

## Unlocking Vocabulary: The Role of Card Sort Learning in Junior High School

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### ABSTRACT

In acquiring English, vocabulary is the fundamental element of language mastery. Competence and expertise in English are defined by knowledge of language. Consequently, vocabulary acquisition is crucial for enhancing students' English language proficiency as both a foreign and second language. Implementing instructional strategies that resonate with students' learning preferences is a means to enhance their English language acquisition. One effective technique is the card sort learning approach. This study aimed to determine the substantial impact of the Card Sort learning method on the vocabulary of seventh-grade students' at MTs Nurul Hidayah Al-amin. This study used a quasi-experimental design. The research population comprised the seventh-grade students of MTs Nurul Hidayah Al-amin, totaling 185 individuals. The sample comprised 62 students selected from two classes: VII A as the experimental group and VII B as the control group. The data collection method employed pre-test and post-test assessments. The instrument employed a test concentrating on verbs, pronouns, and nouns. The data analysis employed content validity, construct validity, item validity, and instrument reliability. Following the hypothetical test, the data analysis conducted via SPSS revealed that the significance (P-value) was less than 0.001, indicating that the significance (P-value) was lower than the significance level  $\alpha = 0.05$ . The study concluded that the card sort learning approach significantly influenced vocabulary mastering among seventh-grade students at Mts Nurul Hidayah Al-Amin.

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## Introduction

Language functions as an essential medium of communication that enables individuals to interact and engage with each other in daily activities. As English permeates many aspects of contemporary existence, proficiency in the language has become essential (Hastomo et al., 2025). Thus, English serves as a global language predominantly employed in the 21st century.

When learning English, students should acquire these four skills. They are writing, reading, speaking, and listening (Syafrizal and Haerudin, 2018). The teaching and learning process incorporates these linguistic skills. Vocabulary is one element that

significantly influences skills (Nurdini & Marlina, 2017). A vocabulary is a collection of words with meaning. According to Brown, a child's vocabulary is the meaning and purposes of the words they learn, which helps them when they speak, read, write, and comprehend the world around them (Evelyn & Brown, 1995). Vocabulary is the collection of words that, notwithstanding their use in conversation, have meaning when heard or viewed (Sari et al., 2023). According to Richard, vocabulary is one of the most obvious components of language and one of the first things applied linguists turned their attention to is vocabulary, which is also the area that applied linguists focused on initially (Richards & Renandya, 2002). Vocabulary is defined by Good in Busran as the content and function words of language that are absorbed so thoroughly that they form a part of the child's vocabulary for speaking, understanding, and eventually reading and writing (Evelyn & Brown, 1995).

Nothing that is read or heard can be comprehended without vocabulary. Furthermore, nothing can be expressed in writing or speech without vocabulary (Settiawan, 2017). This is commensurate with Scott's opinion which says that Scott expressed frustration about having a limited word when trying to find the perfect word to convey the intended idea (Thombury, 2002). Therefore, vocabulary is very important in a language process.

In acquiring English, vocabulary is the fundamental element of language mastery. Competence and expertise in English are defined by knowledge of language. Consequently, vocabulary acquisition is crucial for enhancing students' English language proficiency as both a foreign and second language. Vocabulary is essential for a student's success in acquiring English as a second language (Waziana et al., 2024). Nonetheless, there are situations when teachers require assistance in teaching English, particularly in facilitating students' vocabulary acquisition. The crux of the issue lies in the students' knowledge of the subject content and the appropriate learning methodology. Owing to the insufficient understanding of necessary resources for vocabulary mastery among certain students. To effectively instruct vocabulary, an English teacher needs meticulously select and employ relevant tactics and methodologies (Mandasari et al., 2025).

In the context of education, method refers to the approach employed by educators to fulfill their roles and serves as a means to attain learning objectives. The choice of the appropriate approach, according to the specific circumstances and conditions encountered, will influence the degree of mastery or learning achievement of students. In an effective teaching and learning process, educators should employ diverse instructional approaches or tactics aligned with the anticipated objectives. One of these pedagogical techniques is Card Sort. Instructional strategies must be applied to ensure that learning is enjoyable and that students readily integrate the material. A strategy provides teachers with instructions for making numerous alternative decisions that facilitate the execution of their responsibilities. To facilitate teaching and learning activities in a systematic, direct, seamless, effective manner.

Problems that occur at MTs Nurul Hidayah Al-amin from the results of interviews with English teachers and questionnaires to students, it was stated that teaching vocabulary requires additional effort to enhance students' motivation in learning

English. This is because students perceive English as unfamiliar and find it challenging to learn. The students' lack of exposure to English during their elementary school years has made it challenging for them to learn English vocabulary since they find it unfamiliar and difficult. In addition, a significant number of seventh-grade students lack proficiency in vocabulary, making it challenging for them to memorize and comprehend English terminology. Another contributing reason is the students' lack of enthusiasm for learning English, particularly when it comes to vocabulary. This is mostly due to the absence of engaging methods that might capture students' interest in vocabulary acquisition. The teacher typically presents the content and then assigns tasks, which fails to generate student engagement.

The English teacher also revealed that students' English language skills were still lacking, one of the reasons being the lack or even non-existence of English language learning that they received in elementary school. Due to a lack of knowledge, practice, and greater interest in learning English, students eventually feel bored when English lessons take place and have difficulty understanding English, especially vocabulary. The organization and management of students, classes, and materials are crucial since MTs students are beginning English language learners. As a result, kids require engaging English learning resources and methods, particularly for learning vocabulary.

Card Sort (sorting and selecting cards) is a collaborative activity that can be used to teach concepts, classification of properties, facts about an object, or repeat information (Siberman, 2004). Silberman explains again that in this Card Sort type of active learning, the teacher uses card media containing information or examples that are included in one or more categories. Cards are distributed to students, then students make an effort to find the same category. Card Sort is a learning method used by teachers with the intention of inviting students to find concepts and facts through the classification of material discussed in learning (Asminarseh, 2018).

Card Sort is a sorting activity where students group a group of cards containing pictures or words according to certain characteristics or categories. card sorting ensures all students participate equally. Card sorting is useful for students in learning vocabulary because card sorting can support students in understanding and remembering new words to master vocabulary (Muafi & Roza, 2018). The dominant physical movement in this method can help overcome saturation in the classroom (Asminarseh, 2018). The Card Sort approach seeks to enhance learners' comprehension of ideas or connections among elements. Through the tactile manipulation of cards, learners may enhance their comprehension of the material and cultivate critical thinking abilities.

The card-sort learning method is an educational strategy that encourages active student participation in the learning process. The card-sort learning technique seeks to improve collaborative problem-solving abilities via group organization. This educational approach fosters an engaging and immersive experience, mitigating monotony and alleviating tension during the learning process. Establishing a conducive learning environment enhances student enthusiasm and motivation, resulting in improved academic performance.

## Method

The research method used in this study is quasi-experimental. Quasi-experimental is defined as an experiment that has treatments, impact measurements, and experimental units but does not use random assignment to create comparisons in order to infer the changes caused by treatment (Abraham & Supriyati, 2022). In this research, there are two groups, namely the experimental class and the control class, both of which use the same learning materials and objectives. In the experimental class, the card sort learning method is employed, whilst the control class utilizes standard learning methods commonly implemented in schools. To assess the degree of language proficiency exhibited by students at MTs Nurul Hidayah Al-amin. The research design is illustrated in the table below.

This study was carried out at MTs Nurul Hidayah Al-amin. The research population comprises all seventh-grade students at MTs Nurul Hidayah Al-amin for the academic year 2024/2025. The entire student population is 185, distributed across five classes: VII A, VII B, VII C, VII D, and VII E. This study utilized solely two classes as the sample, namely the experimental group and the control group. The researcher utilized cluster random sampling as the method for sample selection. The research sample consisted of VII A as the experimental group and VII B as the control group.

The data analysis technique used is the normality test which is carried out first. If the data is normally distributed, it can be continued by using the homogeneity test then proceed to use the independent sample t-test.

## Results and Discussion

### Results

This research aims to find out whether the use of the card sort learning method affects students' vocabulary mastery in the seventh grade of MTs Nurul Hidayah Al-amin in the 2024/2025 school year. The pre-test and post-test of vocabulary tests and assessed with a total of 62 students in two Seventh-grade classes, namely experimental and control classes in MTs Nurul Hidayah Alamin. In the pre-test, the researcher gave a test to the students before the treatment, and in the post-test, the researcher gave a test to the students before the treatment and in the post-test, the researcher gave a test to the students after the treatment. The research data was analyzed using mathematical calculations to get the scores for each group.

The researcher administered a pre-test to assess the student's vocabulary mastery before applying the treatment. The pre-test was given on Tuesday, November 19th, 2024 at 10.00 am for the experimental class and Friday, November 15th, 2024. After the treatment, the researcher was given a post-test in the experimental class and control class to know the students' vocabulary mastery. The researcher administered a post-test to see whether or not student scores had increased. The pre-test in the experimental class and control class was given on Tuesday, December 10 th, 2024.

**Table 1. Students' average scores during the pretest and posttest.**

Class	Total Students	Pre-test	Post-test	Deviation
Experimental	32	31,91	75,66	43,75
Control	30	26,45	62,66	36,21

Based on Table 1, it shows the students' average scores during the pretest and posttest between the control class and the experimental class. The data shows that the experimental class has a higher average score than the control class.

After knowing the comparative value of the experimental class and control class using the pre-test and post-test, the next step is to test for normality. The Shapiro-Wilk normality test was used because fewer than 50 students or samples were tested. If the samples used are more than 50 then use the Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test. It can be seen in the table above that the pre-test in the experimental class was 0,185, and in the control class was 0,213. The post-test in the experimental class was 0,168, and in the control class was 0,169. Based on Table 4.3, it can be seen that the Pvalue (Sig.) for the experimental class and the control class is greater or  $> 0.05$ , therefore  $H_0$  is accepted and  $H_a$  is rejected. The conclusion is that the data in the experimental class is normally distributed.

**Table 2. The Result of the Normality Test**

		Test of Normality		
		Group	Shapiro-wilk	
			Statistic	df Sig.
<i>Pre-test</i>	Experimental class		,954	32 ,185
	Control class		,953	32 ,213
<i>Post-test</i>	Experimental class		,952	30 ,168
	Control class		,949	30 ,169

After the data has been tested for normality the results show that the data is normally distributed. The next thing to do is to carry out a homogeneity test. The homogeneity test is carried out to determine whether the data or population variance is homogeneous or not. In this research, the researcher used statistical calculation using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science) to check using Lavene Statistics.

**Table 3. The result of Homogeneity test**

		Tests of Homogeneity of Variances			
		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
<i>Pre-test</i>	Based on Mean	,907	1	59	,345
	Based on Median	,958	1	59	,332
	Based on the Median and with adjusted df	,958	1	54,163	,332
	Based on trimmed mean	,914	1	59	,343
<i>Post-test</i>	Based on Mean	1,412	1	59	,240
	Based on Median	1,452	1	59	,233
	Based on the Median and with adjusted df	1,452	1	58,842	,233
	Based on trimmed mean	1,407	1	59	,240

Based on the pre-test and post-test results in Table 3, the results of the study show that the pre-test significance between the experimental class and the control class is 0.345 ( $p = 0.345 > 0.05$ ), and in the post-test is 0.240 ( $p = 0.240 > 0.05$ ). This score in the pre-test and post-test passes the minimum value  $\geq 0.05$  as a significant score which means that the post-test data obtained has a homogeneous variance. In conclusion,  $H_0$  is accepted because. This means that the data variance is homogeneous, then hypothesis testing can be carried out. In this research, the paired sample t-test was used as a hypothesis test, and SPSS was used as a statistical calculation. This hypothesis test is carried out to find out

whether the data has a significant influence or not.

**Table 4. The Result of the Hypothetical Test**

	Independent Samples Test									
	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means							
			Significance		Mean Difference		Std. Error Difference		95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	F	Sig.	t	df	One-Side d p	Two-Side d p			Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	1,412	,240	4,819	59	<,001	<,001	13,001	2,698	7,602	18,400
Equal variances not assumed			4,779	55,137	<,001	<,001	13,001	2,721	7,549	18,453

Based on the results of the independent sample t-test, it shows that the Pvalue or Sig. is  $< 0.001$ . This shows that  $H_0$  is rejected and  $H_a$  is accepted because  $0.001 < 0.05$ . Based on these results, it can be concluded that There was a significant influence of the Card Sort Learning Method Towards students's Vocabulary Mastery at the Seventh-Grade at Mts Nurul Hidayah Al-amin. The findings above show that the card sort learning method can be used for English language learning, especially vocabulary.

## Discussion

According to the findings of the data analysis, the card sort learning approach significantly affects the vocabulary acquisition of MTs Nurul Hidayah Al-amin's class VII students. This is evident from the experimental class's students' post-test results, which are better than those of the control group. Children benefit from this card-sort learning approach, which teaches new vocabulary in an entertaining style and includes clear illustrations to help students comprehend and retain the information.

Based on data analysis, the post-test results of the experimental class had better scores than the post-test results of the control class which was taught without using the card sort learning method. This is evidenced by the difference in the mean scores of students in the post-test in the control class and the experimental class, namely a difference of 13.00 where the experimental class got a mean score of 75,66 and the control class got a mean score of 62,66. This clearly shows that the treatment given to the experimental class obtained results 13% higher than the control class. In other words, it can be said that the card sort learning method is one of the effective learning methods that can be used to improve students' vocabulary mastery.

Both the experimental and control classes in this study used the lecture approach to teach the card sort learning method to their students. The content used included



information about the house's rooms and items. Prior to starting the teaching and learning exercises with the card sort learning approach, the researcher asked the students to consider the rooms in the house, the items in each room, and the cleaning supplies typically used to keep the house clean. The researcher outlined the day's learning objectives once the students had a better understanding of the subject matter. Next, each student received a random card from the researcher, who requested them to translate it. They then identified which rooms contained their terminology and either scribbled or adhered it on the board. After that, the researcher gave them instructions to construct phrases using the cards they had

Data normality analysis shows that the experimental class and control class data are normally distributed, as indicated by the results of the normality test calculated using the SPSS program with the normality test formula. The experimental class showed a pre-test significance of 0.185 and the post-test significance was 0.168, each greater than the significance value of 0.05 ( $0.185 > 0.05$  and  $0.168 > 0.05$ ). While the control class results showed a pre-test significance of 0.213 and a post-test of 0.169, greater than the significance value of 0.05 ( $0.213 > 0.05$  and  $0.169 > 0.05$ ). Based on the data normality formula, both conditions show that pre-test and post-test data in the experimental class and the control class are normally distributed.

In the same way according to the SPSS calculation with the homogeneity test, pre-test data and post-test experimental classes and control classes are classified as homogeneous data groups. Based on the homogeneity test criteria, the results show that the significance of the pre-test group data is 0.345 greater than the significance value of 0.05 ( $0.345 > 0.05$ ). Then, the post-test group data results of 0.240 are greater than the significance value of 0.05 ( $0.240 > 0.05$ ). Thus, the data group is proven to be classified as homogeneous data.

Based on the results of the hypothesis test, a significance value ( $\alpha$ ) was obtained by 0.05, while the P value obtained from the t-test of the independent sample was Sig. (2-tailed)  $0.001 < 0.05$ . It can be concluded that the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) is rejected and the alternative hypothesis ( $H_a$ ) is accepted. Thus, it can be concluded that there was a significant influence of the Card Sort Learning Method Towards Student's Vocabulary Mastery at the seventh grade at Mts Nurul Hidayah Al-amin. The findings above show that the card sort learning method can be used for English language learning, especially vocabulary.

The card-sort learning method can also be said to be an active learning model that is very suitable for increasing student activity and learning outcomes by creating an active and enjoyable classroom atmosphere (Zaini, 2009). In its application, this card sort learning method requires perfect focus, dexterity, and accuracy in grouping the cards. The dominant physical movement in this learning method can help to dynamize a saturated and bored class.

The Card Sort method is a learning method that emphasizes student activity, where in this learning each student is given an index card containing information about the material to be discussed, and then students group according to the index card they have (Herwin et al., 2021). Here the educator acts more as a facilitator and explains the material that needs to be discussed or material that students have not understood.

The result of this study is supported by Nurdiyanto and Achmadi (2018), who conducted research on economic class XI students at SMA 01 Ledo. They said that the results of observations after applying the card sort method showed that the average student learning activity in learning was 69% of 30 students and classified as quite active. This means that there is a significant effect of the application of the card sort method on student activeness (Nurdiyanto & Achmadi, 2018). Based on the results of this processing, it can be concluded that the application of the card sort method has a great influence on the activeness of students.

According to Billy, the Card Sort Method is a collaborative activity that can be used to teach concepts, classify properties, and facts about an object, or review knowledge (Nurdiyanto & Achmadi, 2018). The card sort method is a method used by educators with the intention of inviting students to learn. The method used by educators with the intention of inviting students to find concepts and facts through the classification of material discussed. Concepts and facts through the classification of material discussed in learning (Fitriani, 2020). Card sort is a learning method of presenting subject matter by using visual-based media in the form of cards. In simple terms, card sort is a way of presenting subject matter that is done through a game of sorting pieces of paper formed like cards that contain information or subject matter.

The use of visual-based card media in the card sort method can facilitate understanding, strengthen memory, foster interest, and provide a connection between the content of the material and the real world. This is in line with what is revealed by Melvin L. Silberman that the use of visual dimension cards in learning can increase memory from 14 to 38 percent (Silberman, 2004). In addition, the visual dimension of the card sort learning method according to Silberman can also stimulate the activeness of the two hemispheres of the brain, namely the left brain (cognition) which functions to remember information, and the right brain (emotion) which functions to bring students to feel happy when participating in learning with the card sort method.

In this research, several difficulties were encountered. Among them, sometimes students have difficulty in translating words due to the limited facilities they have. The students only use a dictionary to translate vocabulary because the school is prohibited from bringing smartphones. Another difficulty is that there are still students who are embarrassed to ask questions even though they do not understand the material or instructions given. As a result, during the post-test, there were some students who got unsatisfactory scores. Following that, student's vocabulary mastery should be assessed in order to provide them with a score. As a consequence, students scored higher than previously. This suggests that the card sort learning method was effective in influencing student vocabulary mastery.

Thus, in the seventh grade of MTs Nurul Hidayah Al-amin, there is a significant influence of the card sort learning method towards student's vocabulary mastery and it can be said that the learning method using card sort is a type of learning method that can help and support students to understand and remember new vocabulary related to the material.



## Conclusion

Research conducted on seventh-grade students at Mts Nurul Hidayah al-Amin during the 2024/2025 academic year indicates a strong impact of the card sort learning approach on students' vocabulary knowledge. The mean post-test score in the experimental class was 75.66, while in the control class, it was 62.66. The pre-test score for the experimental class was 31.91, while the control class scored 26.45. In the analysis of research data for hypothesis testing, the significance (Two-Sided p) of the same variation is assumed in the independent sample t-test table, where the significance is less than 0.001. It is less than 0.05, indicating the rejection of  $H_0$  and the acceptance of  $H_a$ .

The conclusion is that the card sort learning method could have a positive influence on students' vocabulary mastery. It could be clearly seen in the difference in students' scores before and after treatment. Applying the card sort learning method in the process of teaching and learning activities can have an influence, especially on students' vocabulary mastery, because vocabulary is the key to learning a language. From the results of the data analysis that has been carried out, the researcher can conclude that there is a significant influence of the Card Sort Learning Method Towards students's Vocabulary Mastery at the Seventh-Grade at Mts Nurul Hidayah Al-amin.

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