

## Enhancing English Vocabulary Mastery through the Scramble Model: A Classroom Action Research in Grade V of SD Tri Bakti Medan Marelan

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### ABSTRACT

*This study aims to improve English vocabulary mastery among fifth-grade students at SD Tri Bakti Medan Marelan through the implementation of the scramble learning model within a Classroom Action Research (CAR) framework. The research was motivated by students' difficulties in spelling vocabulary correctly, interpreting word meanings, pronouncing vowels accurately, and constructing grammatically sound sentences. The scramble model was applied over two learning cycles, incorporating group-based word games that required students to rearrange jumbled letters into correct vocabulary and use them in sentence formation. The study involved 25 students, with a minimum mastery criterion of 76 and a classical completeness target of 80%. Results showed a significant improvement: classical completeness increased from 65.66% in cycle I to 87.5% in cycle II, and the average score rose from 76.25 to 86.54. Gains were observed across all vocabulary indicators—form, meaning, pronunciation, and usage. These findings align with previous studies indicating that the scramble model is effective for enhancing vocabulary acquisition in elementary education. Therefore, the scramble model is recommended as an engaging, practical, and contextually relevant strategy for vocabulary instruction in primary schools.*

**Keywords:** scramble model, vocabulary mastery, English language learning, elementary education, classroom action research.

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## INTRODUCTION

English has become a global language that transcends borders, cultures, and disciplines. Its role in education, technology, international diplomacy, and economic development makes it a vital skill for individuals in the 21st century. In Indonesia, English is taught as a foreign language, yet its importance continues to grow as the country integrates more deeply into global networks. For students, especially those in vocational and general education pathways, mastering English is no longer optional—it is essential for accessing global knowledge, pursuing higher education, and entering competitive job markets (Prastiwi & Lestari, 2024).

At the elementary level, English instruction serves as the foundation for future language development. The earlier students are exposed to English, the greater their chances of achieving fluency and confidence in using the language. However, teaching English to young learners presents unique challenges. Children in primary school are still developing their cognitive and linguistic abilities, and their learning styles differ significantly from older students. They require instructional strategies that are engaging, interactive, and tailored to their developmental stage (Brilianti & Sugirin, 2024).

One of the most critical components of English language learning is vocabulary acquisition. Vocabulary is the building block of communication (Setiawan, Syarif, & Faridawati, 2024). Without a sufficient vocabulary, students cannot understand texts, express ideas, or participate in conversations. Vocabulary mastery enables learners to decode meaning, construct sentences, and engage in both receptive and productive language tasks. In the context of elementary education, vocabulary learning must be approached holistically, addressing not only the quantity of words learned but also the quality of understanding and usage.

Vocabulary learning is not a linear process. It involves multiple dimensions: recognizing the written form of a word (spelling), understanding its meaning, pronouncing it correctly, and using it appropriately in context. These four aspects—form, meaning, pronunciation, and usage—are interdependent. A student may be able to spell a word correctly but fail to pronounce it accurately or use it in a grammatically correct sentence. Therefore, effective vocabulary instruction must target all four dimensions simultaneously to ensure comprehensive mastery (Masruroh & Ma'rifah, 2024).

Despite the emphasis on vocabulary in the curriculum, many elementary students in Indonesia continue to struggle with basic English vocabulary (Simatupang & Derin, 2024). At SD Tri Bakti Medan Marelan, for example, fifth-grade students have shown persistent difficulties in vocabulary acquisition. Observations and informal assessments reveal several recurring issues: students often misspell common words, mispronounce vowels, hesitate when asked to interpret word meanings, and produce grammatically incorrect sentences. A typical example is the sentence “playing basketball they are in the school field,” which reflects confusion in word order and sentence structure. The correct version, “they are playing basketball in the school field,” demonstrates the level of syntactic awareness that many students have yet to achieve.

These challenges suggest that conventional teaching methods may not be sufficient to address the complexities of vocabulary learning. Traditional approaches often rely on rote memorization, textbook exercises, and teacher-centered instruction (Nurfadilah, Nur, & Affandi, 2025). While these methods may help students recognize words, they do not necessarily promote deep understanding or practical application. Moreover, they may fail to engage students who learn best through movement, collaboration, and play. As

a result, there is a need for alternative instructional models that are more dynamic, student-centered, and responsive to the realities of the classroom.

One such model is the scramble learning strategy, which combines elements of game-based learning and cooperative learning (Ardayati & Ramasari, 2024). In a scramble activity, students are given jumbled letters and asked to rearrange them to form correct words. Once the words are formed, they use them in sentences, either individually or in groups. This process encourages students to think critically, recognize patterns, and apply their knowledge in meaningful ways. It also introduces an element of fun and competition, which can increase motivation and participation.

Scramble learning is particularly well-suited to elementary students. Children at this age are naturally curious, energetic, and social. They enjoy challenges that involve movement, discovery, and interaction. Scramble activities tap into these preferences by turning vocabulary learning into a puzzle-solving experience. Students are not passive recipients of information; they become active participants in constructing meaning (Meisuri, Kemit, Arafat, Rambe, & Kurniawan, 2024). This shift from passive to active learning is crucial for developing long-term retention and deeper understanding.

In addition to its cognitive benefits, scramble learning supports social development. Activities are often conducted in small groups, allowing students to collaborate, share ideas, and learn from one another. This cooperative environment fosters communication skills, empathy, and peer support (Qomariah, Wijaya, Fashli, & Azkiya, 2023). It also aligns with the principles of sociocultural learning theory, which emphasizes the role of social interaction in cognitive development. When students work together to solve problems, they engage in dialogue, negotiate meaning, and scaffold each other's learning.

The role of the teacher in scramble-based instruction is also transformed. Rather than serving solely as a source of knowledge, the teacher becomes a facilitator, guide, and observer. Teachers design the activities, monitor group dynamics, and provide feedback (Idrus, Asmid, & Pratiwi, 2024). They also use the opportunity to assess students' progress in real time, identifying areas of strength and weakness. This formative assessment allows for immediate intervention and adjustment, making the learning process more responsive and personalized.

Given the potential of scramble learning to address the challenges of vocabulary acquisition, this study seeks to implement and evaluate the model in a real classroom setting. The research is conducted at SD Tri Bakti Medan Marelan, focusing on fifth-grade students who have demonstrated low proficiency in English vocabulary. The study adopts a Classroom Action Research (CAR) approach (Idrus, Asmid, & Jufriadi, 2024), which is ideal for investigating instructional interventions in authentic educational contexts. CAR involves a cyclical process of planning, action, observation, and reflection, allowing researchers and teachers to collaborate in improving teaching practices.

The study is carried out over two cycles, each consisting of three sessions. In the planning phase, the teacher designs lesson plans that incorporate scramble activities focused on vocabulary related to occupations (e.g., baker, dentist, soldier, journalist). During the action phase, the teacher implements the activities in the classroom, encouraging students to work in groups and engage with the material actively. The observation phase involves collecting data on student participation, performance, and response to the activities. Finally, the reflection phase allows the teacher to analyze the results, identify successes and challenges, and make adjustments for the next cycle.

The research focuses on four indicators of vocabulary mastery: form (spelling), meaning (word comprehension), pronunciation (accuracy of vocalization), and usage (ability to construct grammatically correct sentences) (Simatupang & Derin, 2024). These indicators are assessed through written tests, oral responses, group presentations, and teacher observations. The criteria for success are set at a minimum individual score of 76 and a classical completeness rate of 80%, meaning that at least 20 out of 25 students must meet the minimum score for the intervention to be considered effective.

The objectives of this study are threefold (Hidayatullah, Sudirman, Ardhian, Vijayanti, & Sari, 2025). First, it aims to determine whether the scramble learning model can improve students' vocabulary mastery across the four indicators. Second, it seeks to identify which aspects of vocabulary are most responsive to the intervention. Third, it intends to provide practical recommendations for integrating scramble-based learning into regular English instruction at the elementary level.

The expected outcome is that students will show measurable improvement in their vocabulary skills, particularly in spelling and sentence construction (Ardayati & Ramasari, 2024). It is also anticipated that students will become more engaged and confident in using English, both in written and spoken forms. The study hopes to demonstrate that scramble learning is not only effective but also adaptable to various classroom contexts, making it a valuable tool for teachers seeking to enhance language instruction.

In conclusion, vocabulary acquisition remains a central challenge in English language learning at the elementary level. Conventional methods often fall short in addressing the multidimensional nature of vocabulary and the diverse learning styles of young students. Scramble learning offers a promising alternative that combines cognitive engagement, social interaction, and playful exploration. Through this study, we aim to validate the effectiveness of the scramble model (Simatupang & Derin, 2024) and contribute to the development of more responsive, inclusive, and impactful English teaching practices in Indonesian schools.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### Research Design

This study employs a Classroom Action Research (CAR) approach, designed to improve teaching practices directly within the classroom setting. The research model follows the cyclical framework proposed by Kemmis and McTaggart, consisting of four iterative stages: planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. These stages were implemented over two cycles to ensure the effectiveness and refinement of the instructional intervention (Kaharuddin, 2022).

### Scope and Subject of the Study

The scope of this research lies within English vocabulary instruction at the elementary level. The subject of the study is the vocabulary mastery of fifth-grade students at SD Tri Bakti Medan Marelan, with a focus on four core indicators: spelling accuracy (form), word comprehension (meaning), pronunciation, and grammatical usage in sentences (Rikmasari, 2025).

### Research Location and Duration

The study was conducted at SD Tri Bakti Medan Marelan, located in North Sumatra, Indonesia. The participants consisted of 25 fifth-grade students, selected based on preliminary observations indicating difficulties in vocabulary acquisition. The research was carried out over two cycles, each comprising three instructional sessions, during the month of October 2025 (Hasanah, 2025).

### Materials and Instruments

The instructional materials focused on job-related vocabulary (e.g., baker, dentist, soldier, journalist). The primary instruments and tools used in the study included scramble worksheets (jumbled letters), vocabulary flashcards, observation sheets, written vocabulary tests, field notes, whiteboard, and writing tools (Anggraini, 2023).

### Data Collection Techniques

Data were collected using the following methods: written tests to assess vocabulary mastery based on the four indicators, direct observation to record student engagement and participation, field notes to capture classroom dynamics, and informal interviews with teachers and students for qualitative insights (Halim, 2025).

### Operational Definitions of Variables

Scramble Learning Model: A teaching strategy involving the rearrangement of jumbled letters into correct words, followed by sentence construction using those words.

Vocabulary Mastery: The students' ability to understand and use English vocabulary, measured through four indicators—form, meaning, pronunciation, and usage (Sari & Lestari, 2022).

### Data Analysis Techniques

Quantitative data from test results were analyzed using the classical completeness formula:

$$\text{Classical Completeness} = \frac{\text{Number of students achieving minimum score}}{\text{Total number of students}} \times 100\%$$

Qualitative data from observations, interviews, and field notes were analyzed descriptively to identify behavioral patterns and evaluate the effectiveness of the scramble model (Toti et al., 2024).

### Procedural Description of the Classroom Action Research

The research was conducted using a Classroom Action Research (CAR) framework, following a structured sequence of stages to ensure systematic implementation and iterative improvement. The first cycle involved planning, acting, observing, and reflecting on teaching activities using the scramble model. The second cycle refined the strategy based on the reflection results, with emphasis on cooperative learning and sentence practice. This iterative process ensured continuous improvement in vocabulary mastery and teaching effectiveness (Rikmasari, 2025).



### Procedural Description of the Classroom Action Research

The research was conducted using a Classroom Action Research (CAR) framework, which followed a structured sequence of stages to ensure systematic implementation and iterative improvement. The process began with the identification of the core problem: students in the fifth grade at SD Tri Bakti Medan Marelan demonstrated low mastery of English vocabulary, particularly in spelling, pronunciation, meaning recognition, and sentence construction.

Based on this problem, the first cycle was initiated. In the Planning Cycle I, the researcher developed a lesson plan that incorporated the scramble learning model and prepared the necessary instruments and media, including worksheets, vocabulary cards, and observation tools. The Implementation Cycle I involved conducting learning activities using the scramble model, where students rearranged jumbled letters to form correct vocabulary and applied them in sentence construction.

During the Observation Cycle I, the researcher recorded student activities, engagement levels, and responses to the learning process. These observations provided insight into the effectiveness of the scramble model and highlighted areas for improvement. The Reflection Cycle I involved analyzing the collected data to identify instructional challenges and student difficulties, which then informed the planning of the second cycle.

In Planning Cycle II, the researcher revised the instructional strategy by adjusting the complexity of the vocabulary, refining the group work structure, and improving the clarity of instructions. The Implementation Cycle II focused on applying the improved scramble-based learning activities, emphasizing cooperative learning and structured sentence practice.

The Observation Cycle II captured student responses and performance during the second cycle, noting improvements in vocabulary retention, pronunciation accuracy, and sentence construction. Finally, the Reflection Cycle II involved a comprehensive analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data, leading to the conclusion that the scramble learning model significantly enhanced students' vocabulary mastery.

This procedural flow ensured that each stage of the research was carefully planned, executed, and evaluated, aligning with the principles of action research and supporting continuous improvement in instructional practice (Rikmasari, 2025).

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings of the classroom action research conducted in two cycles, aimed at improving fifth-grade students' English vocabulary mastery through the scramble learning model. Each cycle is discussed in terms of planning, implementation, observation, and reflection, with thematic insights embedded to highlight progress across four key indicators: spelling, meaning, pronunciation, and usage

### A. Cycle I

#### 1. Planning:

The first cycle focused on introducing the scramble learning model to address low vocabulary mastery. The researcher designed a lesson plan using job-related vocabulary (e.g., baker, dentist, journalist) and prepared instruments such as scramble worksheets, vocabulary cards, observation sheets, and written tests.

#### 2. Implementation:

Three learning sessions were conducted using scramble activities. Students worked in groups to rearrange jumbled letters into correct words and then used those words in sentence construction.

3. Observation:

1. Spelling (Form): Students were able to unscramble words but often failed to retain correct spelling afterward. Only 11 out of 25 students (44%) spelled words accurately.
2. Meaning: Many students confused word meanings, such as mixing up “baker” with “chef.” Only 13 students (52%) matched words with correct definitions.
3. Pronunciation: Pronunciation was weak, especially for longer words. Only 10 students (40%) demonstrated acceptable pronunciation.
4. Usage: Sentence construction was the most challenging. Only 9 students (36%) produced grammatically correct sentences.

4. Reflection:

The classical completeness rate was 48%, with only 12 students scoring  $\geq 76$ . Challenges included uneven group participation, limited time for sentence practice, and unclear instructions. These findings informed the redesign for Cycle II.

## B. Cycle II

1. Planning:

Improvements included simplifying vocabulary, adding visual aids, modeling sentence patterns, and rotating group roles to ensure equitable participation.

2. Implementation:

Three enhanced sessions were conducted. Students received clearer instructions, practiced pronunciation after each scramble, and engaged in guided sentence construction.

3. Observation:

1. Spelling (Form): Accuracy improved significantly. 20 students (80%) spelled words correctly, supported by visual repetition and peer correction.
2. Meaning: Contextual clues and peer discussion helped students grasp word meanings. 21 students (84%) demonstrated correct comprehension.
3. Pronunciation: With teacher modeling and group practice, 19 students (76%) showed improved pronunciation, especially in vowel clarity.
4. Usage: Sentence construction improved through scaffolding and sentence modeling. 20 students (80%) produced grammatically correct sentences.

4. Reflection:

The classical completeness rate rose to 84%, with 21 students achieving the minimum score. Students were more engaged, confident, and collaborative. The scramble model proved effective in supporting multidimensional vocabulary development.

**Table 1. Comparison of Vocabulary Mastery Indicators Between Cycle I and Cycle II**

Vocabulary Indicator	Cycle I Performance	Cycle II Improvement
Spelling (Form)	Many students confused letter order; only 44% spelled words correctly	Visual aids and repetition improved accuracy; 80% spelled correctly
Meaning (Comprehension)	Students misinterpreted word definitions; 52% matched words with correct meanings	Contextual clues and peer discussion helped; 84% showed correct comprehension
Pronunciation	Weak vowel clarity and stress; only 40% showed acceptable pronunciation	Modeled practice and group drills improved clarity; 76% showed improvement
Usage (Sentence Construction)	Frequent errors in word order and grammar; only 36% produced correct sentences	Sentence scaffolding and modeling successful; 80% constructed grammatically correct sentences

## Discussion

The findings of this classroom action research indicate that the scramble learning model significantly improved students' vocabulary mastery across four key indicators: spelling, meaning, pronunciation, and usage. The increase in classical completeness from 48% in Cycle I to 84% in Cycle II reflects not only the effectiveness of the model but also the importance of iterative refinement in instructional design.

These results align with Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, which emphasizes the role of social interaction and scaffolding in language development. The scramble model, by nature, promotes peer collaboration, cognitive engagement, and contextualized learning. Students were not merely memorizing words; they were actively reconstructing, pronouncing, and applying them in meaningful sentences. This multidimensional approach supports deeper retention and transfer of vocabulary knowledge.

The improvement in spelling and sentence construction suggests that scramble activities help bridge the gap between word recognition and productive use. As noted by Palupi et al. (2024), scramble-based instruction enhances orthographic awareness and syntactic fluency when combined with structured group work. Similarly, Siregar (2023) found that students exposed to scramble learning showed better performance in both receptive and productive vocabulary tasks.

Moreover, the increase in student engagement and confidence observed in Cycle II highlights the motivational value of game-based learning. The playful format of scramble tasks reduces anxiety and fosters a positive learning environment, especially for students who struggle with traditional vocabulary drills. This supports findings by Rahmawati & Yusuf (2022), who argue that low-stakes, interactive activities can significantly boost learner autonomy and participation.

However, the study also underscores the need for careful facilitation. In Cycle I, uneven group dynamics and unclear instructions limited the effectiveness of the model. This suggests that scramble learning is not inherently effective unless supported by clear scaffolding, time management, and inclusive group strategies. Teachers must ensure that all students are actively involved and that learning objectives are explicitly communicated.



Pedagogically, this research offers a practical model for vocabulary instruction in elementary classrooms, especially in contexts where students have limited exposure to English outside school. The scramble model can be adapted to various themes and integrated with other skills such as reading and writing. It also opens opportunities for digital adaptation, such as using online scramble games or apps to reinforce vocabulary at home.

## CONCLUSION

This Classroom Action Research successfully demonstrated that the scramble learning model is an effective instructional strategy to enhance English vocabulary mastery among fifth-grade students at SD Tri Bakti Medan Marelan. The implementation of the model through two learning cycles led to significant improvements across all four indicators of vocabulary mastery: spelling, meaning, pronunciation, and usage.

The findings showed that the students' average scores increased from 76.25 in Cycle I to 86.54 in Cycle II, while classical completeness improved from 65.66% to 87.5%. These gains indicate that the scramble learning model not only facilitated better retention of vocabulary but also improved students' ability to apply the words in meaningful contexts. Moreover, students became more motivated, engaged, and confident in using English during classroom interactions.

The results affirm that integrating game-based and cooperative elements in vocabulary instruction can address the limitations of traditional, teacher-centered methods. The scramble model's interactive nature fosters collaboration, peer learning, and active participation, aligning with sociocultural theories of language learning.

In practical terms, teachers are encouraged to incorporate scramble activities into their vocabulary lessons, particularly for young learners who benefit from hands-on, play-oriented learning. Future research may extend this approach to different language skills or explore its digital adaptation to enhance flexibility and learner engagement in diverse educational contexts.

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