


The Use of Taboo Game to Develop Students' Vocabulary Mastery

 <https://doi.org/10.31004/jele.v11i2.1905>

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ABSTRACT

Taboo Game is a word guessing game that challenges players to describe target words without using related forbidden words. This research aims to prove whether the use of Taboo Game can develop English vocabulary mastery of the tenth-grade students at SMA Negeri 1 Parigi Tengah. This quasi-experimental study used purposive sampling, dividing 54 students into experimental and control groups. The experimental group received vocabulary instruction through Taboo Game, while the control group used conventional methods. Data were collected through pre-tests and post-tests. Results showed significant differences between groups, with the experimental group achieving a mean post-test score of 81.11 compared to the control group's 76.96 (sig < 0.05). The experimental group demonstrated an average improvement of 13.48 points. These findings confirm that Taboo Game is an effective strategy for developing vocabulary mastery, creating more engaging learning experiences for students across various proficiency levels.

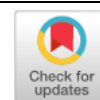
Keywords: *Taboo Game, Vocabulary Mastery, English Learning*

Article History:

Received 23rd December 2025

Accepted 19th April 2026

Published 21st April 2026



INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary is one of the aspects of language students must learn when learning a language, including English. Vocabulary is the totality of words needed to convey ideas and express the speaker's meaning (Alqahtani, 2015), and students will have difficulty in understanding and expressing ideas without mastering it. With sufficient vocabulary, students can speak and write well, understand what they read or listen to, and become more confident in communication, as they can choose the right words to convey their ideas and feelings clearly. Having a large vocabulary also helps in various aspects of communication, for example, when reading a book or watching an English movie, students will not be confused by unfamiliar words because they are familiar with them. In addition, a large vocabulary supports learning grammar and pronunciation, because students can see how words are used in the context of a sentence. Therefore, the important role of English in various fields makes vocabulary mastery an essential foundation that students must acquire in order to communicate effectively in this language.

In English classes, mastering vocabulary is a very important first step in learning the language. When learning it, the students must really understand and master the vocabulary (Sari & Agung, 2023). Learning vocabulary is the first thing they must do, when start learning English. The reason is that they can learn new words and understand their meanings (Alyani et al., 2024). Along with the importance of vocabulary mastery in the English learning process, it also contributes to students' ability to understand and communicate information well. Mastery vocabulary is an essential component that needs to be acquired in learning English as a foreign language at the elementary, intermediate, and advanced levels (Rahmah et al., 2023).

Learning to master vocabulary should be done regularly, for example by reading stories, talking to friends, or playing language games to make the learning process more fun. Learning the new vocabulary does not mean memorizing the form of the word but also understand its

meaning (Gustian, 2021). Agreeing with the expert opinion, vocabulary mastery for students is not just memorizing words, but also understanding their meaning, use, and context in everyday life. Thus, good vocabulary mastery will help students communicate effectively and improve overall language skills.

Common problems related to vocabulary among grade students show that most students face challenges in mastering English vocabulary, especially in memorizing long and complex words, understanding the correct use of words, and retaining vocabulary effectively. The reason is that vocabulary knowledge is the main foundation in language mastery (Rosyada-As & Apoko, 2023). Learning methods that are not varied and tend to be monotonous, lack of interesting learning media, and lack of opportunities for students to practice the vocabulary they have learned in a meaningful context. According to (Baharudin et al., 2024), vocabulary learning is influenced by both internal factors such as confidence and learning habits, and external factors such as teaching methods and learning infrastructure.

Facing these conditions, an innovation is needed in vocabulary learning that can create a more enjoyable and effective learning atmosphere. One alternative that can be used is through the application of educational games, in this case the Taboo Game (Nurjanah & Pratama, 2018). Taboo Game is a challenging word game where players have to guess certain words without using related words (taboo words) that have been determined. It is a multiplayer charades game where one participant, known as the clue giver, gives a clue about a word on a card, and the other players try to guess the word (Toma et al., 2017). The Taboo Game is not only a game that trains vocabulary and language skills, but also trains us to communicate effectively with others (Pambudi et al., 2024).

Some research has investigated the effectiveness of the use of Taboo Game to develop English vocabulary mastery among students at various educational levels. First, (P. Lumbangaol et al., 2024) found that Taboo Word Game Strategy is an effective method that helps students learn vocabulary and gives students more confidence to share their thoughts during class. Similarly, (Graciela et al., 2021) revealed that the Taboo Game can improve student's vocabulary mastery, it was evident that students become more interested and they enjoyed learning English more, could memorize new vocabulary more easily. In line with these findings, (Siregar & Fithriani, 2023) reported that all students had responded positively to the taboo game, taboo game also helped students in learning and understanding the material, knowing and learning new vocabulary had become easier and learning creativity had increased. Finally, (Tefa et al., 2024) found that the use of Taboo Game for learning vocabulary is very significant in helping students memorize, enrich, and increase their English vocabulary knowledge.

Previous research consistently shown that Taboo Game is effective in improving vocabulary mastery, boosting confidence, and increasing student interest. Based on these studies, the researchers investigating the use of Taboo Game as a teaching strategy to develop English vocabulary mastery among tenth grade students at SMA Negeri 1 Parigi Tengah. The research question that leads the reasearch is as follows: Can the use of Taboo Game develop vocabulary mastery of the tenth-grade students of SMA Negeri 1 Parigi Tengah?

METHOD

This research used a quantitative approach using a quasi-experimental research method. It consisted of two classes, namely the experimental class and control class. Both groups were given a pre-test and post-test. The experimental class was treated using the Taboo Game while the control class learned by completing tasks from the school textbook. The pre-test and post-test were administered to see the comparison of achievement before and after given treatment.

Population and Sample

The population of the research was the tenth-grade students of SMA Negeri 1 Parigi Tengah. They were classes X A, X B, and X C. The total number of students was 84 students. In this research, the researchers used a purposive sampling technique as a way to determine the sample from the population. Because the population was large, selective sampling was necessary, and the reason also was to obtain a sample that represented the research objectives and met the research criteria. The selection of classes was based on the results of tests previously administered by the subject teachers, which indicated that both classes had relatively equal academic abilities. Furthermore, these classes were considered to have sufficient readiness and potential for active participation, making them suitable for the intended treatment in this research. Based on this, class X A was designated as the experimental class that was given the treatment in the form of the Taboo Game, and class X C as the control class without treatment. In this research, there were two research variables, namely independent and dependent variables. The independent variable referred to the use of Taboo Game. The dependent variable referred to students' English vocabulary mastery.

Instrument

The research instrument that was used in this research was a vocabulary test developed based on material from the Grade 10 English Student Book of the *Merdeka* Curriculum published by the Ministry of Education. The research instrument used in this research was a vocabulary test. The vocabulary test was used on the pre-test and post-test focusing on the themes of Great Athletes, Sports Events, Sports and Health, and Healthy Foods found in the book. The test that consisted of two parts, namely multiple-choice and sentence completion. The multiple-choice test consisted of 20 with a scoring system of 1 point for each correct answer. The sentence completion consisted of 15 items, for which a fully correct answer was 1 - 2 points.

Procedures

The data collection technique in this research consisted of three main stages. First, the pre-test was an initial test that was conducted in meeting 1 to measure students' basic vocabulary knowledge before the treatment was conducted. It consisted of two parts, namely the multiple-choice vocabulary test and the productive vocabulary test (sentence completion), with a total maximum score of 50 points. Second, the treatment was conducted for six meetings (meetings 2-7) where the experimental group was taught English vocabulary using Taboo Game method with different topics each meeting. The implementation steps of the Taboo Game in each meeting were as follows: introducing vocabulary theme (e.g., Great Athletes), presenting target vocabulary list related to the theme, dividing students into groups and explaining round rules and scoring system, giving a set of themed Taboo cards to the students where each card contains a keyword and a list of words or short phrases that are prohibited from use, continuing the game until every student has played one card or the cards are exhausted or the score or time limit is reached, recording student participation and involvement, discussing difficult vocabulary and effective strategies, and providing feedback and reinforcement. Meanwhile, the control group received traditional vocabulary learning with the same topics. Third, the post-test was the final evaluation conducted in meeting 8 using instruments identical to the pre-test with different difficulty levels from the pre-test. This measured students' vocabulary mastery after the treatment was completed. The post-test results were then compared with the pre-test results to analyze the improvement of vocabulary mastery in both the experimental and control groups.

Data analysis

Technique of data analysis was an important step in processing the data that had been collected from this research to get answers to research questions. Before analyzing the data, the researchers checked the data first. This was done to ensure the data was suitable for use and determine the most suitable analysis method. In this research, three types of tests were carried out, namely the normality test to check the distribution of data, the homogeneity test to check the similarity of variance between groups, and the t-test to compare learning outcomes between experimental and control groups

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The data were collected from two classes designated as the research samples: class X A as the experimental group and class X C as the control group. The results from both groups were analyzed to evaluate how effectively the Taboo Game developed English vocabulary mastery of tenth-grade students at SMA Negeri 1 Parigi Tengah.

Results of Pre-test and Post-test

Table 1. Result of Pre-test and Post-test

| No | Experimental Group | | | Control Group | | |
|---------------------|--------------------|-----------------|--------------|---------------------|-----------------|--------------|
| | Initial | Student's Score | | Initial | Student's Score | |
| | | Pre-Test | Post-test | | Pre-Test | Post-Test |
| 1 | AR | 72 | 80 | AF | 66 | 76 |
| 2 | AF | 74 | 86 | AI | 58 | 70 |
| 3 | AFS | 64 | 72 | AZ | 60 | 72 |
| 4 | AN | 60 | 78 | ACA | 70 | 86 |
| 5 | AR | 70 | 84 | BIB | 44 | 66 |
| 6 | AGF | 60 | 78 | EAP | 64 | 70 |
| 7 | ARY | 76 | 90 | FRS | 68 | 78 |
| 8 | DL | 74 | 80 | FR | 62 | 72 |
| 9 | DA | 70 | 80 | FRN | 70 | 80 |
| 10 | DAF | 68 | 86 | GA | 60 | 70 |
| 11 | HA | 70 | 88 | KAI | 74 | 84 |
| 12 | IT | 62 | 74 | MFL | 66 | 80 |
| 13 | MM | 72 | 84 | MRA | 72 | 88 |
| 14 | MA | 66 | 84 | MRPR | 70 | 84 |
| 15 | MAK | 54 | 80 | MR | 76 | 80 |
| 16 | MIR | 60 | 72 | MFP | 56 | 60 |
| 17 | MR | 60 | 68 | NA | 62 | 80 |
| 18 | MFF | 70 | 90 | RAS | 72 | 90 |
| 19 | MB | 70 | 74 | RA | 50 | 68 |
| 20 | NY | 72 | 80 | RP | 66 | 74 |
| 21 | NS | 76 | 86 | SA | 60 | 80 |
| 22 | NA | 60 | 78 | SR | 44 | 70 |
| 23 | NSY | 70 | 80 | SPI | 72 | 88 |
| 24 | RE | 66 | 88 | SN | 62 | 76 |
| 25 | RA | 78 | 96 | SA | 68 | 82 |
| 26 | SM | 60 | 70 | TS | 78 | 82 |
| 27 | WI | 72 | 84 | WA | 48 | 72 |
| Total Scores | | 1754 | 2110 | Total Scores | 1718 | 2078 |
| Mean Scores | | 67.63 | 81.11 | Total Mean | 63.63 | 76.96 |

After collecting pre-test and post-test scores from both groups, the researchers conducted descriptive statistics analysis using SPSS software. This analysis aimed to determine the minimum, maximum, mean, and standard deviation of pre-test and post-test scores in both the experimental and control groups. These descriptive statistics provide basic information about the data obtained before further statistical testing is conducted. The results of the descriptive statistics analysis are presented in the following Table:

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics

| | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|------------------------|----|---------|---------|-------|----------------|
| Pre-Test Experimental | 27 | 54 | 78 | 67.63 | 6.277 |
| Post-Test Experimental | 27 | 68 | 96 | 81.11 | 6.733 |
| Pre-Test Control | 27 | 44 | 78 | 63.63 | 9.183 |
| Post-Test Control | 27 | 60 | 90 | 76.96 | 7.491 |
| Valid N (listwise) | 27 | | | | |

Based on the descriptive statistics Table above, the experimental group, pre-test scores ranged from 58 to 78 with an average of 67.63 and a standard deviation of 6.277. After being given treatment using the Taboo Game, the post-test scores increased, ranging from 68 to 96, with an average of 81.11 and a standard deviation of 6.733. Meanwhile, the control group showed pre-test scores ranging from 44 to 78 with an average of 63.63 and a standard deviation of 9.183. On the post-test, the scores ranged from 60 to 90 with an average of 76.96 and a

standard deviation of 7.491. These data are show that the experimental group had higher average scores than the control group in both the pre-test and post-test.

Normality Test

The normality test in this research was conducted to determine whether the data obtained from the experimental group and the control group are normally distributed or not. The Saphiro-Wilk test was used because the sample size is less than 50. The data is considered to be normally distributed if the significance value is greater than 0.05, whereas if the significance value is less than 0.05, the data is considered to be not normally distributed. The result of the normality test presented in the following Table:

Table 3. Tests of Normality

| Group | Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a | | | Shapiro-Wilk | | | |
|-------------------|---------------------------------|------|------|--------------|------|------|------|
| | Statistic | df | Sig. | Statistic | df | Sig. | |
| Learning Outcomes | Pre-Test Experimental | .203 | 27 | .006 | .933 | 27 | .082 |
| | Post-Test Experimental | .121 | 27 | .200* | .976 | 27 | .770 |
| | Pre-Test Control | .124 | 27 | .200* | .938 | 27 | .111 |
| | Post-Test Control | .139 | 27 | .195 | .971 | 27 | .641 |

*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

The test results show that the pre-test scores of the experimental group had a significance value of 0.082 (sig > 0.05), the post-test scores of the experimental group have a significance value of 0.770 (sig > 0.05), the pre-test of the control group have a significance value of 0.111 (sig > 0.05), and the post test scores of the control group have a significance value of 0.0641 (sig > 0.05). Since all significance values are greater than 0.05, it can be concluded that all data from both the experimental and control groups are normally distributed.

Homogeneity Test

The homogeneity test is performed using Levene's Test with SPSS software. The data is considered homogeneous if the significance value is greater than 0.05 ($p > 0.05$), which means that there is no significant difference in variance between the two groups. The results of the variance homogeneity test are presented in the following Table:

Table 4. Test of Homogeneity of Variance

| | | Levene Statistic | df1 | df2 | Sig. |
|-------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------|-----|--------|------|
| Learning Outcomes | Based on Mean | .679 | 1 | 52 | .414 |
| | Based on Median | .717 | 1 | 52 | .401 |
| | Based on Median and with adjusted df | .717 | 1 | 51.968 | .401 |
| | Based on trimmed mean | .673 | 1 | 52 | .416 |

The Levene Statistic "Based on Mean" shows a significance value of 0.414 (sig > 0.05). Because the significance value is greater than 0.05, it can be concluded that the variance of data between the experimental group and the control group is homogeneous. These results indicate that there is no significant difference in variance between the two groups, thus fulfilling the assumption of homogeneity.

Hypothesis Test

Testing hypothesis in this research was conducted to determine whether there was a significant effect of using Taboo Game on vocabulary mastery among students in the experimental group and control group. The hypothesis testing process used SPSS version 24. After the assumptions of normality and homogeneity were met, the researchers conducted an Independent Sample t-test to test the research hypothesis. This test aimed to determine whether there was a significant difference between the post-test scores of the experimental group using the Taboo Game and the control group using conventional learning. The hypothesis will be accepted if the significance value (2-tailed) is less than 0.05, which means that there is a significant difference between the two groups. The results of the Independent Sample t-test are presented in the following Table:

Table 5. Independent Samples t-Test

| | | Levene's Test for Equality of Variances | | t-test for Equality of Means | | | | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------|---|-------|------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|---|-------|
| | | Sig. | t | df | Sig. (2- tailed) | Mean Difference | Std. Error Difference | Lower | Upper |
| Learning Outcomes | Equal variances assumed | .414 | 2.140 | 52 | .037 | 4.148 | 1.938 | .259 | 8.038 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | | 2.140 | 51.419 | .037 | 4.148 | 1.938 | .257 | 8.039 |

Based on the Table above, the Levene's Test results show a significance value of 0.414 ($\text{sig} > 0.05$), which means that the variances of the two groups are homogeneous. Therefore, the results should be interpreted using the "Equal variances assumed" row. The t-test results show a t-value of 2.140 with 52 degrees of freedom (df) and a significance value (2-tailed) of 0.037 ($\text{sig} < 0.05$). Since the significance value is less than 0.05, the alternative hypothesis (H_a) is accepted and the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected. This indicates that there is a significant difference between the post-test scores of the experimental group and the control group. The mean difference between the two groups is 4.148 points, with a 95% confidence interval ranging from 0.259 to 8.038. Therefore, it can be concluded that the use of Taboo Game can significantly develop the students' English vocabulary mastery, and is more effective than conventional learning.

Discussion

Based on the findings of the research, the results show that the Taboo game has a significant impact on students' vocabulary mastery. This is evidenced by the results of the independent sample t-test, which shows a significant difference. This means that there is a significant difference between the experimental group that used the Taboo game and the control group that used conventional learning methods. The experimental group obtained a higher average post-test score than the control group. This difference in scores proves that the Taboo Game is more effective in improving students' vocabulary mastery than conventional learning methods.

The Taboo Game creates an interactive and engaging learning atmosphere that motivates students to actively participate in the learning process. As stated by (Sugianto, 2023), Game-Based Learning provides an interesting and challenging learning experience, which can increase students' interest and motivation in learning. During the implementation of the Taboo Game, students were observed to be more enthusiastic and actively involved in describing the target words without using the forbidden words. This active participation required students to think critically and creatively to find alternative ways to explain vocabulary, thereby deepening their understanding of the meaning and use of words.

The research results prove that the Taboo Game can improve vocabulary mastery more quickly. From the average scores obtained, it is evident that both groups experienced an increase. However, the improvement in the experimental group was higher than the control group. Although the experimental group was indeed better from the beginning before receiving treatment, after using the Taboo Game, the improvement became much greater. This shows that the Taboo Game is truly effective in improving students' vocabulary mastery. The results of this research are consistent with previous research on the effectiveness of Taboo games in vocabulary learning. Several researchers, including (R. R. Lumbangaol, 2019), (Graciela et al., 2021), (Sari & Agung, 2023), and (Tefa et al., 2024) have consistently found that Taboo Game successfully improves students' vocabulary mastery at various grade levels and educational contexts. They show that students who use the Taboo Game score higher than those who use conventional methods, with students showing significant improvement in memorizing and understanding new vocabulary. In addition, (Siregar & Fithriani, 2023) found that students responded positively to the Taboo Game because it made vocabulary learning

easier and more enjoyable while enhancing their learning creativity. Previous research also revealed additional benefits of the Taboo Game beyond vocabulary improvement, including increased student engagement, higher learning motivation, greater confidence in using English, and more active participation in class discussions. These research findings further reinforce previous studies, confirming that Taboo is an effective and innovative learning strategy for developing students' vocabulary mastery at various educational levels.

Taboo Game encourages cooperation among students. (Graciela et al., 2021) notes that it helps students improve their cooperation and enthusiasm. During the game, students work in teams, helping each other to guess words and develop strategies together. In this research, careful planning and good time management are necessary so that all students have sufficient opportunity to actively participate in the game. (Praningdhita, 2013) mentions that the Taboo game requires a long time for all students to take turns as clue givers, and requires many cards to cover all learning materials. In addition, some students initially had difficulty explaining words without mentioning the forbidden words, so they needed guidance and practice to develop effective communication skills. Despite these obstacles, the results strongly support the effectiveness of the Taboo Game as an innovative teaching method for improving vocabulary mastery. This research provides evidence that Taboo Game is an effective learning strategy for improving the vocabulary mastery of tenth grade students at SMA Negeri 1 Parigi Tengah. The significant improvement in vocabulary scores in the experimental group, combined with an engaging and interactive learning process, shows that game-based learning such as Taboo Game can overcome problems in vocabulary teaching and create a more effective and enjoyable learning experience for students.

The Taboo Game not only develops vocabulary mastery but also has the potential to develop other language skills. The game naturally trains speaking skills as students must explain words clearly and fluently, enhances listening skills as students need to listen carefully to clues, and develops reading skills when students process written information on the cards quickly. The students can also practice writing skills by creating their own Taboo cards based on vocabulary they have learned. Additionally, the game helps students understand grammar and appropriate language usage in context. The use of digital technology or online applications can make the game more engaging and interactive. With these benefits, the Taboo Game demonstrates considerable potential as a comprehensive language learning tool and warrants further exploration in future research.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research, it can be concluded that Taboo Games can effectively develop English vocabulary mastery of the tenth-grade students at SMA Negeri 1 Parigi Tengah. The Independent Sample t-test reveals a significant difference between the experimental and control groups, with the experimental group achieving notably higher post-test scores. All students in the experimental group show improvement from pre-test to post-test, demonstrating the method's effectiveness across varying ability levels. Thus, Taboo Game proves to be an effective and innovative learning strategy that not only enhances vocabulary mastery but also creates a more enjoyable and meaningful learning experience for students.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Alhamdulillahribil'alam. Praise and gratitude to Allah SWT, the Almighty God, for all His blessings, guidance, strength, and will, which enabled the researchers to complete this research.

The researchers would like to express gratitude to the Rector of Tadulako University, Prof. Dr. Ir. Amar S.T., M.T., IPU., ASEAN Eng.; the Dean of the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Dr. Jamaludin, M.Si.; the Head of the Language and Art Education Department, Dr. Agustan, S.Pd., M.Pd.; the Coordinator of the English Education Study Program, Andi Patmasari, S.Pd., M.Pd.; and all staff of the English Education Study Program for their administrative assistance during the study period.

The researchers would also like to extend gratitude to the Principal of SMA Negeri 1 Parigi Tengah, Yusran Kalape, S.Pd., M.Pd., as well as the English teachers, Setianingsih, S.Pd., and Moh. Rizal, S.Pd., M.Pd., for their support, cooperation and guidance throughout the research process. The researchers also thank the students of classes X A and X C who actively participated and showed great enthusiasm during the research, making the whole process successfully.

The researchers would also like to thank all parties who cannot be mentioned one by one for their assistance, support, and prayers in completing this research. Every contribution is sincerely appreciated. This research would not have been possible without the support and contributions of all parties. The researchers also realize that this research is still far from perfect, and therefore warmly welcomes any constructive suggestions and feedback from readers to improve the quality of this research in the future. May Allah SWT grant blessings and appropriate rewards to all those who have contributed, and may this research bring benefit to those who read it. Aamiin.

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