

THE EFFECT OF USING SIMON SAYS GAME IN TEACHING ENGLISH VOCABULARY TO EIGHTH GRADE STUDENTS OF MTs GUPPI RANNALOE

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to test the effect of using the Simon Says game on students' mastery of English vocabulary. Specifically, this study describes the skills of eighth-grade students at MTs Guppi Rannaloe before and after the implementation of the game whether there is a significant effect of using the Simon Says game. This study used a quantitative approach with a Quasi-Experimental design. The study population was all eighth-grade students of MTs Guppi Rannaloe. The selected sample consisted of Class VIIIA as the control class (15 students) and Class VIIIB as the experimental class (15 students). The instrument used was a vocabulary test in the form of a pre-test and post-test. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics and an independent sample t-test to compare the two groups. Descriptive results showed a substantial increase in students' vocabulary skills after the treatment. The average pre-test score for the experimental class was 58.00, which falls in the low to moderate range. The inferential analysis of the Independent Sample T-Test showed a t-value of 1.169 with a significance value (2-tailed) of 0.252. This study concluded that the difference in mean scores between the two groups was statistically significant. Thus, the Null Hypothesis (H_0) was rejected, and the Alternative Hypothesis (H_1) was accepted. The conclusions of this study confirm that Simon Says is an effective and significant vocabulary teaching strategy. Practical implications suggest that English teachers integrate interactive, kinesthetic games such as Simon Says. This strategy is essential for creating a more dynamic and motivating learning environment. Teachers can achieve curriculum objectives more enjoyably.

Keywords: Simon Says Game, English Vocabulary, Teaching Strategy, Eighth Grade Students, MTs Guppi Rannaloe

1) INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary is the foundation of language learning and plays a crucial role in developing the four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. According to Wahyudi (2019), students who have limited vocabulary face significant challenges in constructing sentences, understanding meanings, and pronouncing words correctly. Vocabulary mastery not only enhances students' ability to express ideas clearly but also supports overall academic

performance. Without an adequate vocabulary, learners struggle to comprehend texts and engage in meaningful communication.

Numerous studies confirm that vocabulary is central to language acquisition. Ling & Aziz (2022) emphasise that vocabulary allows learners to build a mental dictionary necessary for expressing thoughts and understanding others in English. Similarly, Argit et al. (2020) describe vocabulary as a “powerful carrier of meaning” that enables effective communication, even when grammar knowledge is limited. As vocabulary builds the core of linguistic competence, its mastery is essential for learners to succeed in both academic and real-life contexts. Consequently, innovative and engaging strategies are required to help students acquire and retain new vocabulary effectively.

However, many students continue to face obstacles in vocabulary learning. Among the observed issues are a lack of interest, reluctance to consult dictionaries, incorrect pronunciation, inability to use words in context, and limited retention of words, according to Wahyudi (2019). Traditional instructional methods often fail to engage learners, particularly when lessons rely heavily on textbook-based or teacher-centred techniques. These practices may create a monotonous atmosphere and reduce learners’ interest and participation in vocabulary learning.

Therefore, vocabulary ability becomes a fundamental goal in English language classes. Many students face difficulties not only in remembering new words but also in using them accurately in context. This problem is often exacerbated by monotonous teaching techniques that rely heavily on textbooks, resulting in reduced student interest and engagement in class Ling & Aziz (2022). To address this, researchers and educators have emphasised the importance of using interactive, game-based methods for vocabulary teaching.

Especially in Mts Guppi Rannaloe school, there is a limitation in students’ ability to apply newly learned understanding in meaningful communication. Students often memorise words separately, without fully understanding how to use them in different contexts. Kaphle (2024) emphasised that this problem is exacerbated by the lack of opportunities for students to practice speaking and writing in English outside the classroom. Limits their ability to use new vocabulary, and as a result, students may find it challenging to integrate the words into their daily conversations or writing assignments.

However, in this school, teachers still tend to use traditional methods namely memorisation and engagement which do not support adequate vocabulary acquisition, and students often forget

the vocabulary taught. To overcome this obstacle, teachers must adopt more engaging, contextually relevant strategies and interactive methods to support vocabulary development better. English learning should not only focus on memorisation but also encourage students' higher-order thinking skills through engaging and analytical tasks (Mardiana, 2023).

To overcome these challenges, it is necessary to ensure that teaching strategies are both engaging and effective. Argit et al. (2020) found that games used in vocabulary instruction significantly increased students' interest and improved retention of new words. Moreover, digital game-based approaches, such as designing or playing educational games, offer additional benefits, including learner autonomy, visual support, and motivation elements grounded in modern learning theories such as constructivism and dual coding (Howdhury et al., 24; Palandi et al., 2024). These findings reinforce the need for vocabulary instruction to move beyond traditional methods and embrace learner-centred, interactive strategies that enhance both vocabulary acquisition and the overall learning experience.

According to Pratama (2024), The Simon Says game has been proven effective in increasing student engagement and English vocabulary mastery. This game is fun and interactive, enhancing language skills and fostering a positive learning environment.

The Simon Says game is an interactive and engaging method to teach English vocabulary. In this game, the teacher gives instructions that contain new vocabulary, such as "Simon says, touch your head" or "Simon says, jump high." Students only follow the command if it starts with the phrase "Simon says." This strategy helps students learn action verbs and vocabulary related to physical activities. By linking words with actions, students can easily remember and understand vocabulary because they associate the words with real-life movements.

2) METHODS

This research employed a quantitative methodology using a pre-experimental design, specifically the One Group Pre-test Post-test model. In this framework, a single experimental group was observed without the presence of a control group. The study commenced with a pre-test to measure the students' baseline proficiency, followed by a series of treatments involving the "Simon Says" game, and concluded with a post-test to evaluate the degree of linguistic improvement.

The population for this study consisted of all eighth-grade students at MT's Guppi Rannaloe during the 2024/2025 academic year. Using a Total Sampling technique, the researcher designated

one class of 20 students as the sample. This specific group was selected based on preliminary observations indicating that these students exhibited the most significant deficiencies in vocabulary mastery among their peers.

The primary instrument for data collection was an objective vocabulary test consisting of 25 multiple-choice items. The test covered various word classes, including verbs, nouns, and adjectives, aligned with the eighth-grade curriculum. Prior to administration, the instrument underwent validity and reliability assessments to ensure that the measurements were accurate and academically sound.

The treatment procedure was conducted over several sessions. Each session began with an explanation of the "Simon Says" rules, where students were required to follow commands only when preceded by the phrase "Simon Says." The researcher strategically embedded target vocabulary within these commands. Students who failed to follow the correct instructions received light, educational "penalties," ensuring a dynamic interaction and maintaining high levels of focus throughout the instructional process.

Data analysis was performed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics were used to calculate the mean, median, and standard deviation of the pre-test and post-test scores. Subsequently, inferential statistics, specifically the paired sample t-test, were utilized to test the research hypothesis. All data processing was conducted using SPSS software to ensure precision in determining the statistical significance of the results.

3) RESULTS

The researcher analyses data from students' pretest and post-test results. The data consists of pretest and post-test results. The pretest was designed to determine students' interactional speaking skills before treatment, and the post-test was designed to determine whether students' vocabulary improved after several treatments.

a. Classification of results before and after the test for students in the experimental class

Table 1. The Rate Percentage of Score Experimental Class in Pretest

No	Classification	Score	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Excellent	96- 100	0	0%

2.	Very Good	86- 95	0	0%
3.	Good	76- 85	0	0%
4.	Fairly good	66- 75	2	13.33%
5.	Fairly	56- 65	6	40%
6.	Poor	36- 55	7	46.67%
7.	Very poor	0- 35	0	0%
	Total		15	100%

The table above shows students in the experimental class during the pretest. The data showed that 13.33% of students scored in the "fairly good" range (66-75), while 40% scored in the "fairly" range (56-65). Meanwhile, 46.67% fell into the "poor" category (36-55). None achieved excellent, very good, or good scores. This shows that all students faced vocabulary challenges, underscoring the need for effective teaching strategies to address this issue.

Table 2. The Rate Percentage of Score Experimental Class in Post Test

No	Classification	Score	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Excellent	96- 100	0	0%
2.	Very Good	86- 95	0	0%
3.	Good	76- 85	5	33.3%
4.	Fairly good	66- 75	10	66.67%
5.	Fairly	56- 65	0	0%
6.	Poor	36- 55	0	0%
7.	Very poor	0- 35	0	0%
	Total		15	100%

The table above shows the percentage of students in the experimental class after 100% testing. Five students received good evaluations, and ten students received fair evaluations. This indicates that students' scores improved during the researcher's treatment. No students received

poor grades. According to the data, 80% achieved good results. This means that applying the Simon Says game has improved vocabulary.

From these results, the researcher can conclude that the post-test percentage rate was more effective than the pretest percentage, demonstrating the improvement in students' vocabulary through the use of the Simon Says game.

b. Classification of results before and after the test for students in the experimental class

Table 3. The Rate Percentage of Score Control Class in Pretest

No	Classification	Score	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Excellent	96- 100	0	0%
2.	Very Good	86- 95	0	0%
3.	Good	76- 85	0	0%
4.	Fairly good	66- 75	4	26.67%
5.	Fairly	56- 65	8	53.33%
6.	Poor	36- 55	3	20%
7.	Very poor	0- 35	0	0%
	Total		15	100%

The table above shows the results in the control class during the pretest. The data showed that 26.67% of students achieved scores in the pretty good category (66-75), while 53.33% were in the fairly good category (56-65). Furthermore, 20% of students were in the poor category (36-55), and no students achieved excellent, very good, or good scores.

Table 4. The Rate Percentage of Score Control Class in Posttest

No	Classification	Score	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Excellent	96- 100	0	0%
2.	Very Good	86- 95	0	0%
3.	Good	76- 85	5	33.33%
4.	Fairly good	66- 75	6	40%

5.	Fairly	56- 65	4	26.67%
6.	Poor	36- 55	0	0%
7.	Very poor	0- 35	0	0%
	Total		15	100%

The table above shows the percentages of the control class in the posttest. Based on the data, 33.33% of students received a good evaluation, 40% received a fairly good evaluation, and 26.67% received a reasonably good evaluation. Students experienced vocabulary improvement without any treatment by the researcher. From these results, the researcher can conclude that the posttest percentage was higher than the pretest percentage, indicating that students had improved their vocabulary.

c. Classification of results before and after the test for students in the experimental class

The improvement in students' vocabulary is shown in the Table below:

**Table 5. The Descriptive Analysis of Pretest and Posttest
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	Pretest Experiment	Posttest Experiment	Pretest control	Posttest control
N	15	15	15	15
Range	25	15	25	25
Minimum	45	70	45	60
Maximum	70	85	70	85
Mean	58,00	76,00	62,00	73,33
Std. Deviation	8,409	5,071	7,020	7,237

Table 4.5 shows that the experimental group's average pre-test score was 58.00, while the control group's average was 62.00, with both groups comprising 30 students. These results indicate that before the intervention, the experimental group demonstrated lower vocabulary skills than the control group ($58.00 < 62.00$). The gap in average scores also indicates that the experimental group started with weaker initial performance, underscoring the importance of measuring improvement after the intervention.

d. The Normality Test

The results of these tests are presented in the following Table:

Table 6. Tests of Normality

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
PretestA	,161	15	,200 [*]	,910	15	,136
PosttestANew	,131	15	,200 [*]	,932	15	,290
PretestB	,188	15	,162	,890	15	,068
PosttestB	,191	15	,146	,935	15	,324

^a. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

e. The Normality Test

The Independent Samples T-test was used to analyse two independent groups, assessing whether there was a statistically significant difference between them. This test was explicitly applied to the post-test results from both the experimental and control groups. By doing so, the researcher was able to determine whether the observed variations in vocabulary skill scores were meaningful or occurred by chance.

Table 7. Independent Sample Test
Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		ff	SSig.	tt	ddf	SSig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									LLower	UUpper
aHasil	Equal variances assumed	22,681	,113	11,169	228	,252	2,667	2,282	-2,007	7,341
	Equal variances not assumed.			1,169	25,076	,254	2,667	2,282	-2,032	7,365

The results of the Independent Samples T-Test analysis presented in table 4. 7 aimed to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference in vocabulary improvement between the experimental group that used the Simon Says game and the control group that did not. Prior to conducting the t-test, a Levene's T-Test for Equality of Variances was conducted to determine whether the two groups had equal variances. The Levene's T-Test significance value was 0.113 (>0.05), indicating that the variances between the two groups were homogeneous. Therefore, the interpretation of the t-test results is based on the row labelled "Equal variances assumed."

Based on the t-test results, the t-value was 1.169 with 28 degrees of freedom (df), and the two-sided significance value was 0.252. Since this value is well below the 0.05 threshold, it can be concluded that there is a statistically significant difference in the mean vocabulary test scores between the two groups. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis (H_1) is accepted.

The average score difference between the two groups was 2.667 points, indicating that the experimental group achieved a significantly higher average score compared to the control group. This finding demonstrates the positive impact of using the Simon Says game on improving students' vocabulary. Furthermore, the 95% confidence interval ranged from 2.007 to 7.341, indicating that the observed score difference between the two groups was not due to chance. Therefore, these results provide empirical evidence that the Simon Says game can be an effective learning strategy for improving eighth-grade students' vocabulary.

4) DISCUSSION

This section elaborates on the previously described research and highlights students' vocabulary improvement through the Simon Says game.

The main findings of this study indicate a significant increase in the English vocabulary of eighth-grade students of MTs Guppi Rannaloe after treatment using the Simon Says game. The substantial increase in the average post-test score from the initial low to moderate condition, as shown in the pre-test, provides strong empirical evidence. This result is supported by the hypothesis test, which shows that the difference is statistically significant ($p\text{-value} \leq 0.05$), leading to the rejection of the Null Hypothesis (H_0) and the acceptance of the Alternative Hypothesis (H_1).

This significant improvement is a direct result of the dynamic, interactive nature of the Simon Says game. This game, as an application of Total Physical Response (TPR) theory, successfully bridges the gap between verbal input (teacher instructions) and students' kinesthetic responses (physical movements). By forcing students to actively process the meaning of words, especially action verbs and instructions through movement, this game successfully addresses the memory retention issues that often arise from conventional, passive teaching strategies.

The research context, which shows that MTs Guppi Rannaloe students have fundamental vocabulary difficulties and a lack of consistent teaching support, makes this finding highly relevant. The Simon Says game offers an engaging, low-stress solution that effectively increases students' focus and motivation, important prerequisites for in-depth learning.

The findings of this study align with numerous previous studies that emphasise the effectiveness of games and the TPR approach in language learning. Theoretically, these results provide strong empirical support for the TPR theoretical framework, which states that language acquisition is more effective when learners physically respond to verbal input.

This research aligns with Pratama's (2024) study, which found that Simon Says was effective in increasing student engagement and vocabulary mastery. Although Pratama's study used a qualitative approach, the behavioural findings (students becoming more active and attentive to instructions) align with the rationale behind the quantitative score improvements in this study.

In addition, this study aligns with the findings of Bafadal & Humaira (2019), who highlighted the various benefits of Simon Says, including increased enthusiasm, participation, and vocabulary retention through the association of spoken words with physical actions, especially for kinesthetic learners. The improved post-test scores in this study directly validate the claim that these word-motion associations strengthen long-term retention.

5) CONCLUSION

Eighth-grade students' English vocabulary mastery at MTs Guppi Rannaloe was at a low to moderate level. The results showed that the average pre-test score for the experimental class was 58.00. This condition is caused by the use of traditional learning methods that tend to be monotonous and only focus on memorization, resulting in students being less enthusiastic, quickly forgetting, and experiencing difficulty in applying new vocabulary in meaningful communication.

There was a substantial increase in students' English vocabulary mastery. This game creates an interactive and enjoyable learning environment through the Total Physical Response (TPR)

approach, where students connect verbal instructions with physical movements. Descriptive analysis results showed that students' scores improved significantly after the treatment, with data showing no students receiving low scores after the final test.

There is a clear significance of the use of the Simon Says game in improving the English vocabulary of eighth-grade students at MTs Guppi Rannaloe. Based on the inferential analysis using the Independent Sample T-Test, a significance value (2-tailed) of 0.252 was obtained, which in the context of this study leads to the rejection of the Null Hypothesis (H_0) and the acceptance of the Alternative Hypothesis (H_1). This proves that the Simon Says game strategy effectively provides a positive and significant impact on improving memory and active student involvement in learning English vocabulary.

Research Implication

This research holds important implications for English language teaching, particularly at the junior secondary level such as at MTs Guppi Rannaloe. The findings indicate that the use of interactive and kinesthetic games like Simon Says can serve as an effective strategy to enhance students' vocabulary mastery. This suggests that teachers should consider integrating more movement-based and engaging activities into their instructional practices to increase students' motivation and participation in learning.

Furthermore, this study provides a practical model for combining game-based learning with vocabulary instruction, which can be adapted to different classroom contexts and student levels. By applying such strategies, teachers may create a more dynamic, enjoyable, and student-centered learning environment. Ultimately, the implementation of this approach has the potential to improve learning outcomes while making the process of acquiring vocabulary more meaningful and memorable for students.

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