JIPIS
PISSN 0216-2830
EISSN 2686-0147

THE EFFECTIVENES OF SPELLING CITY WEBSITE IN IMPROVING ENGLISH SPELLING SKILL IN WRITING AMONG NINTH-GRADE STUDENTS AT SMPN 10 BARRU.

[1]Nur Fauziah, [2]Anugrah Aryana Akmal, [3] Andi Bulkis Maghfirah

[123]Universitas Muhammadiyah Makassar, Makassar/Indonesia

Email: nurfauziah21@bg.unismuhmakassar.ac.id

==========

Abstract

This study investigates the effectiveness of the Spelling City website in improving English spelling skills in writing among ninth-grade students at SMPN 10 Barru. Utilizing a Classroom Action Research (CAR) approach, the research was conducted over two cycles involving 27 students. Quantitative data were collected through pre-test and post-test evaluations, with improvements analyzed using N-gain scores. The findings reveal significant improvements in students' spelling skills, with average pre-test and post-test scores increasing notably between cycles. In Cycle I, students achieved a moderate level of improvement, while in Cycle II, more than 80% of students reached the desired competency level. This improvement highlights the potential of integrating technology-based tools, such as Spelling City, to create an engaging and interactive learning environment. Additionally, the study underscores the role of gamification, instant feedback, and adaptable word lists in motivating students and fostering sustained engagement. These elements not only enhance spelling accuracy but also contribute to better writing skills and greater learning enthusiasm. This research provides valuable insights into the use of web-based educational tools to address specific learning challenges, offering practical implications for teachers, policymakers, and developers of learning technologies.

Keywords: blended learning; classroom action research; English spelling; Spelling City Website; writing skill

==========

1. Introduction

Technology has revolutionized education, providing various tools that enhance student engagement and comprehension. Zhao et al. (2005) noted that technology offers broad access to resources, supports independent learning, and creates more enjoyable learning experiences. In the context of language learning, BECTA (2004) highlighted that adaptive digital tools have significant potential to improve reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills. The ability of technology to offer regular, delightful practice with instant feedback is one of its main learning benefits. Dawson (2010) showed how students may swiftly fix mistakes when using technology-based learning, which promotes improved retention. By using

interesting and repeating techniques, interactive tools also improve accuracy and memory, according to Kim & Kim (2018). In this context, Lin (2014) highlighted the importance of websites such as Spelling City in helping students increase their vocabulary and enhance their contextual word understanding.

Utilizing technology in the classroom increases student enthusiasm and involvement in addition to technical proficiency. According to Stevenson & Liu (2016), gamification of digital learning resources promotes student engagement. This conclusion was corroborated by Gao et al. (2019), who highlighted at how stimulating and difficult learning environments, such those offered by technology-based resources, increase intrinsic motivation and eventually encourage students to keep improving their skills. Since spelling affects both the standard of writing and the validity of written communication, it is an essential part of learning English. While Snow (2010) stressed that proper spelling improves readability and reading fluency, Beers (2017) connected excellent spelling abilities to effective writing.

However, according to Miller et al. (2013), a lot of learners still have trouble with spelling because they don't comprehend spelling patterns or because their first language affects. Systematic and continuous spelling teaching is crucial to addressing these issues. Spelling City is one platform made to help with spelling training. A range of interactive exercises, including word games, exams, and customized word lists, are available on this website. According to Miller & Hinz (2016), Spelling City enhances students' writing abilities, increases accuracy, and helps them comprehend difficult spelling patterns.

Prior studies have also confirmed that Spelling City is a useful tool for improving spelling. According to Hertzog (2012), elementary school students' spelling accuracy and speed were both improved by utilizing this tool. Web-based tools such as Spelling City have been shown to increase student motivation and support practice consistency (Swartz & Hall, 2018).

Furthermore, a number of research demonstrate the beneficial effects of web-based and game-based resources on learning. According to Bower et al. (2014), game-based applications efficiently support the development of particular abilities and increase student involvement in the learning process. Additionally, web-based learning resources speed up learning and assist students in overcoming spelling and grammar difficulties, according to Gao et al. (2019). Although many studies support for the use of technology in the classroom, few have extremely examined how web-based resources such as Spelling City can assist Indonesian middle school students who struggle with spelling in English. The majority of current research focuses more on how technology generally affects language acquisition or other abilities like reading and listening.

Junior high school students in Indonesia frequently struggle with

spelling English words. These difficulties result from both a lack of exposure to English spelling patterns and interference from their first language, which frequently impairs their capacity to identify proper spelling patterns. As a result, the purpose of this study is to investigate how well Spelling City helps Indonesian ninth-grade students with their English spelling. It focuses on how this platform can assist learners in improving their writing abilities and overcoming spelling difficulties. Additionally, this study will look into how Spelling City usage affects students' enthusiasm to learn. Spelling City is anticipated to improve student involvement in the learning process and produce entertaining learning experiences with interactive elements including instant feedback, gamification, and adaptable word lists. Another goal of this study is to advance knowledge on the efficient use of technology, especially web-based learning resources, to enhance particular abilities such spelling. Teachers, educational policymakers, and learning technology developers might find the study's conclusions useful in incorporating technology into the curriculum. Therefore, in addition to evaluating how well Spelling City improves spelling, this study looks at how technology can increase student interest and engagement, which will ultimately help them succeed academically, particularly in English writing.

2. Method

The researcher employed the Classroom Action Research (CAR) approach in this research. According to Trianto (2018), Classroom Action Research is a type of research activity that involves observing classroom learning activities, taking intentional action, and trying to solve issues or improve the standard of instruction in that particular classroom. The purpose of classroom action research is to enhance the educational process.

According to Afandi in Machali (2022), classroom action research is a type of scientific and thorough research carried out by educators to improve the learning process and results. For many different Classroom Action Research (CAR) models, this model acts as a basic reference. Kurt Lewin states that there are four steps in each CAR cycle: Planning comes first, followed by acting, observing, and reflecting. Kurt Lewin's model of the CAR cycle can be represented in figure 2.

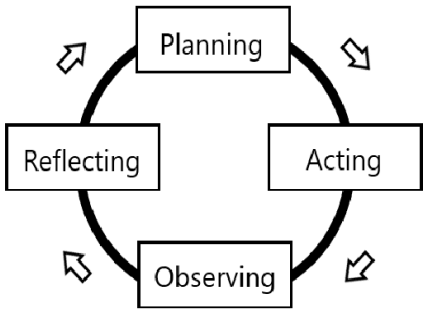

Figure 2 CAR cycle

The improvement of the ninth-grade students' spelling abilities in English writing at SMPN 10 Barru is the focus of this study. 13 male and 14 female students represent the 27 subjects of this Classroom Action Research (CAR).

The efficacy of the Spelling City website in improving learners spelling in writing abilities is assessed in this study using quantitative data. Pre-test and post-test results are gathered at each cycle to assess how much students' spelling in writing competence improve. According to Mardapi (2008: 67), a test is a set of questions or activities intended for evaluating a participant's competence in a certain area. Tests are employed in this study as instruments for evaluating students' English spelling in writing competence.

The researcher in this study used the mean of the N-gain scores to draw conclusions from the data. By comparing pretest and posttest results, the N-gain score is a way for evaluating how well a treatment or learning strategy is working. In order to facilitate comprehension, the difference between the posttest and pretest scores is calculated and then expressed as a percentage (SPSS Indonesia, 2019). The mean, lowest, and maximum N-gain scores are determined by doing descriptive statistical analysis after the N-gain score has been calculated. In order to provide relevant outputs, the N-gain variable is placed into the Dependent List column using SPSS's "Analyze" option (Dwi & Hermawanto, 2021). The descriptive analysis findings offer a summary of the applied method's efficacy. For example, it can be classified as very effective if the average N-gain score is greater than 0.7, and as poor effectiveness if it is less than 0.3 (Yuliatin, 2023).

3. Results

The findings about the efficacy of using the Spelling City website in the context of a blended learning environment to enhance the English spelling and writing skills of ninth graders at SMPN 10 Barru are presented in this part. Two cycles of planning and execution were used for the research: implementation, observation, and subsequent reflection. Pre-test and post-test evaluations during each cycle, as well as some observations made while the students were studying, led to the results. These results demonstrate the value of integrating technology into English instruction and provide a foundation for future expansions of technology-based English teaching interventions. Oleynick, (2021).

a. Cycle I

Overall, cycle I teaching and learning activities utilizing the blended learning model were executed effectively; however, because the students were still adapting to the model, the teacher's role in explaining and guiding was still significant.

Table 8 shows the descriptive statistics of cycle I findings. It can be explained that the application of the Blended Learning model has not yet achieved learning completeness. The results indicate that in the first cycle,

students did not achieve completeness in learning on a class-wide scale, as the mean pretest score was 47.04 and the posttest score was 52.78. Overall, students who obtained an N-gain of 0.1 were below the desired completion percentage, which should be between 0.3 and 0.7 for a high qualification.

Table 8 Descriptive Statistics of Cycle I Data

	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pretest	27	20	90	47.04	16.306
Posttest	27	30	95	52.78	15.525
N_{gain}	27	-.27	.50	.1091	.18731
N_{gain} %	27	-27.27	50.00	10.9079	18.73133
Valid N (listwise)	27				

b. Cycle 2

To make sure that mistakes or faults from Cycle I are not repeated in Cycle II, the teaching and learning process in this cycle refers to the lesson plan while taking into consideration the changes made in Cycle I. Together with the execution of the teaching and learning process, observation is conducted. Table 9 displays the data from the Cycle II research.

Table 9 Descriptive Statistics of Cycle II Data

	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pretest	27	50	96	65.41	9.316
Posttest	27	72	100	80.81	6.674
N_{gain}	27	.17	1.00	.4635	.17371
N_{gain} %	27	16.67	100	46.3539	17.37066
Valid N (listwise)	27				

Based on table 9, learning completeness achieved an average pretest score of 65.41, an average posttest score of 80.81, and an N-gain of 0.46 using a moderate criterion. As a result, 22 of the 27 learners have attained learning completion. This outcome demonstrates that, in comparison to Cycle I, the class-wide learning completeness has improved in Cycle II. The teacher's announcement that a test will be given at the end of each lesson inspired the students to study more in the following sessions, which is why the learning results of the students improved.

The data above shows that students' English spelling writing abilities significantly improved when the blended learning paradigm was implemented by utilizing the Spelling City website, particularly from Cycle I to Cycle II. This was brought about by better communication between students and teachers following the cycle II test or post-test, which was bolstered by encouragement and direction as well as entertaining activities that made learning interesting (Pratiwi et al., 2023).

Figure 3 displays the graph showing the improvement of the pretest and posttest average scores of each cycle.

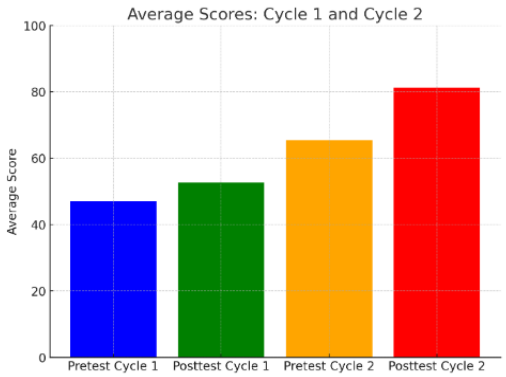

Figure 3 Average Scores Improvement

The average pre-test and post-test scores for Cycle I and Cycle II are contrasted seen in the graphic. The average pre-test score in Cycle I was 47.04, while the post-test score gain to 52.78. Students were still adjusting to the Blended Learning paradigm using the Spelling City website, thus even though there was an improvement, the score was still in the low range. The average pre-test score gain to 65.41 in Cycle II, while the post-test score significantly improved to 80.81. This improvement shows how well the interventions—such as increasing motivation, administering exams often, and fostering a more engaging learning environment—worked after Cycle I was evaluated. This information strengthens the idea that, when properly supported and implemented with the appropriate tactics, the technology-based blended learning model can enhance students' educational experiences (Rahayu et al., 2022).

4. Discussion

The results demonstrate that using Spelling City and the Blended Learning method improves students' English spelling in writing. Although Cycle I established the framework for adaptation for both teachers and students, Cycle II demonstrated how major change can be accomplished when challenges are addressed using model-based interventions.

a. Pedagogical Effectiveness

The structured approach in cycle II, demonstrated the flexibility of blended learning in meeting a range of learning demands by using Cycle I feedback and improvements. This result supports the claim made by Graham and Harris (2005) that writing training can be very successful when customized to meet the needs of each student. Student engagement and achievement were greatly increased by the emphasis on interaction, frequent assessments, and instructor support. According to Garrison, Anderson, and Archer (2000), a significant focus on interaction and feedback improves critical inquiry in distance learning settings.

b. Technology Integration

The use of Spelling City website offered a dynamic way to practice writing with spelling. However, initial resistance to technology tools made clear how crucial it is for teachers and students to have appropriate training in order to use these platforms efficiently. According to Cuban (2001), technology in education is frequently overvalued and underutilized, highlighting the necessity of proper planning and assistance.

c. Motivation and Participation

This study highlights how crucial motivation is to learning. Students were far more ready to participate and enhance their skills when consistent testing was used and a positive learning atmosphere was created in the classroom. The research of experts such

Deci and Ryan (1985), who have highlighted the importance of intrinsic motivation in learning, is supported by this study. This argument is further supported by Marwani, S. et al (2022), which shows how adding gamification components to blended learning settings can greatly increase student enthusiasm and engagement. The employment of AI-powered tutoring systems in blended learning settings can greatly improve student learning results, especially for difficult learners, according to an additional research study by Basri (2024).

d. Challenges and Recommendations

The challenge of applying this method is that traditional learners' resistance to adopting a new approach and the initial lack of familiarity with the platform. To optimize the platform's potential, future implementations should concentrate on early training sessions for instructors and students, the incorporation of more captivating activities, and the provision of continuous technical support.

The Blended Learning model's effectiveness in this study indicates that it can work in other contexts and subjects. To encourage interactive and customized learning experiences while guaranteeing conformity with students' preparation and learning preferences, educators may consider about implementing digital tools such as Spelling City.

5. Conclusion

Based on the research questions, findings, and discussions, this study concludes that using the Spelling City website within a Blended Learning model effectively enhances students' English spelling and writing skills. The interactive and engaging activities provided through this platform successfully motivated students and made the learning process more enjoyable, as observed during the research. The implementation of this approach during two cycles of action research demonstrated significant improvements in students' participation and confidence. Students became more active and showed a higher level of interest in their learning, which contributed to their skill development. This positive change was supported by regular assessments, interactive activities, and structured guidance, creating a supportive and dynamic learning environment. The findings highlight potential of technology-integrated learning methods, such as Spelling City, in improving educational outcomes and fostering a more active and confident learning experience for students.

6. References

Basri, W. S. (2024). Effectiveness of AI-powered tutoring systems in enhancing learning outcomes. *Journal of Educational Technology, 19*(1), 15-30. https://ejer.com.tr/manuscript/index.php/journal/article/view/1640

Beers, K. (2017). The importance of spelling in writing instruction. *The Reading Teacher, 70*(4), 427-431. https://doi.org/10.1002/trtr.1576

BECTA. (2004). The impact of technology on learning: A review of the evidence. Retrieved from https://www.becta.org.uk

Bower, M., Howe, C., McCredie, N., Robinson, A., & Grover, D. (2014). Acceptance of game-based learning and intrinsic motivation as predictors for learning success and flow experience. *International Journal of Serious Games, 4*(3). https://doi.org/10.17083/ijsg.v4i3.176

Bower, M., Lee, J., & Sweeney, R. (2014). Game-based learning: A review of the literature and its implications for education. *Educational Technology & Society, 17*(3), 1-13. Retrieved from https://www.jstor.org/stable/jeductechsoci.17.3.1

Cuban, L. (2001). *Oversold and underused: Computers in the classroom.* Harvard University.

Dawson, K. (2010). Technology and student engagement: The impact of technology on learning outcomes. *Journal of Educational Technology Systems, 38*(4), 353-367. https://doi.org/10.2190/ET.38.4.e

Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (1985). *Intrinsic motivation and self-determination in human behavior.* New York: Plenum.

Dwi, R., & Hermawanto, H. (2021). Penerapan problem solving dalam pembelajaran matematika. *UIN Mataram.*

Gao, Y., Zhang, X., & Wang, Y. (2019). Digital game-based learning: Foundations, applications, and critical issues. In Earl Aguilera & Roberto de Roock (Eds.), *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Education.* https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190264093.001.0001

Gao, Y., Zhang, X., & Wang, Y. (2019). The role of technology in enhancing language learning: A meta-analysis. *Educational Technology Research and Development, 67*(5), 1257-1280. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11423-019-09724-9

Garrison, D. R., Anderson, T., & Archer, W. (2000). Critical inquiry in a text-based environment: Computer conferencing in higher education. *The Internet and Higher Education, 2*(2), 87-105. https://doi.org/10.1016/S1096-7516(00)00016-6

Graham, S., & Harris, K. R. (2005). Writing better: Effective strategies for teaching students with learning difficulties. *Teaching Exceptional Children, 37*(4), 36-42. https://doi.org/10.1177/004005990503700404

Hertzog, C. (2012). The effectiveness of Spelling City in improving elementary students' spelling skills. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 104*(1), 123-134. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0026008

Kim, H., & Kim, S. (2018). The effects of mobile applications on English language learning among secondary students: A case study in South Korea. *Journal of Computer Assisted Learning, 34*(5), 475-486. https://doi.org/10.1111/jcal.12263

Lin, C. (2014). Enhancing vocabulary and spelling skills through interactive websites: A case study of Spelling City. *Computers & Education, 78,* 1-12. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2014.05.006

Machali, I. (2022). Bagaimana melakukan penelitian tindakan kelas bagi guru? *IJAR: Indonesian Journal of Action Research, 317.*

Mardapi, D. (2008). *Teknik penyusunan instrumen tes dan nontes.* Yogyakarta: Mitra Cendikia.

Mawarni, S., & Hartoto. (2022). The implementation of gamification method in blended learning. *Indonesian Journal of Educational Studies (IJES, 25)*(2), 1-10. https://doi.org/10.26858/ijes.v25i2.38631

Miller, D., & Hinz, L. (2016). Using Spelling City to improve writing skills and spelling accuracy in students: An exploratory study in an elementary school setting. *Journal of Language and Literacy Education, 12*(1), 1-20.

Miller, K., McGowan, J., & Smith, R. (2013). Understanding spelling difficulties: The influence of first language on English spelling among ESL learners in a bilingual context. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism, 16*(5), 568-586. https://doi.org/10.1080/13670050.2013.785632

Oleynick, F. L. (2021). The effect of the Vocabulary Spelling City app on student performance in spelling, vocabulary, and reading comprehension in grades 5-8 at Glenview Adventist Academy. Retrieved from https://dx.doi.org/10.32597/dissertations/1746

Pratiwi, Y., Shidqi, M. T., Wardhani, S. T., Ismail, J., & Syam, U. K. (2023). Penerapan model project based learning (PjBL) dalam pembelajaran bahasa Inggris terhadap siswa kelas XII MIPA 1 SMAN 9 Maros.

Rahayu, D., Marpaung, D. S., Fatimatuzzahrah, F., Khairunnisa, K., Prabu Ningrat, I. K., & Solihah, R. (2022). Efektivitas pembelajaran dengan metode blended learning terhadap hasil belajar mahasiswa. Retrieved from https://ejournal.undiksha.ac.id/index.php/IKA/article/download/44630/25408

Snow, C. E. (2010). Academic literacy development: The role of spelling in reading fluency and comprehension among middle school students: A longitudinal study. *Reading Research Quarterly, 45*(1), 90-115.

SPSS Indonesia. (2019). Cara menghitung N-gain score kelas eksperimen dan kontrol dengan SPSS. Retrieved from https://www.spssindonesia.com/2019/04/cara-menghitung-n-gain-score-spss.html

Stevenson, C., & Liu, M. (2016). Gamification in education: Enhancing student engagement through technology-based learning environments. *Computers in Human Behavior, 57,* 203-213.

Swartz, L., & Hall, T. (2018). Web-based applications for middle school English learning: The case of Spelling City. *Journal of Educational Computing Research, 56*(2), 245-263.

Trianto. (2018). *Model pembelajaran terpadu, konsep, strategi dan implementasinya dalam KTSP.* Jakarta: Bumi Aksara.

Yuliatin, Y. (2023). N-Gain: Pendekatan teori tes klasik. *Eprints UAD.*

Zhao, Y., Pugh, K., & Hubbard, L. (2005). Technology and education reform: A review of the research. *Educational Technology Research and Development, 53*(4), 3-14