

# THE IMPLEMENTATION OF BUILDING WORDS IN IMPROVING VOCABULARY MASTERY OF THE SECOND GRADE STUDENTS OF SMPN 1 MAJAULENG

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**Abstract:** This study evaluates the effectiveness of the Building Words method in enhancing vocabulary mastery among second-grade students at SMPN 1 Majauleng. Employing a pre-experimental one-group pretest-posttest design, the research involved 30 randomly selected students. Data were collected through pretest and posttest, with an intervention using the Building Words method between the two tests. Results show a significant improvement in students' average vocabulary scores, from 31 in the pretest to 91 in the posttest. Statistical analysis using paired t-test yielded a t-value of -81.168 with a p-value of 0.000, confirming the method's effectiveness. Students' ability classification shifted dramatically from "Very Poor" and "Poor" to "Good" and "Very Good". The Building Words method proved effective in enhancing vocabulary mastery through active student engagement, collaborative learning, and a multi-sensory approach. This research highlights the potential of the Building Words method for integration into language teaching curricula and adaptation to various educational contexts. While focusing on short-term effects, the results indicate potential long-term positive impacts on students' language abilities. Further studies are recommended to evaluate long-term vocabulary retention and the application of this method in other language skills.

**Keywords:** Building Words, vocabulary mastery, language learning

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary is a fundamental component in language acquisition and plays a crucial role in honing language skills. As the foundation of effective communication, good vocabulary mastery is the main goal for most students. The significance of vocabulary permeates into academic and practical contexts, with proficient students typically having a rich lexicon (M Alqahtani, 2015). However, many learners face difficulties in retaining previously learned words, leading to challenges in articulating thoughts and opinions, especially in professional settings. In the context of teaching United Kingdom vocabulary, there are a variety of methodologies that can be used to help learners expand their lexical repertoire. Educators are required to choose the right methods to facilitate effective teaching, taking into account the inherent complexity of teaching United Kingdom vocabulary. Similar to other social science teaching, successful vocabulary teaching requires a tailored approach to ensure optimal learning outcomes.

The low level of vocabulary mastery among students is influenced by various internal and external factors. Internally, factors such as motivation, confidence, and interest in learning United Kingdom play an important role. Externally, factors such as teaching strategies, techniques, and media can affect

vocabulary acquisition. Media can increase students' vocabulary because it serves as a tool to convey information and involves students' thoughts, feelings, and interests in learning (Syarifuddin, 2009). As United Kingdom language learners, it is very important to learn the words they want to use, striving to achieve proficiency in a wide variety of vocabulary to facilitate ease of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Learning United Kingdom as a second language requires a holistic approach, which includes the acquisition of four basic skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. In the field of language acquisition, vocabulary considers very important as one of the basic components, in addition to phonetics and grammar (Q Pan, 2011).

Although various methodologies, strategies, and techniques have been used by educators to impart vocabulary knowledge, achieving the desired results remains a challenge. In practice, many United Kingdom learners face difficulties, with one common problem being a lack of vocabulary. Often, this comes from a conventional teaching method where students are presented with a vocabulary list and instructed to memorize it. Such an approach fails to stimulate students' interest, as they have no chance of real-world application, resulting in short-lived vocabulary retention. Given the problems mentioned above, this study aims to introduce methods and offer solutions to teachers' challenges in improving vocabulary proficiency. To overcome the difficulties faced by students and teachers and to improve students' vocabulary mastery, applying a "word building" approach has proven to be advantageous in teaching vocabulary and presenting viable solutions for instructional activities. The study focused on second-grade students at SMPN 1 Malaujeng, who showed a sufficient level of proficiency in their vocabulary knowledge, but still had room for improvement. Although it shows a solid foundation in vocabulary acquisition, further efforts are needed to improve their skills and expand their lexicon.

The main purpose of this study is to find out the implementation of 'Building Words' in improving the vocabulary mastery of second grade students of SMPN 1 Majauleng. The significance of this research lies in its contribution both theoretically and practically. Theoretically, this study contributes to theoretical advances in language education by evaluating the effectiveness of the 'Word Building' method in improving vocabulary mastery among second-grade students. Practically, this research has the potential to inform and improve teaching practices in real-world educational settings, especially in SMPN 1 Majauleng and similar educational institutions.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1. The Concept of Vocabulary**

Vocabulary, according to Jackson (2000), can be interpreted as a compilation of words in the target language. Nunan (1999) further defines it as a collection of lexemes, including individual words, compound words, and idioms. Vocabulary mastery involves understanding the meaning of words and the ability to use them correctly in context (Cameron, 2001). John (2000) explained

that vocabulary knowledge includes understanding the meaning of words and the ability to match words with synonyms, dictionary definitions, or translations. Harmer (2001) explained that vocabulary learning includes several aspects, namely meaning (including synonyms, antonyms, denotations, and connotations), usage (including collocations and idioms), word grammar (such as nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs), spelling, pronunciation.

## **2.2. Vocabulary Teaching Techniques**

Harmer proposes several effective techniques for teaching vocabulary as realia: using of real objects for illustration, image: using of visual illustrations, pantomy, action, and movement, physical demonstration of meaning, contrast: explaining meaning through comparison, enumeration: creating a list of related items, and explanation provides definition and context, translation: economical use of mother tongue.

## **2.3. Building Words Method**

Building words is an innovative method for vocabulary learning that involves students in the active construction of words using fragments of letters and pictures (Intermediate, 1980). This method aims to increase students' vocabulary mastery independently and collaboratively. The advantage of this method includes active vocabulary improvement, accommodation of different learning styles, encourage collaborative learning. However, this method also has limitations, among others: may be less challenging for advanced learners, risks of memorizing without deep understanding, requires intensive preparation from educators.

## **3. METHODS**

This study uses a quantitative approach with a pre-experimental one-group pretest-posttest design. The main purpose of the study is to evaluate the effectiveness of the Word Building method in improving the vocabulary mastery of second-grade students at SMP Negeri 1 Majauleng. The study population includes 81 second-grade students of SMP Negeri 1 Majauleng. From this population, a sample of 30 students was selected using random sampling techniques. The research was carried out at SMP Negeri 1 Majauleng, which is located on Jl. Nuri Atapange, Rumpia, Majauleng District, Wajo Regency, South Sulawesi Province. Data collection is carried out during the 2023/2024 academic year. The main instrument of the research is a vocabulary test consisting of 16 questions. This test is given as a pre-test and post-test to measure students' vocabulary mastery before and after the application of the Word Building method. Data collection is carried out through three stages: Pre-test: Held at the initial meeting to assess the level of initial vocabulary mastery of students. Treatment: The application of the Word Building method in one meeting to teach vocabulary. Post-test: Conducted after treatment to evaluate the impact of the Word Building method on students' vocabulary mastery. Data Analysis is carried out through several stages: assessment of student answers, calculation of the average score of the pre-test and post-test and analysis of the difference between pre-test and post-

test scores using T-test with the help of SPSS software. This research method is designed to provide a comprehensive overview of the effectiveness of the Word Building method in improving students' vocabulary mastery. By using pre-experimental design and statistical analysis, this study aims to produce valid and reliable data on the impact of the intervention on the vocabulary ability of second-grade students at SMP Negeri 1 Majauleng.

## 4. RESULTS

This study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of the Building Words method in improving the vocabulary mastery of second-grade students of SMPN 1 Majauleng. The data collected consisted of pretest and posttest scores from 30 participants. Data analysis showed a significant improvement in students' vocabulary mastery after the application of the Building Words method.

### 4.1. Descriptive Analysis

The pretest score ranges from 28 to 38, with an average score of 31. Posttest scores range from 84 to 97, with an average score of 91. Table 1 shows the results of the pretest and posttest in detail.

**Table 1. Pre-test and Post-Test Results of Student Ability in Vocabulary Mastery**

No.	Participants	Pre-Test Score	Post-Test Score	Pretest Classification	Posttest Classification
1	Student 1	30	85	Very poor	Good
2	Student 2	32	88	Very poor	Good
3	Student 3	29	90	Very poor	Good
4	Student 4	28	87	Very poor	Good
5	Student 5	31	95	Very poor	Very good
6	6 students	35	89	Poor	Good
7	Student 7	34	86	Poor	Good
8	8 students	33	90	Poor	Good
9	Students 9	30	88	Very poor	Good
10	10 students	36	92	Poor	Very good
11	Students 11	37	93	Poor	Very good
12	Students 12	38	94	Poor	Very good
13	Students 13	32	91	Very poor	Very good
14	Students 14	30	85	Very poor	Good
15	Students 15	33	84	Poor	Good
16	Students 16	31	86	Very poor	Good
17	Students 17	29	87	Very poor	Good
18	Students 18	28	89	Very poor	Good
19	Students 19	30	90	Very poor	Good
20	20 students	31	91	Very poor	Very good
21	Students 21	29	92	Very poor	Very good

22	Students 22	32	94	Very poor	Very good
23	Students 23	34	95	Poor	Very good
24	Students 24	33	96	Poor	Very good
25	Students 25	31	97	Very poor	Very good
26	Students 26	30	93	Very poor	Very good
27	Students 27	34	90	Poor	Good
28	Students 28	35	88	Poor	Good
29	Students 29	33	87	Poor	Good
30	30 students	32	85	Very poor	Good

The results of the pretest showed that most students (19 out of 30) were in the "Very Poor" category, while another 11 students were in the "Poor" category. This indicates a low level of vocabulary mastery before the intervention. After the implementation of the Building Words method, there was a significant increase. On the posttest, 10 students achieved the "Very Good" classification, and 20 students belonged to the "Good" category. There are no students left in the "Very Poor" or "Poor" categories.

## 4.2. Statistical Analysis

Statistical analysis was carried out to test the significance of the difference between pretest and posttest scores. The results of the analysis are presented in table below

**Table 2. Results of Statistical Analysis of Paired Samples T-Test**

Paired Differences	Std. Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	t	Sig. (2-Df tailed)
Pair 1 Pretest - Posttest	-57.9	3.91	0.71	Lower: -59.36 Upper: -56.44	-81.168	29 0

Based on the results of the analysis, the average difference between the pretest and posttest scores was -57.90, with a standard deviation of 3.91 and a standard error mean of 0.71. The 95% confidence interval for this difference ranged from -59.36 to -56.44, indicating a significant drop in the score. The t-value for this difference is -81.168, with 29 degrees of freedom, and the significance level (p-value) is 0.000.

## 4.3. Interpretation of Results

The results showed a substantial and statistically significant increase in vocabulary mastery after applying the Building Words method. The negative mean difference (-57.90) indicates that the students' scores on the posttest are significantly higher than those on the pretest. A very low p-value (0.000) suggests that this increase is unlikely to have occurred by chance. Based on



these findings, the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) stating that the Building Words method is not effective in improving vocabulary mastery is rejected. On the other hand, the alternative hypothesis ( $H_a$ ) that states that Building Words are effective in improving the vocabulary mastery of second-grade students of SMPN 1 Majauleng was accepted.

## 5. DISCUSSION

The effectiveness of the Building Words method in improving vocabulary mastery can be attributed to several factors:

- a. Active engagement: This method actively engages students in the learning process using fragments of letters and pictures, which facilitates better retention and understanding of new vocabulary.
- b. Collaborative learning: This method encourages students to discuss and share interpretations, which further strengthens their learning.
- c. Multi-sensory approach: The use of images and letters involves a variety of senses, which can improve comprehension and retention.
- d. Contextualization: This method helps students understand new vocabulary in context, which is important for deeper understanding.

The significant increase from the "Very Poor" and "Poor" categories to "Good" and "Very Good" shows that the Building Words method is effective in overcoming the vocabulary mastery gap among students. This underscores the potential of this method to be used more widely in language teaching. The results of this study have several important implications for teaching practice:

- a. Curriculum integration: The Building Words method can be integrated into the language teaching curriculum to improve students' vocabulary mastery.
- b. Professional development: Teachers can be trained in the use of these methods to improve the effectiveness of their vocabulary teaching.
- c. Cross-subject adaptation: This approach can be adapted for the teaching of vocabulary in a variety of subjects, not limited to language lessons alone.
- d. Individualized learning: This method can be customized to meet the individual needs of students, especially those who have difficulty mastering vocabulary.
- e. Limitations and Future Research

Although the results of this study are promising, some limitations need to be noted:

- a. Sample size: The study was limited to 30 students. Future studies with larger sample sizes may provide more generalized results.
- b. Duration: This study focuses on short-term effects. Longitudinal studies are needed to assess long-term vocabulary retention.
- c. Context: The research was conducted in one school. Replication in different educational contexts will strengthen the external validity of the findings.

For future research, some of the directions that can be considered include:

- a. Comparative study with other vocabulary teaching methods.
- b. Investigate the effects of the Building Words method on other language skills such as reading and writing.
- c. Exploration of the adaptation of this method to different levels of education and subjects.

This study provides strong evidence about the effectiveness of the Building Words method in improving the vocabulary mastery of second-grade students of SMPN 1 Majauleng. A significant improvement in vocabulary scores and a positive shift in the classification of students' abilities demonstrate the potential of this method as a valuable pedagogical tool. These findings prompted for further research and wider application of the Building Words method in language teaching.

## 6. CONCLUSION

This study has demonstrated the significant effectiveness of the Building Words method in improving the vocabulary mastery of second-grade students at SMPN 1 Majauleng. A substantial increase in the mean score from 31 on the pretest to 91 on the posttest, supported by a robust statistical analysis (t-value -81.168, p-value 0.000), provides conclusive evidence of the success of this method. The dramatic shift in the classification of students' abilities from the categories "Very Poor" and "Poor" to "Good" and "Very Good" further confirms the positive impact of these interventions. The Building Words method not only improves vocabulary mastery, but also succeeds in increasing students' active involvement in the learning process. The adaptability of this method shows its potential to be applied in a variety of educational contexts. Although the focus of this study is on short-term effects, the significant improvements observed indicate a potential positive long-term impact on students' overall language skills.

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