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# Enhancing Students' English Vocabulary Mastery through Interactive Teaching Methods

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**ABSTRACT**
This study aimed to investigate the effectiveness of interactive teaching methods in enhancing students' English vocabulary mastery at one elementary school in Medan, Indonesia. Vocabulary mastery is one of the fundamental aspects of English language learning because it supports students' abilities in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. However, many elementary school students still face difficulties in understanding and remembering English vocabulary due to conventional teaching methods that are teacher-centered and less engaging. The study employed a quantitative pre-experimental design using a one-group pre-test and post-test approach. The participants consisted of 17 elementary school students. Data were collected through vocabulary tests administered before and after the implementation of interactive teaching methods. The treatment included educational games, collaborative learning, digital quizzes, visual media, and interactive classroom activities. The findings revealed significant improvement in students' vocabulary mastery after the treatment. The mean score increased from 8.47 in the pre-test to 32.88 in the post-test. The results indicate that interactive teaching methods positively affect students' vocabulary learning achievement, participation, and motivation. The study concludes that interactive teaching methods provide meaningful learning experiences that improve vocabulary acquisition among elementary school learners. Therefore, English teachers are encouraged to implement interactive and student-centered learning strategies in vocabulary instruction.

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## 1. Introduction

English has become one of the most important international languages used in communication, education, technology, and global interaction. In Indonesia, English is taught as a foreign language and has become an important subject in schools, including elementary schools. Learning English at an early age is considered beneficial because young learners tend to acquire language more effectively through exposure, interaction, and practice. One of the essential components of English learning is vocabulary mastery because vocabulary serves as the foundation for communication and language development.

Vocabulary is a collection of words that individuals use to express ideas, feelings, and meanings in communication. Without adequate vocabulary knowledge, students may experience difficulties in understanding spoken or written texts and expressing their thoughts effectively. Nation (2020) emphasized that vocabulary knowledge is central to language learning because words are essential for communication. Similarly, Cameron (2001) stated that vocabulary development is highly important in young learner classrooms because

children need sufficient vocabulary to participate in communication and classroom interaction.

Despite the importance of vocabulary mastery, many elementary school students still experience problems in learning English vocabulary. Based on preliminary observation conducted at one elementary school in Medan, many students showed limited vocabulary knowledge. Students had difficulty remembering English words, pronouncing vocabulary correctly, and understanding word meanings in context. During classroom observation, students appeared passive and less motivated because vocabulary learning activities were dominated by memorization and teacher explanations.

Traditional vocabulary teaching methods often focus on repetition, memorization, and translation activities. Although these methods may help students recognize words temporarily, they do not always support long-term vocabulary retention and meaningful language use. As a result, students may easily forget vocabulary items after classroom activities. Furthermore, monotonous learning situations reduce students' motivation and participation in English learning.

To solve these problems, teachers need to implement innovative and engaging teaching methods that encourage active student participation. One of the effective approaches is the use of interactive teaching methods. Interactive teaching methods refer to learning strategies that involve active communication, collaboration, games, technology integration, and student-centered learning activities. These methods create enjoyable learning environments that motivate students to participate actively in classroom activities.

Recent studies have shown that interactive teaching methods significantly improve students' vocabulary mastery. Umayah and Maruf (2026) found that game-based digital platforms effectively improved vocabulary acquisition among EFL learners because students became more engaged and motivated during learning activities. Similarly, Siregar and Syahputri (2025) reported that augmented reality-based learning strategies positively influenced vocabulary mastery and students' learning interest.

Interactive learning activities such as games, songs, digital quizzes, role-play, storytelling, and collaborative tasks enable students to practice vocabulary meaningfully. Students become active participants in learning rather than passive recipients of information. Furthermore, technology-assisted learning tools such as Kahoot, Quizizz, Educandy, and ChatGPT-based exercises provide immediate feedback and enjoyable learning experiences.

The use of interactive teaching methods is particularly suitable for elementary school students because young learners generally prefer engaging, visual, and participatory activities. According to Piaget's cognitive development theory, children learn effectively through active interaction with their environment. Therefore, interactive learning activities can help students understand and retain vocabulary more effectively.

This research aimed to investigate the effectiveness of interactive teaching methods in enhancing students' English vocabulary mastery at one elementary school in Medan. The study focused on measuring students' vocabulary improvement before and after the implementation of interactive teaching methods.

The research question of this study is formulated as follows: How can interactive teaching methods enhance students' English vocabulary mastery? The findings of this study are expected to provide practical contributions for English teachers, researchers, and educational institutions in improving vocabulary teaching strategies for elementary school students.

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# 2. Literature Review

## 2.1 Vocabulary Mastery

Vocabulary mastery refers to students' ability to understand, remember, pronounce, and use words appropriately in communication. Vocabulary is considered one of the most important components of language learning because communication cannot occur effectively without words. According to Nation (2020), vocabulary knowledge includes receptive and productive knowledge. Receptive vocabulary refers to words that learners understand when listening or reading, while productive vocabulary refers to words learners can use in speaking and writing.

Vocabulary mastery involves several aspects, including pronunciation, spelling, meaning, word usage, and contextual understanding. Learners who possess broad vocabulary knowledge generally perform better in language learning because vocabulary supports comprehension and communication skills.

Schmitt (2010) explained that vocabulary learning should not only focus on memorization but also involve meaningful exposure and contextual practice. Students need repeated encounters with vocabulary items in various contexts to retain words effectively. Therefore, teachers should provide learning experiences that encourage active vocabulary use.

In elementary school contexts, vocabulary teaching should consider students' developmental characteristics. Young learners tend to learn effectively through concrete objects, visual media, songs, stories, and interactive activities. Cameron (2001) stated that children learn vocabulary more successfully when they are actively involved in meaningful learning experiences.

Vocabulary mastery is closely related to language proficiency. Students with limited vocabulary often face difficulties in understanding instructions, expressing ideas, reading texts, and participating in classroom communication. Therefore, vocabulary instruction should become an important focus in English language teaching.

## 2.2 Interactive Teaching Methods

Interactive teaching methods are instructional approaches that involve active student participation through communication, collaboration, games, discussions, and technology-assisted activities. Unlike teacher-centered instruction, interactive learning encourages students to become active participants in the learning process. According to Brown (2007), interactive learning provides opportunities for learners to negotiate meaning, exchange ideas, and practice language in authentic situations. Interactive teaching creates dynamic classroom environments that enhance motivation and learning engagement.

Interactive teaching methods include various classroom activities such as:

1. Educational games
2. Role-play activities
3. Group discussions
4. Digital learning platforms
5. Collaborative learning
6. Storytelling
7. Interactive quizzes
8. Multimedia learning
9. Problem-solving activities
10. Technology-assisted learning

These activities encourage students to communicate and practice vocabulary meaningfully. Recent studies indicate that interactive teaching methods effectively improve

vocabulary learning outcomes. Pratiwi et al. (2024) found that gamified technology and flipped classroom approaches significantly enhanced students' vocabulary acquisition and participation. Similarly, Özdemir (2026) reported that Kahoot-based digital learning improved vocabulary retention and learner engagement.

Interactive teaching methods also increase students' motivation because learning becomes enjoyable and meaningful. According to Self-Determination Theory proposed by Deci and Ryan (2000), students become more motivated when learning activities satisfy their needs for competence, autonomy, and social interaction.

### 2.3 Game-Based Learning in Vocabulary Instruction

Game-based learning is one of the most popular interactive teaching strategies in vocabulary instruction. Educational games create enjoyable learning situations that reduce anxiety and encourage participation. Through games, students practice vocabulary repeatedly without feeling pressured. A study conducted by Umayah and Maruf (2026) revealed that digital game-based platforms effectively improved EFL students' vocabulary mastery. Students became more enthusiastic and active during classroom activities. Similarly, Uge and Hornay (2025) found that multi-game interventions improved students' environmental vocabulary knowledge.

Games such as crossword puzzles, matching games, guessing games, board games, and digital quizzes provide opportunities for vocabulary repetition and contextual usage. Furthermore, competition elements in games motivate students to participate actively. Digital learning applications such as Kahoot, Quizizz, Educandy, and Wordwall are increasingly used in English classrooms because they combine learning with entertainment. Lestari and Astutik (2025) found that Kahoot significantly improved elementary students' vocabulary achievement because students enjoyed interactive quizzes and immediate feedback.

### 2.4 Technology-Assisted Vocabulary Learning

Technology integration has become increasingly important in modern language learning. Digital tools and applications provide innovative learning opportunities that support vocabulary acquisition. Siregar and Syahputri (2025) reported that augmented reality-based learning strategies positively influenced students' vocabulary mastery because visual and interactive features improved comprehension and memory retention. Similarly, Jannah et al. (2026) found that ChatGPT-based interactive exercises enhanced vocabulary learning by providing immediate responses and contextual practice. Technology-assisted learning offers several advantages: Interactive learning experiences; Immediate feedback; Visual support; Flexible learning opportunities; Increased student motivation; Collaborative learning possibilities. These benefits make technology integration suitable for elementary school learners.

### 2.5 Previous Studies

Several previous studies have investigated the effectiveness of interactive teaching methods in vocabulary learning. Tekir (2021) conducted action research on vocabulary learning among EFL learners and found that interactive learning activities significantly improved vocabulary mastery and classroom participation. Pratiwi et al. (2024) investigated gamified technology in vocabulary learning and concluded that interactive digital platforms enhanced students' motivation and vocabulary acquisition. Jannah et al. (2026) explored the use of ChatGPT-based interactive exercises and found positive effects on vocabulary mastery among EFL learners. Siregar and Syahputri (2025) examined augmented reality-based learning strategies and reported significant improvement in vocabulary achievement. These

studies demonstrate that interactive teaching methods effectively support vocabulary learning in EFL classrooms.

### 2.6 Conceptual Framework

This study is based on the assumption that interactive teaching methods positively influence students' vocabulary mastery. Interactive learning activities encourage active participation, motivation, collaboration, and meaningful practice. As students become more engaged in learning activities, their vocabulary understanding and retention improve. The conceptual framework of this study can be illustrated as follows: Interactive Teaching Methods → Active Participation → Increased Motivation → Better Vocabulary Practice → Improved Vocabulary Mastery

## 3. Methodology

### 3.1 Research Design

This study employed a quantitative pre-experimental research design using a one-group pre-test and post-test approach. The design was chosen because it enabled the researcher to measure students' vocabulary mastery before and after the implementation of interactive teaching methods. According to Creswell (2014), pre-experimental designs are useful for investigating the effects of treatments in educational settings when randomization is not possible. The research design can be illustrated as follows:

O1 → X → O2

Where:

O1 = Pre-test

X = Treatment using interactive teaching methods

O2 = Post-test

### 3.2 Research Site and Participants

The research was conducted at one elementary school in Medan, Indonesia. The participants consisted of 17 students. The students were selected because they showed limited English vocabulary mastery during preliminary observation. The participants included both male and female students from elementary school level. The students had different vocabulary abilities, as indicated by their pre-test scores.

### 3.3 Research Instrument

The instrument used in this study was a vocabulary test designed to measure students' vocabulary mastery. The test included vocabulary related to daily activities, classroom objects, animals, colors, family members, and simple expressions. The vocabulary test assessed several aspects:

1. Vocabulary recognition
2. Vocabulary meaning
3. Vocabulary spelling
4. Vocabulary usage
5. Vocabulary comprehension

The same test format was administered in both pre-test and post-test.

### 3.4 Data Collection Procedure

The data collection procedures included several stages: Firstly, the researcher administered a pre-test to identify students' initial vocabulary mastery before the treatment. Students answered vocabulary questions individually. Secondly, after the pre-test, the

researcher implemented interactive teaching methods during English learning activities. The treatment involved: Vocabulary games; Digital quizzes; Group activities; Role-play; Picture-based learning; Storytelling; Collaborative tasks; Interactive classroom discussions. The activities were conducted in enjoyable and student-centered learning environments. And thirdly, after the treatment sessions, the researcher administered a post-test to measure students' vocabulary improvement.

### 3.5 Data Analysis Technique

The data were analyzed descriptively by comparing pre-test and post-test scores. The researcher calculated: Total scores; Mean scores; Score improvement; Percentage of improvement. The analysis aimed to identify whether interactive teaching methods improved students' vocabulary mastery.

## 4. Findings and Discussion

### 4.1 Findings

The findings of this study were obtained from students' pre-test and post-test scores. They are seen in the following description.

#### 4.1.1 Pre-Test Results

The pre-test results indicated that students had low vocabulary mastery before the implementation of interactive teaching methods. Many students scored below 10 points. The pre-test scores are presented below:

**Table 1**

*Pre-Test Score*

| NO | Participants | Pre - Test |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | PS | 2 |
| 2 | SM | 1 |
| 3 | NZ | 5 |
| 4 | TU | 4 |
| 5 | AW | 9 |
| 6 | AS | 2 |
| 7 | NU | 32 |
| 8 | WT | 3 |
| 9 | MY | 4 |
| 10 | MS | 9 |
| 11 | DA | 18 |
| 12 | BA | 5 |
| 13 | AK | 6 |
| 14 | GR | 8 |
| 15 | SM | 12 |
| 16 | TM | 20 |
| 17 | OW | 4 |

The total pre-test score was 144 with a mean score of 8.47. These results indicate that most students had limited vocabulary knowledge before the treatment.

#### 4.1.2 Post-Test Results

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After the implementation of interactive teaching methods, students demonstrated significant improvement in vocabulary mastery. The post-test scores are presented below:

**Table 2**
*Post-Test Score*

| No. | Nama Mahasiswa / I | Post - Test |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | PS | 24 |
| 2 | SM | 23 |
| 3 | NZ | 39 |
| 4 | TU | 29 |
| 5 | AW | 32 |
| 6 | AS | 18 |
| 7 | NU | 34 |
| 8 | WT | 32 |
| 9 | MY | 33 |
| 10 | MS | 29 |
| 11 | DA | 30 |
| 12 | BA | 38 |
| 13 | AK | 33 |
| 14 | GR | 38 |
| 15 | SM | 39 |
| 16 | TM | 26 |
| 17 | OW | 32 |

The total post-test score increased to 559 with a mean score of 32.88.

### 4.1.3 Students' Score Improvement

The comparison between pre-test and post-test scores indicates significant vocabulary improvement.

**Table 3**
*Students' Score Improvement*

| **Category** | **Pre-Test** | **Post-Test** |
|---|---|---|
| Total Score | 144 | 559 |
| Mean Score | 8.47 | 32.88 |

The findings clearly demonstrate that interactive teaching methods improved students' English vocabulary mastery.

## 4.2 Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that interactive teaching methods effectively enhanced students' English vocabulary mastery at one elementary school in Medan. Before the treatment, students demonstrated limited vocabulary knowledge. Many students had difficulty understanding vocabulary meanings, remembering words, and using vocabulary correctly. These findings support previous observations that traditional vocabulary teaching methods often fail to engage students effectively.

After the implementation of interactive teaching methods, students showed remarkable improvement in vocabulary mastery. The increase in mean scores from 8.47 to 32.88 indicates that interactive learning activities positively influenced students' vocabulary acquisition. Several factors contributed to this improvement.

### 4.2.1 Increased Student Motivation

Interactive learning activities such as games, quizzes, and collaborative tasks created enjoyable classroom environments. Students became more enthusiastic and motivated during learning activities. This finding supports Pratiwi et al. (2024), who found that gamified technology significantly enhanced students' vocabulary learning motivation. Similarly, Lestari and Astutik (2025) reported that Kahoot-based learning improved students' enthusiasm and participation.

Motivation is highly important in vocabulary learning because motivated learners tend to participate actively and practice vocabulary more frequently.

### 4.2.2 Active Participation

Interactive teaching methods encouraged students to become active participants rather than passive learners. Students interacted with peers, answered quizzes, participated in games, and practiced vocabulary through meaningful communication. Brown (2007) explained that interaction supports language acquisition because learners negotiate meaning and practice language use. Active participation enables students to process vocabulary more deeply, leading to better retention.

### 4.2.3 Meaningful Learning Experiences

Interactive activities provided meaningful learning experiences that helped students remember vocabulary more effectively. Students learned vocabulary through pictures, games, stories, and contextual activities rather than memorization only. According to Cameron (2001), young learners acquire vocabulary more effectively when learning activities are concrete, visual, and meaningful.

### 4.2.4 Technology Integration

The use of digital quizzes and interactive media increased students' interest in learning English vocabulary. Technology-assisted learning provided immediate feedback and visual support that enhanced comprehension. These findings support Siregar and Syahputri (2025), who reported that augmented reality-based learning improved vocabulary achievement. Similarly, Jannah et al. (2026) found that AI-based interactive exercises positively influenced vocabulary mastery.

### 4.2.5 Collaborative Learning

Group activities and collaborative tasks encouraged students to learn from peers. Students practiced vocabulary through communication and teamwork. Collaborative learning creates supportive learning environments that reduce anxiety and encourage participation. Students feel more confident when learning together with peers. Overall, the findings indicate that interactive teaching methods are effective strategies for improving vocabulary mastery among elementary school students.

## 5. Conclusion

This study investigated the effectiveness of interactive teaching methods in enhancing students' English vocabulary mastery at one elementary school in Medan. The findings

revealed significant improvement in students' vocabulary achievement after the implementation of interactive learning activities. The mean score increased from 8.47 in the pre-test to 32.88 in the post-test. Interactive teaching methods such as games, digital quizzes, collaborative activities, storytelling, and visual learning successfully increased students' motivation, participation, and vocabulary retention.

The study concludes that interactive teaching methods provide meaningful and enjoyable learning experiences that positively influence vocabulary acquisition among elementary school learners. This finding is consistent with recent research showing that gamification can support L2 vocabulary acquisition and increase learners' motivation in primary education (Budiarti et al., 2025). Similarly, Lestari and Astutik (2025) found that the use of Kahoot significantly improved vocabulary mastery among elementary school students, demonstrating the potential of interactive digital tools to enhance vocabulary learning outcomes. Based on the findings, English teachers are encouraged to implement interactive and student-centered learning strategies in vocabulary instruction. Schools should also support the integration of technology and innovative teaching practices to improve English learning quality. Future researchers are recommended to conduct studies with larger samples and different educational levels to further investigate the effectiveness of interactive teaching methods in vocabulary learning.

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