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### IMPROVING STUDENTS' VOCABULARY BY USING RIDDLE GAME

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The purpose of this study is to improve students' vocabulary using riddle games as a method in the teaching-learning process. This study employs a Classroom Action Research (CAR) design, conducted in two cycles during the academic year 2022/2023 at SMP Negeri 14 Pontianak with a total of 34 students in Grade VII A. The class sample was selected using Cluster Random Sampling. Data collection was carried out using three primary instruments: observation checklists, field notes, and measurement tests. The observation checklists were used to monitor student engagement and participation during the learning process, while field notes provided detailed qualitative insights into the classroom dynamics. The measurement tests were administered at the end of each cycle to quantitatively assess the improvement in students' vocabulary. The data from checklists and field notes were analyzed descriptively to capture the students' active involvement, and the test score data were analyzed using the mean value formula to measure progress. Observations and field notes indicated that students were active and enthusiastic during the lessons. Student performance increased by 17.33% from the first cycle to the second cycle. Furthermore, the individual score data revealed that some students initially only achieved the minimum score of 50. However, after the implementation of riddle games, most students achieved satisfactory results, reaching the Minimum Completion Criteria of 75 points. These findings highlight a significant improvement in vocabulary acquisition between the first and second cycle tests, clearly indicating that the use of riddle games is an effective method for teaching vocabulary.

**Keywords:** Classroom Action Research; Riddle Game; Teaching Vocabulary

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary instruction is a fundamental responsibility of English teachers, encompassing pronunciation, spelling, meaning, and word usage. This complexity makes the task challenging for both teachers and students. Students often struggle to retain vocabulary, making English learning difficult and later instruction problematic. However, it's not solely the students' errors that contribute to these challenges; other factors must also be considered. Vocabulary is crucial for the development of the four primary language skills: reading, listening, speaking, and writing. According to Thornbury (2004), vocabulary comprises the collection of words that an individual uses in their native language. This definition underscores the importance of vocabulary as a primary tool for efficient English learning. Students often find it difficult to express their ideas in writing or speaking due to limited vocabulary. This limitation can hinder the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process, particularly for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students, as noted by Alqahtani (2015). A broad vocabulary is essential for students to communicate effectively and develop their English skills. Vocabulary refers to the range and richness of words within a language. It is essential for language learning, as a robust vocabulary significantly influences one's ability to communicate fluently (Megi et al., 2023). Memorizing vocabulary can be tedious for some students, making it crucial for teachers to select engaging teaching techniques. Various methods, such as velcro games, jigsaw puzzles, card games, wall cards, pictures, and jigsaw tricks, have been employed to make vocabulary learning more interesting (Bakhsh, 2016). Riddles, in particular, require ingenuity and critical thinking, which can enhance students' excitement and interest while learning. Riddle games involve rules that players must follow, making them not only educational but also structured (Liu, 2020). According to Johnson (2022), riddle games help learners expand their vocabulary, particularly in understanding word meanings and spellings. These games

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also encourage students to experiment with different word uses, meanings, and combinations, thus enhancing their vocabulary. To make English vocabulary appealing to students and foster an interest in learning the language, it can be introduced and developed through game-based methods or techniques (Julia, 2020). Riddles are beneficial for teaching dialogue as they allow students to practice communicating in varied ways. Sharndama and Magaji (2014) in Hapsari and Pinandhita (2015) describe riddles as confusing descriptive statements or direct questions that require associative or connotative responses. Riddles have several advantages: they entertain students, motivate them, and improve cognitive functioning. Additionally, riddles can significantly expand students' vocabulary. Riddle Game is excellent ESL / EFL tools because they have forced students to practice a variety of