

THE USE OF SIMON SAYS GAME TO IMPROVE STUDENTS' VOCABULARY MASTERY IN LEARNING ENGLISH AT SMA 1 JUWANA

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Abstract: Game-based learning is an innovative method that boosts vocabulary learning through increased student engagement. This research aims to (a) find out students' vocabulary mastery before they participate in vocabulary practice using the Simon Says game. (b) find out students' vocabulary mastery after they participate in vocabulary practice using the Simon Says game. (c) know significant difference in vocabulary mastery before and after they participate in vocabulary practice using the Simon Says game. This research used a quantitative method with a pre-experimental study in one group pre-test post-test design. The research data was collected using a multiple choice pre-test and post-test measurement technique consisting of 20 multiple choice items. The population of this research was the class X of SMA 1 Juwana in Academic Year 2024/2025. The sample of this research was 32 students of class X-6. The results of this study indicate an increase in scores, with the average pre-test score rising from 57.03 to 83.59 in the post-test. This improvement is supported by the SPSS analysis, which shows a significance value (Sig.) of 0.00, indicating a statistically significant difference before and after the implementation of the Simon Says game in learning vocabulary at SMA 1 juwana.

Keyword: *Vocabulary, Vocabulary mastery, Simon says game, Learning English*

INTRODUCTION

Communication is an important thing in this world. Communication needs language, but not only one language is used. There are more than a million languages in use today. Every nation has an official language and thousands of dialects, making it difficult to determine the total number of languages spoken worldwide. Every nation in the modern era needs to be able to understand and speak languages other than its own in order to communicate. Therefore, people use English functioning as a medium of communication. English serves as a medium for international communication, just as it does in Indonesia. English has become a foreign language to be studied in Indonesia. English has four important aspects that should be learned: speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Sharma & Puri (2020) stated that mastery of the four language skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing is essential for the development of complete communication skills as well as an effective form of exchange of information and ideas. Mastering vocabulary is a key aspect of learning those aspects, which is critical for acquiring English as a foreign language. Vocabulary is a collection of words that must be mastered to understand and use language, not just a list of words, but includes the form, meaning and use of the words (Nation, 2018). According to Lessard-Clouston (2021) Vocabulary refers to the collection of words in a language, encompassing not only individual terms but also phrases or groups of words, like single words, express specific meanings. Odnokaya et al. (2021) stated that vocabulary traditionally known as the use of a collection of words in a particular language. Workie & Feleke (2020) define vocabulary of a language encompasses individual words and phrases or combinations of many words that express a certain meaning. According to experts, vocabulary can be defined as a collection of words, phrases, and expressions in a language that a person understands and uses to communicate meaning that include includes the form, meaning and use of the words. Odnokaya et al. (2021) said mastering any foreign language requires vocabulary knowledge. Vocabulary is also dynamic, meaning it continues to develop along with a person's learning and experience. In Indonesia itself, students learn

English starting from vocabulary, starting from elementary school. Senior high school need strong vocabulary to enhance reading understanding, speaking fluency, and overall communication skills.

Mastering vocabulary is essential for student academic success and future opportunities in global communication. However, learning and teaching the English process for senior high school students was not an effortless thing. Vocabulary mastery causes a challenge because of monotonous teaching methods, lack of involvement, and inadequate contextual application. Many students feel that learning vocabulary is boring or difficult, which can cause a lack of involvement and memory. Particularly for students living in rural areas, they may perceive English as a less important language to learn. These challenges make teachers look for ways to make it easier to teach vocabulary to students. Innovative teaching methods have been developed to make language learning more engaging and effective. One of these methods is game-based learning, which has received great attention because of its ability to increase student participation and motivation. The game not only creates a pleasant and interactive learning atmosphere but also provides an opportunity for contextual and recurrent exposure to new words, which are crucial for the memory of vocabulary. Games are broadly acknowledged as a powerful strategy for supporting language acquisition, especially in terms of boosting student motivation and fostering an interactive classroom atmosphere. In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning, games can greatly enhance high school students' participation and involvement in the learning process (Mardiah & Desi, 2024). Ahmed (2023) states that learning vocabulary through games is a fun method that can leave a lasting impression on students. The practical exercises that are conducted in class can help the second learners retain new vocabulary. Having fun in class can help ESL students learn languages more quickly and easily. One game that can cover several learning styles is "Simon Says".

"Simon Says" is one of the efforts for various types of students' needs in learning, especially kinesthetic and auditory students, which offers an inclusive approach to teaching vocabulary. J.asher (2012) stated through the Total Physical Response (TPR) approach, the emphasis is that physical involvement in responding to commands helps form strong associations between words, meanings and actions. According to Nasution (2021) Simon Says is a directive driven game that requires students to respond physically to verbal cues, promoting active listening and kinesthetic engagement through object-based interactions. Simon Says is a tool to improve children's cognitive abilities. This game helps children listen carefully and make decisions faster while playing. In the context of language teaching, this game can be adapted to focus on vocabulary acquisition by incorporating target words into the commands. In addition, the interactive aspect of this game encourages student involvement, active listening, and thinking quickly, all of which are important skills in language learning. Despite having a potential benefit, research on the use of "Simon Says" in the English class is still limited.

The use of the simon says game has been studied previously by Suci Humairoh et al. (2023) used qualitative research to describe how effective the Simon Says game for students vocabulary, with the findings in this study indicate that the use of the Simon Says game is significantly effective in improving students' English vocabulary mastery. This effectiveness is reflected in the consistent positive changes after several learning sessions involving the implementation of the game. The second is research has been done by Mbere et al. (2025) used a classroom action research method to increase students' vocabulary use scrabble game. The results of the first cycle showed an average score of 61.77%. In the second cycle, the average score increased to 71.59%, and in the third cycle, the average score reached 92.95%. The findings of this study indicate that the Scrabble game media is suitable for use in English learning. Additionally, the Scrabble game changes the classroom atmosphere to be more active and greatly assists students in enhancing their English vocabulary. The third is research has been done by Matondang & Harahap (2022) employed a quantitative method using a pre-experimental

design, specifically the one-group pre-test and post-test design, to examine the effect of the Simon Says Game method on the listening ability of eighth-grade students at MTSS Al-Washliyah Serbelawan. Based on the data analysis, it was found that before the treatment using the Simon Says Game method, the students' listening ability was low, with a mean pre-test score of 26.45, and the low level dominated. However, after the treatment, the students' listening ability improved significantly, as evidenced by the mean post-test score of 79.03, with the good level becoming dominant. Further analysis revealed that the Simon Says Game method contributed a significant effect value of 52.58 on the students' listening ability. Therefore, it is concluded that the Simon Says Game method has a positive effect on the listening ability of eighth-grade students at MTSS Al-Washliyah Serbelawan in the academic year 2021/2022. It is suggested that this method be considered an appropriate approach for improving students' listening ability. The fourth is research has been done by Hidayah et al. (2023) applying a qualitative descriptive approach by utilizing observation techniques, distributing questionnaires, and interviews with English teachers who participated in the learning process. Aims to assess the implementation of the Game-Based Learning (GBL) method in an effort to improve vocabulary mastery in EFL students at SMPN Satu Atap 1 Katingan Hilir. The results of the study revealed that the use of the Game-Based Learning (GBL) approach was proven to be significant in improving the English language proficiency of EFL students at SMPN Satu Atap 1 Katingan Hilir. This finding shows that interactive and fun learning methods are able to cover the shortcomings previously found in the English learning process. Based on the analysis data, there was a significant increase in students' understanding after participating in learning activities by implementing the GBL technique. The delivery of educational materials through an interesting game format has been proven to be able to increase students' interest in learning, thus encouraging active participation and interaction in the learning process. Thus, the GBL approach can be used as an effective choice in developing interesting and productive learning strategies to optimize EFL students' English language proficiency. The fifth is research has been done by Ahmed (2023) used quantitative to investigate the effects of learning vocabulary through games, aiming to uncover the educational advantages and explore how games can be integrated into language classrooms to improve student learning. The results indicate that English is easier to learn when taught through various creative activities.

Those five previous studies discussed the use of games in learning, but there are some differences with the research conducted by the researcher. The research conducted by Suci Humairoh et al. (2023) used a qualitative method to test the effectiveness of the Simon Says game in improving students' vocabulary mastery. Meanwhile, the research conducted by Mbere et al. (2025) also used a qualitative method, but with a focus on a different game, namely the Scrabble game. Matondang & Harahap, (2022) research is similar to this study, but the variable studied is students' listening skills. Furthermore, Hidayah et al. (2023) research did not specifically mention the game used, and the method applied was a qualitative method. Similarly, Ahmed, (2023) research also did not specify which game was studied in detail. Therefore, the researcher chose to use a specific game, namely Simon Says, with a quantitative method to test its effect on students' vocabulary mastery.

Based on this background, this research aims to (a) find out students' vocabulary mastery before they participate in vocabulary practice using the Simon Says game. (b) find out students' vocabulary mastery after they participate in vocabulary practice using the Simon Says game. (c) know significant difference in vocabulary mastery before and after they participate in vocabulary practice using the Simon Says game and intends that this research will contribute to the literature and understanding of the use of the "Simon Says" game to encourage students to learn. It can also help teachers and educators figure out how to improve students' vocabulary in a fun way.

METHOD

This article used quantitative methods that is measured using numbers. This study used a pre-experimental design to conduct research. A pre-experimental design involves examining a single group that receives a specific treatment or intervention, without the inclusion of a control group for comparison, thereby focusing solely on the changes observed within that experimental group (*Creswell, 2013*) By using the One-Group Pre-test-Post-test Design, This design includes a pre-test, then treatment and a post-test for one group. This research conduct at SMA 1 Juwana, one of the senior high school in Pati that is located in Jalan Ki Hajar Dewantara No.54, Juwana, Pati Regency, Central Java. The population of this research consisted of tenth-grade students enrolled at SMA 1 Juwana during the 2024/2025 academic year. By using the Simple Random Sampling technique, sampling was carried out. Random sampling is one method of selecting participants in quantitative research. everyone has an equal chance of being selected from the population, so random sampling ensures that the sample is representative of the population (*Creswell, 2013*).The sample in this study was taken from one class among grade 10 at SMA 1 Juwana in the 2024/2025 academic year. The selected class was class X-6 which contains 32 students. Data collection can be done in various settings, various sources, and various ways (*Sugiyono, 2015*). To collect the necessary data, the researcher employed testing methods and documentation as the primary research instruments. The instrument used to measure students' abilities and perspectives in mastering vocabulary using the Simon Says game. The research was conducted for three meetings. A pre-test was carried out during the first meeting. The class was treated further during the following meeting. A post-test was carried out at ending of the session to evaluate the students' improvement using the Simon Says method. To evaluate the impact of the Simon Says game on vocabulary learning, the students' pre-test and post-test scores were compared. The score categorized into five components in scoring and each of them has different level score; Excellent, Good, Adequate, inadequate, failed. The researcher used IBM SPSS Statistics to conduct a quantitative analysis of the data collected from the pre- and post-tests. The paired sample t-test was employed for the study, which intends to compare the average scores of the same group before and after the test.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In this research, the amount of the students who were engaged as the sampling of the treatment was selected randomly. They were 32 students of Class X-6 of SMA 1 Juwana. Furthermore, they were given the pre-test based on 20 multiple-choice questions and a post-test consisting of 20 multiple-choice questions. Post-test is given after students receive treatment during learning.

Table 1. pre-test and post-test score

No	Initial	pre-test	post-test
1	ACG	60	100
2	ABR	65	75
3	ASP	55	85
4	A	55	85
5	BDY	65	90
6	CMS	50	90
7	CSA	75	70
8	DS	50	85
9	DCM	40	80
10	GDS	35	100
11	GR	70	90

12	HME	50	95
13	HNS	30	70
14	ISF	40	70
15	KKS	65	90
16	KAF	65	90
17	MHL	70	80
18	MDSN	60	75
19	NSR	45	75
20	NSR	50	80
21	NITT	65	85
22	QNF	75	90
23	RAE	45	80
24	RNN	70	85
25	RAN	70	90
26	SMK	55	80
27	SNA	45	75
28	UKI	55	75
29	VAP	60	80
30	VNI	60	85
31	WFD	65	85
32	ZKP	65	90

It is seen from the table that came before it that class X-6 students average pre-test score was 57.03., this indicates that, in general the students' knowledge of the content before getting treatment was significantly inadequate. This value indicates that the majority of students have not completely understood the content to be taught. Furthermore, it can be seen that the highest score obtained by students in the pre-test was 75, which shows that only a few students already have a good initial understanding of the material. Meanwhile, the lowest score was 30, which indicates that there were students with a very limited level of understanding. The range of values obtained is quite wide, indicating that there was a significant variation in ability among students before using Simon Says game in the learning process.

A significant increase can be seen compared to the previous pre-test average value. 83.59 is the average post-test value of class X-6 students. The results of the average post-test score can explain that most students were able to achieve good learning outcomes after being given the Simon Says Game treatment in vocabulary learning. In addition, the data also shows that the highest score achieved by students is 100, which is the perfect score for students on the post-test. Meanwhile, a score of 70 was the lowest score in the post-test, but this score was still in the adequate category. This range of values indicates that there are no more students in the low score category, and overall the post-test results show more even and improved academic achievement compared to the pre-test scores or before treatment was given.

After all the students' pre-test and post-test data have been collected and calculated thoroughly, the next step is to classify the values into five assessment categories. This category is arranged based on a certain score range to facilitate analysis of the level of student learning achievement. This qualification division aims to provide a clearer picture of the distribution of student abilities before and after treatment using the Simon says game in learning. Complete information on the number of students in each category and the percentage of distribution can be seen in the following table:

Table 2. students category score

No	Score	Grade	Category	<i>f</i>		P%	
				pre	post	pre	post
1	90-100	A	Excellent	0	11	0%	34%
2	80-89	B	Good	0	13	0%	41%
3	70-79	C	Adequate	6	8	19%	25%
4	60-69	D	inadequate	11	0	34%	0%
5	less than 60	F	failed	15	0	37%	0%

The qualification table shows a significant increase in student scores after the Simon Says treatment in learning. This can be seen from the changes in the value category, there is an increase in the high value category such as the Excellent category (A) increasing from 0 students (0%) to 11 students (34%), and the Good category (B) increasing from 0 students (0%) to 13 students (41%). Meanwhile, the Adequate category (C) also have a slight increase, from 6 students to 8 students (25%). On the other hand, there was a drastic decrease in the lower grade categories. Inadequate category (D) decreased from 11 students (34%) to 0 students (0%), and Failed category (F) decreased from 15 students (37%) to 0 students (0%). The analysis outcome of this table have shown that the Simon Says treatment in learning was effective because there were no more students in the failed or inadequate categories, which previously included more than 70% of students (D and F). Majority of students are now in the Good and Excellent categories, which cover 75% of the total number of students (A and B). This shows that the intervention provided has succeeded in improving learning outcomes significantly and evenly.

From the qualifications it can be seen that there is an increase, but the researcher calculated using SPSS to find out the significance accurate and systematic analysis results of the increase. Two statistical analysis steps are included in this data processing. The data analysis involved two main statistical tests, the normality test, used to assess whether the dataset follows a normal distribution, and the t-test, applied to examine the significance of differences between pre-test and post-test scores and to evaluate the effectiveness of the implemented treatment. Given that the sample size consisted of 32 students fewer than 50 participants the Shapiro-Wilk test was chosen as the appropriate method for testing normality.

Table 3. Tests of Normality

Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
.158	32	.040	.953	32	.173
.132	32	.170	.946	32	.112

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

The normality assessment using the Shapiro-Wilk test yielded significance values of 0.173 for the pre-test and 0.112 for the post-test, both of which exceeded the 0.05 threshold. These results indicate that the distribution of the data in both tests meets the assumption of normality. Given that the pre-test and post-test were administered to the same participants, the researcher proceeded with a Paired Samples t-test to examine whether there was a statistically meaningful difference in students' learning outcomes following the implementation of the Simon Says game as an instructional approach.

Table 4. Paired Samples Statistics

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Pre-test	57.03	32	11.699	2.068
	post-test	83.59	32	8.056	1.424

Table 5. Paired Samples Test

		Paired Differences				t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Pre-test - post-test	-26.563	12.664	2.239	-31.128	-21.997	11.865	31	.000

Based on The analysis outcome of the Paired Samples t-test, the mean difference between the pre-test and post-test scores was -26.563, indicating a notable improvement in post-test performance compared to the pre-test. Additionally, the significance value for the two-tailed test was found to be below 0.05, confirming that the difference between the pre-test and post-test scores is statistically significant.

In this study, two hypotheses were tested. According to the null hypothesis, there is no statistically significant difference between the students' pre-test and post-test scores, meaning that the implementation of the Simon Says game does not influence their learning outcomes. In contrast, the alternative hypothesis indicates that a significant difference is present between the two assessments, suggesting that the use of Simon Says contributes positively to the improvement of students' learning achievements. The hypothesis testing was carried out through the IBM SPSS statistical software, and the results indicated that the p-value obtained was less than 0.05, demonstrating statistical significance.

As a result, the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected in favor of the alternative hypothesis (H_1). This signifies that the instructional intervention implemented in the study was effective in producing a meaningful improvement in students' academic performance.

This finding is in line with previous study conducted by Suci Humairoh et al. (2023) entitled "The Effectiveness Of Simon Says Game To Improve Students Vocabulary Mastery In Learning English". In previous study, it shows that implementing the Simon Says game as a teaching method supports the development of students' vocabulary skills. However, there is a gap between previous research and the research conducted by the researcher, the previous study uses a qualitative method which only provides detailed descriptions while the research conducted by the researcher is more statistically measurable because it uses a qualitative method with the spss measurement tool. In the research, explains that in the first meeting, only a small number of students showed enthusiastic to learn vocabulary through Simon Says game. However, in the next meeting, almost all students joined in, encouraged by seeing their friends enjoying learning while playing. As time went by, more and more students began to participate enthusiastically, and they started to master vocabulary slowly. This increasing enthusiasm of students also occurred during the research conducted by the researcher. At the beginning, students were a little interested in the Simon Says game because they did not know about the game. On the first day, students were still a little confused, only a few students were enthusiastic about following. However, after being demonstrated and playing the game together from the first day to last day (third meet), students looked very enthusiastic about learning to use the Simon Says game. The results were reinforced by the pre-test and post-test results which increased by 46.57%. From an average pre-test score of 57.03 to an average post-test score of 83.59.

Another previous study was by Mbere et al. (2025) entitled "Enhancing Vocabulary Mastery Using Scrabble Game". Although with a different variable gap, namely the use of different games, scrabble game with Simon says game, it can be admitted that the use of games in English learning can improve students' vocabulary. This study was implemented over three cycles, each demonstrating a progressive improvement in both average scores and the percentage of students meeting the success criteria. In the first cycle, the class achieved an average score of 61.77%, with only 31.81% of students reaching the expected standard. In the second cycle, the average score increased to 71.59%, and 77.27% of students met the learning criteria. By the third cycle, the average score rose to 92.59%, with all students (100%) successfully achieving the target. The class success rate improved by 40% from the first to the second cycle, and by an additional 20% from the second to the third. This consistent upward trend aligns with the findings from the researcher's application of the Simon Says game, which also demonstrated improved student outcomes following its implementation.

Previous research that also discusses the Simon says game is a study by Matondang & Harahap (2022) entitled "The Effect of Simon Says Game Method on Listening Ability for Eighth Grade Students of MTSS Al-Washliyah Serbelawan". This study presents a variable distinction from previous research conducted by the researcher. While the earlier study focused on examining the effectiveness of the Simon Says game in enhancing listening skills, the present research explores its impact on students' vocabulary acquisition. Despite this difference in focus, Simon Says has demonstrated its versatility as a learning tool, proving beneficial for both vocabulary development and listening comprehension. Findings from the listening-focused study, conducted with eighth-grade students at MTSS Al-Washliyah Serbelawan, revealed a significant improvement in listening skills following the use of the Simon Says game. The mean score difference between the pre-test and post-test was 52.58. The results of the hypothesis testing showed that the calculated t-value (26.055) was greater than the t-table value at the 5% significance level (2.042), leading to the acceptance of the Alternative Hypothesis and the rejection of the Null Hypothesis.

Thus, the three previous studies are still closely related to this study, although there are some gaps that differentiate them. The three studies generally show consistent results, namely that the use of

games in learning has been proven to be able to improve students' vocabulary mastery. Moreover, several findings also indicate that the application of games not only has a positive impact on vocabulary mastery, but also contributes to improve the other language skills such as listening skills and encouraging increased motivation and enthusiasm of students in the English learning process.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this research indicate that the integration of the Simon Says game into English vocabulary instruction leads to a significant enhancement in students' vocabulary mastery. The average score increased from 57.03 in the pre-test to 83.59 in the post-test, reflecting an improvement of 46.57%. Statistical analysis supported the significance of this gain, with a p-value of 0.000, confirming the effectiveness of the treatment. Consequently, the Simon Says game proves to be an impactful and engaging strategy for vocabulary development in the English language classroom. The researcher recommends that educators incorporate enjoyable and interactive methods such as Simon Says to foster better comprehension and active student involvement. It is also encouraged that students engage fully in such activities to reinforce vocabulary learning. Future researchers may use the present study as a foundation for investigating the application of Simon Says in developing other language skills or within varied educational settings.

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