



IMPROVING VOCABULARY MASTERY THROUGH SEGONG GAME FOR FIRST-GRADE STUDENTS AT ALOK PUBLIC JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Fatmawati Suaebas Ahmad¹, Maria Louise Aprillia Lidia Sadin², Vinsensia Yosefa De Rosari³

English Language Education Study Program Nusa Nipa University

fatmawatihmad0902@gmail.com

aprillialidiasadin02@gmail.com

vinsensiasefa@gmail.com

Abstract:

Vocabulary proficiency plays a vital role in English language acquisition, enabling individuals to comprehend written texts and effectively articulate their ideas in oral and written communication. This article presents an academic study that focuses on enhancing the vocabulary competency of first-grade students through the implementation of traditional Segong activities. The research was conducted in the context of Alok Public Junior High School during the academic year 2022/2023. This study reexamines the efficacy of employing specific Segong traditional games as a strategy to facilitate the development of English vocabulary among students in an educational setting. The Segong game format was utilized to enhance students' vocabulary knowledge while harnessing the teacher's instructional prowess. The research employed a two-cycle classroom action research methodology, incorporating assessments, questionnaires, and observations to gather data. The findings reveal a substantial improvement in vocabulary mastery, as evidenced by an initial data analysis showing a percentage increase of 18% in the pre-cycles. Notably, the first cycle demonstrated a growth rate of 63%, while the second cycle witnessed a remarkable increase of 85.72%. These outcomes affirm the effectiveness of the Segong game in enhancing English vocabulary acquisition.

Key Terms: *Segong game, vocabulary mastery, classroom action research*

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INTRODUCTION

English is an international language that is used in every field of science. Sagala (2019) states that language is widely considered to be the essential communication instrument to convey information. In learning English, there are four skill. Susini and Ndruru (2021) stated that four basic skills must be mastered in learning English: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The most important thing to know and learn first in learning is vocabulary. According to Flyman et al. (2013), vocabulary is the building block of language that contains information about meaning and its applications. In addition, vocabulary is one of the English components that have an important role in understanding reading and expressing all ideas in writing or pronunciation (Inayatul, 2013). In learning English, a student must have experienced an obstacle in learning. Irham and Wiyani (2013) state that difficulty in learning is a situation when students experience obstacles in participating in the teaching and learning process to

achieve learning outcomes that are not optimal. According to Blassic and Jones (in Irham and Wiyani 2013), the difficulties experienced by students in learning indicate a gap between expected academic achievement and what students achieve. In learning English, several problems are often found, including (1) The teacher is unpleasant during the lesson, (2) The teacher's teaching method is less interactive or passive, (3) In the classroom, there are completely passive students, (4) The teacher is not an expert in teaching English lessons, (5) Some students make noise so that the classroom atmosphere becomes noisy.

Learning problems come from internal factors, including attitude towards learning, learning motivation, learning concentration, and learning habits, and external factors, including the learning process driven by students' intrinsic motivation. The learning process can also occur when encouraged by the learner's environment (Roinah, 2019). Furthermore, internal factor problems include: student characteristics, attitudes towards learning, learning concentration, ability to process learning materials, ability to explore learning outcomes, self-confidence, and learning habits. According to Norrby (2013), vocabulary is the building block of language containing information about meaning and its applications. As Anzar and Mardhatilah (2017) state external factors include: Teacher factors, social environment, curriculum and infrastructure.

This results in teachers having to find solutions to find methods that feel interesting and suitable to be applied in learning English. Generally, teachers will use the memorization method, but according to Syafrizal (2019), memorization without further action to store the memorized words in memory is meaningless, especially for children who tend to be more difficult and uninterested in memorizing. Children of elementary and junior high school age usually experience this problem. In this case, children at Junior High School age, especially those in first grade, mostly still like to play because it is a transition period from childhood to adolescence so that teachers can slip learning methods while playing in delivering lessons. Being in the digital era, everyone is required to accept civilization, but in the midst of the digital turmoil that echoes, we do not realize that our culture is slowly starting to disappear along with the times. Realizing this, as a young generation who loves culture, authors try to carry out an English learning method using traditional games. In addition to preserving culture, the use of traditional games as a medium for learning English vocabulary also aims to generate pleasure in students while learning. Marzoan and Hamidi (2017:46) concluded that "traditional games are activities that are carried out voluntarily and cause pleasure for the perpetrators, governed by game rules that are carried out based on hereditary traditions".

In this study, authors apply Segong (a traditional game from Sikka). The Segong game is quite popular among the community, but the term differs in various regions. For example, Java uses the term "Engklek," then in Batak Toba, the game is called "Marsitekka" and in English uses the term "Hopscotch". Segong games can be one of the traditional games that are suitable to be used as a medium for learning vocabulary. According to Ali & Aqobah, Engklek (Segong) can be used as a tool to remember lesson concepts. With the Segong game, students are expected to have more fun and relax when learning English vocabulary. These traditional games can also improve children's intelligence and thinking skills in developing new vocabulary. Subagiyo in Mulyani (2016) says that traditional games have several benefits,

including developing children's emotional, musical, spiritual, natural, and intellectual intelligence. Segong games can be used as a learning medium to improve English vocabulary mastery.

From the explanation above, it can be seen that mastery of English vocabulary is very important, but not everyone has it. First-grade students at Alok Public Junior High School also experience this problem. In this connection, the authors will conduct a study titled Improving Vocabulary Mastery through Segong Game for First Grade Students at Alok Public Junior High School. Research related to the use of *engklek* (Segong) games to improve English vocabulary mastery has been conducted (Yulianti, 2017; Authar et al., 2021). The results of these studies show that. Using *engklek* as a learning media can easily enhance students' vocabulary mastery skills (Authar et al., 2021). In addition, *engklek* game can also be an effective media for English language learning media (especially vocabulary) because it is easy to use and economical (Yulianti, 2017). The application of *engklek* as a learning media in other subjects such as mathematics and natural sciences has been conducted (Anggraini & Pujiastuti, 2020; Rosa, 2019; Zein & Rahayu, 2022). The results of other studies show that the application of *engklek* game as a learning media has an effect in increasing student motivation and learning outcomes on environmental pollution material in natural sciences subject (Zein & Rahayu, 2022). In addition, using *engklek* game as a learning media can improve student scores (Rosa, 2019), and make students more enthusiastic and relaxed in learning mathematics (Anggraini & Pujiastuti, 2020).

METHOD

The aim of this classroom action research is to improve students' vocabulary. This study employs both qualitative and quantitative data. The information assortment technique was directed by perception. The authors directed a Segong game to test the students' vocabulary mastery in Alok Public Junior High School, by placing every word into flashcard that had been made, then the students were approached to answer the word given by the authors.

This action required two weeks, where on the first day the authors directed a site study and information assortment of students in Alok Public Junior High School before the Segong game was held, then, at that point, on the second day the authors give test for the students to know about their vocabulary mastery before apply Segong game. On the ninth day, the authors led perceptions and information assortment subsequent to playing the Segong game. Perceptions were made for three days during the authors training in the field. Chalk, edan, colorful flashcard, and the provided vocabulary are the materials and tools used.

The method for gathering data was through observation where the data were taken from students' vocabulary mastery in Alok Public Junior High School. The students needed to answer the vocabulary that were write on flashcard after they dropped the "edan" and jump on Segong. The students' vocabulary will be counted and weighed to determine their score. Twenty-eight students from Alok Public Junior High School participated in the Segong game individually. The students participated in the Segong game activity for approximately 40

minutes. Each gathering that plays should answer the word that has been given in the flashcard. They are enthusiastic about playing Segong for vocabulary mastery because they will receive a reward and compliment for answering with the most vocabulary.

To apply the Segong game, the authors follow some procedures, such as (1) Coordinating students to make a line in front of the class, (2) Students will sequentially throw edan in the Segong game box, (3) Students start playing by jumping over each number box and stop at the box containing edan that has been thrown before. (4) The authors asks questions in the form of vocabulary in flashcards according to the number of the box containing ‘edan’, (5) Students read the vocabulary and translate it, (6) The game is continued by the next student in the same way.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Findings

Pre-cycle

In the pre-cycle activity, the author first made observations on March 29, 2023 at the alok public high school with the research subject being 28 first grade students. In this activity, the author observed students' interest in learning English. Authors also interviewed the English teacher and several students after following the English learning activities in class. From the observations and interviews, it is known that students have a low interest in learning English. This is due to several things (from the students' point of view): (1) the classroom atmosphere is not conducive, so students find it difficult to follow the lesson well. Many students during the learning process, (2) Smart students often dominate in answering questions given by the teacher, (3) Students lack confidence to participate in the learning process actively, and (4) According to students, the teacher's teaching method is still monotonous, because it only makes books the only source of learning. Meanwhile, from the teacher's point of view, it can be seen that: (1) Following the 2013 curriculum, English lessons at the elementary school level were eliminated, so some students did not have a strong basic knowledge of English, (2) Alok Public Junior High School has inadequate facilities and minimal source books, because it is still classified as a newly established school, (3) The stigma about the difficulty of learning English has been formed in the minds of students. This problem happened because of low student interest in learning.

The results are shown in the table:

Table 1. Students' learning outcomes in the pre-cycle

| Statistics | Score |
|-------------------------------|-------|
| Highest Value | 85 |
| Lowest Value | 55 |
| Minimum Completeness Criteria | 71 |
| Average | 65 |
| Passing Grade | 5 |
| Not Passing Grade | 23 |

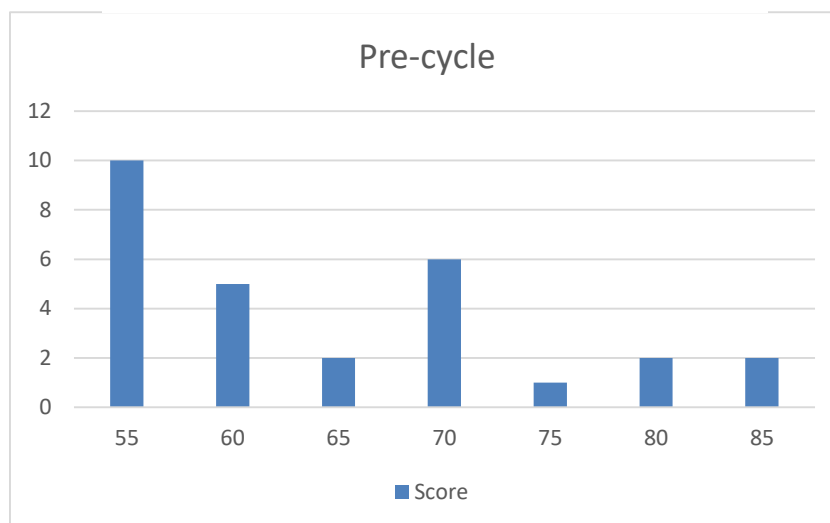


Figure 1. Students' learning outcomes in the pre-cycle

From the data on the written test results above, of the 28 students who took the test students scored above the minimum completeness criteria. In comparison, the other 23 students could not reach the minimum completeness criteria with the percentage being 18%. This means that only a small proportion of students are able to reach the minimum completeness criteria. After seeing the test result conducted by students, the author planned to conduct cycle I by applying the Segong game media to attract students' interest in learning English.

Cycle I

Based on the results of the vocabulary pre-test, it can be seen that the number of students who have not reached the minimum completeness criteria on the vocab test is very low. Concerning that, the authors apply Segong game as one of the learning media in cycle I, playing while learning is the most fun for children of their age. Cycle I was held on April 5, 2023 with a total of 28 students. The authors expect and practice the vocabulary learned.

Table 2. Students' learning outcomes in the cycle I

| Statistics | Score |
|-------------------------------|-------|
| Highest Value | 85 |
| Lowest Value | 55 |
| Minimum Completeness Criteria | 71 |
| Average | 73 |
| Passing Grade | 18 |
| Not Passing Grade | 10 |

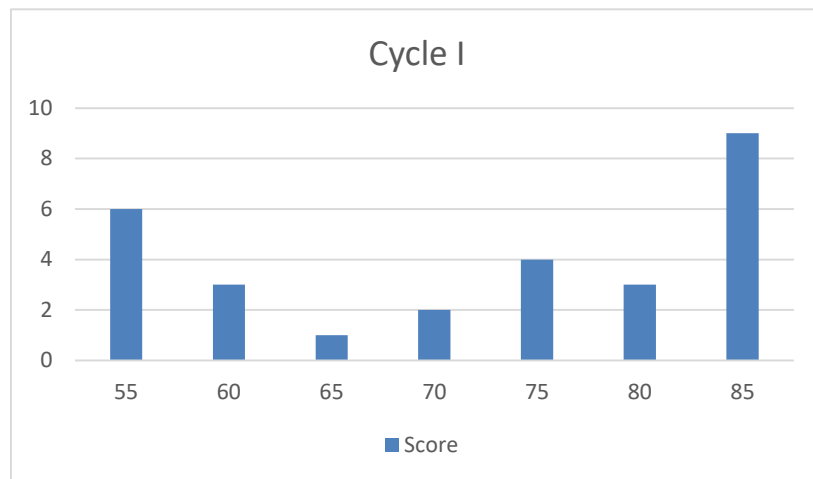


Figure 2. Students' learning outcomes in the cycle I

Based on the results of cycle I, 18 students had successfully passed the minimum completeness criteria and people had not reached the minimum completeness criteria, with the percentage being 63%. This means that only a small proportion of students are able to reach the minimum completeness criteria. As a form of self-reflection, first the author must provide a good perception as an opening learning activity to attract students' interest. Second the author asks students not to use a dictionary. Third the need for a more detailed explanation of the Segong game. Fourth the author has not been able to control the class properly. Therefore, based on the students' average scores and the results of observations during cycle I, the author realizes that this research must be continued to cycle II.

Cycle II

In this second cycle, the implementation activities went well. Cycle II was held on April 12, 2023 with a total of 28 students. The activity begins with a good perception so that students look enthusiastic about participating in learning activities in class. Students focus more attention and actively participate in classroom activities because the author provides instructions related to the Segong game so that students memorize more and know different vocabulary in each round.

The author and the English teacher feel happy because the effort to improve vocabulary mastery, reading skills and memory ability has been successfully realized through the Segong game.

Table 3. Students' learning outcomes in the cycle II

| Statistics | Score |
|-------------------------------|-------|
| Highest Value | 85 |
| Lowest Value | 55 |
| Minimum Completeness Criteria | 71 |
| Average | 73 |
| Passing Grade | 24 |
| Not Passing Grade | 4 |

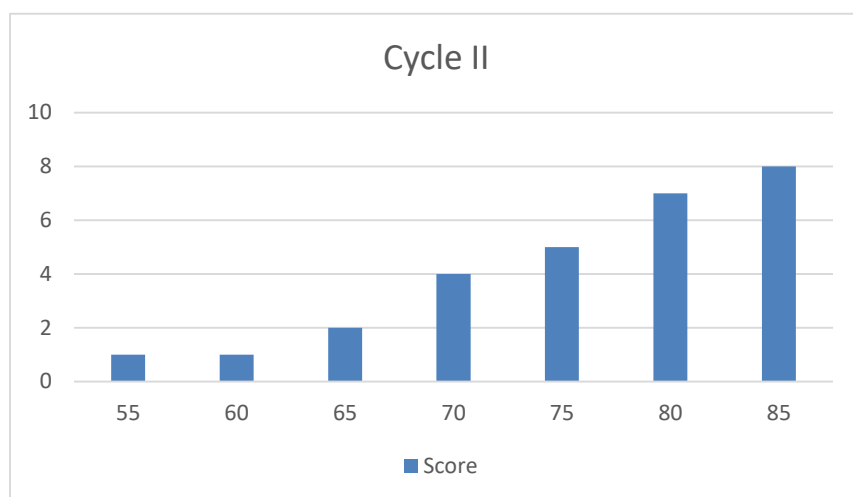


Chart 3. Students' learning outcomes in the cycle II

The authors and the English teacher are satisfied because their efforts to improve students' vocabulary skills in reading and listening skills have been realized. The results of the second test showed that 24 students (85,72%) had score above the minimum completeness criteria meanwhile 4 students did not pass the minimum completeness criteria (14,28%) as well on the listening test. Moreover, the observation sheet, interview, and questionnaire prove that students are active, enthusiastic, and collaborative during the learning process through the game. Therefore, the second cycle has met the minimum completeness criteria reflecting on the research instruments provided. The authors and English teachers successfully improved students' vocabulary through the Segong game technique that they decided to discontinue classroom action research and follow a plan previously discussed by the authors and teachers.

Discussion

The results showed that this study met the author's criteria in the two cycles. Based on the post-test results, only five students with a percentage of 18%, were successful. Therefore, the author provides a good perception at the beginning of the activity so that the class atmosphere runs well, of course, with the teacher's help so that the class atmosphere is conducive. By providing perceptions, students will be more active during the game, not only that students can better understand the steps of the game so that there are no obstacles during play. After one month of applying this Segong game, the author feels satisfied because the effort to improve students' vocabulary has been realized. In Cycle I 63%, Cycle II was held with a percentage of 85.72% which successfully exceeded the minimum completeness criteria. All students showed great enthusiasm during the game. This proves that through Segong game the students understood all the instructions and actively participated. Therefore, Segong game can be considered as a good medium to help students' vocabulary retention.

The study provides insights into the effectiveness of the Segong game as a tool for improving students' vocabulary retention. Segong game has shown promising results in enhancing vocabulary skills. This finding implies that incorporating interactive and engaging activities, like games, into language learning can be a beneficial approach for students. When students feel comfortable and motivated in their learning environment, they are more likely to

actively engage with the material and participate in activities. When students are actively engaged, they are more focused, attentive, and motivated to understand and absorb the content being taught. This heightened level of engagement often results in better comprehension, retention, and application of knowledge and skills (Ginting, 2021).

Reflecting on the productive actions in each cycle, the author can reveal some practices with the best results, following the application of Segong game in the context that the author faced. For vocabulary improvement, students usually depend on the teacher's efficient way of teaching or stick to books, so that students' learning ability is delayed. Moreover, the school where the author conducted the research is a new school with inadequate facilities such as lack of books, inadequate technology (Such as; speakers, LCD, etc.).

In addition, this study also highlights the significance of continuous reflection and improvement in teaching practices. This is one of the characteristics of 21 century teachers. Teachers should regularly assess their methods, identify areas for improvement, and adapt their approaches accordingly (Ginting, 2018). By constantly seeking ways to enhance instructional techniques, teachers can optimize the learning experience for their students. Reflection allows teachers to critically examine their instructional methods, strategies, and outcomes, and make necessary adjustments to improve student learning. Moreover, this pedagogical practice provides teachers with an opportunity for personal and professional growth. By reflecting on their teaching practices, teachers can identify their strengths and areas that need improvement. This self-awareness helps teachers develop a deeper understanding of their teaching style, pedagogical approaches, and the impact they have on student learning. In conclusion, reflective practice enables teachers to refine their skills, expand their knowledge, and continuously evolve as effective educators.

Regarding the progress of teaching and learning process, teachers have done their best through techniques that allow students to progress. Each instrument is assessed and discussed, allowing students to improve their language skills, especially vocabulary mastery in reading and listening. Everything done in each cycle ends with students feeling one step closer to their goals. Teachers also build opportunities to test students' progress through practice, exercises, and tests that will inevitably be held after this study is completed.

CONCLUSION

After applying Segong game in English learning activities in class VII of Alok Public Junior High School, the authors found an improvement in students' vocabulary mastery. During the English learning activities with Segong game, the classroom atmosphere became more fun, making students more enthusiastic in learning. With high enthusiasm for learning, students can have better vocabulary mastery skills. This is evidenced by the increase in the percentage of students who reached the passing grade, which initially was only 18% to 82.75%. In addition, the teacher's assistance in the research process was very helpful to the authors, such as helping to direct, provide support and advice so that the classroom atmosphere during the research became more conducive and coordinated.

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