowledge about curriculum, teaching and learning. The cycle of Classroom Action Research was showed as follow:

Figure 1. Classroom Action Research Cycles



Adapted from Kemmis & McTaggart (1992)

Kemmis and McTaggart (1988) stated that there are four steps in Classroom Action Research (CAR), they are; (1) Planning. In this phase, the researcher identify a problem or issue and develop a plan of action in order to bring about improvements in specific area of the research context. This is a forward looking phase where you consider what kind of investigation is possible within the realities and constraints of your teaching situation and what potential improvements you think are possible. Planning is a plan to conduct treatments or after making sure about the problem of the research, the researcher needs to make a preparation before doing an action research. (2) Action. This section discuss about the steps and activities that would be taken by the researcher. (3) Observation. This phase involves the researcher in observing systematically the effects of the action and documenting the context, actions and opinions of those involved. In this step, the researcher has to observe all events or activities during the research. (4) Reflection. At this point, the researcher reflect on, evaluate and describe the effects of the action in order to make sense of what has happened and to understand the issue you have explored more clearly.

Data collecting technique used in this study were observation, performance, and documentation. They were described as follows: (1) observation of the discovery learning method implementation, (2) students' performances that were in the form of experiment reports. The written reports became sources of assessment, (3) documentation used in this study was lesson plans, students' scores, and photos. Data collecting instrument in this study used a rating scale of learning implementation observation and experiment report. Data obtained in this study were analyzed qualitatively. The criteria determining the action' success in this research was when the students' mastery in vocabulary was improved.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this research, there are two research cycles to improve the students' vocabulary by the use of game technique, entitled "EsVoc" game. Those cycles yield that the results of the students' achievement in the second cycle is better than the first cycle. Although each cycle has similar steps of planning, implementing, observing and reflecting, game technique in the second cycle gave better results than that the first cycle. The results of teaching vocabulary using game technique on the first cycle and the second cycle are elaborated in Figure 2.

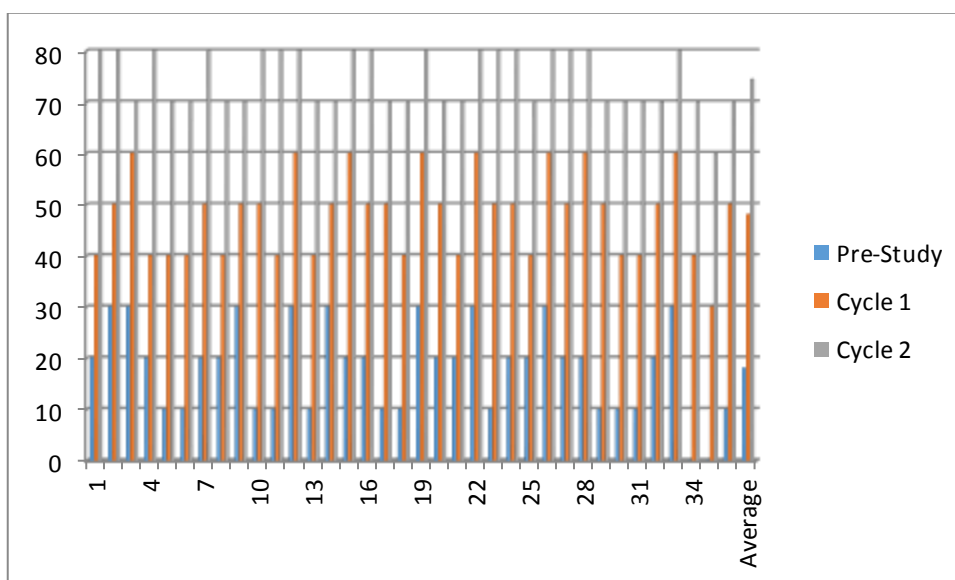


Figure 2. Students' progress in learning vocabulary

Cycles	Students' Average Score
I	48
II	74

Table 1. Record of Students' Concentration in Cycles I and II

Based on the result of the test given in the first and second cycles, the researcher could recognize that the students' scores had improved. It can be seen from the average score in Table 1. The result of evaluation test in the first cycle showed that their average score was 48. In the first cycle, only 8 students who got score more than 50 and 28 of them got score below 50. While students' average score in the second cycle was 74. All of the 36 students got score more than 50. In the second cycle was successful to enhance the students' vocabulary achievements. Simply said, an "EsVoc"

game is a teaching media which is effective to enhanced the students' vocabulary achievement. The result score of test in pre study, cycle 1 and cycle 2 as follows:

No.	Pre-Study	Cycle 1	Cycle 2
1	20	40	80
2	30	50	80
3	30	60	70
4	20	40	80
5	10	40	70
6	10	40	70
7	20	50	80
8	20	40	70
9	30	50	70
10	10	50	80
11	10	40	80
12	30	60	80
13	10	40	70
14	30	50	70
15	20	60	80
16	20	50	80
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22	30	60	80
23	10	50	80
24	20	50	80
25	20	40	70
26	30	60	80
27	20	50	80
28	20	60	80
29	10	50	70
30	10	40	70
31	10	40	70
32	20	50	70
33	30	60	80
34	0	40	70
35	0	30	60
36	10	50	70
Average	18.05	48.05	74.4

Table 2. Students' Average Score in Pre-Study, Cycle 1 and Cycle II

The interesting playing of the game attracts the students' attentions because they can studying by playing games, try to played it as soon as possible and competed to get the best score. In the first cycle, the activities associated with playing game

engaging the students' interest in repeating play the game and memorizing the vocabularies, so that the students became familiar with these words.

Reflected into the second cycle, the students were assisted through controlling the difficulty when they found it hard in understanding the vocabulary and its meanings. Because in the second cycle, the teacher asks the students to study the material before playing the game. So they can more understand about the vocabularies, easier to find the meaning and their score in playing the game are increased. Because of that relevant technique, the implementation of teaching vocabulary to the seventh grade students using EsVoc game technique in the second cycle was more interactive and finally achieved the criteria of success.

Based on the findings, this study is in line with the principles of language development, Huyen (2003) which said that there are some advantages of games especially in teaching vocabulary: "First, games bring in relaxation and fun for students, thus help them learn and retain new words more easily. Second, games usually involve friendly competition and they keep learners interested. These create the motivation for learners of English to get involved and participate actively in the learning activities. Third, vocabulary games bring real world context into the classroom, and enhance students' use of English in a flexible, communicative way."

CONCLUSION

Based on the result of the research, the researcher concludes that an "EsVoc" game is a teaching media which is effective to enhanced the students' vocabulary achievement. The reseacher has done this research in two cycles. Each cycle has been done in two meetings.

In the first cycle, teaching vocabulary by EsVoc game was not successfull yet, because the teacher was not explain the material first, so the students still feel difficult to master the vocabularies. In the second cycle, teaching vocabulary by EsVoc game was successfull, because the teacher has explain the material first, so the students can understand the vocabularies well.

The result of the evaluation test in the first cycle showed that the average score was 48. In the first cycle, only 8 students who got score more than 50 and 28 of them got score below 50. While students' average score in the second cycle was 74. All of the 36 students got score more than 50. In the second cycle was successful to enhance the students' vocabulary achievements. So, it can be conclude that an "EsVoc" game is a teaching media which is effective to enhanced the students' vocabulary achievement.

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