

THE USE OF SPELLING BEE METHOD TO IMPROVE STUDENTS' ENGLISH VOCABULARY FOR EIGHT GRADE STUDENTS OF SMP NEGERI 17 MARUSU

Sardiansa S^{1*}, Muthmainnah Mursidin², Rizka Indahyanti³

Received: March 18, 2025; Accepted: April 23, 2025; Published: May 1, 2025

^{1,2,3}English Education Department, Faculty of Teacher Training, Education and Literature, Universitas Islam Makassar, Indonesia

^{1*}Corresponding author, email: ardi1natmas@gmail.com

Abstract: This study aims to analyze the effectiveness of the Spelling Bee method in improving English vocabulary mastery of eighth grade students at SMP Negeri 17 Marusu. This study uses a quantitative approach with a pre-experimental design, namely one-group pretest-posttest. A total of 25 students of class VIII.a were selected as research samples. Data were collected through vocabulary tests before and after treatment, and analyzed using the Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test. The results of the study showed a significant increase in students' vocabulary mastery after the Spelling Bee method was implemented. The average pretest score of students was 80.80, while the average posttest score increased to 98.00. The results of the statistical analysis showed a significance value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$), so the null hypothesis (H_0) which states that "there is no significant difference in vocabulary improvement before and after treatment" is rejected. Conversely, the alternative hypothesis (H_1) which states that "there is a significant difference in vocabulary improvement before and after treatment" is accepted. In addition, this method also increases students' motivation and participation in learning English. Thus, the Spelling Bee method can be considered as an effective learning strategy to improve students' English vocabulary mastery.

Keywords: English vocabulary, Spelling Bee, Eighth Grade Students

1. INTRODUCTION

The history of English language learning began during the spread of English as the dominant language in the 19th and 20th centuries, which was mainly influenced by British colonialism. Initially, learning English tends to focus on understanding formal literature and grammar. However, as time went on, attention shifted to practical communication skills in the language. English is the second language taught in schools in the world of education because, the practice of English is no longer limited to international destinations but also local communication. In Indonesia, English is one of the main subjects in education (Mursidin et al., 2022).

In this era, the need for English language skills has become a familiar thing. The development of technology and the advancement of civilization have opened the door for anyone to interact globally. In the education sector, the importance of supporting students to have competitive skills is immense. One effective way is to master the English language. In the current era of globalization, the ability to communicate, especially using English, is essential to adapt to technological developments and cross-cultural interactions (Mandasari et al., 2022).

The development of English teaching methods follows the evolution of educational and linguistic theories. Starting from teaching that emphasizes aspects of conventional grammar to communicative approaches that focus on using language in real communicative situations. This new approach encourages students to learn through hands-on interaction, leading to more natural and sustainable language skills. English also plays a crucial role in accessing the various educational, research, and cultural resources available globally. By mastering the English language, students can access the latest information, literature, and innovations from around the world, which can enrich their learning experience (Melati et al., 2023).

Learning English at SMPN 17 Marusu faces significant challenges, especially in the aspect of vocabulary learning. Vocabulary is a crucial aspect of language skills, especially in the context of the use of English as an increasingly important international language in today's era of globalization. To ensure adequate ability to communicate in this language, vocabulary mastery is essential. A broad and accurate vocabulary allows a person to convey thoughts, ideas, and information more effectively (Sari, L., & Lestari, Z. 2019)

In the context of learning English at SMPN 17 Marusu, several challenges are faced that need to be overcome so that the learning process becomes more effective. Factors such as the lack of variety in learning methods and the lack of student involvement in the learning process can be the cause of this low interest and motivation. In addition, it should also be noted that each student has a different learning style. Some students may be more responsive to learning methods that involve hands-on interaction, while others may prefer to learn through competitive and fun activities. Therefore, choosing the right learning method is very important to create an inclusive and effective learning environment for all students.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Vocabulary Learning Method

Learning is a teacher's effort to direct students in acquiring knowledge, skills, character, attitudes and beliefs. One indication of learning success is a positive change in student behavior (Syah, ME, & Pertiwi, DS 2024). To achieve learning goals effectively and efficiently, good cooperation between teachers and students is needed in school administration. Vocabulary is a key element that needs to be emphasized in learning English. It is an essential foundation for a person's ability to speak, listen, read, and write.

Poor student vocabulary is a problem that needs to be solved well because vocabulary is indispensable for learning English. Student ability is the foundation of student success, but the problem with teachers is that they always misinterpret the word ability in a broad context. Therefore, innovation and creativity are needed to improve students' vocabulary or learning (Sondakh & Sya, 2022). Teachers need to facilitate vocabulary learning by teaching practical words and helping students understand their personal meaning (Pertiwi et al., 2021). In an effort to facilitate vocabulary learning,

teachers have an important role in teaching relevant and useful words and helping students understand their personal meaning.

Teaching English vocabulary is not only to prepare the students with the list of words and ask them to memorize. The teachers are expected to provide students with rich and exciting exercises which can help them to improve their vocabularies (Imran, 2023). The choice of learning media, especially English, must be effective. One alternative media that is often used is Realia. Realia is a real media that exists in the surrounding environment, in the sense that the media must be concrete so that students can be actively involved in the learning process so that the material presented by the teacher can run well. The media can be shown to students during the learning process (Jusmaniar, 2020).

In addition, providing continuous support to students in overcoming learning challenges is also an important factor in improving the effectiveness of learning English vocabulary. Teachers can provide constructive feedback, provide additional guidance, or adjust learning approaches to suit the needs of each student. By providing the right support, students can feel more confident in facing difficulties in learning vocabulary and be more motivated to continue learning and developing. Overall, learning English vocabulary requires a holistic approach that integrates diverse learning methods, connects vocabulary to everyday contexts, and provides ongoing support to students. With a comprehensive and integrated approach like this, students can better develop their English language skills and achieve academic success.

2.2. Spelling Bee

Spelling Bee is a competition where participants are tested on their ability to spell out a given word. Usually, participants will be given a list of certain words that they must memorize and then they will be called to take turns spelling these words in front of an assessor or an audience. In an educational context, Spelling Bees are often held in schools as a way to teach and test English vocabulary. Bee spelling is used as a method to improve English skills, it is a practical, simple and easy approach. According to (No et al., 2022). There is a close relationship between music and language, so spelling bees can be considered a fun tool in learning English. The use of spelling bees by teachers has many advantages in teaching English.

Spelling bees, with their interactive and entertaining nature, can motivate students to be more active in learning English. In addition, through spelling bees, students can improve their ability to listen, understand, and pronounce words in English correctly. It can also help students to expand their vocabulary as well as improve spelling skills. Vocabulary is the words that people understand both their meaning and usage. Someone must have sufficient vocabulary to understand what is read and heard, to speak and write the right words that could be understood by others (Rizka Indahyanti, 2010).

In addition to the academic benefits, Spelling Bees can also help in the development of students' social skills. The competition provides an opportunity for students to interact with their classmates, collaborate on preparation, and

support each other throughout the event. This can help strengthen social relationships among students and create an inclusive and cooperative learning environment. Thus, Spelling Bee is a special learning method that is not only effective in improving English vocabulary and skills, but also provides additional benefits in developing students' academic, social, and independence skills.

2.3. Vocabulary and Spelling Bee

Spelling Bee is an educational activity that primarily focuses on the accurate spelling of words. At a basic conceptual level, it helps students recognize letter patterns, pronunciation rules, and word structures. As learners progress, the activity extends to more complex linguistic skills, such as understanding word origins (etymology), prefixes, suffixes, and language families. The higher the level of the competition, the more it challenges participants' cognitive and memory abilities, encouraging deeper engagement with language and promoting mastery beyond surface-level memorization.

Vocabulary refers to the body of words known and used by an individual in a particular language. Conceptually, vocabulary development begins with recognizing and understanding basic, high-frequency words, which form the foundation of communication. As students advance, they are introduced to more academic and domain-specific vocabulary that allows for precise and nuanced expression. Vocabulary acquisition is crucial for all language skills—reading, writing, speaking, and listening—and plays a vital role in comprehension, fluency, and critical thinking (Sulviana, 2021).

A word wall is an interactive tool used to teach students vocabulary needed for reading and writing. It is an organized collection of words displayed in large letters on a classroom wall. These words can be arranged alphabetically, by theme (such as weather-related words), or by spelling pattern. Most teachers regularly add at least five new words each week, while many others are added spontaneously as needed. Word walls promote literacy by providing a print-rich environment and encouraging students to develop an excitement about words (Mursidin,M.,Nurjannah,S.,and Misrawati, M., 2020).

3. METHODS

This research uses method descriptive research qualitative approach. In this study, the type of research used is quantitative research. A quantitative approach was chosen to measure the effectiveness of using the Spelling Bee method in improving students' English vocabulary mastery. This research would allow data to be collected on the increase in the number of words mastered by students after engaging in the Spelling Bee method. This study used a pre-experimental design with a one-group pre-test-post-test design, where one group of students is tested before and after receiving the treatment, which in this case is the Spelling Bee method. The researcher would observe the changes in students' spelling skills by giving a spelling test before and after the treatment using the Spelling Bee method.

4. RESULTS

4.1. Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores

Table 4.1. The classification of frequency and percentage score of students Spelling Bee in experimental class (Pre-test)

Total Score	Level Ability	Frequency	Percent
90-100	Excellent	11	44%
80-89	Good	7	28%
70-79	Fairly good	3	12%
60-69	Fair	1	4%
0-59	Poor	3	12%
Total		25	100%

The data in table 4.1. shows that of the 25 students in the experimental class pre-test, there were 11 (44%) students at the Excellent level, 7 (28%) student at the good level, 3 (12%) students at the fairly good level, 1 (4%) student at the fair levels and 3 (12%) students at the poor levels.

Table 4.2. The classification of frequency and percentage score of students Spelling Bee in experimental class (Post-test)

Total Score	Level Ability	Frequency	Percent
90-100	Excellent	25	100%
80-89	Good	0	0%
70-79	Fairly good	0	0%
60-69	Fair	0	0%
0-59	Poor	0	0%
Total		25	100%

The data in table 4.2. shows that of the 25 students in the experimental class post-test, there were 25 (100%) students at the Excellent level, and no students got the fair and poor levels.

Based on the Tests of Normality using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests shows that the Pretest Class data has a significance value (Sig.) of 0.011 in both tests, while the Posttest Class has a significance value of 0.000. Because the Sig. value in both groups is less than 0.05, it can be concluded that the data is not normally distributed. Therefore, in further analysis, it is recommended to use non-parametric statistical tests that do not require the assumption of normality.

The results of the analysis using the Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test showed that there was a significant difference between the pretest and post-test results. From the table, it can be seen that all 25 respondents had higher post-test scores than the pretest, with the number of positive ranks being 325 and no negative ranks or equal values (ties). In the "Test Statistics" table, the Z value

obtained was -4.416 with an Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) value of 0.000. Since the significance value is less than 0.05, it can be concluded that there was a significant increase in the posttest results compared to the pretest. These results indicate that the intervention or treatment given before the posttest had a positive impact on improving the respondents' learning outcomes.

Based on the results of the analysis using the Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test, it was found that there was a significant difference between the pretest and posttest scores. This is indicated by the Z value of -4.416 and the significance value (Asymp. Sig. 2-tailed) of 0.000, which is smaller than the significance level of 0.05. Thus, the null hypothesis (H_0), which states that there is no difference between the pretest and posttest scores, is rejected, while the alternative hypothesis (H_1), which states that there is a significant difference, is accepted. In addition, the test results showed that no participants experienced a decrease in scores on the posttest compared to the pretest (Negative Ranks = 0), and all participants experienced an increase in scores after treatment (Positive Ranks = 25). Thus, these results indicate that the use of Spelling Bee in learning significantly improves students' vocabulary.

5. DISCUSSION

The findings of this study indicate that the use of the Spelling Bee method has a significant impact on improving students' English vocabulary mastery. The data analysis shows a marked increase in students' vocabulary test scores from the pretest to the post-test. This improvement demonstrates that engaging students in a structured and interactive spelling can enhance their vocabulary skills. One of the key factors contributing to this improvement is the active participation required in Spelling Bee activities. Unlike traditional vocabulary learning methods that rely on passive memorization, Spelling Bee encourages students to actively engage with words by listening, recalling, and spelling them correctly. This interactive approach aligns with the findings of previous studies, such as Rantika et al. (2019), who concluded that the Spelling Bee game significantly enhances students' vocabulary mastery by making the learning process more engaging and competitive.

Furthermore, the study highlights the importance of teacher guidance in ensuring the effectiveness of the Spelling Bee method. Teachers play a crucial role in selecting appropriate word lists, providing feedback, and creating a supportive learning environment. Asma (2022) emphasizes that teachers should facilitate spelling activities by incorporating visual and auditory aids to cater to diverse learning styles. In conclusion, the findings of this study support the effectiveness of the Spelling Bee method in improving students' vocabulary mastery. The method not only enhances students' vocabulary skills but also improving spelling skills in learning English. Future research could explore the long-term effects of the Spelling Bee method on students' language proficiency and its application in different educational contexts.

6. CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings and discussions in the previous chapters, it can be concluded that the use of the Spelling Bee method has a significant impact on improving students' English vocabulary mastery. The pretest and posttest results showed a noticeable increase in students' vocabulary scores after the implementation of the Spelling Bee method. The statistical analysis using the Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test confirmed that there was a significant difference between the pretest and posttest results, indicating that the Spelling Bee method effectively enhances students' vocabulary acquisition.

The findings also suggest that the Spelling Bee method not only helps students memorize words but also improves their pronunciation, spelling accuracy, and motivation to learn English. The competitive nature of the Spelling Bee encouraged students to be more engaged in the learning process, making vocabulary learning more interactive and enjoyable. Furthermore, the students' positive responses toward the Spelling Bee method indicate that it can be an effective and innovative approach to teaching vocabulary in the classroom.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The researchers express the gratitude for all those who have assisted in the process of journal.

REFERENCES

- Asma, N. (2022). Investigating the influence of speaking teaching strategies for young EFL students in international elementary schools (doctoral dissertation, UNS (Sebelas March University).
- Imran, M. C. (2023). Babbel Application to Improve Students'vocabularies. *Paedagogia: Jurnal Kajian, Penelitian Dan Pengembangan Kependidikan*, 14(2), 110-113.
- Imran, M. C. ., Marzuki, M. ., Sasabobe, L. ., Jubhari, Y. ., & Sujarwo, S. (2025). DeepL Translate can be a scaffold to speaking fluency: Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). *EDULEC : Education, Language, and Culture Journal*, 5(1), 56–66.
<https://doi.org/10.56314/edulec.v5i1.302>
- Indahyanti, R. (2010). The Implementation of Team Game Tournament of Cooperative Learning Method in Improving Students' Vocabulary Achievement (Doctoral dissertation, Thesis FBS UNM).
- Indahyanti, R. ., Nonci, J. ., Imran, M. C. ., Mursidin, M. ., Sulviana, S., Nurjannah, S. ., ... Sulistiana, S. (2024). Penguatan Keterampilan Mengajar Mahasiswa Melalui Pelatihan Microteaching. *Community Development Journal : Jurnal Pengabdian Masyarakat*, 5(4), 7651–7656. <https://doi.org/10.31004/cdj.v5i4.32219>

- Misrawati, M., Nurjannah, S., & Mursidin, M. (2020). Word-Wall Technique in Improving Students' Vocabulary Mastery at the first Grade of SMPN 4 Kajuara Kabupaten Bone. *DIKDAS MATAPPA: Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan Dasar*, 3(1), 50-58.
- Nonci, J., Nurjannah, S., Sulviana, S., & Abdullah, A. (2020). Teaching English Vocabulary Based Realia Kits at SDN 35 Tajuncu. *Algazali International Journal Educational Research*, 2(2).
- Nonci, J. ., Imran, M. C. ., Mursidin, M. ., Sulviana, S., Indahyanti , R. ., Nurjannah, S. ., ... Salsabila, N. . (2024). Penguatan Menulis Akademik Mahasiswa Melalui Pelatihan Aplikasi Aries (Assisted Revision In English Style). *Community Development Journal : Jurnal Pengabdian Masyarakat*, 5(1), 528–532. <https://doi.org/10.31004/cdj.v5i1.23856>
- Sulviana, S., & Mahendra, I. (2021). The Use of Spelling Bee to Improve Students' English Vocabulary Mastery at SMP Negeri 11 Makassar. *Edumaspul J. Pendidik*, 5(2), 1027-1033.
- Mursidin, M., Scientific Mursidin, I., & Asrang, A. (2022). The Impact of Online Games on Students' English Achievement. *Indonesian Journal of Education (INJOE)*, 2(1), 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.54443/injoe.v2i1.6>
- Melati, E., Kurniawan, M., Marlina, M., Santosa, S., Zahra, R., & Purnama, Y. (2023). The Effect of Technology-Based Teaching Methods on Speaking Ability in English Learning in Secondary Schools. *Journal of Education and Teaching Review (JRPP)*, 6(4), 14. <http://journal.universitaspahlawan.ac.id/index.php/jrpp>
- Mandasari, B., Aminatun, D., Pustika, R., Setiawansyah, S., Megawaty, D.A., Ahmad, I., & Alita, D. (2022). English Learning Assistance for SMA/MA/SMK students in Purworejo Village, Central Lampung. *Journal of Community Development: Journal of Community Service*, 3(1).
- Pertiwi, AB, Rahmawati, A., & Hafidah, R. (2021). Methods of Learning English Vocabulary in Early Childhood. *Kumara Scholars*, 9(2), 95. <https://doi.org/10.20961/kc.v9i2.49037>
- Rantika, P., Pudjiati, D., & Megawati, M. (2019, November). Improve students' vocabulary mastery through the Spelling Bee game. In the proceedings of the National Seminar on Education STKIP Kusuma Negara.
- Sari, L., & Lestari, Z. (2019,). Improving students' English language skills in facing the era of revolution 4.0. In the proceedings of the National Seminar of the Postgraduate Program of PGRI University, Palembang.
- Syah, ME, & Pertiwi, DS (2024). Learning psychology. *Prosperous Young Fenic*.
- Sondakh, D.C., & Sya, M. F. (2022). Difficulties in Learning English Vocabulary at the Elementary School Level. *Karimah Tawhid*, 1, 9–10. <https://ojs.unida.ac.id/karimahtauhid/article/view/781>.