

# EFL senior high school students' perceptions on using scrabble to increase their vocabulary mastery

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to investigate students' perceptions of using scrabble to increase their English vocabulary mastery. This study used a quantitative method in the form of a survey. Questionnaires were distributed to 78 students at a private high school in East Jakarta who have played scrabble. The questionnaire used Likert scale questions and was divided into three domains comprising difficulties, perception, and implementation. The data that had been obtained was then analyzed to reveal the percentages of students' perceptions in each domain using SPSS. The results show that 43.6 % of the students have difficulties in acquiring vocabulary while 56.4% don't face many difficulties. Moreover, 35.9% of students feel motivated and need scrabble to increase vocabulary mastery while 64.1% of them perceive that they do not need scrabble to learn vocabulary. Regarding the implementation of scrabble to learn English vocabulary, 52.6% of students believe that scrabble helps them acquire vocabulary.

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## 1. Introduction

English is a language that is relatively easy to learn compared to other languages. In learning English, based on the book by ProLiteracy America (1997) there are four skills that must be mastered; reading, speaking, listening, and writing. It will be much easier for someone to communicate new languages, especially English if they master these four skills. Vocabulary is one of the important language components (Hadijah, Pratolo, & Rondiyah, 2020). McCarthy (2010) states that no matter how good the grammar is mastered by a student and no matter how good the pronunciation is mastered, without word communication, communication will not occur in any meaningful way. So, in supporting the four language skills above, vocabulary mastery is needed so that in using language, the students can express it smoothly because the ideas can be channeled well (Jackson, 2002; Tania et.al., 2018).

Vocabulary learning for students is now considered complicated because the only way they learn vocabulary is by memorizing it (Hadfield, 1999; Susanto, 2012; Pratolo, & Hafizhah, 2022). Due to lazy and forgetful reasons, students will not learn vocabulary effectively which results in a lack of students' vocabulary (Susanto, 2017). Roeni (2014) stated that many MI/SD class students have difficulty in mastering vocabulary in learning English. They were able to take part in learning

English at that time, but in subsequent meetings, many students forgot the material that had been presented previously, due to their lack of interest in learning English and the lack of English assignments they did at home. In fact, many students get bored in learning vocabulary techniques that use media, such as reading books, opening dictionaries, etc. Therefore, as creative instructors, teachers are required to create learning media that can build student enthusiasm for learning, one of which is through games. Since at this time, students spend more time playing games than reading books. Meanwhile, based on Chairiah and Perdana (2020), vocabulary is one of the first things students must master when learning English because no one can speak English well if they have a limited vocabulary, and anyone who does not have a proportional amount of vocabulary will have difficulty learning English. It is a part of linguistics competence and is typically defined as all the words used by speakers when speaking their native language.

The researcher focused on the students' perceptions of utilizing the scrabble game in this study. The researcher chose scrabble since it has been shown that using it in school can assist students to improve their vocabulary memorization and spelling skills. It has been proven that scrabble, although being an out-of-date game, has a favorable impact on kids' vocabulary development (Ningtyas, 2015). It has also been proven by some relevant studies conducted by Khairini (2019), Sadewo (2016), and Roeni (2014).

Perception refers to a student's thought process during or after learning and how they see the success in their work (Altman, 1985; Asgari & Mustapha, 2011). According to Hermawan & Tyas (2019), perspective is an internal process that has been recognized by individuals when selecting and regulating stimuli that come from outside. This stimulus is captured by one's senses, then spontaneously individual feelings and thoughts will give meaning to the existing stimuli (He, 2010).

Wright, Betteridge, and Buckby (2006) as cited in Fitriah (2020) said that games can provide contextual context that language can be useful and meaningful. Saha and Singh (2016) also stated that the use of games can entertain the learning environment so that the learning process becomes fun and interesting. In addition, Fitriah (2020) stated that games can be used to find skills in English such as reading, listening, and speaking. Coupled with the above opinion, in addition to teaching using games, it will really make students feel enthusiastic. It can also improve their skills in English, especially in reading, listening, and speaking. Furthermore, Huyen and Nga (2003) in Roeni (2014) stated that games can provide some effectiveness in lessons. First, games can make students enjoy and motivated so that it can make it easier for them to learn and accept new lessons such as new words. Secondly, games will definitely make them compete so that they are motivated to be better and always be active in the lesson. Third, Scrabble is a game that aims to enable students to improve their use of English in a flexible and communicative manner. Vocabulary games generally link the real world into the teaching and learning process in the classroom (Nunan et.al., 2005).

One of the games that are commonly used in learning English, especially in vocabulary, is Scrabble. Scrabble is a simple game that can aid the instructor in the teaching of vocabulary, particularly in the areas of memorization, spelling, and comprehension. The meaning of scrabble itself, according to Warner & Brown (2005), is a board game, where the way to play is by building words from the letters obtained to get points, this game is played by two or more players or teams. Besides that, Fitriah (2020), Scrabble is a word game played by two to four people by placing one letter to form a word into a box in the form of columns and rows that have been provided. The word can form a row or column and is the correct word and is in the dictionary. Of the above meanings, scrabble makes it possible to influence students' desires in learning English, especially in learning English words or vocabulary because scrabble is fun and easy to play. Moreover, according to Klimova (2015) as cited in Lisdawati, Sofian, and Supardi (2017), Scrabble is one of the most popular boards that specifically highlight language. In addition, Lisdawati, Sofian, and Supardi (2017) stated that the Scrabble game is a very good medium to teach English in the classroom because it challenges students' ability to remember vocabulary more enjoyably.

Khairini (2019) stated that playing Scrabble gives several advantages. First, it makes students skilled in listening, reading, and writing because of the effect of the many imitations given, especially by the topic being studied in class. Secondly, it increases the number of new vocabularies obtained by students. Third, this strategy is considered suitable for advanced students. Moreover, the flexibility of this strategy can be used in large and small classes

Several studies showed a variety of results with mostly positive results. In the studies conducted by Sadewo (2016), the results of his research showed satisfactory results. Scrabble is considered to be of benefit to students in terms of improving their vocabulary mastery. Scrabble is thought to improve their memorizing, pronunciation, and spelling elements. Another Research is done by Hajar (2019), the result also got a significant improvement, from the questionnaires show that most of the students agree that there is an improvement with their vocabulary after they use scrabble technique for their study method

In addition, another research was done by Prayitno, Sukma, and Eripuddin. The researchers conducted the study at SD Negeri 007 Bangun Purba with 6<sup>th</sup>-grade students as participants from the school. Their research showed that the scrabble game is effectively used as a media for teaching vocabulary mastery to the students at the elementary level. The results are shown from this study that the number of students' achievements in the vocabulary before being taught by the researcher using scrabble was 2184, while their scores after being taught with scrabble was 2684

From the discussion above the researcher proposed that scrabble can improve students' vocabulary skills because it has several advantages. It makes students skilled in listening, reading, and writing. Due to the effect of the many imitations given, the number of new words obtained, the possibility to do it in large or small classes, this strategy is considered suitable for the advanced students. In addition, from here we will also see the comparisons they feel when learning vocabulary before using scrabble and after they learned vocabulary with scrabble.

## 2. Method

The researcher used a quantitative approach by giving students (who have played Scrabble) survey questionnaires with questions about their perceptions of scrabble's impact on their vocabulary skills. According to Barr, Davis, and Johnson as cited in Kabir (2016), a questionnaire refers to a systematic compilation of questions given to a sampling of the population from which information is to be gained. In order to determine whether scrabble is beneficial in boosting students' language skills, the researcher will compute and analyze the students' perceptions. In addition, the researcher surveyed by handing out a survey created by the researcher to students who have played scrabble after the class has ended.

The study was carried out at Budhi Warman senior high school. The researcher conducted the research during an internship program. Due to the pandemic situation at the time, the teaching and learning activities were adjusted to school restrictions using online learning, namely video conferencing through the zoom or googlemeet application given by the school or the supervising teacher. The study was conducted based on the teaching hours received by the researcher while doing internship at Budhi Warman senior high school. The participants of the present research are the students who have played Scrabble in Budhi Warman senior high school from class 10 to class 11.

In collecting data, the researcher gave the survey to the students in class that the researcher taught between grade 10 and grade 11. The researcher got 78 participants from students who have played scrabble from the class the researcher taught. In a class taught by researchers, the researcher only took the students who had played scrabble.

To get data of students' responses in learning vocabulary through scrabble game technique, the researcher made a questionnaire that consisted of 20 items, to be able to get the percentage of each domain. The researcher used a Likert scale. The answer "strongly agree" got a score of 5, "agree" got a value of 4, "neutral" got a value of 3, "disagree" got a value of 2, and "strongly disagree" got a value of 1. The total of everything is calculated using SPSS 27 to find the favorable, namely students whose scores are above the Tmean limit and those who are unfavorable are students whose scores are below the Tmean. Besides that, it is intended to find out the percentage per question of students in the questionnaire by using the formula below:

$$P = \frac{FF}{NN} \times 100\%$$

Where:

P = Percentage from the student's response

F = Frequency of the answer

N = number of students

### 3. Findings and Discussion

The data were taken based on a questionnaire that had been given to students who had been given treatment in the form of playing scrabble by their teacher. The results of these students' perceptions scores show how they perceive the use of scrabble in vocabulary lessons.

The researcher categorizes the questionnaires based on 3 domains, namely difficulties, perception, and implementation. In this section, the researcher aims to see the overall percentage obtained from the questions posed to students.

Table 1. Frequency and percentage of students' difficulties

		Difficulties			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Unfavorable	44	56.4	56.4	56.4
	Favorable	34	43.6	43.6	100.0
	Total	78	100.0	100.0	

As can be seen in the table, favorable means that students have difficulty and unfavorable indicates that they have no difficulty in learning vocabulary before they learned using scrabble. In the following table it can be seen that 43% of students or 34 of 78 students have difficulty in learning vocabulary while 56.4% or 44 people in 78 students do not have too much difficulty in vocabulary.

Table 2. Frequency and percentage of students' Perception

		Perception			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Unfavorable	50	64.1	64.1	64.1
	favorable	28	35.9	35.9	100.0
	Total	78	100.0	100.0	

The table shows the frequency and percentage of students' perceptions about their perception of learning vocabulary assisted by scrabble. This table shows that as many as 50 students from 78 students or 64,1 percent students perceive that they do not need scrabble in learning vocabulary, while 28 students from 78 students or 35,9 percent students said that they feel motivated and need scrabble in learning vocabulary.

Table 3. Frequency and percentage of students' Implementation

		Implementation			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Unfavorable	37	47.4	47.4	47.4
	Favorable	41	52.6	52.6	100.0
	Total	78	100.0	100.0	

The table shows further questions regarding the implementation of Scrabble in learning English, especially Scrabble. This table shows a unique number that in its implementation most of the students said that Scrabble helped them in learning especially English vocabulary. There were 41 students out of 78 students or 52.6 percent of students said so while about 37 students out of 78 students or 47.4 percent of students said that scrabble did not help them in learning English, especially scrabble

The results obtained from the calculation with the above formula are presented in table form. There will be 20 questions followed by an explanation per question-based on the results obtained. These questionnaire results are presented based on the 3 domains described above.

In the research that the researcher made, many students in the implementation agreed that they found it helpful to use scrabble in voice lessons. 41 people or 52.6 percent of students from a total of 78 students whom the researchers took part in while the rest thought they were not helped by scrabble in learning English, especially in learning vocabulary. This result is following what has been stated by previous researchers who have researched the same theme. It is stated that teaching using games will really make students feel enthusiastic. It can also improve their skills in English, especially in reading, listening, and speaking.

Researchers found something interesting in this research in the second domain, namely "perception", researchers got results that were very inclined towards the fact that they did not need scrabble in learning vocabulary, namely, there were 50 students while there were only 28 students who perceived that they needed scrabble in their vocabulary learning. The last domain that the researcher studied was "difficulties". The researcher found that quite a lot of students had difficulties in learning English, especially vocabulary learning. There are 34 students or about 43.6%. This means that almost half of the students studied have difficulty in learning vocabulary.

#### 4. Conclusion

Based on the data that has been analyzed, the researcher concludes that there are still many high school students who are very lacking in their vocabulary even from the data that the researchers researched. Almost half of the population has difficulty in learning vocabulary or to be precise. There are 34 (43.6%) students who feel it is less effective. Their learning is due to their lack of ability in learning vocabulary. Therefore, the teacher must find a way that makes students happy and comfortable in learning vocabulary so that what is being taught enters and remains in the students' brains. Even if the data in the "perception" domain involve many students, there are 50 students out of 78 students who think that they do not need scrabble in learning vocabulary. According to the researcher, this may be because games are still traditional and most students prefer games that are integrated with technology. In addition, further data was taken from students' perceptions that the use of scrabble in the "Implementation" of English learning, especially in vocabulary learning, the data said that scrabble was needed, with more than half of the students from 78 students or 41 (52.6%) who felt they needed scrabble in learning vocabulary mastery.

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