

Improving Students' Grammar Mastery by Using Index Card Match Strategy at SMP Budi Agung

Meningkatkan Penguasaan Tata Bahasa Siswa dengan Menggunakan Strategi Index Card Match di SMP Budi Agung.

Sekar Kinanti Rahajeng^{a,1}, Dina Irmayanti Harahap^{b,2}

^{a,b}Universitas Potensi Utama, JL. KL. Yos Sudarso Km. 6,5 No. 3-A, Medan, 20241, Indonesia
Sekarraahajeng18@gmail.com¹, Dinairmayanti4@gmail.com²

ABSTRACT

This study aimed to determine if the implementation of the Index Card Match Strategy could significantly improve students' grammar mastery. This classroom action research (CAR) was conducted on 35 eighth-grade students at SMP Swasta Budi Agung Medan. The research was conducted over two cycles. The first cycle included four sessions, while the second cycle also comprised four sessions. The instruments used to collect quantitative data were multiple-choice tests, while qualitative data were gathered using daily field notes, observation sheets, and student activity notes. According to the analysis, students' grammar mastery improved in each test. In the pre-cycle I, none of students succeeded in passing the Minimum Passing Score and the average score obtained was 22.08. In test II of cycle I, after the implementation of the Index Card Match Strategy, 34.29% of students (12 out of 35 students) succeeded in passing the Minimum Passing Score with an average score of 64.85, and in test III of cycle II, 82.86% of students (29 out of 35 students) succeeded in passing the Minimum Passing Score with an average score of 88.14. From the qualitative data collected based on observation sheets, daily field notes, and student activity notes, it was determined that the instructional process went off without a hitch. Students showed greater engagement and enthusiasm during the teaching and learning process. It is concluded that the Index Card Match Strategy can improve students' mastery of grammar.

Keywords: Grammar Mastery, Index Card Match

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui apakah penerapan Index Card Match Strategy dapat meningkatkan penguasaan tata bahasa siswa secara signifikan. Penelitian ini dilakukan dengan menggunakan penelitian tindakan kelas (CAR). Subjek penelitian ini adalah siswa kelas Delapan SMP Swasta Budi Agung yang terdiri dari 35 siswa. Penelitian ini dilakukan dalam dua siklus. Siklus pertama terdiri dari empat pertemuan dan siklus kedua terdiri dari empat pertemuan. Instrumen untuk mengumpulkan data kuantitatif adalah tes pilihan ganda dan instrumen untuk mengumpulkan data kualitatif adalah catatan harian, lembar observasi, dan catatan aktivitas siswa. Berdasarkan hasil analisis, penguasaan tata bahasa siswa mengalami peningkatan di setiap tes. Pada pra-siklus I, tidak ada siswa yang mencapai nilai ketuntasan dan nilai rata-rata yang diperoleh adalah 22,08. Pada tes II pada siklus I, setelah penerapan Index Card Match Strategy, 34,29% siswa (12 dari 35 siswa) berhasil mencapai nilai ketuntasan dengan nilai rata-rata adalah 64,85, dan pada tes III pada siklus II, 82,86% siswa (29 dari 35 siswa) berhasil mencapai nilai ketuntasan dengan nilai rata-rata adalah 88,14. Dari data kualitatif yang dikumpulkan berdasarkan lembar observasi, catatan harian dan catatan kegiatan siswa, ditemukan bahwa proses belajar mengajar berjalan dengan baik. siswa lebih aktif dan antusias dalam proses belajar mengajar. Disimpulkan bahwa Index Card Match Strategy dapat meningkatkan penguasaan tata bahasa siswa.

Kata kunci: Penguasaan Tata Bahasa, Pencocokan Kartu

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1. INTRODUCTION

Language refers to a intricate form of conveying information used by humans to convey thoughts, feelings, and information. According to Saussure (1916), language is a social sign that has meaning and form, where meaning is determined by the relationship between the sign and the concept it represents. Language functions not only as a tool for communication but also as a means to build identity, culture, and social relationships. In the context of learning English, a deep understanding of the structure and rules of grammar is crucial. Grammar, defined as a system of rules that dictates how words are structured in sentences, offers a framework that enables students to express themselves clearly and effectively. Therefore, mastery of grammar not only enhances language skills but also strengthens students' ability to understand and use the language accurately.

Good grammar plays a crucial role in effective communication. According to David Crystal (2008), a language expert, grammar is described as the "heart" of language, governing the rules that dictate how words are used in a sentence. This is important because grammar helps students to communicate clearly and effectively. On the other hand, according to Geoffrey Pullum (1982), grammar is not just about rules to be followed, but also about patterns that influence how we speak and write correctly and effectively. However, many students struggle to apply correct grammar rules, especially in writing contexts. Factors that influenced grammar comprehension include inadequate practice, the complexity of grammar rules, and ineffective teaching strategies.

Teaching and learning grammar is a fundamental component of mastering English as a Second Language (ESL). A solid understanding of grammar is essential for developing effective communicative skills in English. Moreover, Harmer (1991) highlights the importance of grammatical knowledge for learners aspiring to attain communicative competence. Proficiency in English grammar enables learners to construct sentences correctly, thus avoiding common errors that could hinder effective communication.

In teaching grammar, teachers often encounter several challenges faced by students. According to an interview conducted by the researcher with the teacher mentor teaching English in Eighth grade students at SMP Swasta Budi Agung Medan. The teacher saw that some students commonly exhibit reluctance towards learning grammar because they perceive it as difficult and boring lesson, and they often struggle with grasping complex grammatical concepts to be apply effectively in writing and speaking.

Teachers' attitude in studying grammar significantly influences students' willingness to learn English grammar in the classroom, making teachers as the best motivators who could guide students to succeed in understanding grammar. Therefore, it is important for a teacher to explore teaching strategies that could assist students in enhancing their grasp of grammar.

There are only the Minimum Passing Score namely 80 is only a small percentage of students who have managed to achieve this score. The monthly exam results for March indicated that students only achieved an average score of 45.65. This is the reason the researcher decided to carry out a study titled: Improving students' grammar mastery by using Index Card Match Strategy at SMP Swasta Budi Agung Medan. This study focusses on the use of the "Index Card Match Strategy" to improve students' grammar mastery. This strategy was selected because it could be regarded to activate students interactive learning and provide concrete contexts for students to apply the grammar rules they have learned. Additionally, this strategy provides an advantage for teachers as an example to deliver materials for students in mastering grammar. It is hoped that by integrating this strategy into teaching and learning process. The students improved their grammar mastery easily.

Brown, H. D. (2007) Grammar mastery is defined as the understanding of and capability to apply the grammatical structures of a language proficiently in communication. According to Stephen Krashen (1981), grammar mastery entails the skill to accurately utilize grammar rules in both spoken and written forms. As stated by Styaningrum (2019, p. 90), Grammar mastery involves understanding the formal rules regarding word forms and applying those words in sentences to create correct and meaningful expressions.

According to David Crystal (2008) the purpose of mastering grammar is to Providing a framework for understanding and constructing meaningful linguistic expressions, thereby fostering language proficiency. To mastering grammar we need to have a good strategy. According to Kenichi Ohmae (1982) Strategy is the result of a complex, dynamic process that develops over time, influenced by many factors, both internal and external to the organization. Another opinion say Strategy is a plan for positioning a company or organization sustained over a long duration to achieve a competitive advantage in the marketplace (Gary Hamel and C.K. Prahalad, 1996).

The Index Card Match strategy is an interactive teaching approach employed to revisit material that has already been learned. According to Silberman (2006: 250), this strategy provides an engaging and enjoyable way for students to recall the material presented. The activity consists of students collaborating in pairs and asking each other quiz questions. In the context of grammar, the Index Card Match strategy is an educational technique that employs index cards to enhance the understanding and application of grammar rules. This approach involves writing words, phrases, or sentences on index cards to represent various grammatical concepts, such as verb tenses, parts of speech, sentence structure, and punctuation rules.

This strategy involves pairing two cards. Index Card Match is a strategy that promotes active student participation and develop an independent spirit in the learning process and nurture their creativity. In addition, the Index Card Match strategy is also an enjoyable game. Students can learn through play, which makes the learning experience more enjoyable. This approach helps reduce stress when students are presented with new material. Furthermore, it can be utilized to assess or revisit prior material (Silberman 2004: 269).

This research was conducted at SMP Swasta Budi Agung Medan, focusing on eighth-grade students who have weaknesses in grammar mastery. The researcher utilized Classroom Action Research (CAR) methods for gathering and analyzing data. The study was conducted over two cycles, referred to as Cycle I and Cycle II, each consisting of planning, action, observation, and reflection phases. To evaluate the success of the research, worksheets with multiple-choice questions and observational data were employed. The goal of the study is to improve students' grammar mastery by implementing the Index Card Match Strategy at SMP Swasta Budi Agung Medan.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

To examine students' grammar mastery using the Index Card Match Strategy, the researcher employed classroom action research as the study design. The subjects involved were the VIII-5 class of Junior High School students at SMP Swasta Budi Agung Medan. In this study, the researcher adhered to several stages of classroom action research. The procedures for Classroom Action Research (CAR) were based on Kemmis' framework, which included two cycles, each comprising four components: planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. If the first cycle was completed successfully, it was important to proceed to the second cycle, which followed the same structure as the first.

The data collection tools were designed to target the research problem. The researcher used tests (pre-test and post-test), observations, documentation, and note-taking. To collect data, the researcher implemented the following techniques::

1. Test

A test consists of a series of questions or statements intended to evaluate the skills, knowledge, or intelligence of a group. There are two categories of tests: the pre-test and the post-test.

a) Pre-test

In the pre-test meeting, the researcher administered a set of questions as a pre-test to assess the students' abilities prior to the treatment. Each cycle included a test comprising 20 multiple-choice questions.

b) Post-test

The post-test is conducted after the treatment, subsequent to the pre-test. The results show whether the Index Card Match Strategy influenced the enhancement of students' grammar mastery. Each cycle featured a test consisting of 20 multiple-choice questions.

2. Observation

Observation involves selecting, modifying, recognizing, and coding behaviors and situations of organisms that align with the research objectives. Additionally, the researcher assessed whether the activities in the class were engaging or led to boredom. The activities of both students and teachers were monitored and noted by the observer. To facilitate this, the researcher utilized an observation sheet to record insights about the class, students, and teacher.

3. Interview

The interview aims to gather information about the students' challenges in grammar. The researcher conducted an interview with the English teacher by posing several questions.

4. Documentation

Documentation was used to showcase the teaching and learning process through photographs. The researcher took pictures of students while they were participating in their studies, which aided in identifying those who were engaged and those who were not during the instructional period, as well as in documenting the research.

To analyze the data in this study, the researcher employed various techniques, including::

1. The qualitative data analysis in this research involved observing students' activities during the teaching and learning process, as well as conducting interviews before and after the Classroom Action Research (CAR).
2. The analysis of quantitative data in this research involved a grammar test that included 20 multiple-choice questions for each cycle. The students' scores on the grammar test ranged from 0 to 100, based on the number of correct answers..

Correct answers received 5 points, while incorrect answers were awarded 0 points, according to the formula proposed by Purwanto (2008: 102).

$$S = \frac{R}{N} \times 100$$

Where: S= Score of the test
R = The number of correct answers
N = The number of questions

To determine the average score of the students' assessments provided during each treatment, the research used the following formula:

$$M = \frac{\sum x}{N} \times 100\%$$

Where: M = The mean of students' score

$\sum x$ = The total score

N = The number of the students

In assigning scores to students after the pre-test and post-test, the researcher utilized a scoring classification that aligned with the criteria for grammar assessment. These criteria or classifications are outlined as follows:

Table 2. 1 Scoring classification

No	Classification	Score
1	Very Good	80-100
2	Good	70-79
3	Enough	60-69
4	Less	50-59
5	Bad	0-49

Next, to categorize the number of students who successfully passed the test, the researcher used the following formula:

$$P = \frac{R}{T} \times 100\%$$

Where: P = Percentage of those who getting score

R = The number of students' getting score

T = The total number of the student

After calculating the average scores of the students for each action, the researcher assessed whether the students had demonstrated improvement in their grammar mastery by comparing the pre-test and post-test scores from both Cycle I and Cycle II. To perform this analysis, the researcher used the following formula:

$$P = \frac{Y}{N} \times 100$$

Where: P = Percentage of students' improvement

Y = The number of students' getting improvement score

N = The number of the students

$$P = \frac{Y_1}{N} \times 100$$

Where: P = Percentage of students' not Improving

Y_1 = The number of students' getting low score

N = The number of the students

3. RESEARCH FINDING AND DISCUSSIONS

A. The Preliminary Study

The preliminary study was carried out on Saturday, May 25th, 2024, at SMP Budi Agung Medan to gather data on the actual conditions and challenges encountered by teachers and students during the English learning process, especially in grammar. This research was conducted in class VIII-5 at Budi

Agung Medan. The researcher identified several issues within the class. The primary concern was the students' lack of interest in learning English, which they perceived as difficult and challenging to understand. Additionally, students were not accustomed to bringing a dictionary to every English lesson, a concern also voiced by the English teachers in that class. The class consisted of 35 students, and the teacher found it challenging to manage the classroom effectively.

The first issue encountered in the class was that some students frequently ignored the teacher and were preoccupied with their friends. The second problem was the very crowded class situation and the challenge of maintaining order. A pre-test was conducted as an initial assessment before implementing the Classroom Action Research (CAR) to evaluate students' grammar mastery and identify the specific issues related to grammar, particularly concerning the Simple Past Tense. In the pre-test, the teacher provided 20 multiple-choice questions that involved changes from verb₁ to verb₂ and transformation from positive, negative and interrogative forms to enhance students' grammar mastery in constructing sentences using the Simple Past Tense which denoted past events.

In Post-test 1, the teacher requested that students identify Verb₁ and Verb₂ using the Index Card Match Strategy and required them to answer 20 multiple-choice questions again. In Post-test 2, the teacher asked students to identify positive, negative, and interrogative forms using the Index Card Match Strategy and required them to answer 20 multiple-choice questions again according to the practice material that had been taught.

B. The 1st Cycle of Classroom Action Research

In the first cycle, the research was conducted by identifying the difficulties experienced by students during the English grammar teaching and learning process. Student problem identification was carried out by giving a pre-test consisted of 20 multiple-choice questions that included the use of verbs in regular and irregular verb of the simple past tense in positive, negative, and interrogative forms in nominal and verbal sentences. It was followed conducting interviews with the classroom teacher. In the first cycle, the researcher held 4 sessions.

C. Pre-Test

The pre-test was conducted on Monday, May 27th2024. Pre-test in these cycles was conducted in 1 meeting. At this meeting, the teacher briefly explained the concept of the simple past tense and provided examples in daily activities. Then, the teacher gave 20 multiple-choice questions as part of the pre-test and assessed the students' responses. The pre-test was administered as an initial assessment before the Classroom Action Research (CAR) to evaluate students' grammar mastery. In this instance, students were asked to respond to various written questions concerning the forms of regular and irregular verbs, as well as positive, negative, and interrogative sentences in the simple past tense.

Here is the outcomes of students' scores on Pre-test in cycle I, the researcher applied the following formula:

$$M = \frac{\sum x}{N} \times 100\%$$

Where: M = The mean of students' score

$\sum x$ = The total score (795)

N = The number of the students (35)

$$M = \frac{795}{35} \times 100\%$$

$$= 22,08$$

Table 2. 2 The Result of Students' Scores on Pre-test in Cycle I

No	Students' Initials	Pre-Test
1	AN	20
2	AS	15
3	AEN	60
4	CSR	15
5	DK	20
6	DP	20
7	DOA	25
8	IAF	30
9	IP	15
10	KSM	5
11	KHI	15
12	LZN	15
13	MS	20
14	MAM	25
15	MA	25
16	NS	45
17	P	40
18	PRB	25
19	RE	20
20	RS	25
21	RA	35
22	RJ	30
23	RR	25
24	RSW	20
25	SP	15
26	SH	10
27	SS	35
28	S	30
29	TS	10
30	TZP	20
31	MEQZ	15
32	MF	10
33	MSF	25
34	WA	10
35	YA	25

According to the observations conducted by the researcher on the students, it was discovered that the students' English skills were relatively low and far from the Minimum Passing Score namely 80. It was of the because students answered carelessly due to a lack of interest in English, as it was considered difficult and confusing due to their less ability to understand the meaning of the questions given. As a result, only a small number of students managed to score above 50.

The results of the pre-test on grammar usage in English, particularly simple past tense, at the VIII-5 students of SMP Budi Agung Medan, could be seen in the following table:

$$P = \frac{R}{T} \times 100\%$$

P = Percentage of those who getting score
R = The number of students 'getting score (1 & 34)
T = The total number of the student (35)

$$1. P = \frac{1}{35} \times 100$$

$$= 2,86\%$$

$$2. P = \frac{34}{35} \times 100$$

$$= 97,14\%$$

Table 2.3 Categories of Students' Scores on Pre-test in Cycle I

Catagories	Scores	Frequency	Percentage
Very Good	80-100	-	-
Good	70-79	-	-
Enough	60-69	1	2,86%
Less	50-59	-	-
Bad	0-49	34	97,14%
TOTAL		35	100%

According to the table above, it can be observed that out of 35 students, only 1 student (2.86%) who had enough category, while 34 students (97.14%) who had bad category. From the test results, the following conclusions could be drawn as follow:

1. A weak language foundation served as a significant barrier to learning other tense structures and overall English material.
2. The students' test answers were careless due to a lack of interest and understanding of the questions.
3. The absence of motivation to learn English meant that no students were driven to complete the test diligently.
4. The classroom which was temporarily located in the prayer room (mushola) due to renovations, was another reason for the students' lack of concentration. The crowded seating arrangements and the resulting noise made it difficult for them to focus on the questions. Additionally, frequent joking and laughter among classmates further hindered their ability to concentrate on the given material.

D. Post-Test I

The post-test was conducted on Thursday, June 4th, 2024. This cycle's post-test took place in a single session. During this session, the teacher administered 20 multiple-choice questions and evaluated the students' responses. The post-test followed the teacher's instruction on the simple past tense and the use of the Index Card Match strategy over four sessions. The aim of the post-test results was to determine whether the implementation of the Index Card Match Strategy had led to improvements in the students' grammar mastery. In this context, students were asked to answer several written questions related to the forms of regular and irregular verbs in the simple past tense.

Below are the results of students' scores on Post-Test 1 in Cycle I:

$$M = \frac{\sum x}{N} \times 100\%$$

M = The mean of students' score

$\sum x$ = The total score (2.270)

N = The number of the students (35)

$$M = \frac{2.270}{35} 100\%$$

$$= 64,85$$

Table 2.4 The Result of Students' Score on Post-test 1 in Cycle I

No	Students' Initials	Pre-Test
1	AN	85
2	AS	80
3	AEN	70
4	CSR	80
5	DK	80
6	DP	60
7	DOA	90
8	IAF	35
9	IP	55
10	KSM	60
11	KHI	65
12	LZN	35
13	MS	75
14	MAM	70
15	MA	40
16	NS	30
17	P	65
18	PRB	95
19	RE	40
20	RS	55
21	RA	20
22	RJ	95
23	RR	45
24	RSW	65
25	SP	35
26	SH	100
27	SS	80
28	S	55
29	TS	40
30	TZP	95
31	MEQZ	65
32	MF	75
33	MSF	60
34	WA	85
35	YA	95

From these calculations, it is evident that students' grammar mastery improved compared to the earlier pre-test activity, despite the fact that it took four sessions to complete. The test results allow for the following conclusions to be drawn:

1. Although only half of the class, half of them had reached their Minimum Passing Score. However, the other half still got scores below the Minimum Passing Score, even some of them in the bad category.

2. In cycle I, students' attitudes and behaviors could be categorized as good, but there were still some students who were still noisy and disturbed their friends.
3. In ongoing learning, students often lacked focus and asked questions about how to do it, but student enthusiasm increased in comparison to the initial pre-test.
4. The results of the exercises were still considered suboptimal, as students still made mistakes in matching irregular verbs.
5. The teaching and learning process that occurred was quite good because students could be controlled even though they were not serious about learning.

Based on the results of observations in the post-test of cycle I, it was found that some students started to get an increase in scores. Because there were still student scores that did not meet the Minimum Passing Score, the researcher needed to continue to Cycle II, so that more efforts were made to improve students' grammar mastery.

Here are the Categories of students' scores in Post-Test 1 in cycle I:

$$P = \frac{R}{T} \times 100\%$$

P = Percentage of those who getting score
R = The number of students' getting score (12, 4, 7, 3 & 9)
T = The total number of the student (35)

1. $P = \frac{12}{35} \times 100$
= 34,29%
2. $P = \frac{4}{35} \times 100$
= 11,42%
3. $P = \frac{7}{35} \times 100$
= 20%
4. $P = \frac{3}{35} \times 100\%$
= 8,58%
5. $P = \frac{9}{35} \times 100\%$
= 25,71%

Table 2.5 Categories of students' scores in Post-Test 1 in cycle I

Catagories	Scores	Frequency	Percentage
Very Good	80-100	12	34,29%
Good	70-79	4	11,42%
Enough	60-69	7	20%
Less	50-59	3	8,58%
Bad	0-49	9	25,71%
TOTAL		35	100%

According to the table above, it can be seen that 12 students (34.29%) fell into the very good category, 4 students (11.42%) were classified as good, 7 students (20%) were categorized as sufficient, 3 students (8.58%) were rated as below average, and 9 students (25.71%) were in the poor category. These results suggest that the students' grammar mastery improved in comparison to their performance in the earlier pre-test activity.

E. The 2nd Cycle of Classroom Action Research

The results of cycle I indicated a slight improvement in students' grammar mastery, but no significant improvement was noted. To achieve greater improvements and to address the issues identified in the first cycle, Cycle II was implemented. Cycle II also took place over four sessions, following the same procedures.

In the second cycle, the procedures were similar to those in the first cycle, where the teacher explained the simple past tense. While the focus in the first cycle was on regular and irregular verb forms in the simple past tense, in Cycle II the teacher added explanations regarding nominal and verbal sentences, including their positive, negative, and interrogative forms. This was done concurrently with the implementation of index card matching as a practical exercise to enhance students' understanding of the material and to prevent boredom during the learning process.

In Cycle II, the evaluation based on observation results concluded that both the teacher's and students' activities were positive. Students who had started to grasp the material listened attentively, and the question-and-answer sessions occurred less frequently than in Cycle I. In this cycle, students also demonstrated their enthusiasm by competing to answer the questions posed by the teacher. The classroom environment became more conducive and easier to manage.

The researcher also observed that students' scores demonstrated improvement compared to the earlier activities, specifically the pre-test and post-test of Cycle I. While a small number of students' scores decreased compared to Post-Test 1, the researcher noted that most students' scores surpassed the Minimum Passing Score, and students became more active and enthusiastic about learning English in the classroom. This indicates that the use of the Index Card Match Strategy has effectively enhanced the grammar mastery of eighth-grade students at SMP Swasta Budi Agung Medan.

Below are the results of students' scores on Post-Test 2 in Cycle II:

$$M = \frac{\sum x}{N} \times 100\%$$

M = The mean of students' score

$\sum x$ = The total score (3.085)

N = The number of the students (35)

$$M = \frac{3.085}{35} \times 100\%$$

$$= 88,14$$

Table 2.6 The Result of Students' Scores on Post-Test 2 in Cycle II

No	Students' Initials	Pre-Test
1	AN	65
2	AS	100
3	AEN	100
4	CSR	95
5	DK	55
6	DP	100
7	DOA	100
8	IAF	90
9	IP	90
10	KSM	95
11	KHI	90
12	LZN	100
13	MS	95
14	MAM	60
15	MA	40
16	NS	65
17	P	100
18	PRB	100
19	RE	95
20	RS	95
21	RA	95
22	RJ	100
23	RR	95
24	RSW	95
25	SP	100
26	SH	80
27	SS	95
28	S	90
29	TS	55
30	TZP	90
31	MEQZ	100
32	MF	100
33	MSF	95
34	WA	80
35	YA	95

Here are the categories of students' scores in Post-Test 2 in cycle II:

$$P = \frac{R}{T} \times 100\%$$

P = Percentage of those who getting score

R= The number of students' getting score (29, 3, 2 & 1)

T= The total number of the student (35)

$$1. \quad P = \frac{29}{35} \times 100$$

$$= 82,86\%$$

$$2. P = \frac{3}{35} \times 100$$

$$= 8,58\%$$

$$3. P = \frac{2}{35} \times 100\%$$

$$= 5,71\%$$

$$4. P = \frac{1}{35} \times 100\%$$

$$= 2,85\%$$

Table 4.1 Categories of students' scores in Post-Test 2 in cycle II

Catagories	Scores	Frequency	Percentage
Very Good	80-100	29	82,86%
Good	70-79	-	-
Enough	60-69	3	8,58%
Less	50-59	2	5,71%
Bad	0-49	1	2,85%
TOTAL		35	100%

According to the assessment above, it can be observed that 29 students (82.89%) were in the very good category, 3 students (8.58%) fell into the sufficient category, 2 students (5.71%) were classified as below average, and 1 student (2.85%) was in the poor category. In relation to the results in Cycle II, several key points were noted, including:

1. Students' proficiency in grammar, especially in the simple past tense, demonstrated considerable improvement. This was evident from the results of Post-Test 2, which indicated an increase of 88.14% compared to the previous 64.85%.
2. Most students have successfully grasped the concept of writing grammar in the simple past tense. *
3. Of the 35 students, only 6 did not meet the Minimum Passing Score. Three of them showed improvement, although they did not reach the target Minimum Passing Score, while the other three experienced a decrease in scores from the previous Post-test. Upon further investigation, it was found that this was due to a lack of carefulness in answering and understanding the questions.

F. Data Analysis

The improvement in students' grammar mastery through the use of the Index Card Match strategy among eighth-grade students at SMP Swasta Budi Agung Medan highlights a comparison of their grammar skills across the pre-test, Cycle I, and Cycle II activities as follows:

$$P = \frac{Y}{N} \times 100$$

P = Percentage of students' improvement

Y = The number of students 'getting improvement score

N = The number of the student.

$$1. P = \frac{12}{35} \times 100$$

$$= 34,29\%$$

$$2. \quad P = \frac{29}{35} \times 100 \\ = 82,86\%$$

$$P = \frac{Y_1}{N} \times 100$$

P = Percentage of students' not Improving

Y_1 = The number of students' getting low score

N = The number of the students.

$$1. \quad P = \frac{35}{35} \times 100\% \\ = 100\%$$

$$2. \quad P = \frac{23}{35} \times 100\% \\ = 65,71\%$$

$$3. \quad P = \frac{6}{35} \times 100\% \\ = 17,14\%$$

Table 4.2 The Percentage of Completeness Results on Pre-test, Cycle I, and Cycle II

No	Research	Category	Frequency	%
1	Pre-Test	Complete	-	-
		Incomplete	35	100%
2	Cyle I	Complete	12	34,29%
		Incomplete	23	65,71%
3	Cyle II	Complete	29	82,86%
		Incomplete	6	17,14%

From the data above, it is evident that the percentage of students' scores improved across the pre-test, Cycle I, and Cycle II. In the pre-test, the proportion of students reaching the minimum passing score was 0%, indicating a lack of prior understanding of the simple past tense. However, in the post-test for Cycle I, the percentage of students achieving the completeness score increased to 34.29%, and in Cycle II, it rose significantly to 82.86%. This study was deemed successful, indicating that utilizing the Index Card Match strategy effectively improved grammar mastery among the eighth-grade students at SMP Swasta Budi Agung Medan.

G. Findings

The researcher concluded that there was an improvement in students' grammar mastery. This was evident from the pre-test, as well as from Cycle I and Cycle II, where students' grammar mastery was categorized as either complete or incomplete.

1. Pre-Test

In the pre-test, it was clear that only 1 student (2.86%) fell into the enough category when answering 20 multiple-choice questions that included regular and irregular verbs as well as positive, negative, and interrogative sentences regarding the simple past tense. The remaining 34 students were categorized as bad, with a percentage of 97.14% based on the pre-test results.

2. Cycle I

In this phase, the researcher explored students' difficulties in mastering grammar. In this regard, the teacher provided students with an opportunity to express their challenges to the teacher. Almost all students encountered difficulties in distinguishing between regular and irregular verbs. After identifying the problem, the researcher also assisted students by implementing the index card match strategy. Some students were able to overcome their difficulties, but many still struggled. The results indicated that 12 students (34.29%) achieved very good category, 4 students (11.42%) were classified as good, 7 students (20%) as sufficient, 3 students (8.58%) as below average, and 9 students (25.71%) as poor. In this cycle, the researcher noted a modest increase in students' grammar mastery, which rose from 0% in the pre-test to 34.29% in the post-test of Cycle I.

3. Cycle II

During this cycle, students reported feeling more confident in using the simple past. As a result, students did not experience difficulties in constructing past tense sentences, both in determining the appropriate verbs and in forming positive, negative, and interrogative sentences. This indicates that 29 students (82.86%) were in very good category in using simple past tense, while 3 students (8.58%) were in enough category, 2 students (5.71%) fell into the below-average category, while 1 student (2.85%) was classified as poor. In Cycle II, it was observed that students improved their grammar mastery through the use of the Index Card Match strategy as part of their learning on the simple past tense. This was evident from the analysis showing a percentage increase in their grammar mastery, with 82.86% of students completing the grammar task. It was recognized that there was a significant enhancement in students' grammar mastery in Cycle II as a result of using the Index Card Match strategy.

H. Discussion

There were several weaknesses among the students in this process, including students' low prior knowledge and being categorized as 'bad' in grammar, especially simple past tense, low interest in learning English, and a lack of motivation to learn English. At this stage, most students had low scores, as reflected in their pre-test results. Some were unsure about how to answer the questions asked by the teacher and they struggled to identify verbs in the simple past tense, particularly irregular verbs. Improvements in students' abilities were evident in the chart for every cycle.

During the pre-test activities, students were quite confused about determining verbs in the simple past tense, especially irregular verbs, and changes in positive, negative, and interrogative sentences. After conducting the pre-test activities, the researcher conducted the activities for Cycle I with the students. In the first cycle, the researcher explained the meaning of the simple past tense, provided examples from everyday activities using the simple past tense, and discussed the characteristics of simple past tense sentences in English. After delivering the material, the researcher then gave 20 multiple-choice questions as part of the Cycle I post-test.

In Cycle I activities, many students were not interested when the teacher started explaining the material. Some of them were busy making noise with their classmates or playing around even though

the teacher was explaining. However, as time went on, during the 4 meetings, students began to listen to the teacher after they managed to answer some of the teacher's inquiries regarding the simple past tense, even though they used Indonesian. Especially when the teacher taught them to use the index card match strategy, they seemed enthusiastic because they thought that learning was not just sitting but also had to walk around and find pairs of question cards that they held.

After conducting In the activities of Cycle I, the researcher proceeded to implement Activities in Cycle II using the same strategy as in Cycle I. However, the teacher added learning materials from the Cycle I material which discussed irregular and regular verbs and added with Cycle II material on nominal and verbal sentences in positive, negative, and interrogative forms. This cycle showed a significant improvement in students' grammar mastery. They were also more focused, cooperative, and enthusiastic in applying the index card match strategy in the classroom.

Based on the results of learning the simple past tense using the Index Card Match strategy, it can be seen that the mean score of students in the pre-test was 22.08, while the mean score in Cycle I was 64.85, and in Cycle II, it rose to 88.14. This data led the researcher to conclude that the Index Card Match strategy was effective in improving grammar mastery among eighth-grade students at SMP Swasta Budi Agung.

4. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

A. Discussion

In the pre-Cycle, none of the students succeeded in passing the Minimum Passing Score. These results were obtained from the data of pre-test with the average scores were 22,08. In cycle I, 34,29% of 12 students succeeded in passing the Minimum Passing Score and 65,71% of 23 students failed in passing the Minimum Passing Score. These results were derived from the data of Post-Test I, which had an average score of 64.85.

Then in Cycle II, 82,86% of 29 students succeeded in passing the Minimum Passing Score and 17,14% of 6 students failed in passing the Minimum Passing Score with an average score of 88.14. According to the data analysis performed by the researcher, the results indicated an enhancement in students' grammar mastery through the use of the Index Card Match Strategy, with the average score increasing from 22.08 to 88.14.

Qualitative data were also collected through interviews with English teachers and students. The teacher observed that the class became more interactive, and students were highly engaged in their English learning, especially in enhancing their grammar mastery with the Index Card Match strategy. The students expressed that they found the Index Card Match strategy to be a fresh and interesting approach. Some students also reported that they now found simple past tense easier and that it had renewed their interest in learning.

B. Suggestion

Based on the conclusion above, there was an improvement in students' grammar mastery using the Index Card Match Strategy at Eighth-grade students of SMP Swasta Budi Agung Medan. The researcher provided some suggestions for:

1. For students, it is expected that students are capable to implement the simple past tense material that has been taught in everyday conversations and feel motivated to continue improving their grammar mastery and English language in any way, especially by using the index card match strategy because it has proven to assist students in making progress their grammar mastery. It is also expected that students should often bring a dictionary during English lessons to get them used to find verb₂ easily, such as finding regular and irregular verbs in the simple past tense.
2. For English Teachers, it is suggested that English teachers use interesting strategies and learning methods. There are many types of strategies and methods that could be utilized, and hopefully,

the index card match strategy will become one of the strategies used in other English learning materials.

3. For other researchers, several issues still need to be addressed. This study could serve as a guide for those looking to undertake classroom action research aimed at improving students' mastery of English grammar.

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