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Word Scavenger Hunt: A Fun Way for Literacy Skills in English Language Learning [Pemburuan Kata: Cara Menyenangkan untuk Keterampilan Literasi dalam Pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris]

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Abstract: Students' English literacy skills remain an area of concern in the learning process. This is because classroom activities often relies on monotonuous method that are teacher-centered, resulting in students being less active during lessons. Therefore, more engaging learning activities are needed so that students can participate directly and more easily understand the material being studied. This study was conducted to determine how the implementation of the Word Scavenger Hunt can help improve students' English literacy skills. This study used a qualitative descriptive approach, involving ninth-grade students at SMP Al Islamiyah as the research subjects. Data collection was conducted through classroom observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation throughout the learning process. During the activity, astudents appeared more active and enthusiastic while participating in classroom. The data obtained were then analyzed using triangulation techniques through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and drawing a conclusion. The results of the study indicate that the Word Scavenger Hunt activity helps students recognize vocabulary, comprehend reading passages, and use the words appropriately within their context. During the activity, students were observed to be more active in discussing, communicating, and collaborating with their group members. Additionally, this activity also helped develop critical thinking skills, creativity, and teamwork. Thus, the Word Scavenger Hunt can be used as an alternative learning activity that makes the English language learning environment more active and enjoyable for students.

Keywords – collaboration; game-based learning; literacy skills; vocabulary mastery; Word Scavenger Hunt

Abstrak Kemampuan literasi bahasa Inggris sampai sekarang masih menjadi salah satu hal yang diperhatikan dalam proses pembelajaran. Hal ini disebabkan karena kegiatan belajar di kelas masih sering menggunakan metode yang monoton dan berpusat pada guru, sehingga siswa menjadi kurang aktif selama pembelajaran berlangsung. Oleh karena itu, diperlukan kegiatan pembelajaran yang lebih menarik agar siswa dapat terlibat secara langsung dan lebih mudah memahami materi yang dipelajari. Penelitian ini dilakukan untuk mengetahui bagaimana penerapan Word Scavenger Hunt dapat membantu meningkatkan kemampuan literasi bahasa Inggris siswa. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif dengan melibatkan siswa kelas IX di SMP Al Islamiyah sebagai subjek penelitian. Pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui observasi di kelas, wawancara semi-terstruktur, dan dokumentasi selama proses pembelajaran berlangsung. Selama kegiatan berlangsung, siswa terlihat lebih aktif dan antusias ketika mengikuti pembelajaran di kelas. Data yang diperoleh kemudian dianalisis menggunakan teknik triangulasi melalui tahap reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kegiatan Word Scavenger Hunt membantu siswa dalam mengenali kosakata, memahami isi bacaan, dan menggunakan kata sesuai dengan konteksnya. Selama kegiatan berlangsung, siswa terlihat lebih aktif dalam berdiskusi, berkomunikasi, serta bekerja sama dengan anggota kelompoknya. Selain itu, kegiatan ini juga membantu mengembangkan kemampuan berpikir kritis, kreativitas, dan kerja sama tim. Dengan demikian, Word Scavenger Hunt dapat digunakan sebagai salah satu alternatif kegiatan pembelajaran yang mampu membuat suasana belajar bahasa Inggris menjadi lebih aktif dan menyenangkan bagi siswa.

Kata Kunci - kolaborasi; pembelajaran berbasis permainan; keterampilan literasi; penguasaan kosakata; Perburuan Kata

I. Introduction
English language learning across different levels of education to face challenges, particularly in developing students' literacy skills. Traditional instructional practices such as lectures and memorization often fail to engage learners' interest and rarely support deeper comprehension. As a result, many students struggle to use vocabulary meaningfully, which later affect their reading, writing, and speaking abilities. According to Zarimah [1] a lack of engaging teaching methods can lead to low student participation and results in suboptimal learning outcomes. Literacy skills today are not limited to the ability to read and write, but also include the ability to understand , interpret, evaluate, and use information meaningfully in various contexts.

In line with this, UNESCO [2] states that literacy is a fundamental right of every individual that plays a crucial role in supporting self-development, social participation, and lifelong learning. In the context of education, literacy learning

requires students' ability to collect, process, and present information (Ministry of Education and Culture. It is also directed at building a culture of reading and writing habits that eventually lead to the development of skills and creative innovations. Furthermore, the language and Book Development Agency emphasizes that basic literacy, especially for early learners, should be developed through engaging and enjoyable activities. According to Anwas and Hadiana [3] Literacy is not only related to reading and writing skills but also encompasses other skills, such as observing, calculating, and communicating ideas comprehensively. Meanwhile, Kern [4] explains that literacy in language learning is not only about understanding the context of a text but also about how students construct meaning, interact with texts, and use language skills in daily life. Therefore, students need to be actively engaged in the use of words, texts, and social interactions so that their literacy skills can develop effectively.

Given this, a learning strategy is needed that can encourage students to be more active in exploring the material, collaborating with peers, and using vocabulary appropriately in context. One activity that can be implemented is game-based learning, such as the Word Scavenger Hunt. Through this activity, students can practice their literacy skills by reading various texts in their surroundings, identifying specific vocabulary words, discussing with peers, and constructing sentences together. This view is also supported by Gee [5] who states that games can aid literacy development because they create a more realistic and meaningful learning environment and can enhance students' motivation to learn. In recent years, game-based learning has emerged as an alternative strategy that not only improves students' involvement but also enhances motivation and academic achievement, Su and Cheng [6] emphasized that mobile and interactive games can significantly increase learning motivation and performance. Likewise, Noviyanti et al [7] found that word-based games, such as word searches, effectively improve beginner learners' vocabulary skills, since these activities encourage active participation and provide enjoyable exploration.

One example of such activity is the Word Scavenger Hunt, which allow students to search for vocabulary from their surrounding environment, understand its meaning, and use it in the context. A study by Chen and Greenwood [8] shows that scavenger hunt activities can be used as engaging intructional strategies to support students' vocabulary development through interactive exploration. In this regard, Word Scavenger Hun tis better categorized as a learning strategy rather than a teaching method as it functions as an activity based approach that promotes active participation, collaboration, and contextual learning. Responding to the educational shifts in the 21st century, where creativity, collaboration, and active engagement are considered in learning, teachers are encouraged to adopt innovative approaches. Von Lau and Gopalai [9] state that scavengerhunt activities can reinforce learning fundamentals through active and engaging tasks. Lee et al. [10] explain that treasure hunt-based learning can be designed using technologies such as augmented reality (AR), virtual reality (VR), and mixed reality (MR). In line with this, Nurpatima [11] found that junior high school students can also use treasure hunt techniques for collaboration, problem-solving, and vocabulary discovery based on clues.

According to Oktarind [12] found that the scavenger hunt strategy can improve reading skills through enjoyable exploration. Tsai and Tsai [13] demonstrated that language games encourage students' comprehension and engagement in the learning process. Widya and Nurani [14] found that word scavenger hunts can help students improve vocabulary through group learning activities. Additionally, Saha and Singh [15] state that game-based learning is engaging and suitable not only for children but also for adult learners. Therefore, this method is considered effective in supporting literacy development. In this study, the researcher specifically examined the application of the Word Scavenger Hunt technique in the English classroom. This study also examined students' responses to the activity as well as its contribution to vocabulary mastery, learning engagement, and students' confidence in communicating. Hamari et al. [16] Highlight that gamification supports creativity, collaboration, and social interaction in learning.

To provide a clearer context of the study, the research was conducted at SMP Al Islamiyah, a suburban school that was also selected as a partner school in the Kampus Mengajar program, which aims to support schools with limited learning innovation and improve students' literacy and numeracy skills. Students in this school show enthusiasm toward learning English, but they still face difficulties in vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension. Based on initial observations, English language instructions in school still largely rely on conventional methods, such as translation and memorization of material. These situations result in students being less actively engaged during the learning process, leading to limited classroom interaction. Consequently, many students remain hesitant to use English for communicating and lack confidence when expressing their opinions. Therefore, the Word Scavenger Hunt activity was selected as a learning strategy deemed appropriate for implementation in english language instruction. This strategy provides a more interactive and student-centered learning environment, allowing learners to actively explore vocabulary from their surroundings, collaborate with peers, and construct meaning through real-life context. In addition, the game-based nature of the activity helps reduce students' anxiety and boredom, making learning more enjoyable and meaningful. Therefore, the Word Scavenger Hun is not only relevant to address students' literacy challenges but also suitable to support a more engaging and participatory learning atmosphere in the school.

In this study, students' literacy skills are identified through several interconnected aspects. These include students' ability to recognize and locate English vocabulary from various written sources in their surrounding environment, as well as their comprehension of the meaning of the words and simple texts they encounter during the activity. Literacy skills are also reflected in students' capacity to use the discovered vocabulary contextually by constructing meaningful sentences

and discussing word meanings collaboratively with their peers. In addition, the students' communication skills were evident in the way they actively participated in group discussions, expressed their opinions, and interacted directly with one another during the Word Scavenger Hunt activity. Their critical and creative thinking skills also began to emerge as they tried to understand the clues, find solutions, and arrange words into clear and meaningful sentences. On the other hand, this activity also demonstrated cooperation among students. They shared tasks, helped group members who were struggling, and worked together to complete the assigned activity. This demonstrates that literacy development occurs not only individually but also through social interaction and teamwork.

Based on the background of the study, the research question is formulated as follows: How are students' literacy skills reflected through the implementation of the Word Scavenger Hunt in English language learning.

II. Method

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach to explore how the Word Scavenger Hunt strategy is applied in English language learning, especially in improving students' literacy skills. A qualitative approach was chosen because it allows the researcher to understand classroom situations more deeply and naturally, based on what actually happens in the teaching and learning process, as explained by Miles [17]. This study was conducted at SMP Al Islamiyah, one of the schools collaborating with the eighth generation of the Kampus Mengajar program. Through this collaboration, the researcher had the opportunity to conduct observations and participate in classroom learning activities. The research subjects were ninth-grade students taking English classes, specifically focusing on materials designed to improve their comprehension and basic literacy skills. Participants were selected through purposive sampling, taking into account the alignment between the learning material and the objectives of the Word Scavenger Hunt activity. Data collection in this study utilized two primary techniques: observation and semi-structured interviews. Observations were conducted non-participatively, meaning the researcher observed without directly intervening in the learning process. During the activity, the researcher noted student interactions, participation levels, group collaboration, and the overall classroom atmosphere. Observation data were recorded through field notes, observation sheets, and photographic documentation, as suggested by Rosyidi et al [18]. Additionally, semi-structured interviews were conducted with several students and the English teachers. A total of 13 students were selected as interview participants using purposive sampling. This selection was based on students' level of engagement during the Word Scavenger Hunt activity. Through this interview, the researcher sought to understand the students' experiences during the activity, their understanding of vocabulary, their motivation to learn, and their opinions regarding the learning process. The data were analyzed using the steps proposed by Cohen, Manion, and Morrison [19], namely data reduction, data display, conclusion drawing, and verification. First, the data from observations and interviews were simplified and grouped into several themes, such as vocabulary mastery, student participation, collaboration, and real-life application. After that, the data were presented in a narrative and thematic form to make it easier to see patterns and relationships. To ensure the validity of the data, this study used triangulation by comparing information from different sources, such as observation, interviews, and documentation, as recommended by Barkley et al. [20] and Vygotsky [21]. In this approach, the word scavenger hunt technique can provide a comprehensive understanding of student learning in the classroom.

III. Result and Discussion

The implementation of literacy skills in the Word Scavenger Hunt activity can be observed through several interconnected stages, including collecting information, processing information, and presenting information. These stages reflect how students engage with vocabulary, understand meaning, and communicate their ideas during the learning process.

Collecting Information

This section focuses on students' ability to collect information through identifying and gathering relevant vocabulary from various written sources encountered during the Word Scavenger Hunt Activity. The indicators of literacy skills identified in this study are reflected clearly in both classroom observations and interview data. During the Word Scavenger Hunt activity, students were able to find and identify English vocabulary words from various written sources around the classroom. Based on observations, students actively read posters, information boards, textbooks, and other printed materials to find words that matched the assigned tasks. This activity demonstrated that students were directly engaged in simple reading activities and vocabulary recognition. Both of these elements are crucial components in the development of students' literacy skills. Furthermore, reading comprehension skills were observed when students attempted to understand the meanings of the words they found. Rather than merely copying words, students discussed the meanings with their peers and, in some cases, asked the teacher for clarification. Interview data support this observation, as several students stated that they tried to understand the meaning of the words before writing them down or using them in sentences. This indicates that this activity not only helps students recognize words but also helps them understand the meanings of the vocabulary they encounter. In addition to helping students understand vocabulary, this activity also demonstrates an increase in student motivation and engagement throughout the learning process. During the Word Scavenger Hunt activity, students appeared more enthusiastic and engaged than during regular lessons. They seemed more active in participating in the activity and more interested in engaging in the learning process in the classroom. Some students even expressed that they were looking forward to the activity. This finding aligns with Krashen's (1982) Affective Filter Hypothesis, which suggests acquisition. In addition, previous studies by

Shelton and Hedley [22], Prensky [23] and Gee [24] Highlight that game-based learning can increase students' engagement and minimize boredom by creating meaningful and enjoyable learning experiences.

Figure 1. Word Scavenger Hunt Activity in the classroom learning



Interview results further supported these observations, as most students stated that the activity was fun and less monotonous than conventional learning. For example, one student mentioned, "It was so much fun! We went around reading various texts just to find one word, and we all got excited." This was further supported by another student who stated, "It was fun! The most memorable experience was when we had to find a very difficult word. We had to go around, read texts, bulletin boards, even food wrappers." Another student expressed, "The feeling was a mix of joy, challenge, and having to think hard!" These responses indicate that students were not only enjoying the activity but also actively engaged in exploring various written texts in their environment. This reflects students' ability in vocabulary recognition and reading comprehension, as they interactive directly with authentic materials while trying to understand word meaning.

These findings are consistent with the views of Rosyidi et al [18] and Hung et al [25] who state that game-based learning activities, such as scavenger hunts, can enhance students' motivation, engagement, and participation in the learning process. These responses indicate that such activities are capable of creating a more meaningful and enjoyable learning experience, thereby making students more active compared to traditional teaching methods. The findings of the study are in line with Chen and Greenwood [8] who discovered that the Word Scavenger Hunt could significantly improve vocabulary learning while also encouraging students' interest in learning vocabulary in meaningful contexts. These findings are supported by Afra [26], which indicate that the Word Scavenger Hunt can improve vocabulary in a meaningful context. Similarly, Rosyidi et al. [18] highlights that such activities provide opportunities for students to explore their environment actively.

Figure 2. Winners of the Word Scavenger Hunt activity

The results of classroom observations in this study indicate that students appeared highly enthusiastic, actively participated, and responded spontaneously throughout the activity. These findings are also supported by Shelton Hedley

[22] assertion that the use of games in learning can enhance student motivation and engagement. After students successfully collect and identify relevant vocabulary, the next stage involves processing the information to develop a deeper understanding of the words and their usage.

Processing Information

Contextual vocabulary use was evident when students arranged the collected words into sentences. Observation notes revealed that students negotiated word choices and sentence structures within their groups, indicating an effort to use vocabulary appropriately in context. Interview responses further confirmed this finding, as students mentioned that they learned how to use new words in sentences rather than just memorizing them. This process demonstrates that students are beginning to apply the vocabulary they have learned in more realistic situations. This ability is a sign of the development of students' literacy skills. In addition, critical and creative thinking skills are also evident when students attempt to understand instruction and organize words into accurate and easily understandable sentences. Based on the observation results, students were seen discussing to determine the appropriate word choice, reconsidering their answers, and then trying to construct sentences in more creative ways. Based on the interview results, several students stated that the activity was quite challenging but skillfully enjoyable. This indicates that the Word Scavenger Hunt activity can encourage students to think more actively rather than simply focusing on memorizing vocabulary. In addition to developing critical thinking skills, this activity also highlights the importance of collaboration in the learning process. Students were observed interacting more frequently, engaging in discussions, and helping one another while completing tasks together. This supports Vygotsky's [21] perspective on the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which emphasized that learning occurs through social interaction and cooperation between individuals. In line with this, Barkley et al. [20] states that collaborative learning enhances both conceptual understanding and interpersonal skills. Observation showed that students worked in groups, shared responsibilities, and interacted actively while completing tasks.

Figure 3. Collaboration and Social Interaction Word Scavenger Hunt Activity

They divided roles, exchanged ideas, and supported one another throughout the activity. Interview results further confirmed that students felt more motivated when working in groups, as they were able to collaborate, share ideas, and complete tasks together. Furthermore, students explained how they divided roles during the activity. One student said, "Our group immediately divided up the tasks so we could work faster. Some looked up words, while others checked them." This statement shows that this activity encouraged students to work together more actively and help one another in completing their group assignments. In addition, this activity also helped improve students' collaboration and communication skills as they learned to share tasks, exchange ideas, and work together throughout the learning process.

Interview data revealed how students divided tasks within their groups, such as searching for words, writing them down, and checking their accuracy. Some students also mentioned that they swap roles when they ran out of ideas. This indicates flexibility within the group work. This findings demonstrates that the activity requires genuine cooperation and adaptability, as students adjust their roles and assist one another throughout the process. Additionally, this activity provides a more authentic collaborative learning experience. Students are required to coordinate with one another, share tasks, and engage in social interaction to succesfully complete the activity. This situation makes the learning process feel more active and helps students become more engaged in the learning activities. This is consistent with, Rosyidi et al. [18], who highlights that scavenger hunt activities foster cooperation, communication, and social interaction among learners. Overall, these findings indicate that the processing stage not only enhances students' ability

to use vocabulary meaningfully but also promotes critical thinking and effective collaboration. Following this stage, students then move to the next phase, where they present their ideas and communicate their understanding through interaction.

Presenting Information

Meaning construction and communication skills were also strongly represented during the activity. Observations showed that students frequently exchanged ideas, corrected each other's understanding, and explained word meanings within their groups. These interactions were supported by interview data, where students described how they discussed clues, shared opinions, and helped one another understand difficult words. These communicative interactions demonstrate that literacy develops not only individually but also through discussion and collaboration among students. Based on the observations, students shared tasks, took turns in their roles, and helped their groupmates when they encountered difficulties. The interview results also showed that students worked together, shared responsibilities, and relied on teamwork to complete the assigned tasks. This indicates that literacy development in the Word Scavenger Hunt activity occurs through social interaction and cooperation among students during the learning process. Overall, the results of the observations and interviews show that the Word Scavenger Hunt activity can support various literacy skills in students, such as vocabulary mastery, reading comprehension, context-appropriate language use, communication skills, critical thinking, and cooperation in learning. In addition to improving students' communication and confidence, the activity also contributes to the development of essential 21st-century skills.

Figure 4. Cooperation and Communication with the team

The finding indicates that the Word Scavenger Hunt contributes to the development of essential 21st-century skills, particularly collaboration, communication, critical thinking, and creativity. This aligns with the Partnership for 21st Century Learning (P21, 2019), which emphasizes the importance of 4C skills in modern education, as explained by Rosdiana et al. [27]. Previous studies by Al-Azawi [28], Plass et al. [29] and Yang and Wu [30] suggest that game-based learning can enhance motivation, engagement, and higher-order thinking skills. Classroom observations showed that students worked collaboratively to arrange words into meaningful sentences, demonstrating both teamwork and problem-solving skills. Interview results further revealed that students enjoyed solving clues and working together as a team, while many reported that the activity was helpful in learning new vocabulary.

Kuo and Chuang [31] and Dichev and Dicheva [32]. This was evident during the activity, as students worked together to arrange the words they had found into meaningful sentences. Throughout the process, students helped and supported one another so that the task could be completed as a group. Based on the interview results, many students said they enjoyed the activity more when working in groups. They felt more enthusiastic when searching for clues together and discussing them with their friends. Some students also mentioned that the most interesting part was solving the clues and arranging the words into correct sentences. In addition, the majority of students reported that the activity was helpful in learning new vocabulary. In addition, students were also asked to share what they liked more about the activity. Some students answered "Working with friends," "Finding and solving clues," "Putting words together to form paragraphs," and "Learning new vocabulary." When asked whether this activity helped them learn new things, most students gave positive responses such as "It helped" and "It was very helpful." These responses indicate that students were not only actively participating in the activity but were also engaged in the process of thinking and understanding



the material throughout the lesson. This reflects the development of critical thinking and contextual vocabulary use, as students analyzed clues, organized vocabulary, and constructed meaning through group interaction.

Figure 5. Critical Thinking in Composing and Finding Words

These findings suggest that students were not only physically active but also cognitively engaged in problem-solving and the creative thinking process. Furthermore, the activity fostered teamwork, communication, and mutual trust among students. This is consistent with Rosyidi et al. [18] and Brkley et al. [20], who emphasize that collaborative activities such as Word Scavenger Hunt can enhance student participation, cooperation, and interaction. Therefore, the activity can effectively support the development of essential 21st-century skills, particularly collaboation, communication, and critical thinking.

VII. Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, the implementation of the Word Scavenger Hunt strategy, through the stages of collecting information, processing information, and presenting information, appears to support students' literacy development in English learning. Students are able to recognize and understand vocabulary and then use it in simple, meaningful sentences. This indicates that students' skills in vocabulary mastery, reading comprehension, and contextual understanding are beginning to develop. Throughout the activity, students were actively searching for vocabulary words, discussing word meanings, and constructing sentences together with their group members. This activity also helped boost students' motivation, participation, and self-confidence in the learning process. In addition, group activities encourage students to communicate and collaborate more actively with their classmates. They can exchange ideas, help each other when experiencing difficulties, and work together to complete the tasks given by the teacher. Through these activities, students gradually develop critical and creative thinking, and to work effectively in teams throughout the learning process. In general, the Word Scavenger Hunt activity creat skills, as well as the ability to cooperate effectively during the learning process. In general, the Word Scavenger Hunt activity is able to create a learning atmosphere that is more interesting and not monotonous. Students are not only focused on listening to the teacher's explanations but they are also directly involved in finding words, understanding their meanings, and applying them in sentences. This activity supports the development of students' literacy skills. Students' vocabulary understanding and reading comprehension can be seen when they search for words from various texts around them. In addition, their ability to use vocabulary appropriately according to the context is reflected in the sentence they create clearly and correctly. Communication and collaboration skills also improve through discussions and interactions carried out during froup activities. This indicates that literacy learning is not only related to understanding written texts, but also involves social interaction and meaningsul language use in daily learning activities. Futhermore, students seemed more enthusiastic and confident during the activity because they were given opportunities to participate directly and share their ideas with peers.

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