

**IMPROVING STUDENTS ENGLISH VOCABULARY BY USING  
SCRABBLE GAME AT SDIT AS-SAKINAH**



(THESIS)

Submitted to State Islamic College of Sultan Abdurrahman Kepulauan Riau to fulfill one of the requirements for obtaining a Bachelor's as Education Degree

By:

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# STATEMENT OF ORIGINALITY



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I hereby declare that my thesis entitled *Improving Students English Vocabulary By Using Scrabble Game At SDIT As-Sakinag* is truly my work with the direction of the supervisory commission and has not been submitted in any form to any university. Sources of information derived or quoted from published or unpublished works of other authors have been mentioned in the text and listed in the bibliography at the end of this thesis.

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Stated that this thesis is suitable to be continued at the Munaqasyah examination. It is hoped that the thesis can be accepted and can be used properly.

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## SUPERVISOR STATEMENT LETTER

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Assalamu'alaikum Wr.Wb.

After providing guidance, direction, and proofreading of the thesis entitled:  
Improving Students English Vocabulary By Using Scrabble Game At SDIT As-  
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Therefore, I declare that the thesis can be submitted to the English Language  
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Wassalamu'alaikum Wr.Wb.

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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### A. Background

English is one of the global languages that is very important in the field of education, especially in improving students' global literacy skills from an early age. In Indonesia, English language instruction has been introduced at the elementary school level as a strategic step to prepare students for global challenges, technological advances, and international interactions. Early English language instruction is considered crucial for equipping students with 21st-century skills, particularly in literacy and intercultural communication. Within the framework of the Merdeka Curriculum, English is now included as an optional subject (local content) that can be taught according to the needs and readiness of educational institutions. However, with the issuance of Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology Regulation No. 12 of 2024, the government has mandated that English will become a required subject in elementary schools starting in the 2027/2028 academic year.<sup>1</sup> This policy addresses the demand for improving the quality of Indonesia's human resources to compete in the global era.

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<sup>1</sup> dan Teknologi Kementerian Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset, *Permendikbudristek Nomor 12 Tahun 2024 Tentang Kurikulum Pada Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini, Pendidikan Dasar, Dan Menengah*, 2024.

One of the most crucial elements in learning English at the basic level is vocabulary mastery. Vocabulary is the foundation for mastering the four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Without sufficient vocabulary mastery, students will face difficulties in understanding texts, expressing ideas, and participating effectively in learning activities. Nation emphasizes that vocabulary is an important element in learning English as a foreign language (EFL), especially for children.<sup>2</sup> Additionally, enjoyable learning methods such as the use of educational games have been proven to significantly enhance vocabulary mastery and student motivation.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, interactive, contextual, and developmentally appropriate teaching strategies must be implemented in English language instruction at the elementary school level.

Furthermore, according to the 2024 Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology Policy Paper, Indonesia still lags behind other ASEAN countries in teaching English from an early age, as this subject is not yet compulsory in elementary schools.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, the government's decision to make English a compulsory subject starting in the 2027/2028 academic year is highly relevant and urgent to be implemented gradually. This encourages educators to begin designing learning that is appropriate

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<sup>2</sup> I. S. P. Nation, *Learning Vocabulary in Another Language*, 2nd edn (Cambridge University Press, 2022).

<sup>3</sup> N. Schmitt, *Researching Vocabulary: A Vocabulary Research Manual* (Routledge, 2024).

<sup>4</sup> dan Teknologi Kementerian Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset, 'Risalah Kebijakan: Penguatan Bahasa Inggris Di Pendidikan Dasar', 2024.

for the characteristics of elementary school students and the demands of the existing curriculum.

However, empirical research shows that vocabulary mastery among elementary school students is still considered low. For example, a national study shows that only about 37% of fifth graders scored “proficient” in English vocabulary, which is a clear indication that the majority of students have difficulty mastering fundamental vocabulary.<sup>5</sup> This factor is caused by the dominance of conventional learning methods, such as memorizing words without context, limited use of visual aids, and lack of active student participation, making the learning process monotonous and meaningless. Therefore, a more creative, engaging, and interactive learning approach is needed to enhance motivation and the effectiveness of vocabulary mastery.

This situation is also seen in the education system, especially at the elementary school level. English has indeed been taught in many elementary schools in Indonesia as local content, but the implementation still faces various obstacles. The teaching and learning process is often monotonous, lacks innovation, and is not in accordance with the characteristics of elementary students who tend to like learning that involves games. In fact, elementary school is an important period for children's cognitive and language development, so the introduction of vocabulary and correct pronunciation is very important from an early age.

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<sup>5</sup> STKIP Muhammadiyah Pagaram Program Studi Bahasa Inggris, ‘English Vocabulary App Promotes Mastery Among Rural Fifth Graders’, *ACOPEN: Proceedings of UMSIDA Conference Series*, 2025.

Vocabulary plays an important role in language learning. Without sufficient vocabulary, students will not be able to speak, write, read or listen well. According to Najla et al., low vocabulary mastery makes it difficult for students to understand and remember the English material taught, because the learning media used is not effective and interactive. In addition, students tend to be passive due to the one-way learning approach and do not provide opportunities for exploration.<sup>6</sup>

This problem is reinforced by the findings of Sondakh and Sya, which show that elementary school students have difficulty understanding English vocabulary due to the limited use of supporting media and contextual learning strategies. The dominant use of rote memorization without meaningful context causes students to quickly forget the words they have learned. As a result, vocabulary learning becomes ineffective and unengaging. Therefore, a more active, contextual, and enjoyable approach to vocabulary instruction is urgently needed to help students retain and apply new words more effectively.<sup>7</sup>

One promising approach is through the medium of educational games, such as Scrabble. Scrabble is a board game that requires players to arrange letters into meaningful words in English. This activity not only stimulates thinking and creativity, but also strengthens vocabulary

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<sup>6</sup> Alisha Putri Najla, Otib Satibi Hidayat, and Uswatun Hasanah, 'Analisis Kebutuhan Media Pembelajaran "Wording" Pada Pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris Kelas Iv Sekolah Dasar', *Kompetensi*, 16.1 (2023), pp. 109–17, doi:10.36277/kompetensi.v16i1.116.

<sup>7</sup> Delfina Christie Sondakh and Mega Febriani Sya, 'Kesulitan Pembelajaran Kosakata Bahasa Inggris Tingkat Sekolah Dasar', *Karimah Tauhid*, 1.3 (2022), pp. 346–51.

acquisition through fun and repetitive exercises. The use of this game is considered to bridge the learning needs of students with the developmental characteristics of elementary school-age children who love to play.

To increase student interest and engagement, researchers used Scrabble media specially designed for second-grade students. This media was simply made from square pieces of cardboard, then covered with colored paper to make it more attractive and easier for children to use. Each piece was manually labeled with letters, and a total of 234 letter pieces were prepared so that students would have many options for forming words. This homemade Scrabble game was chosen because it is child-friendly, easy to use, and allows children to learn through play activities, such as arranging letters, recognizing words, and practicing pronunciation directly.

Batubara et al. research shows that Scrabble can significantly increase students' vocabulary. In addition, this game also builds students' confidence in speaking English.<sup>8</sup> These results are in line with Lubis et al. research which states that the use of game-based learning media can increase learning interest, active student involvement, and academic achievement.<sup>9</sup>

However, vocabulary learning using Scrabble has received limited attention in previous studies. For instance, research conducted by Lukitaningtyas et al. primarily emphasized quantitative outcomes related to

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<sup>8</sup> Zulkarnain Batubara and others, 'Pembelajaran Kosakata Bahasa Inggris Kesehatan Melalui Permainan Scrabble Di Desa Bangun Rejo Tanjung Morawa', *Prosiding Konferensi Nasional Pengabdian Kepada Masyarakat Dan Corporate Social Responsibility (PKM-CSR)*, 5 (2022), pp. 1–10, doi:10.37695/pkmcscr.v5i0.1586.

<sup>9</sup> Lollo Rosa Lubis and others, 'Pelaksanaan Teknik Permainan Dadu Dalam Pembelajaran Vocabulary', *Jurnal Adam : Jurnal Pengabdian Masyarakat*, 1.2 (2022), pp. 181–85.

vocabulary acquisition, without exploring the learning process in depth. Although their findings demonstrated improvements in students' vocabulary knowledge, there is still a need for further research that not only examines the results but also investigates how engaging learning methods like Scrabble can influence students' interest and retention in vocabulary learning.<sup>10</sup>

To overcome this problem, it is necessary to optimize the use of Scrabble as a vocabulary learning tool by integrating it with contextual and interactive strategies. These may include the use of visual aids to support word recognition, thematic grouping of vocabulary to enhance memory retention, and engaging activities such as storytelling or sentence formation to reinforce understanding. The aim of this approach is to help students not only recognize and memorize vocabulary, but also use it meaningfully in various learning contexts.

In line with this view, Habib asserts that vocabulary learning is not effectively achieved through memorization alone, but must be practiced in meaningful and contextual situations that allow students to understand and apply new words.<sup>11</sup> Scrabble, as an interactive and engaging learning tool, can support this process by providing opportunities for students to learn vocabulary in a fun, competitive, and meaningful environment.

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<sup>10</sup> Atalya Lukitaningtyas, Eka Adi, and Susilaningsih Susilaningsih, 'Penerapan Permainan Scrabble Untuk Meningkatkan Kosakata Bahasa Inggris Siswa Kelas Iii Di Sdk St. Fransiskus Lawang', *Jurnal Kajian Teknologi Pendidikan*, 2.3 (2019), pp. 213–23, doi:10.17977/um038v2i32019p213.

<sup>11</sup> Memperluas Kosakata, Bahasa Inggris, and Siswa Sekolah, '410 P-ISSN 2338-980X', 11 (2024), pp. 410–18.

However, a review of the existing literature shows that not many studies have deeply investigated the effectiveness of using Scrabble in improving vocabulary mastery among primary school students. Most studies tend to focus on quantitative outcomes without exploring how the game influences students' engagement, contextual understanding, and long-term vocabulary retention. Therefore, further research is needed to examine not only the improvement in vocabulary scores but also how Scrabble can support meaningful and active learning in the classroom.

At SDIT As-Sakinah, students still face great challenges in their English language skills. Observations and interviews with English teachers show that Grade II students only have a very limited vocabulary, most of which comes from basic words in the textbooks. As a result, they have difficulty in understanding and applying the vocabulary in broader situations. In addition, exercises given by teachers show that students often struggle to construct simple sentences, indicating a discrepancy between their vocabulary ability and what is expected. This low vocabulary mastery inhibits students from communicating effectively and participating in more interactive learning activities.

This study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of the Scrabble game in improving English vocabulary mastery among grade II students of SDIT As-Sakinah. Using a quantitative research method, this study is expected to contribute both theoretically and practically to the field of education. Theoretically, it can enrich the literature on game-based English vocabulary

learning strategies. Practically, the findings of this research may serve as a reference for teachers in developing more engaging, creative, and effective teaching methods to support vocabulary acquisition in the classroom.

Thus, this research is expected to address the challenges in English learning at the elementary school level, which is often conventional and less engaging for students. Through the use of the Scrabble game, students are expected to improve their English vocabulary in a more enjoyable and meaningful way. This approach can foster greater interest in learning, enhance active participation in the classroom, and build a strong foundation for continued language development as they advance to higher levels of education and prepare to face the global era.

## **B. Problem Formulation**

The proposed problem formulation is;

1. What are the students' English vocabulary achievement before and after the using of scrabble game?
2. How can the use of scrabble improve students English vocabulary?

## **C. Purpose and Usefulness of Research**

Research Objectives

The purpose of this study is to determine students' English vocabulary skills before and after using the Scrabble game media and assess how effective the Scrabble game media is in helping students at SDIT As-Sakinah in improving their mastery of English vocabulary.

- a. Usefulness of Research

This research is expected to provide the following benefits.

1) Theoretical benefits

Contribute ideas to teachers to use scrabble game media in the learning process.

2) Practical Benefits

(a) For schools, the findings of this study can provide very useful input in the effort to improve the quality of education, especially in English language teaching. Schools can assess and improve more suitable teaching strategies, based on the real results of this study, to create a better and more effective learning environment.

(b) For teachers, this research offers practical information on more effective ways to expand students' English vocabulary. By knowing the techniques that have been proven to work, teachers can customize teaching methods that are more interactive and suitable for students' needs, so that the learning process becomes more effective and students' learning outcomes improve.

(c) For students, this research can help them find a more interesting and understandable way of learning to enrich their English vocabulary. It is hoped that this can improve their enthusiasm for learning and their overall English proficiency.

(d) For future researchers, the results of this study can be a reference or basis for further research in the field of English vocabulary teaching, as well as a comparison material to develop more innovative learning methods.

#### **D. Previous Studies**

Various previous studies have emphasized the effectiveness of game-based methods in improving English vocabulary acquisition among elementary school students. Research by Lukitaningtyas et al. (2019) demonstrated that the application of the Scrabble game in English instruction for grade III students at SDK St. Fransiskus Lawang produced significant positive outcomes in vocabulary development. Using quantitative analysis through SPSS, the study revealed a significant improvement in students' vocabulary mastery, with a Paired Sample Test significance value of 0.000 ( $< 0.05$ ), indicating a substantial difference before and after the intervention. In addition, student responses to Scrabble were overwhelmingly positive, with an acceptance rate reaching 86%, reflecting increased learning motivation.<sup>12</sup>

Besides Scrabble, the use of other game-based learning strategies has also been proven effective. A study by Khasanah et al. (2024) applied Bingo Games in English lessons at SDN Pageron Purworejo. Using a Classroom Action Research (PTK) approach, the findings showed that the

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<sup>12</sup> Lukitaningtyas, Adi, and Susilaningsih, 'Penerapan Permainan Scrabble Untuk Meningkatkan Kosakata Bahasa Inggris Siswa Kelas Iii Di Sdk St. Fransiskus Lawang'.

average student vocabulary mastery improved to 72.92%. This improvement varied across individuals and was influenced by factors such as student motivation and engagement. Moreover, the game method succeeded in enhancing students' activeness, making the classroom atmosphere more dynamic and enjoyable.<sup>13</sup>

In addition, digital innovations have also been utilized to support vocabulary learning at the primary level. Widagdo and Junaedi (2023) developed interactive learning media using Articulate Storyline for first-grade elementary students. Applying a Research and Development (R&D) approach, the study produced effective digital media, as evidenced by the significant increase in vocabulary scores from pre-test to post-test. The media feasibility assessment reached 96% by material experts and 100% by media validators, showing that such technology can effectively support English vocabulary learning in elementary education.<sup>14</sup>

From the review of previous research, it is evident that game-based learning methods, whether through board games like Scrabble, educational games like Bingo, or digital interactive media have a positive impact on vocabulary acquisition. However, most of these studies have been conducted at higher grade levels or secondary education, and primarily focused on vocabulary quantity or student motivation, without extending to

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<sup>13</sup> Fitrotul Khasanah, Titi Anjarini, and Arum Ratnaningsih, 'Upaya Peningkatan Penguasaan Kosakata Pada Pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris Melalui Bingo Games Di Sekolah Dasar', *DWIJA CENDEKIA: Jurnal Riset Pedagogik*, 8.3 (2024), p. 524, doi:10.20961/jdc.v8i3.94089.

<sup>14</sup> Arif Widagdo, Salsa Nabila Junaedi, and Info Artikel, 'ARTICULATE', 12.3 (2023), pp. 128–33.

how such games can be adapted for younger learners in lower elementary school.

Research conducted by Habib (2024) from the Indonesia University of Education shows that playing Scrabble continuously can benefit elementary school students' vocabulary skills. In his research, Habib found that through play activities that emphasize cooperation, healthy competition, and contextual word formation, students are more active and motivated in learning. The improvement in vocabulary skills was not only evident in the number of words mastered, but also in their ability to use those words appropriately in simple sentences. In addition, the classroom atmosphere became more lively and enjoyable, which ultimately helped increase students' interest and participation in learning English.<sup>15</sup>

Similar results were also found by Lubis et al. (2022), their research shows that the use of Scrabble can significantly improve students' vocabulary learning outcomes. With an interactive play approach, students are not only encouraged to find and compose new words, but also learn to communicate, collaborate, and think critically in the learning process. This play-based learning activity helps boost students' confidence and makes English learning more interesting and meaningful. The study confirms that the use of game media such as Scrabble can create an active, creative learning environment that is suitable for elementary school children.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Habib Thifail Arrahmani, 'Analisis Penggunaan Permainan Scrable Dalam Memperluas Kosakata Bahasa Inggris Siswa Sekolah Dasar', *Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia Kampus Daerah Serang Indonesia*, 11.2 (2024).

<sup>16</sup> Lubis and others, 'Pelaksanaan Teknik Permainan Dadu Dalam Pembelajaran Vocabulary'.

The uniqueness of this research lies in its effort to adapt the Scrabble game, commonly used for older students, to suit the developmental and linguistic needs of second-grade elementary students. By contextualizing the game with simpler rules and targeted vocabulary relevant to their level, this study aims to explore how Scrabble can be effectively implemented as a vocabulary enhancement tool in lower elementary education.

Thus, this research is expected to fill the existing gap by not only reaffirming the benefits of game-based learning for vocabulary acquisition, but also by demonstrating that such methods can be successfully adapted for younger learners at the elementary level. It is hoped that this study will contribute both theoretically and practically to the development of innovative, engaging, and age-appropriate strategies for teaching English vocabulary in primary schools.

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