

THE USE OF GAME BASED LEARNING IN TEACHING DESCRIPTIVE TEXT IN SMPK SANTO YOSEPH NAIKOTEN

Lendiana Kartin Paun¹, Aleksius Madar²

lennpaun34@gmail.com¹

Universitas Katolik Widya Mandira

Article Info

Article history:

Published Desember 31, 2025

Keywords:

Game-Based Learning, Descriptive Text, Vocabulary Mastery, Classroom Action Research, English Language Teaching.

ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the effectiveness of Game-Based Learning (GBL) in improving students' ability to write descriptive texts. This study was conducted through a Classroom Action Research (CAR) design involving 28 ninth-grade students of SMPK Santo Yosep Naikoten. The use of games, specifically the Word Chain Game, was implemented to improve students' vocabulary mastery and motivation in learning English descriptive writing. Data were collected through pre-tests, post-tests, and classroom observations. The findings showed a significant improvement in students' writing performance, with the average score increasing from 68.8% in the pre-test to 83.7% in the post-test. In addition, students showed greater enthusiasm, active participation, and confidence during the learning process. These results indicate that Game-Based Learning not only supports vocabulary mastery but also creates an engaging and interactive classroom environment. Therefore, GBL can be considered an effective and innovative strategy for teaching English descriptive texts, which promotes both linguistic competence and learning motivation. Further research is recommended to explore the long-term effects of GBL on other language skills and across various educational settings.

1. INTRODUCTION

Teaching descriptive text is a fundamental competency in the English curriculum, aiming to equip students with effective and engaging writing skills. Descriptive text requires students to observe carefully, use rich and specific vocabulary (such as vivid adjectives and adverbs), and construct cohesive sentences to paint a vivid picture of a person, place, or thing. Unfortunately, many educators report that teaching writing skills, particularly descriptive text, is often plagued by challenges such as low student motivation, difficulty generating original ideas, and limited lexical variety in their writing. This indicates an urgent need to adopt more innovative and engagement-oriented teaching methods.

In response to these pedagogical challenges, Game-Based Learning (GBL) has emerged as a revolutionary approach. GBL is a strategy that integrates game elements and mechanics—such as challenges, achievements (scores, badges), fun competition, and immediate feedback—into a formal learning environment. Unlike conventional methods, GBL has been shown to significantly increase student engagement and intrinsic motivation. In the context of language learning, GBL creates a relaxed and supportive atmosphere that allows students to practice and make mistakes without fear, an ideal environment for mastering complex skills like writing.

The specific application of GBL in teaching descriptive text offers great potential to overcome the weaknesses of traditional methods. Games can be designed to focus on crucial aspects of description, such as practicing vocabulary related to the five senses (for example, through "Guessing Games"), reinforcing the generic structure of the text, and stimulating collaborative and imaginative brainstorming. Through structured activities in a game format, students are encouraged to actively interact with the material, use the target language functionally, and develop richer and more vivid descriptive details. This makes GBL a powerful tool for transforming the writing process from being perceived as intimidating into a challenging and enjoyable activity.

Based on this background, this study aims to investigate in depth the effectiveness and implementation of the use of Game-Based Learning as a teaching strategy for descriptive text. The main focus of this study is to evaluate the impact of Game-Based Learning on improving students' descriptive writing skills, both in terms of mastery of linguistic features (vocabulary and grammar) and the quality of descriptive narratives. The results of this study are expected to not only provide empirical evidence regarding the benefits of Game-Based Learning in teaching writing, but also provide practical recommendations for English language educators on how to effectively integrate game elements to create a more motivating and productive learning experience.

2. METHODOLOGY

Data analysis is the process of processing, interpreting, and drawing conclusions from data collected during research to answer research questions and test hypotheses. In this study, I used quantitative data and wanted to determine the extent to which game-based learning can improve students' ability to understand and write descriptive text.

3. RESULT AND DISSCUSION

This research was conducted in two cycles, with each cycle consisting of four stages: planning, action implementation, observation, and reflection. The subjects of the research were 28 students of class IXB SMPK "Santos Yosep Naikoten". The focus of the action taken was the Use of Word Chain to Improve English Mastery of Class IX Students. The average pre-test was 68.8, 51%.

A. Pre-test

Table 1 Student Pre-Test Scores

NO	Name	Score	
1	Polycarpus Rocky Mas	45	45%
2	Elisabeth F. Kou	55	55%
3	Johanes Bosco Adithea	75	75%
4	Deriska Tosi	60	60%
5	Genoveva Y.M Lanang	50	50%
6	Gravyella Cristine Tmeubam	45	45%
7	Primanita Sesilia Taboy	50	50%
8	Putu A. Wigana	75	75%
9	Maryo Anthony Tupitu	65	65%
10	Yoseph Enrike Bulu Manu	65	65%
11	Marchella S. Mbau	70	70%
12	Mathew Teta	60	60%
13	Gregorius Charlito Radja	80	70%
14	Nimbert P. Kulas	45	45%
15	Clarisa J. Putri Sanggu Doa	60	60%
16	Aditya G.N.P Resi	65	65%

17	Anastasia C.M Wea	55	55%
18	Raditya Wisnu Wardana	80	70%
19	Immanuel Xavier Lanang	75	75%
20	Charlos D. Nahak	65	65%
21	Gilberthory P. Lamak	75	75%

The table above illustrates the scores obtained by students during the initial meeting before the start of the lesson, which was used to assess their understanding of the word chain game and evaluate their vocabulary proficiency. The average pre-test score for junior high school students was 62,6 less than the minimum passing criterion (KKM) of 77. Consequently, the findings of this study indicate that students in Grade IXB of SMPK Santo Yosep showed an inadequate foundation in descriptive texts and vocabulary frequently used in this domain.

B. Application of game-based learning to improve students' vocabulary mastery

In the planning stage, researchers developed lesson plans, prepared learning media (student worksheets), and conducted research instruments in the form of teacher and student activity observation sheets, as well as learning outcome tests. The interventions were conducted in two 45-minute learning sessions. Educators used game-based learning as a method to improve students' vocabulary.

The series of events began with the teacher greeting the students, then asking one of the students to lead the opening prayer, and then checking all students' attendance. After that, the teacher gave a preliminary exam. Students were given fifteen minutes to complete the preliminary exam. Next, the teacher explained the objectives to be achieved and began the material by asking several questions, such as: It is very important to know whether there is knowledge about the game-based learning method.

After students provide feedback, the teacher moves on to the next stage by explaining the activities that will be carried out together. Initially, the instructor facilitates student understanding by explaining material related to game-based learning. This serves to inform students about the content that will be explored during the research component of this course. In the next stage, the teacher will provide familiar and relevant examples and provide examples of playing games that the teacher has prepared. After reviewing the examples provided by the teacher, students are instructed to gather in groups, discuss, and complete a series of exercises.

The next stage includes a presentation of the results of each group's discussion, followed by feedback from the instructor. The fourth step in this process is the development of independence. Next, students are instructed to document the new vocabulary they have acquired during the lesson. After identifying and correcting the meaning of the vocabulary in group discussions, students are instructed to study and memorize the vocabulary. At the end of the lesson, students are given a final test, which they are expected to complete individually within 15 minutes. The final test is then collected and graded by the instructor.

Observation results

Table 2 Pre-test Results

NO	Name	Score	
1	Polycarpus Rocky Mas	100	100%
2	Elisabeth F. Kou	95	95%
3	Johanes Bosco Adithea	100	100%
4	Deriska Tosi	85	85%
5	Genoveva Y.M Lanang	100	100%
6	Gravyella Cristine Tmeubam	100	100%
7	Primanita Sesilia Taboy	80	80%
8	Putu A. Wigana	100	100%

9	Maryo Anthony Tupitu	100	100%
10	Yoseph Enrike Bulu Manu	95	95%
11	Marchella S. Mbau	95	95%
12	Mathew Teta	95	95%
13	Gregorius Charlito Radja	95	95%
14	Nimbert P. Kulas	100	100%
15	Clarisa J. Putri Sanggu Doa	100	100%
16	Aditya G.N.P Resi	100	100%
17	Anastasia C.M Wea	90	90%
18	Raditya Wisnu Wardana	90	90%
19	Immanuel Xavier Lanang	90	90%
20	Charlos D. Nahak	100	100%
21	Gilberthory P. Lamak	95	95%

Table 3 Post-test Results

Research result		
Completed	:	21
Not Completed	:	0

$$\text{Student's final grade} = \frac{\text{JumlahSkorPerolehan}}{28} \times 100$$

$$\text{Class average score} = \frac{\text{jumlahtilai seluruhsiswa}}{\text{jumlahtsiswa}} \times 100$$

$$\text{Completed student score} = \frac{21}{21} \times 100 = 100\%$$

The table above presents the scores obtained by students at the end of the learning process, specifically on the final test used to assess their understanding of the word chain game and evaluate their vocabulary skills after the application of the research method. The average score of the final test for junior high school students was 90. Five students scored below the Minimum Passing Score (KKM), with a result of 70, while 23 students scored 80-100. The findings obtained from the methodology used showed substantial improvements, which indicates that the pedagogical approach using the word chain game is very effective for grade IX students.

C. Observation Results

Most students were active in playing the game. They sat attentively, maintained eye contact with the board, and displayed enthusiastic facial expressions throughout the session. However, some students were less enthusiastic, some were noisy, some played alone, and some did not pay attention to what was written on the board. However, several students also showed high interest and enthusiasm. Some smiled or reacted emotionally to the game, indicating enjoyment in the learning process. They enthusiastically participated in follow-up activities such as answering questions and group discussions. They expressed their opinions about the game. Most students were able to remember and use the new vocabulary introduced in the word chain game, including vocabulary they had just discovered from playing the game. However, some students still struggled to fully understand the meaning of new words in the game context. Students showed improvement in vocabulary-related tasks such as matching words. Students' curiosity about the background of playing the word chain game in the game-based learning method was very limited; only a few showed interest in learning more. The teacher successfully integrated the game-based learning method into narrative learning. The word chain game served as the main material for exploring vocabulary. The teacher provided clear instructions before, during, and after the play session, helping students follow the lesson smoothly. The teacher attempted to involve all students, although not all were actively engaged. Only a small percentage of students

showed improvement in their vocabulary test scores after the play session. Most students provided positive feedback about the learning experience, stating that the word chain game was fun and useful. A small number of students showed increased confidence in using English vocabulary in speaking and writing tasks.

The pre-test and post-test results can be compared in the following table.

Table 4 Comparison between pre and post test

Assessment aspects	Pre-Exam	Post test	improved
Average class score.	62,6%	100%	37,4%
Learning Completeness (%)	50%	80%	17,5%
Active Student Participation	50%	88%	31,1%

The table above shows an increase in the pre-test average from 62,6 to 100 in the post-test, representing an increase of 37,4%. This indicates that the method used during the learning process, namely teaching vocabulary using word chain games, is indeed effective for junior high school students. Not only did grades improve, but student enthusiasm, learning completion, and active participation also increased. Therefore, it can be concluded that this method is highly recommended, especially if the learning is related to descriptive texts.

Discussion

The results of the study showed that the use of the word chain game significantly improved the English vocabulary skills of ninth-grade students at SMPK Santo Yosep Naikoten. This was evident in the increase in students' average scores, which rose from 62,6 in the pretest to 100 in the first posttest. This consistent increase indicates that the word chain game can facilitate vocabulary comprehension more effectively. The observation sheet and vocabulary elements, as well as the presentation of situations close to real life, made it easier for students to remember the meaning of words and how to use them.

These findings corroborate the results of previous research by Resmini, N., et al. (2010) which showed that the use of guessing games improves student learning outcomes. The average class grades increased. Observations show that guessing games make students more active and the classroom atmosphere more enjoyable. Students find it easier to manage and organize words to write descriptive texts. In addition, teachers also find it easier to teach. Therefore, it can be concluded that the guessing game model can improve learning outcomes in the material of writing descriptive texts. Sari, P., & Kurniawan, E. (2023) that there was a significant increase in students' speaking abilities in the experimental class after the application of the word game method. The average posttest score of the experimental class increased significantly compared to the control class. Data analysis using the t-test showed that the significance value was below 0.05, which means there was a significant effect of the word game method on students' speaking skills. Thus, the word game method can be used as an effective learning alternative in improving junior high school students' descriptive text speaking abilities.

Future research should test the effectiveness of similar media over a longer period and implement it in multiple schools with diverse backgrounds. Additionally, combining quantitative and qualitative methods, such as classroom observations or student interviews, could provide a deeper understanding of how students respond to game-based media. Overall, the results of this study indicate that game-based media is highly effective in helping students improve their vocabulary.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the research results, it can be concluded that the use of game-based learning methods using word chain games is an effective way to improve the English vocabulary

mastery of ninth-grade students at SMPK Santo Yosep. This is evident from the increase in students' average scores, from 68.8 in the pretest to 83.7 in the posttest. This increase indicates that the word chain game captures students' attention and helps them understand and remember vocabulary in meaningful contexts. The incorporation of elements, such as vocabulary customs, into the word chain game provides a more enjoyable and contextual learning experience.

Therefore, game-based learning media can be an effective and innovative alternative in English teaching, particularly for developing students' vocabulary. This type of media aligns with the principles of contextual and multimodal learning, which have been proven to improve learning outcomes. This research is expected to serve as a reference for teachers and educational material developers in their efforts to continue creating engaging and relevant media tailored to students' needs and interests. Further research is recommended to explore the influence of similar media on other language skills and to test long-term vocabulary retention.

5. REFERENCES

- Ahmad Rosidi, EF (2016). *Journal of English Language Teaching* (An Experimental Study of the Seventh Graders of MTs. Miftahul Khoirot Brangang in the Academic Year of 2014 / 2015). 5(1), 1–5.
- Ahmed, AAA, Ampy, ES, Komariah, A., Hassan, I., Thahir, I., Hussein Ali, M., Fawzi Faisal, A., & Zafarani, P. (2022). Investigating the Effect of Using Game-Based Learning on EFL Learners'
- Faridah, F., Fatmawaty, R., Farih, A., & Agraini, L. (2024). THE POWERING OF GUESSING GAME IN STUDENTS' WRITING DESCRIPTIVE TEXT: EFL CLASSROOM ACTIVITIE. *MSJ: Majority Science Journal* ,2 (1), 330-338.
- From, NW (2020). THE EFFECT OF WHOLESOME SCATTERING GAME ON STUDENTS' WRITING DESCRIPTIVE TEXT ABILITY (A Study at the Eighth Grade of SMP NEGERI 1 Angkola Selatan in 2018/2019 Academic Year. *LINER JURNAL* (Language Intelligence and Educational Research) ,3 (1), 86-101.
- <https://www.academia.edu/download/67633487/2240.pdf>
- Lubis, WI, Rahmansyah, H., & Rosadi, A. THE EFFECT OF BOARD GAME METHOD ON STUDENTS' WRITING DESCRIPTIVE TEXT SKILL (A study at the Seventh Grade of MTs Darul Akhiroh Marancar in 2020/2021 Academic Year).
- Masrukhah, L. (2017). Developing learning descriptive text materials to support literacy skills through DeBeBino game of the seventh grade students of SMPN 2 Wonoayu. *Journal of English Teaching, Literature, and Applied Linguistics* ,1 (2), 8-15.
- Pratiwi, R., Susilawati, E., & Wardah, W. (2020). Improving Students Mastery of Simple Present Tense in Descriptive Text by Using Kahoot! Games. *Journal of English Education Programs* ,1 (2), 358651.
- Rizky, R. (2020). "Bits and Pieces" to Improve the Students' Writing Skill: Using Educational Games as an Approach to Teach Descriptive Text. *ELSYA: Journal of English Language Studies* ,2 (1), 20-25.
- Rowe, J., Shores, L., Mott, B., Lester, J.: Integrating learning, problem solving, and engagement in narrative-centered learning environments. *Int. J. Artif. Intel. Educ.* 21, 115–133 (2011)