

**IMPROVING STUDENTS' MASTERY OF ENGLISH SYNONYMS AND ANTONYMS USING BINGO AND DOMINO GAMES
(A Classroom Action Research on the Eighth Grade Students of SMP Negeri 3 Maos in the Academic Year 2013/2014)**

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Abstract

This final project is concerned with the use of bingo and domino games in improving students' mastery of synonyms and antonyms. The objective of this research is to investigate to what extent bingo and domino games give their influence in teaching synonyms and antonyms to the junior high school students. This study used action research design. There were two cycles of action in this study. This research was started with an initial pre-test and ended with a final post-test. In each cycle there were pre-test, treatment, and post-test. Tests were used to collect the quantitative data. Meanwhile, observation checklist and questionnaire were used to gather the qualitative data. The students of class VIIIA of SMP Negeri 3 Maos were chosen as the subjects of this study. The study showed that the games could give a great help to the students in improving their mastery of synonyms and antonyms. By comparing the mean score of initial pre-test and final post-test, a significant improvement could be seen. The students' mean score of the final post-test (86.95) was higher than that of the initial pre-test (33.09). This improvement was also supported by the results of observation checklists and questionnaire. Based on the observation checklists, the students' attitude improved. The students' participation in Cycle 2 was better than that of Cycle 1. Moreover, the result of questionnaire showed that the students gave positive perception towards the use of bingo domino games. By referring to the results, it can be concluded that bingo domino games gave good contribution to the improvement of the students' ability in mastering English synonym and antonym. Therefore, the use of those games as an alternative way to teach synonyms and antonyms is recommended. Through this technique, teachers are expected to be able to increase students' interest and motivation in learning synonym and antonym.

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INTRODUCTION

When we talk about vocabulary, we usually mean words. However, there are multiple aspects of vocabulary knowledge that learners must master. Two of them are synonym and antonym.

More specifically talking about two aspects of vocabulary; synonym and antonym, they become one of the most favorite subjects in reading comprehension test in Indonesia. However, based on my experiences, teachers tended to teach vocabulary in general. They did not teach its parts such as synonym and antonym specifically. Commonly, they only gave their students the translation of a difficult word. They slightly gave the synonym or antonym of a word after it appeared in the test. Moreover, they did not use any special medium or technique to teach synonym and antonym. In line with this, Webb (2007: 120) states,

. . . students tend to learn the majority of synonyms in the later stages of vocabulary learning, and researchers are more focused on the earlier stages of vocabulary learning, which are critical to language acquisition. Moreover, in the classroom, teachers and learners might be more motivated to teach and learn words that convey new information rather than teaching and learning forms that convey information similar to what learners already know.

Based on the statement above, there is a consideration that vocabulary is more important than synonym and antonym. Therefore, it is not surprising if the media and techniques in teaching synonym and antonym are not as many as those in teaching vocabulary. Whereas, effective techniques and media are also needed in teaching synonym and antonym since they are parts of vocabulary.

Therefore, I would like to find out an alternative and interesting way to teach synonym and antonym to students by conducting a research. In this research, I choose bingo domino games as the techniques. Games can become initial learning and reinforcement of materials. By using games, students are expected to get

immersed in a lesson without realizing they are learning something.

In brief, I intend to conduct a classroom action research in order to prove that bingo domino games can improve students' mastery of English synonym and antonym. I hope bingo domino games will give positive effect to students' mastery of English synonym and antonym.

METHOD OF INVESTIGATION

The subjects of this study were the students of class VIIIA of SMP Negeri 3 Maos in the academic year 2013/2014. Class VIIIA is one of the six first grade classes in SMP Negeri 3 Maos. It consists of 22 female and 18 male students. Therefore, there are 40 students in this class.

The purpose of this research is to measure students' mastery of synonyms and antonyms by using bingo and domino games in the teaching and learning process. Therefore, the object of this study was English words. Specifically, the words which were used were those that have synonym and antonym pairs.

To collect those data, three instruments were used. The first was tests; they were used to record the students' mastery of synonyms and antonyms. The second was observation checklists; they were used to record the students' participation during the treatments. The last instrument was questionnaire; it was used to record the students' opinion toward the treatments.

The first step before conducting a research was identifying a problem. There were four main activities which were conducted in this study; initial pre-test, cycle 1, cycle 2, and final post-test. In addition, based on Burns (2010: 8) there were also four steps in this study. Those activities and steps are explained as follows:

Problem Identification

The students' behavior in their English class was observed to find their synonym and antonym problem. Their English teacher was also interviewed and some additional information

about them such as their previous English scores was collected.

To find out whether the students really had problem in synonym and antonym mastery, initial pre-test was given to them. The findings of the observation and IPT were the foundation in conducting the treatment.

Initial Pre-Test (IPT)

The first activity in this action research was giving the students IPT. This test was conducted before starting any cycle. In this test, the students had to give the appropriate synonym and antonym of the 32 selected words.

Cycle 1

Planning

At this stage, all the preparations of teaching activities, such as organizing the material, preparing the games, making the instruments, and making the lesson plan, were planned and arranged.

Acting

After the planning was done, the next activity was acting. It consisted of three steps. They were pre-test, treatment, and post-test. Those steps are described in the next sub-chapter below:

Giving Cycle 1 Pre-Test

The pre-test was given at the beginning of each cycle. The students were asked to answer a half of questions in the IPT. The aim of this test was to measure students' initial ability mastering synonym and antonym.

Giving Treatment

A treatment was conducted after the pre-test was given. The treatment followed these steps:

- (1) the students were given a text in order to make them aware of synonym and antonym;
- (2) some words were taken from the text, then the students were asked to mention

the synonym or the antonym of the words;

- (3) the students paid attention to the teacher's explanation about the synonym and antonym;
- (4) the teacher gave more examples of synonym and antonym;
- (5) the students were introduced to the bingo domino games;
- (6) the rules of bingo domino games were explained; and
- (7) the teacher conducted the games.

Giving Cycle 1 Post-test

The post-test was held after the treatment was given. It was used to find out the students' improvement after they experienced the treatment. The students were asked to answer the same questions as those in the pre-test.

Observing

At the observing stage, students' attitudes during the teaching and learning process were observed by giving the check mark (✓) in the prepared checklist.

Reflecting

Reflecting was the last stage in Cycle 1. At this stage, the students' achievement was evaluated by analyzing the pre-test, the post-test, and the observation checklist. The next cycle would not be conducted if the result of this cycle was satisfying and no additional treatment was needed.

Cycle 2

Cycle 1 and Cycle 2 were almost similar. Cycle 2 would have four stages as the Cycle 1 had. The difference between them was in the material. The material which was taught and tested in the Cycle 2 was the other half of the total words in the IPT. In addition, at the observation stage of the Cycle 2, the questionnaire would be given in order to find out the students' opinions towards the learning process.

Final Post-Test (FPT)

FPT was given after the first and the second cycle were done. All the materials that were given in both cycles were being tested. The result of FPT and IPT were compared in order to observe students' improvement. Then, the tests comparison, and the observation of the students' attitude were considered as the complementary evaluation of the research.

DISCUSSION

Initial Pre-test (IPT)

The students' mean of IPT was 33.09. Meanwhile, the English mastery learning score in the school was 70. It means that there was no student who achieved the passing grade. This result answers the first research question which was 'Do students have difficulty in finding synonym and antonym of a word?' The students have difficulty in finding synonym and antonym of a word. Therefore, an action research was needed to improve the students' mastery in synonyms and antonyms.

Cycle 1 Pre-test

Cycle 1 Post-test recorded the ability of the students in mastering the synonyms and

antonyms of the first half of IPT. The result of this test was not satisfying. Their mean score (40.55) was low. The low result of Cycle 1 Pre-test supported the finding in IPT. The students' mastery of synonym and antonym was poor. Because of that, the first treatment was given to the students.

Cycle 1 Post-test

The mean score after the first treatment was 86.09. If we compare this result with that of Cycle 1 Pre-test, we can see a significant improvement. The mean score in Cycle 1 Post-test (86.09) is higher than that of Cycle 1 Pre-test (40.55).

However, although the result was quite good and 85% of the students passed the passing grade, there were six students who failed in this test. They were S-9, S-10, S-18, S-23, S-28, and S-40. Because of their failure, they were given an additional treatment before Cycle 2 was conducted. In the additional treatment, those students were divided into two groups and conducted the games once again. After the additional treatment was given, the remedial test was held by re-testing the Cycle 1 Post-test. The samples of students' worksheets and their scoring table are provided in Appendix 15 and 16. Meanwhile, the comparison of their scores before and after the additional treatment is presented in the following table:

The Comparison of the Students' Score

Students' Code	Cycle 1 Post-Test		Remedial Test	
	Achieved Point	Score	Achieved Point	Score
S-9	21	65.63	30	93.75
S-10	19	59.38	28	87.50
S-18	20	62.50	29	90.63
S-23	20	62.50	32	100.00
S-28	18	56.25	32	100.00
S-40	22	68.75	30	93.75
Total	98	375.00	181	565.63
Mean	62.50		94.27	

The average score of those six students in Cycle 1 Post-test was 62.50. Meanwhile in the remedial test, their mean score increased to 94.27. None of their scores was lower than 70. By referring to the result, all of the students were considered to have mastered the synonym and antonym of the words in Cycle 1. Therefore, the next cycle could be conducted.

Cycle 2 Pre-test

The mean score of this test was 25.63. It means that the students' initial ability in mastering the synonym and antonym of the words in Cycle 2 did not meet the mastery learning score. This result was even lower than that of Cycle 1 Pre-test (33.09). It might be because the material in the Cycle 2 was considered more difficult than that of Cycle 1. Based on this result, the second treatment was needed to be conducted.

Cycle 2 Post-test

There was an improvement after the second treatment was given. The students' mean score increased from 25.63 in pre-test to 87.34 in the post-test. The mean score in Cycle 2 Post-test indicates that there was no student who got lower than 70. Therefore, the additional treatment was not needed to be conducted because all students had passed the mastery learning score.

Final Post-test (FPT)

Because all students were considered successful in the Cycle 2 Post-test, I decided to end the cycles and conduct the Final Post-test (FPT). In FPT, their mean score was 86.95. This mean score was higher than that of IPT (33.09). The

result proved that all of the students successfully passed the test since their scores were above the mastery learning score.

Cycle 1 Observation Checklist

The results of Cycle 1 Observation Checklist will be discussed in the following paragraphs. The first aspect of the checklist showed that all of the students attended the class. Thus, the mean of this aspect was one and categorized into very high.

Then, in the second aspect, there were more than a half of the students who were motivated in the teaching and learning process. Therefore, that aspect was categorized into high.

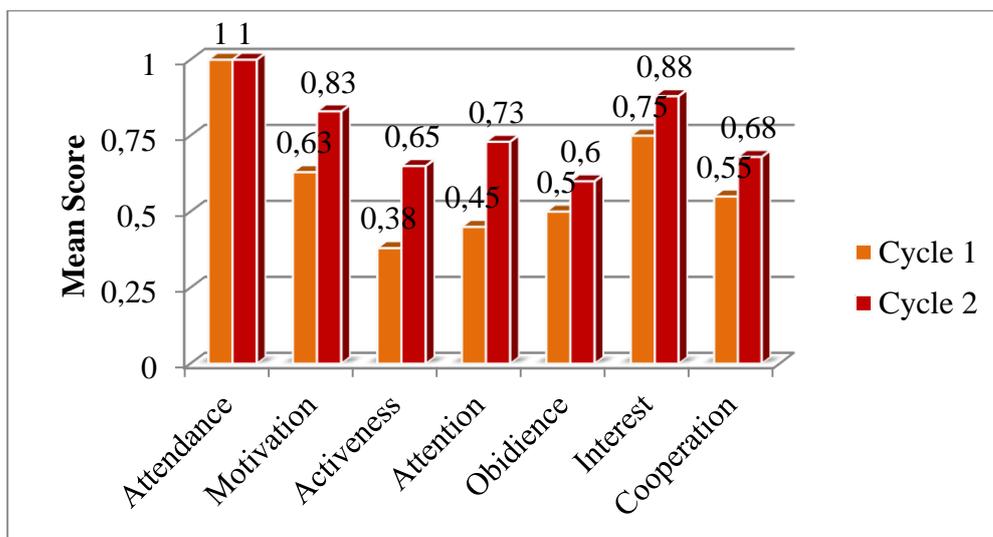
The next three aspects were categorized into low. They were students' activeness, obedience, and attention. Those results might be because the students were still at the adaptation stage of the new teaching and learning process.

However, in the sixth aspect, they showed high interest towards the games. The mean of this aspect was 0.75. It was quite normal since children basically love games.

Lastly, in the seventh aspect, they showed that they could cooperate well with their friends in group activities. It was proven by the mean of the seventh aspect which was 0.55.

Cycle 2 Observation Checklist

The result of Cycle 2 Observation Checklist was better than that of Cycle 1 Observation Checklist. The improvement of each category in Cycle 2 Observation Checklist will be described in the following chart:



The Comparison of Cycle 1 and Cycle 2 Observation Checklist

From the chart above, we can see that in the first aspect, the students' attendance was perfect. All students attended the class. Next, the students' mean score in the motivation aspect increased from 0.63 to 0.83. In the activeness aspect, the mean score had increased to 0.65, while that of the attention aspect had increased to 0.73. Then, students' obedience improved from 0.5 to 0.6. For the students' interest aspect, the mean score in Cycle 2 Observation Checklist (0.88) is higher than that of Cycle 1 Observation Checklist (0.75). In the last aspect, students' cooperation ability increased from 0.55 to 0.68.

Based on comparison of the students' attitude in the two cycles, the students' attitude improved positively. The results indicate that the use of bingo domino games was favorable in improving their mastery of English synonym and antonym.

Questionnaire

There were five questions that represented the indicators in the questionnaire. The discussion of each indicator is presented in the following paragraphs. The first indicator shows the very high level of students' interest towards bingo domino games in teaching and learning process. It was proven by 11 students who chose *very like* and 29 students who chose *like*. Moreover, there was no student who chose the option *d* and *e* which represent *less like* and *did not like*.

The second indicator was aimed to find out how often the students heard the words which were used in the material. Mostly, the students chose option *c* which represents *ever*. The mean of this indicator was 2.43. Thus, the relevancy of the material was high.

The students' opinions towards the level of difficulty of the material were measured in the third indicator. According to the table, 1 student chose *very difficult*, 6 students chose *difficult*, 26 students chose *difficult enough*, and 7 students chose *not difficult at all*. The average of this indicator is 2.03. It means that the material was difficult enough for the students.

The next indicator was intended to find out students' responses of whether or not the use of bingo domino games could help their synonym and antonym mastery. From the table, we can see that half of the students chose *very helpful*, sixteen of them chose *helpful*, three of them chose *rather helpful*, and only one student who said *not helpful at all*. The mean of this indicator is 3.38. It means that the games could give a great help to the students to improve their synonym and antonym mastery.

The last indicator was to measure the sustainability of the technique. The students were asked whether or not this technique is needed to be applied in the future. In the result, 9 students chose *very necessary*, 28 students chose *necessary*, 2 students chose *less necessary*, and 1 student chose *not necessary*. The mean of this indicator is 3.13. By referring to this result, it is necessary for the game to be applied in learning synonym and antonym.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Conclusions

The subjects of the study had problem in mastering English synonym and antonym. It was proven by their low results in the IPT. They could only answer 847 words from the total 2560 words. Thus, their mean score was 33.09.

After the study was conducted, the students showed significant improvement.

The students mean score increased from 33.09 in the IPT to 86.95 in the FPT.

The use of bingo domino games was favorable in teaching synonym and antonym. Based on the observation checklist, the students' attitude was positive. Moreover, as recorded in the questionnaire, the students expressed that the technique was helpful for them in mastering synonym and antonym and had high possibility to be conducted in the near future.

Suggestions

First, teachers are expected to give their students words in synonym and antonym relation during the teaching and learning process. The mastery of synonym and antonym will enrich their vocabulary and improve their language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing). Second, this study is expected to be an alternative and proper way for teachers to teach synonym and antonym. In this case, teachers may use bingo domino games so that the students will enjoy the learning process. Third, for the researchers, this study can be a good reference for those who want to conduct a similar kind of research.

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