

# Using Riddles Technique to Develop Students' Vocabulary Mastery

1. Trisnawati
2. Sudarkam Mertosono
3. Jamiluddin
4. Maf'ulah

<sup>1,2,3,4</sup> Universitas Tadulako, Indonesia

## Abstract

This research aims at proving whether using riddles technique can develop vocabulary mastery of the seventh grade students of SMPN 1 Sausu or not. The researchers applied a quasi-experimental research design, includes experimental and control class. In the academic year 2022-2023, students in first grade at SMP Negeri 1 Sausu made up the population, includes the classes VIIA and VIIB. The total number of students were 77 students. The sample class was determined using a cluster sampling technique. The instrument in this research was tests, pre-test and post-test. The researchers come to the conclusion that using riddles technique can develop students' vocabulary mastery in the first grade of SMP Negeri 1 Sausu. It was evidenced by the experimental class's post-test results (79.29), that was higher than the control class's post-test (68.40). Also, the  $t_{\text{counted}}$  score (8.52) was exceeds than the  $t_{\text{table}}$  value (1.674).

## Keywords

Develop  
Vocabulary  
Mastery  
Riddles Technique

Ethical Lingua

Vol. 10, No. 2, 2023

ISSN 2355-3448 (Print)

ISSN 2540-9190 (Online)

## Corresponding Email

Trisnawati

Trisnawati.8621@gmail.com

## Article's History

Submitted 24 August 2023

Revised 13 September 2023

Accepted 14 September 2023

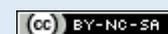
## DOI

10.30605/25409190.625

Copyright © 2022

The Author(s)

This article is licensed under  
CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 License



# Using Riddles Technique to Develop Students' Vocabulary Mastery

## Introduction

Vocabulary is one of the essential components of learning languages. (AgnesyaSiregar et al., 2022) state vocabulary is a linguistic right of an individual acquires amid thru languages. "Vocabulary is the collection of words that an individual knows" (Linse as mention in Ashari, 2020). Vocabulary means a list of words with their meanings. Since language consists of words, students cannot express their ideas without words. Moreover, students' vocabulary mastery plays an important role in supporting the four basic language skills, namely reading, writing, listening and speaking. "If language structures make up the skeleton of the language, then it is vocabulary that provides the vital organs and flesh" (Harmer as mention in Urgessa, 2019) It means vocabulary is the main content for the students to study a language.

Students who struggle with vocabulary will find it challenging to participate in classroom activities. (Komalasari, 2022) state acquiring vocabulary in Junior High School, students had trouble pronouncing the words since they were unaccustomed to their vocalization. Therefore according to (Al-Khasawneh, 2019), it is challenging for Indonesian students to acquire the English language due to a shortage of English vocabulary. Additionally number of issues in Indonesian Junior High School contributes to students' inability to overcome English vocabulary. Such as, lack of study methods and approaches (Asyiah, 2017), (Rahmatika et al., 2015), (Saridevita et al., 2022), also anxiety (Hanifa, 2018). According to (Fithriani, 2021 & Br Simamora and Oktaviani, 2020), the teachers have to get over the difficulties that the students experience during expanding their vocabulary and making it entertaining for their students. The students are encounter challenges to recognize, understand the meaning and spelling of English words especially in countable nouns and basically passive in the learning process. In order to assist students in expanding their vocabulary, the researchers suggested an attractive technique that is suitable for the students. (Afrianti, 2014) state that one of the classroom activities that might increase students' interest in the material being taught is the use of riddles. The riddles technique encourages the students to be more active and enjoy the learning process. In line with the statement from (Davis as mention in Rahmawati et al., 2022), students can acquire vocabulary by playing riddle games, which can help them identify the meaning and spelling of words. Students can retain word meanings and correct spellings by employing the riddle technique. Also the statement from (Mina et al., 2021) by playing riddle game, students will have the ability to study the language of choice instinctively and acquire certain unfamiliar terms without feeling worried.

In the Longman Dictionary of the English Language, the word 'riddle' (as a noun) is described as "a question, problem, or contrivance designed for testing ingenuity" (Longman as mention in Yusrah, 2019). However, in the BBC English Dictionary, "riddle is a question, game or toy which you have to think about carefully in order to answer it correctly or put it together properly" (BBC English as mention in Yusrah, 2019). It means, playing riddles are fascinating. English can be learned in a pleasant way by playing the riddle game. In other words, games prevent the

lessons from being conventional and boring. Instead, they promote a positive learning environment where the students' education is the main priority (Ngsurukh et al., 2021). Even though riddles are intended to test creativity, they are performed as pleasurable. Besides, riddles additionally foster a way of pleasure concerning about words and inspire the students to have an interest in taking part during the activities in the classroom. According to (Ikhsanudin et al., 2019), riddles helped to increase the students' involvement in the lessons. According to a study, students could learn more effectively with greater classroom participation.

Studies on the effects of riddles technique have been done by some researchers. (Yuliarsih, 2022) who looked into the impact of riddle game on students' vocabulary. The study's findings indicate that applying riddle game has an impact on students' vocabulary enhancements. The students' logical and inventive thinking, their ability to solve the provided puzzle, and their performance on the test were all evidence of their progress.

Moreover, (Rahmawati et al., 2022) investigated the effect of riddles game on students' vocabulary mastery. The aim of this study is to help the students becomes more proficient in their vocabulary. The result indicates that the use of riddle game can engage students and help them retain terminology based on the subject presented. However, riddle game concept can be an effective method in teaching vocabulary.

(Hapsari & Pinandhita, 2015) also conducted a study on the application of riddle game in teaching speaking for the students in Ngawi. This study discovered that using a riddle game to teach speaking increased students engagement, happiness, ability to articulate certain words correctly, and confidence in reciting the story. On the other hand, the riddle game is an effective technique for teaching speaking.

Many studies investigated the effect of riddle game for the students. This research focuses on developing students' vocabulary mastery about nouns in countable nouns used by the seventh grade students at SMP Negeri 1 Sausu, the researchers chose SMP Negeri 1 Sausu based on the preliminary research, they found that the students' struggle to recognize, understand the meaning and spelling of English words in countable nouns. In the case, they asked the students to mention the meaning and the spelling of 'broom' in Indonesia, they were unable. Based on informal interview with the English teacher of SMP Negeri 1 Sausu, the students have poor vocabulary because they were not interest with English lesson and riddles have never been used in teaching English to them. Therefore, the researchers aimed to determine whether or not applying riddles technique can assist the seventh-grade students at SMP Negeri 1 Sausu to improve their vocabulary mastery.

## Method

A quasi-experimental design was used for this research. In this research, two distinct groups took part; the control and experimental groups. The pre-test, treatment, and post-test were administered to the experimental group. Meanwhile, the control group received pre-test and post-test without treatment. There were six treatments in this research.

The population are the students in the seventh grade consisting of 77 students. Moreover, this research focused on classes VII A and VII B. The sample of this

research included 56 students. The sample for this research was taken using the cluster sampling technique. The sample technique was carried out using the following procedures; first, the names of the experimental, control, and none classes were inscribed on pieces of cards. Second, shuffled the cards and put the upside down on the table. Third, each class representative take one card for themselves.

Quantitative data were gathered as part of this research’s methodology. It was supported by vocabulary test as the research instrument. The test was administered twice, once as a pre-test and once as a post-test. The test in the form of 10 numbers of matching test and 10 numbers of jumble letters that contains 20 numbers and each correct number is scored 1, and 0 if it was wrong. To assemble the data, the researchers utilizing the formula that suggested by (Arikunto, 2020).

$$t = \frac{Mx - My}{\sqrt{\left(\frac{\sum x^2 + \sum y^2}{Nx + Ny - 2}\right) \left(\frac{1}{Nx} + \frac{1}{Ny}\right)}}$$

**Results**

The results of the data analysis serve as the primary source of information for the researchers’ conclusions. Data collection involves data analysis. The outcomes of pre-test and post-test on students’ vocabulary mastery are presented. The pre-test is designed to identify the vocabulary mastery of the students before having a starting of treatment. Following treatment, the post-test was provided to ascertain the students’ increase of vocabulary mastery after getting the treatments using riddles technique.

**Table 1.** Classification of Pre-test Results in Experimental Class

Classification	Score	Pre-test	
		Frequency	Percentage
Very good	86-100	0	0%
Good	70-85	3	11%
Fair	55-69	1	4%
Poor	40-54	6	21%
Very poor	<40	18	64%
Total		28	100%
Mean Score	36.96		

Referring to table above, the students’ obtained score in the pre-test was varied. There was no student who got a very good classification score. Even though only three students got higher scores than 55 that were classified as good or fair. Most of them were classified as poor or very poor. It indicates that the students still did not really understand the nouns especially countable nouns before the treatment was given.

**Table 2.** Classification of Pre-test Results in Control Class

Classification	Score	Pre-test	
		Frequency	Percentage
Very good	86-100	0	0 %
Good	70-85	7	25%
Fair	55-69	11	39%
Poor	40-54	9	32%
Very poor	<40	1	4%
Total		28	100%
Mean Score	56.96		

The table above points out that there were eighteen students who got scores higher than 55 that were classified as fair or good. Moreover, there was no student who got a very good classification score. However, there were ten students who classified as poor or very poor. It indicates most of them really understand about nouns in countable nouns.

Having found the pre-test results of both experimental and control class, it showed that the result of students pre-test in control group was better than the experimental group's. In the other hand, the prior vocabulary mastery about nouns in countable nouns of the control group was better than the experimental group.

After the researchers given the treatment to the students, the post-test were administered to both of experimental and control groups. The results showed that the scores of students in experimental class have improvement. The post-test result of experimental class showed that there were fifteen students who got score higher than 55 that were classified as fair score, good score, even though there were ten students classified as very good score. Meanwhile, there were 3 students who classified as poor score and there is no student who classified as very poor score. It can be seen as presented in the table 3:

**Table 3.** Classification of Post-test Results in Experimental Class

Classification	Score	Pre-test	
		Frequency	Percentage
Very good	86-100	10	35%
Good	70-85	14	50%
Fair	55-69	1	4%
Poor	40-54	3	11%
Very poor	<40	0	0%
Total		28	100%
Mean Score	79.29		

**Table 4.** Classification of Post-test Results in Control Class

Classification	Score	Pre-test	
		Frequency	Percentage
Very good	86-100	5	18%
Good	70-85	9	32%
Fair	55-69	8	29%
Poor	40-54	6	21%
Very poor	<40	0	0%
Total		28	100%
Mean Score	68.40		

Referring to the table 4, there were five students who got very good score classification, moreover there were seventeen students who got score as good and fair classification. Meanwhile there were six students who classified as poor score and there is no students classified as very poor score.

Table 1 and 3 showed that the students' mean score in experimental class significantly evolved. It indicates that the treatment was successful or applying riddles technique can develop students' vocabulary mastery about nouns in countable nouns. Then, in determining the testing hypothesis, the researchers computed the mean deviation of experimental class (41.61) and the mean deviation of experimental class (11.64), sum of square deviation in experimental class (5,752) while the control class (3,660), and t-counted (8.52) by applying the degree of freedom ( $df = N_x + N_y - 2 = 28 + 28 - 2 = 54$ ), with a level of significance (0.05). It was discovered that the t-counted value (8.52) is higher than t-table value (1.674). The result of this statistic calculation provided that the hypothesis is accepted, it represent how the seventh grade students at SMP Negeri 1 Sausu can develop their vocabulary mastery through the use of riddles technique.

## Discussion

The Riddles technique was used to help students enjoy studying vocabulary in class. They participated in the learning process actively and with enthusiasm. They used the terms and learned some of their pronunciation, particularly for countable nouns. In other words, students pay closer attention and show more interest. The main finding of the hypothesis testing was that the vocabulary mastery, particularly in countable nouns, greatly improved. This result is in line with a study by (Yuliarsih, 2022) who discovered that using riddle games has an effect on students' vocabulary enhancements. A study by (Hapsari & Pinandhita, 2015) also found that the riddle game improved not only students' vocabulary mastery but also it is an effective technique for teaching speaking. It is because riddles additionally foster a way of pleasure concerning about words and inspire the students to have an interest in taking part during the activities in the classroom.

There were 28 students in the experimental group overall and 28 students in the control group. The instrument used was tests. In data collection of experimental group, the data collection procedures employed in this research were pre-test, treatment, and post test. Meanwhile, only pre-test and post-test data from the control group were collected. While the total score was 20 and for each right answer scored 1.

Before giving treatment, the students' vocabulary mastery was indicated by the average percentage of pre-test total score, where almost all of the students in experimental and control group were categorized failed. The researchers applied riddles technique for six meetings and provided different vocabulary words based in the topic for students. At fist meeting the researchers applied riddles technique, they got difficulties in managing the students due some factors, such as the students' low attention and uninterested to the lesson. They preferred to be silent during the learning process, so the researchers had to explain the specific information about the topic and what riddle is, so the students began to show some improvement in learning activities. They were active and enthusiastic in doing the learning process. They mentioned the words and got some meanings and spelling

of words. In shorts, the students become more active and interested during the learning process.

To make sure the treatment's effectiveness, both the experimental group and the control group received a post-test from the researchers. Having found that the students had no problem answering the test. Comparing the result of pre-test and post-test especially in experimental class, the researchers conclude that using riddles technique is effective to develop students' vocabulary mastery. This improvement also reflected with the related studies written by (Yuliarsih, 2022) and (Rahmawati et al., 2022) after the students were taught by riddle technique. Both researchers state that there is significant level of development after they conducted the treatment.

## Conclusion

Considering what was discovered and discussion earlier, the researchers found that utilizing Riddles technique can assist the seventh grade students at SMP Negeri 1 Sausu to develop their vocabulary mastery. It was proven by the mean score in post-test of experimental class's (79.29), which was higher than the mean score of pre-test result (36.96). While the mean score of control class's post-test result (68.40) was lower than the mean score of experimental class's post-test result (79.29). Moreover, the value of the t-table (1.674) was lower than t-counted score (8.52). It indicates that the research hypothesis is accepted in that the students' vocabulary mastery that was taught utilizing Riddles technique was developed. It was proved by the post-test result that was done by the researchers after giving treatments.

The researchers would like to give some suggestions; first, for the English teacher, Riddles can be a suitable method in teaching vocabulary that will make the students' time in the classroom pleasurable while learning. Additionally, an appropriate media should be used in classroom in order to make the students would find the process of teaching and learning engaging. Second, for the students, they should use their English vocabulary to communicate in daily life in order to keep the vocabulary. Last, for the further researchers, they may use this research result as a reference to conduct a further research dealing with a similar topic by using different language components or other language skills with a different research area and research design to develop the students' vocabulary mastery.

## Acknowledgment

Researchers express their highest appreciation to the Teacher Training and Education Faculty of Tadulako University. Also this article would not have been possible without the influential people who gave meaningful guidance, helpful suggestion, support and patience. Valuable thanks are extended to Principal of SMP Negeri 1 Sausu, who gave permission to the researchers for use of the area for research. Finally, researchers would like to thank to their beloved family and everyone who has been involved in completion of this article. This article is still far from being perfect, but it is hoped that it will be useful not only for further researchers, but also for readers. For this reason, suggestion and constructive criticism are most welcome.

## References

- Afrianti, L. (2014). The Effect of Using Riddles on Vocabulary Achievement of the Eight Grade Students at MTs Baitul Hikmah Tempurejo Jember in the Academic Year 2014/2015. *Muhammadiyah University of Jember*.
- AgnesyaSiregar, M., & Fithriani, R. (2023). Learning English Vocabulary with Taboo Game: A Case Study of Indonesian Junior High School Students. *Ethical Lingua: Journal of Language Teaching and Literature*, 10(1). 2023. <https://doi.org/10.30605/25409190.513>
- Al-Khasawneh, F. (2019). The impact of vocabulary knowledge on the reading comprehension of Saudi EFL learners. *Journal of Language and Education*, 5(3), 24–34. <https://doi.org/10.17323/jle.2019.8822>
- Arikunto, S. (2020). *Prosedur Penelitian Suatu Pendekatan Praktik*. Jakarta: Rineka Cipta.
- Ashari, A., Hasibuan, A., Tanjung, S. (2020). The Effect of Using Flashcard Media on Students' Vocabulary Mastery. A Study at the Seventh Grade Students of SMP SwastaSariputra in 2018/2019 Academic Year. *Jurnal Liner, Institut Pendidikan Tapanuli Selatan*. 3(2), 1–13.
- Asyiah, D. N. (2017). the Vocabulary Teaching and Vocabulary Learning: Perception, Strategies, and Influences on Students' Vocabulary Mastery. *Jurnal Bahasa Lingua Scientia*, 9(2), 293–318. <https://doi.org/10.21274/ls.2017.9.2.293-318>
- Br Simamora, M. W., & Oktaviani, L. (2020). What Is Your Favorite Movie?: a Strategy of English Education Students To Improve English Vocabulary. *Journal of English Language Teaching and Learning*, 1(2), 44–49. <https://doi.org/10.33365/jeltl.v1i2.604>
- Fithriani, R. (2021). The utilization of mobile-assisted gamification for vocabulary learning: Its efficacy and perceived benefits. *Computer Assisted Language Learning Electronic Journal (CALL-EJ)*, 22(3), 146–163.
- Hanifa, R. (2018). Factors generating anxiety when learning EFL speaking skills. *Studies in English Language and Education*, 5(2), 230–239. <https://doi.org/10.24815/siele.v5i2.10932>
- Hapsari, M. T., & Pinandhita, F. (2015). The Application of Riddle Game in Teaching Speaking for the Eighth Grade Students of MTsN Kedunggalar Ngawi in the Schooling Year 2014/2015. *English Teaching Journal: A Journal of English Literature, Language and Education*, 3(1). <https://doi.org/10.25273/etj.v3i1.729>
- Ikhsanudin, I., Sudarsono, S., & Salam, U. (2019). Using Magic Trick Problem-Based Activities to Improve Students' Engagement in a Listening Class. *JELTIM (Journal of English Language Teaching Innovations and Materials)*, 1(2), 7. <https://doi.org/10.26418/jelitim.v1i1.31620>
- Komalasari, D. A. (2022). an Analysis of Student Difficulties in Mastering Vocabulary in Eight Grade at Smpn 06 Kotabumi in the Academic Year of 2021 / 2022. *Griya Cendikia*, 7(2), 266–276. <https://doi.org/10.47637/griya-cendikia.v7i2.366>
- Mina, D. F. C., Muin, A., & Septiana, T. I. (2021). Enriching Students' Vocabulary Mastery by Using " Riddle Game ". *Indonesian Journal of English Studies*, 2(1), 23. <http://jurnal.uinbanten.ac.id/index.php/ijes>
- Ngsurukh, M. P. M., Anita, F., & Syahadati, E. (2021). a Systematic Review of the Effect in Using Riddle Game Technique on Students' Vocabulary Mastery. *Journal of English Language Teaching and Education (JELTE)*, 2(1). <https://doi.org/10.31571/jelte.v2i1.51>

- Rahmatika, A., Pertiwi, D., Karmala, E. T., & Nastiti, I. A. (2018). Exploring Efl Learners' Vocabulary Learning Strategies. *1st English Language and Litearture International Conference (ELLiC,)* 40–45.
- Rahmawati, W. T., Harahap, Y. M., & Sembiring, F. W. (2022). The Effect of Riddle Game on Students' Vocabulary Mastery. *PEDAGOGI: Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan* 8(1), 69–73. <https://doi.org/10.47662/pendagogi.v8i1.277>
- Saridevita, A., Suhendar, A., & Hasan, N. (2022). Analisis Kesulitan Pelafalan Kosakata Bahasa Inggris Siswa Kelas V SDN Pondok Makmur. *ANWARUL: Jurnal Pendidikan dan Dakwah*, 2(4), 364–373. <https://doi.org/10.58578/anwarul.v2i4.521>
- Urgessa, D. N. (2019). Assessing Students' Vocabulary Learning Strategies use with particular reference to EFL First Year In-service Students of Ambo University. *International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications (IJSRP)*, 9(9), p93109. <https://doi.org/10.29322/ij srp.9.09.2019.p93109>
- Yuliarsih, Y. (2022). the Use of Riddle Game To Improve Students' Vocabulary. *The Ellite of Unira*, 5(1), 1–5. <https://doi.org/10.53712/ellite.v5i1.1400>
- Yusrah. (2019). *the Effect of Riddle on Teaching Vocabulary of the Seventh Year Students*. 1(1), 1–9.