

Improving Students' Vocabulary by Using Chain Words Game Among Ninth Grade Students At SMP Al-Ma'arif Almansuriyah Tanak Rarang

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received September 19, 2025

Revised November 12, 2025

Accepted November 25, 2025

Available online Desember 2, 2025

Kata kunci: Permainan Rantai Kata, Penguasaan Kosakata, Pembelajaran Berbasis Permainan, Pre-Test dan Post-Test



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ABSTRACT

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menginvestigasi efektivitas penggunaan Permainan Rantai Kata (Chain Words Game) dalam meningkatkan penguasaan kosakata siswa kelas IX di SMP Al-Ma'arif Almansuriyah Tanak Rarang tahun ajaran 2025/2026. Studi ini didorong oleh pengamatan bahwa banyak siswa kesulitan dengan keterbatasan kosakata, yang tidak dapat diatasi secara efektif oleh metode pengajaran tradisional. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain pra-eksperimental kuantitatif dengan pendekatan satu kelompok pre-test dan post-test. Sampel terdiri dari 23 siswa dari satu kelas IX, yang dipilih secara sengaja (purposive). Data dikumpulkan melalui tes kosakata dan dianalisis menggunakan statistik deskriptif dan uji-t sampel berpasangan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan peningkatan signifikan pada nilai kosakata siswa, dengan nilai rata-rata meningkat dari 56,40 pada pre-test menjadi 78,60 pada post-test. Uji-t sampel berpasangan mengkonfirmasi signifikansi statistik dari hasil tersebut, menunjukkan nilai t sebesar 9,85 dengan tingkat signifikansi 0,000 (lebih rendah dari 0,05). Hasil ini mengindikasikan bahwa Permainan Rantai Kata adalah strategi pembelajaran yang efektif dan menarik untuk meningkatkan penguasaan kosakata siswa, mendorong partisipasi aktif di kelas, dan meningkatkan motivasi siswa.

INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary is an essential component in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning, serving as the foundation for overall comprehension, expression, and language proficiency. However, many students at the junior high school level, especially in rural areas like Tanak Rarang, frequently face difficulties with vocabulary retention and usage. At SMP Al-Ma'arif Almansuriyah Tanak Rarang, ninth-grade students show a limited vocabulary range, largely due to reliance on traditional teaching methods that emphasize memorization and are less interactive. To address this issue, innovative teaching strategies such as educational games are being recognized for their potential to enhance student engagement and learning outcomes. One such strategy is the Chain Words Game, a collaborative and interactive activity where students form a chain of words, with each new word starting with the last letter of the preceding word. This game is designed to reinforce existing vocabulary and encourage students to recall new words in a fun and memorable way. Based on this



background, this research aims to investigate the effectiveness of the Chain Words Game in improving the vocabulary mastery of ninth-grade students at SMP Al-Ma'arif Almansuriyah Tanak Rarang.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

This research employed a quantitative research method with a pre-experimental design, specifically the one-group pre-test and post-test design. This design was intended to measure the improvement in students' vocabulary skills after the treatment (the implementation of the Chain Words Game).

Participants

The sample consisted of 23 ninth-grade students selected purposively at SMP Al-Ma'arif Almansuriyah Tanak Rarang, comprising 13 female and 10 male students.

Instruments

Data were collected through a vocabulary test administered before (pre-test) and after (post-test) the treatment. The treatment using the Chain Words Game was conducted over four learning sessions.

Instrument and Data Collection Technique:

Data were collected through a vocabulary test administered before (pre-test) and after (post-test) the treatment. The treatment using the Chain Words Game was conducted over four learning sessions.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and a paired sample t-test to determine the significance of the improvement in students' vocabulary. The hypothesis testing criterion was that if the significance value (Sig.) is < 0.05 , the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis (H_a) is accepted.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results showed a significant improvement in students' vocabulary mastery after the treatment using the Chain Words Game:

Test	Mean Score	Total
Pre-test	56.40	22,20 Points
Post-test	78.60	

Paired Sample T-Test:

T-value: 9.85

Significance Level: 0.000



Since the significance value (0.000) is smaller than 0.05, this result indicates a statistically significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis (H_a) is accepted, proving that the Chain Words Game has a significant effect on improving students' vocabulary. The findings of this research validate that the Chain Words Game significantly enhances students' vocabulary mastery. Before the treatment, students tended to be passive and rely on memorization. However, during the game sessions, students showed active participation, collaborated with peers, and were more enthusiastic.

The competitive yet fun nature of the game encourages students to expand their vocabulary and recall words more effectively. They were able to form word chains confidently and apply new vocabulary in a meaningful context. These results align with previous research indicating that game-based learning strategies, such as the Chain Words Game, can boost motivation, retention, and comprehension in language acquisition. The interactive environment created by the game promotes better cognitive engagement and reduces anxiety in learning English.

CONCLUSION

Based on the data analysis and research findings, it is concluded that the Chain Words Game is an effective instructional strategy for improving the vocabulary mastery of ninth-grade students at SMP Al-Ma'arif Almansuriyah Tanak Rarang in the academic year 2025/2026. The quantitative results showed a significant and substantial improvement in students' vocabulary scores after the implementation of the game, with the mean score increasing from 56.40 to 78.60. Therefore, this research suggests that English teachers should integrate game-based learning activities to support more interactive and effective vocabulary development.

CLOSING STATEMENT

The researcher is grateful for the opportunity to conduct this research. We hope this article can contribute to the development of English language teaching theory and practice, and be useful for teachers, students, and other researchers.

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