

## Using Circle Game to Improve Students' Vocabulary Mastery of the Eighth Grade Students

Ferayanti,<sup>1</sup> Sriati Usman,<sup>2</sup> Mashuri,<sup>3</sup> Aminah

Correspondence author: Ferayanti, [ferayanty670@gmail.com](mailto:ferayanty670@gmail.com)

Tadulako University, Indonesia

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### Abstract

This study aims to determine the effectiveness of the circle game in improving the vocabulary mastery of eighth-grade students at SMP Labschool Untad Palu. The background of this study is the low mastery of English vocabulary among students, which affects their ability in four basic English skills. The researcher applied the circle game as an engaging learning strategy to overcome this issue. The research employed a pre-experimental design with one group pre-test and post-test. The sample consisted of 19 students from class VIII. The research instrument was a vocabulary test in the form of multiple-choice questions, administered before and after the treatment. The findings showed that the students' vocabulary mastery significantly improved after the implementation of the circle game. The average score of the pre-test was 60.35, while the post-test average rose to 78.60. The gain score was 18.25. Based on the paired sample t-test result, the significance value was 0.000, which is lower than the standard alpha value of 0.05. This means that the improvement is statistically significant. These findings prove that the use of the circle game has a positive impact on students' vocabulary acquisition. In addition to the quantitative results, qualitative observations indicated that students were more enthusiastic, confident, and active during the learning process. The atmosphere in the classroom became more dynamic and supportive, which encouraged students to participate and use English vocabulary in a fun and relaxed way.

**Keywords:** *circle game, vocabulary mastery, English language learning.*

### INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary is the key to forming a sentence. If students lack vocabulary, they will have difficulty communicating. This can be problematic, knowing how vocabulary acquisition is a critical component of academic language. Students with less vocabulary will face many difficulties expressing their feelings and ideas to others. Vocabulary is an important part of learning English (Marpaung, 2022:288-302). In learning English, one of the important parts to know and reproduce is vocabulary. Words are the tools we use to think, to express ideas and feelings, and to learn about the world. Because words are the very foundation of learning, improving students' vocabulary knowledge has become an educational priority (Derakhshan & Khatir, 2015).

Vocabulary is the first and foremost important step in language acquisition (Yudha & Mandasari, 2021:78). Knowing the meaning of words is the same as knowing the vocabulary. Besides that, vocabulary is very important in reading because the more vocabulary one has, the easier it is for someone to understand reading. When exposed to new words, readers who have a broad vocabulary will find it easier to use context clues in the text to guess the meaning of the word. Based on the observation of the researcher in eighth grade at SMP Labshool Untad Palu, most of the students lack vocabulary. They also have difficulty

memorizing vocabulary because if they want to convey their thoughts, the difficulty is using the vocabulary and arranging it into a good sentence.

According to the school-based curriculum Merdeka, in junior high school, limited vocabulary is one of the obstacles that cause students to have problems understanding language. The next problem is the lack of practical training, which means a lack of practice in using vocabulary in a real context, which makes it difficult for students to apply it. Another problem is the lack of diversity of learning resources, where learning resources that are not varied can make students feel bored and monotonous, or lack interest in learning new vocabulary. Teaching English as a foreign language necessitates not only brains but also the ability to make students comprehend, appreciate, and be interested in learning English as a foreign language (Katemba, 2022:88-101).

As a result, students have less interest in learning, resulting in a lack of vocabulary and difficulty communicating in English. Regarding vocabulary mastery in English, the number of vocabulary mastery for English, curriculum Merdeka refers to the international standard CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages). Eighth-grade students are expected to master around 2,500-3,000 words (both actively and passively) refers to the international standard CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages). Eighth-grade students are expected to master around 2,500-3,000 words (both actively and passively). Moreover, Students' interest in learning can be increased through motivation from the teacher, this can quite influence students' interest in learning, depending on the way it is delivered. Again, motivating students to learn is not an easy thing for a teacher. In this case, a technique is needed in the teaching and learning process so that the process is not monotonous and gives students the enthusiasm to learn. The researcher chose circle games as a strategy so that students would be more interested in learning and increase their vocabulary.

Circle games are an interactive learning method that involves students in a circle, creating a collaborative and fun atmosphere. Matt Nelson, from New Bremen, Ohio. He made the game in the early 1980s. Now, circle games have become a popular technique and are often used in education, especially in the context of language teaching. The researcher chose to adapt the circle game put forward by Matt Nelson to develop the circle game method that was initially used only for the ordinary game into a game that can be played in the classroom to learn and improve students' vocabulary. Circle games can be adapted to suit different skill levels and learning themes. This allows teachers to adapt activities according to students' needs. Games are important and useful. Not only are they fun, but they also create the desire to communicate and create predictability (Bakhsh, 2016). Circle games offer an effective approach to making English language teaching more dynamic, helping students practice the language interactively and collaboratively, making the teaching and learning process feel fun.

By providing games as a medium for teaching vocabulary, researchers can make the students feel more comfortable in learning and feel the difference between students previously in class. Using games will stimulate them to be more active, and it was a match with the student. One of game will be used by the researcher of the many educational games in improving student vocabulary knowledge is the Circle game. The development of increasingly advanced method makes games can be used as a medium of learning. (Riswani et al., 2024). Using games will stimulate them to be more active, and it was a match with the student. The use of games will encourage children to be more active, and it is appropriate for preschoolers, as researchers prefer to learn via hands-on experience. Based on the description provided above, the researcher wants to undertake research under the title "Using circle games as a strategy to improve the students' mastery of English vocabulary in the eighth grade at smp labschool untad palu".

## METHODS

This study was organized with a quantitative approach using a pre-experimental design to test of the result Using Circle game to improve students' vocabulary mastery of the eighth grade at SMP Labschool Untad Palu.

### Research design

This study employed a Pre-experimental research design with A group Pretest-Posttest design model. There are still external variables that influence the formation of the dependent variable—selected". In the one-group pretest-posttest design, there was a pretest before being given treatment, and the results of the treatment can be more accurate because it can be compared with the situation before being given treatment, Moreover, the design of this research was suggested by Nursyahidah (2007:6).

**Table 1**  
**Research Design**

$O_1$	X	$O_2$
<b>Pretest</b>	<b>Treatment</b>	<b>Posttest</b>

### Research Participants and Sampling Procedures

This research used eighth-grade students at SMP Labschool Untad Palu Middle School as the population for this research. The eighth class consists of four classes: Class Eight A, Class Eight B, Class Eight C, and Class Eight D.

**Table 2**  
**Population**

No	Class	Number of Students
1	8 A	19
2	8 B	19
3	8 C	19
4	8 D	19
Total	76	

Population was a crucial stage in research design since it affects the criteria and breadth of the findings. The population is a grouping or compilation of all elements with more than one observed attribute (Mauliddiyah, 2021). The sample is a piece or subset of a larger whole commonly used for analysis, testing, or representation. This research sample consisted of one class. During the observation, all classes had the same problems in vocabulary, therefore the researcher used purposive sampling to select the class to be taken as a sample, namely class A.

## Data Collection

This research conducted a test to collect data by applying a list of questions according to the topic to provide facilities for students to increase their vocabulary. Next, the researcher was given a post-test to see how effective the treatment is in increasing students' vocabulary knowledge after they complete the treatment. The purpose of giving this test is to measure how much vocabulary students have.

In seeing the increase in student vocabulary in this study, using tests and scoring in the table below:

**Table 3**  
**The Scoring Guide**

No	Types	Number	Scores	Total Score
1	Multiple Choice	10	1	10
2	Fill in the Blank	10	1	10
3	Word Underline	10	1	10
<b>Total</b>		<b>20</b>		<b>30</b>

## Interventions

This study used a pre-test design with eight meetings. The initial and subsequent meetings were dedicated to the pre-test phase and the post-test phase. In the absence of a control group, all participants were treated using the circle game method in this study. The treatment was given in the sixth meeting between the pre-test and post-test. The Sessions Students learned using the circle game method in six meetings. In the first two meetings, students are taught to make sentences using single words and nouns, then in the middle two meetings, students play in circle games using sentences and verbs, and in the last two meetings, students play in circle games by composing sentences into paragraphs using verbs and nouns. All activities will be conducted in groups and using the circle game method, with the main goal of increasing vocabulary in students. This study involved 19 students who received the same treatment.

## RESULTS AND FINDINGS

The findings of this study relate to the answers to the formulation of the problem, which aims to determine the increase in students' vocabulary. The results of the data analysis indicate that the application of the Circle Game in teaching vocabulary can improve the vocabulary of eighth-grade students at SMP Labschool Untad Palu. The researcher examined the data obtained from the students' pre-test and post-test scores, and the findings showed that the Circle Game Method was effective in improving students' vocabulary.

**Table 4: Results of Pre-Test and Post-Test**  
**Descriptive Statistics**

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pre-test	19	33	77	60.35	10.418
Post-test	19	63	93	78.60	8.629

Valid N (listwise)	19			
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The mean score of the students' pre-test was 60.35, with a minimum score of 33 and a maximum score of 77, according to the results of descriptive statistics. With a minimum score of 63 and a high score of 93, the mean score rose to 78.60 following instruction utilizing the Circle Game. Additionally, the standard deviation dropped from 10.418 in the pre-test to 8.629 in the post-test, suggesting that students' performance was more stable. These findings imply that following the use of the Circle Game, students' vocabulary knowledge improved.

**Table 5**  
**Tests of Normality**

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup>			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Pre-test	.149	19	.200*	.940	19	.264
Post-test	.167	19	.169	.953	19	.439

\*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

The normality test is a test carried out to check whether our research data comes from a population with a normal distribution. This test needs to be carried out because all parametric statistical calculations assume the normality of distribution (DEMİR, 2022:53). Normality tests are used for assessing whether a sample was drawn from a normally distributed population and comparing their powers (Yazici, B., & Yolacan, S, 2007:175). In this study, the researcher used Shapiro-Wilk statistics to test the normality of the data. The Shapiro-Wilk test is a popular way to check whether data follows a normal distribution. The Shapiro-Wilk Normality Test is carried out to determine whether the distribution is normally distributed. The Shapiro-Wilk test for the case of normality with a known mean is considered (Hanusz et al., 2016:89).

Based on the table above, results showed that the significance values for both pre-test and post-test were greater than 0.05 (pre-test = 0.200 and 0.264; post-test = 0.169 and 0.439), indicating that the data followed a normal distribution. Therefore, a parametric test such as the paired sample t-test could be appropriately used.

**Table 6**  
**Paired Samples t-test**

		Paired Differences							
			Std.	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval				
		Mean	Deviation	Mean	Lower	Upper	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pair 1	Pre-test - Post-test	-18.246	11.727	2.690	-23.898	-12.594	-6.782	18	.000

Parametric tests are used when the data meet certain assumptions, especially those related to distribution. Parametric tests in data analysis (t-tests, ANOVA, etc.) are used in cases where the data obtained from the sample has a normal distribution (DEMİR, 2022:397). Paired t-test is a parametric test used to compare two mean values of the same sample, before and after a treatment. It is very commonly used in pre-test and

post-test research. Paired sample t-tests are generally interval or ratio-scaled data (quantitative data). Paired samples are from the same subject (DEMİR, 2022:86).

Based on the table above, the analysis showed a mean difference of -18.246, with a significance value (Sig. 2-tailed) of .000. Since this value is less than 0.05, it can be concluded that there is a statistically significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores. This means that the use of the Circle Game had a significant effect on improving the vocabulary mastery of eighth-grade students at SMP Labshool Untad Palu.

## DISCUSSION

Based on the data analysis presented previously, it can be concluded that the use of the Circle Game had a significant effect on improving students' vocabulary mastery. The students' average score increased from 60.35 in the pre-test to 78.60 in the post-test, with a significance value of 0.000 obtained from the paired sample t-test. This shows that students' vocabulary knowledge improved significantly after the treatment using the Circle Game.

These findings are in line with several previous studies reviewed in Chapter II. One relevant study was conducted by Halimah et al. (2013), who implemented the Circle Game with seventh-grade students at SMPN 9 Palopo. They found that the technique made it easier for students to memorize vocabulary, as indicated by their t-test result (23.24), which was significantly higher than the t-table (2.09). This supports the current research findings, as both studies show a clear increase in students' vocabulary ability after being taught using the Circle Game.

The second supporting study came from Riswani et al. (2024), who applied the Circle Game to tenth-grade students at SMK Negeri 7 Bulukumba. Their research also used a pre-experimental design with a pre-test and a post-test. The results showed a significant improvement in vocabulary scores from 49.75 to 68.75, with a significance value of 0.001, which is below 0.05. This again aligns with the findings of the present study, reinforcing the effectiveness of the Circle Game as an engaging and enjoyable learning strategy that helps students enhance vocabulary mastery.

The third study by Nisa' & Fatmawaty (2018) involved fourth-grade students at MI Darul Ulum Katemas. Their findings also showed a notable increase in vocabulary scores from 65.71 in the pre-test to 83.92 in the post-test. They concluded that the Circle Game not only improved vocabulary mastery but also increased student interest in learning English. This is consistent with the current study, where students appeared more active and enthusiastic during the implementation of the Circle Game, likely contributing to their improved vocabulary scores.

From all the above comparisons, it can be seen that the results of this research are consistent with previous studies. All of them emphasize that the Circle Game is a beneficial tool in teaching vocabulary, as it promotes student interaction, motivation, and enjoyment, which are essential elements in language learning. The improvement in test scores across different grade levels and school types (elementary, junior high, and vocational) further confirms that the Circle Game can be applied effectively in a variety of educational contexts to enhance students' vocabulary acquisition.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and discussion, it can be concluded that using the Circle Game has a significant effect on improving students' vocabulary mastery. This was proven by the increase in students' mean scores from 60.35 in the pre-test to 78.60 in the post-test. The result of the paired sample t-test also showed a significance value of 0.000, which is lower than 0.05. It indicates that



there is a statistically significant difference between students' vocabulary achievement before and after being taught using the Circle Game. The implementation of the Circle Game created a more interactive, enjoyable, and engaging learning environment. Students became more enthusiastic and motivated in the learning process, which helped them remember and understand new vocabulary more effectively. These results are also supported by previous studies that found similar outcomes when applying the Circle Game as a teaching strategy. In conclusion, the Circle Game is an effective and appropriate technique for teaching vocabulary, especially for junior high school students. It not only improves students' vocabulary achievement but also increases their participation and interest in learning English.

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