Improving Student's Vocabulary Mastery Through Crossword Games

by Yuliyanah Sain

Improving Student's Vocabulary Mastery Through Crossword Games

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Abstract: This research aims to improve English learning outcomes through the application of the Crossword puzzle strategy. Type of classroom action research (CAR). The sequence of research activities includes: (1) planning, (2) Implementation, (3) observation, (4) documentation. This classroom action research was conducted at SMP N 5 KENDARI. of class VIII, which consisted of 35 students, they were 16 male and 19 female students. And in collecting data, the researcher used observation technique, tests measuring learning outcomes. The result showed that the use of the crossword puzzle strategy in English learning can improve student learning outcomes starting to 44% in cycle 1, then the learning outcomes increased in cycle II by 96%.

Key word: Vocabulary, Classroom action research, Teaching English

1. INTRODUCTION

Teaching English is essential for developing a variety of skills and getting ready for the globalization era. As a result, we can up rivalry with the global community. They need to arm themselves with vocabulary if they are to master them all. Learning vocabulary is essential to learning English. This is because is hard for pupils to speak properly with strangers, they lack language, and they are unable to articulate their views. Most learning styles in the modern, globally interconnected period are still transmissive, meaning that professors impart knowledge to pupils directly. Students can be motivated and given academic stimulation through the usage of educational media. As Study by Sadiyah et al., (2019) teaching English vocabulary using crossword puzzles is an effective medium for increasing students' vocabulary.

In Indonesian, English has become foreign language, but it was little bit possible to mastery. Therefore, to make it better the use of English has been applied early in School. But only included in local content lessons. The purpose of learning English early on is to introduce English to students. Difficulties of students in learning English, lack of students' vocabulary skills. In teaching-learning of English language, one of component or sub skill that must be taught to the learners is vocabulary. Vocabulary is central and important to language learner. Words help us to share our ideas and they also help us to understand other people's ideas. We listen, speak, read, and write with words. It can be said that the students will find difficulties in mastering English skills if they have limited vocabulary. Without a sufficient vocabulary, someone cannot communicate effectively or express ideas because we think with word. Vocabulary for children is very important and is the basis of communication. they must fully

master the four pillars of English proficiency. As a result, it was decided to investigate "The Influence of Crossword Media on Students' Vocabulary Acquisition and Oral Communication." To improve their English, students can look for ways to expand their vocabulary and practice public speaking. After considering several potential approaches to the classroom, the authors decided to use crossword puzzles as a means of encouraging student growth in this area. The aims of this study were to: (1) provide an overview of how crossword puzzles can help in the development of their English proficiency and vocabulary retention; (2) offer suggestions for future research; and (3) describe how media containing crossword puzzles affects students' ability to learn new words. After the information was collected through a questionnaire, quantitative data analysis was carried out. As study by Suryadi.,&Safitri.,(2023)

In the learning process, proper use strategy will greatly affect the creation of an effective and efficient learning atmosphere. Provides variety motivation will provide optimal results in the learning process. One of alternative strategy to improve students' motivation in learning English is using media need to be consider. Media plays an important role as a support in learning activities. In this case, crossword puzzle game is one alternative expected to help the learning process, especially to improve vocabulary mastery. The use of crossword puzzle games as learning media has a purpose. This is due to less optimal learning. Unreached learning expected goals, requires a solution. One of the right solutions is to use crossword game media in learning English. The use of this media is expected to motivate students to participate actively in learning activities. There is an increase in students' vocabulary skills in each cycle. Using crossword puzzle games can make students more interested and motivated in learning (Panjaitan, M. L., & Amaniarsih, S. D., 2020).

The researcher provides a solution to improve mastery of student vocabulary for eighth grade students of SMP N 5 KENDARI, so that later students can master English well. That the solution is to use a crossword puzzle game. The crossword game offers a challenge that will motivate students to try to fulfill the puzzle. It gives a lot of opportunities for students to practice and repeat sentence patterns and vocabulary. For sure, crossword games are the kind of games that will make the learning process more interesting than before. The students will find it relaxing and enjoyable. Then, they will memorize the vocabulary in it a different way, namely by rewriting what has been taught to them earlie r.

Vocabulary is one of the important elements in language. Nurgiyantoro (2001), states that vocabulary is vocabulary or whatever is owned by a language. Students' vocabulary is generally considered as an important part of building communication, both in the process of learning a language and developing skills in a language. It is impossible for students to

understand, speak, read, write, without adequate vocabulary mastery. When students find difficult words, they don't want to continue learning English because they think English is very difficult to remember or memorize. With a limited vocabulary, it will be difficult with the teacher's explanation. Vocabulary is one of the necessary components in learning English. Vocabulary is very important for building sentences.

Vocabulary is a component of language for people to convey their thoughts, ideas, or feelings. For example, when we want to talk to someone, we need vocabulary. And when we want to write, we also need vocabulary. Therefore, vocabulary is very important to be known by people who learn or teach English. It is not easy to learn and prohibit Indonesian vocabulary students, because English and Indonesian are very different, one of the differences is that the sentence structure in Indonesian and English is very different. Vocabulary mastery is one of the students' problems in memorizing English vocabulary.

The Concept of Learning Vocabulary in EFL.

According to Brown & Payne in Hatch and Brown (1995), there are five important steps in learning vocabulary. Namely 1). Have a source finding new words. Text source from various readings, both from books and mass media, are the most appropriate for finding new vocabulary. 2). Get a clear picture of the new words. Either seen or heard or both. These new words can be seen in their form, especially nouns, or heard of these new words in conversation or oral interaction, either in one direction such as speeches, lectures, and well as in two-way conversations or dialogues. 3). Study the meaning of the word. In this case, the new words that are found must be learned whether they are nouns, verb ,adjectives , adverb. 4). Make a strong construction between the form and the meaning of the word. Construction in changing word forms of various types of words, for example from adjectives. 5) Using vocabulary or applying the new vocabulary in writing or speaking.

The useful of games in teaching vocabulary

The use of educational games is a new learning media that is believed to be able to increase children's motivation in learning and can increase children's understanding of learning material by using learning media in the form of interesting games. Educational games for children are games designed in such a way as to stimulate and train students' brain development, develop creative thinking, and improve memory. So, children's games that will be implemented in class not only aim to attract students' interest but also to educate and stimulate their brains, these games are given to students to make it easier for students to

memorize basic vocabulary and create a cheerful class atmosphere. The benefits of implementing educational games in the classroom: Increase creativity and develop thinking patterns, train concentration which can improve student learning focus, create a fun learning atmosphere for students, increase socialization and student outreach interaction skills, training verbal skills in communicating between students, helping to grow students' self-confidence, enriching students' knowledge, and insight. There are several educational games as follows, Guess words, movements, and songs, Connecting words, memory games, Quiz.

Crossword puzzle

a. Definition of Crossword Puzzle

According to Silberman (2013), Crossword Puzzle is "composing a review test in the form of a crossword puzzle that will invite student interest and participation, crossword puzzles can be completed individually or in groups". A crossword puzzle is a word game that usually takes the form of a series of blank spaces in the form of black and white squares. The aim of the game is to fill in the white squares with letters, forming certain words or phrases, by completing clues that lead to certain answers. Squares that are black (or any other color) are usually used to separate different words or phrases.

Where is a play on words that usually has a series of blank spaces. It is in the form of a box in black and white. In this one game, the aim is to fill in the white squares with letters that form certain words or phrases. To fill in, we must complete clues that lead to certain answers. In crossword puzzles, both Indonesian and English, squares that are black or any other color are generally used to print different words or phrases. before the game starts the teacher gives directions and how to play the crossword, the teacher plays the music and when the music is stopped the students moved forward to fill in the crossword on the blackboard. From the several definitions above, the writer can conclude several definitions of crossword puzzles:

1) A crossword puzzle is a game that must be done carefully, consisting of words written in a predetermined box.
2) A crossword puzzle is a game to train the mind so that the learning process does not begin to get tense.
3) A crossword is a game that you have carefully thought out which is usually a white square or rectangular grid.
4) A crossword puzzle is a game to train the mind which is usually in the form of a white square or rectangle and a shaded (gray) square.

b. Procedure of using Crossword Puzzle

According to Zaini, et al (2008), the steps in implementing the crossword puzzle strategy are as follows:

1) Write down key words, terminology or names related to the subject matter that has been taught.

2) Put together a simple crossword puzzle that includes as many items as needed. Give black to the boxes that are not needed.

3) Make examples of cross items, use various categories, such as definitions, categories that correspond to items, examples, or opposites.

4) Make questions whose answers are adjusted to the words that have been chosen.

5) Distribute puzzles to students. Tasks can be done individually or in groups.

6) Give a time limit in completing the puzzle.

7) Give prizes in the form of awards or grades to groups or individuals who do the fastest and correctly.

Furthermore, teachers can be creative in presenting crossword puzzles. For example, the teacher divides the class into several groups. Then the teacher gives the same crossword puzzle for each group. The group that finishes first and all the answers are correct will be awarded high points. This can make the learning process interesting. The teacher has prepared a prize for the winner. In addition, crosswords consist of crosswords and clues. The clues are guides for solving crosswords. There are three clues:

1) Picture. Clues in the form of pictures that show something, so students can guess the word. For example: What animal is this? (The answer is bear)

2) Definition. This clue is to give the meaning of the word or explanation in the crossword puzzle. For example: Becomes no longer valid (Answer expired).

3) Completion of sentences. This clue consists of sentences where the answer is to fill in the missing or blank words. For example: My father's brother is .... (Answer is uncle).

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The design of the research is classroom action research (CAR). In this study researcher want to examine the use of vocabulary games before learning begins or it can be done in the middle of learning and at the end of learning. According to Kemmis and Mc Tagart (1998) stated that, research action can be said to spiral cycle of planning, implementation, observation and reflection which can lead to the next spiral cycle if there has been no progress. So, there

are two cycles that have been conducted by the research. They are cycle I and cycle II. This research will be conducted at SMP N 5 Kendari. By class VIII those who learn English language. Distributing crossword puzzles on a piece of paper to each group with only 15 minutes to answer the questions. This study will conduct on Jan-Feb 2024. This classroom action research was conducted at SMP N 5 KENDARI. of class VIII, which consisted of 35 students, they were 16 male and 19 female students. Students of class VIII have different characteristics, both in terms of academic abilities, economic background, and attitudes towards everyday behavior. In terms of academic ability, there are students who have different abilities in capturing subjects. The reason for choosing class 8 students this is because they used to English lessons and in one week they learn English 2 times, which can be very enlightening and responsive for students, so this crossword puzzle game can influence the development of student vocabulary. According to Arikunto (2019) are equipment or facilities that researchers use to gather data to facilitate their job and produce better, more accurate, comprehensive, and systematic results that are simpler to interpret. There are 3 instruments used in this research, namely :1). Test, 2). Observation,3). Documentation.

This method of data collecting is implemented piecemeal. Researchers evaluate and think about the data once they have collected. The researcher then maps the data and remove any unnecessary information. Data that is not pertinent to the research topic is referred to as unused data. The researcher then considers the facts and draws a conclusion. The primary goal of this study is to collect reliable data that is consistent with the study's title. Researcher won't obtain relevant and accurate data unless they are aware of this research data. Then, using observation, testing, and documenting approaches, data for this classroom action research will be gathered. The information gathered through observation is the outcome of teaching about several systematic teacher activities and student learning activities that follow the observation framework. The two types of observation formats that be used in this study are: a). Teacher's activities (observation sheet). b). A recording student's activities (observation sheet). To be details it can be seen the exposure as follow:

a. Tests are e given to find out the results of learning or student ability. It can also be interpreted as a measuring tool for find out how good the ability or student learning outcomes after the learning process takes place. The tests in this study were carried out at the end of each cycle meeting, both at the end of cycle I and the end of cycle II. The type of data that was collected by the test by the researcher is data on the results of learning English for class VIII students of SMP N 5 KENDARI after implementing the Crossword Puzzle strategy.

b. Documentation is data or archives that exist in schools that are used as data sources, which can describe the ideal conditions of students who are the subjects of research, such as attendance list books and lists of student values.

Findings

a. Description before conducting the cycle

The researcher encountered several problems when the teacher was carrying out the learning process before the researcher started the cycle, based on the result of the orientation that was done before the first cycle started. Some of the problems that were discovered include the following: Firstly, Student learning outcomes are still not meeting the KKM learning standards, particularly item 70. Secondly, Instructors still use lectures as one of the conventional teaching modalities. Thirdly, the teachers don't adapt their ways.

Based on several issues that the researchers faced and the findings of these observations, it is possible to assume that these issues are the root cause of the poor student learning outcomes. The results prior to the action had a score of 30, with the highest score being 90. Only 21 students received higher scores for completeness than the required number, with 14 students falling short of the mark. Merely 21 of students have finished their studies, according to calculations based on learning completion percentage.

b. Result of Cycle 1 (Actions)

The initial steps in this cycle were carried out based on orientation observation findings which revealed several obstacles that prevented students from achieving their maximum potential before action was taken. An activity was created that focused on improving student learning outcomes and incorporating a crossword puzzle approach into the learning process. It is hoped that by taking this step, student learning outcomes improved.

1) Planning of cycle I

The English learning design was created by the researcher before the action was taken. By using the Greeting Card learning device. The syllabus, lesson plans, and researcher observation sheets were developed by the teacher before teaching began. It was observed how the students who participated in the learning process and the researchers who taught them learned.

2) The Implementation of Actions of cycle I

Crossword learning is used at this level by researcher. The following is a description of the learning process in this cycle the first meeting, Following are the learning steps for

the first meeting:

    a) The researcher provides a little learning motivation for them and explain the importance of the material that will be taught.

    b) Researcher explains the definition of greeting card, explain the component of a greeting card, explains the various types of greeting card.

    c) Next, the researcher shows pictures of greeting card material in the pocketbook.

    d) Then ask students to name the types of greeting card and component greeting card.

    e) The researcher reviewed the greeting card material again.

    f) Next, the researcher corrected students mistake in terms of vocabulary.

    g) Researchers give appreciation who answer questions correctly.

    h) Researchers ask questions about material that is not yet understood.

3) Observation

Data is gathered for research from cycles based on the acts that have been given. Data on student learning outcomes from tests and observations was that used. The information gathered via observations is the outcome of watching both student and teacher activity during a lesson. With an average score of 3,3. The overall score derived from monitoring instructor activities in learning is 50. It is therefore possible to conclude that the teacher's proficiency with the crossword puzzle approach is comparatively good based on the description of the assessment categories. With an average score of 3,0. The overall score obtained from monitoring instructor activities in learning is 34. Therefore, it can be concluded that students' activity and enthusiasm using the crossword puzzle approach is classified as good based on the description of the assessment categories.

c.   Data from the final test result of cycle 1

The crossword puzzle method was used to test the first cycle instrument on the learning process, and the result showed that ability increased prior to the implementation of action. The table below displays the learning outcomes for the greeting card material see appendix 5. From learning result, the lowest score is 45, the highest is 90, and the average is 65. 13 students got a score higher than 70. The resulting greeting card can be used to calculate the average student score and the percentage of learning completion.

1) The following formula used to determine a student's average score:

$$MX = \frac{\sum x}{N}$$

Information:

　　MX: Class average score

　　$\sum x$: Total score obtained by students.

　　N: Number of students

Is known:

$\sum X = 1960$

N　　= 30 Students

　　So: $X = \dfrac{1960}{30}$

　　　$X = 65$

2) The following formula is used for the percentage of learning completeness:

　　$P = \dfrac{\sum T \times 100\%}{\sum N}$

　　Is known:

Students complete　　　　**:** 13 Students

Students do not complete: 22 Students.

P. Students do not complete: $P:\dfrac{\sum T \times 100\%}{\sum N}$

　　　　P: $\dfrac{22 \times 100\%}{30}$

　　　　　$= 74\%$

P. Students complete :

　　　　P: $\dfrac{\sum T \times 100\%}{\sum N}$

　　　　$;\dfrac{13 \times 100\%}{30}$　　$= 44\%$

The foregoing description makes clear that the crossword puzzle approach's cycle 1 improvement in student learning outcomes is still in the moderate range. Although learning results have improved, 80% of students still do not meet the desired aim. Then, this research go moved to cycle II to enhance learning result in line with the learning goals.

d.　　Reflection

After doing cycle 1 action were completed the researcher analyzed problems doing the process then that scheduled the implementation of corrective actions carried out in the cycle II learning action process.

e.   Result of Cycle II Actions

Activities were repeated in cycle II after it was determined that number of barriers contributed to the low students learning results in cycle I due to observations of actions. Based on the difficulties and subpar students learning outcomes from cycle I, this activity was developed for cycle II with the goals of enhancing students learning outcomes in the learning process after used *crossword puzzle*. It is intended that this cycle II exercise assist in enhancing students learning results.

f.   Planning

The English learning design was created by the researcher before the action was taken. By using the Zookeeper device. Syllabus, lesson plans, and researcher observation sheets were developed by the teacher before teaching began. It was observed how the students who participated in the learning process and the researchers who taught them learned.

g.   Implementation **of Actions**

1) Explain the importance of the material to be studied.

2) The researcher explains the definition of descriptive text, explain the structure of descriptive text.

3) Next, the researcher showed pictures or identification and description material (descriptive text)in the text book.

4) Then ask students to mention the structure of descriptive text.

5) Next, the researcher displays a description of the crossword puzzle game.

6) Researchers give appreciation to students who answer questions correctly.

7) Researchers ask questions about material that is not yet understood.

8) The researchers make conclusions from the lessons that have been taught.

9) The researchers assess students results during the learning process.

10) The researchers closed the lesson by saying (salam).

h.   Observation

Data is gathered for research from cycles based on the acts that have been given. Data on student learning outcomes from tests and observations was that used. The information gathered via observations is the outcome of watching both student and teacher activity during a lesson. Based on the overall scores and cycle II average value, it is 42 with an average value of 3,5. To help you understand, it was found that cycle II students participation in the learning process through the usage of the *crossword puzzle* approach was assessed as good.

i.   Data from the final test result of cycle II

Testing the second cycle instrument on the learning process the crossword puzzle approach revealed an increase in learning results. The learning objectives for the Zookeeper cycle II material. The average score was 80, with 25 being the lowest and 90 being the highest, based on the learning outcomes that the students had achieved during cycle II implementation. Measuring the percentage of students who completed study, only 30 students did so, and 5 did not. Based on the learning objectives of the Zookeeper material, the average score and percentage of students learning completeness can be calculated, in particular:

1) The following formula can be used to determine a student's average score:

$$MX = \frac{\sum x}{N}$$

Information:

MX: Class average score

$\sum x$: Total score obtained by students

N : Number of students

Is known :

$$\sum X = 1960$$

N   = 30 Students

So : $X = \frac{2465}{31}$

X= 80

2) The following formula is used for the percentage of learning completeness:

$$P = \frac{\sum T \times 100\%}{\sum N}$$

Is known :

Students complete   : 30 Students

Students do not complete : 5 Students

P Students do not complete : $P : \frac{\sum T \times 100\%}{\sum N}$

$$P : \frac{5 \times 100\%}{31}$$

$$= 16\%$$

P Students complete :

$$P : \frac{\sum T \times 100\%}{\sum N}$$

$$\frac{;30 \times 100\%}{31} = 96\%$$

Additional details on the percentage of cycle 1I learning completeness are given in the table below: The description above makes it clear that the cycle II crossword puzzle approach to increasing student learning outcomes is classified as very good . Learning outcomes have increased to reach 90% and exceed the target of 80% of students having achieved the desired score.

j.   Reflection

The Crossword puzzle method made cycle II go easily. It can be concluded from the results of the observation evaluation that the activities conducted have resulted in the intended learning outcomes and are compliant with the pre-established plans.

k.   Discussion of the entire cycle

Effectiveness in this research is measured by increasing students' English vocabulary learning outcomes. The research results show that improving students English learning outcomes can be achieved by implementing the crossword puzzle method. The puzzle learning strategy through 2 cycles has been proven to improve student learning outcomes and achieve excellent grades in English learning. The use of crossword puzzle to improve student learning outcomes has proven to be effective. The steps used were to determine students' English vocabulary learning abilities in cycles I and II, when student learning outcomes increased significantly. Students can also contribute new ideas and experience and become more engaged in their continuing education by using crossword strategies. Additionally, both teacher and students can benefit greatly from using teaching tactics. When educators apply methods methodically, the method can function as a set of learning tools. Each approach can make learning easier for those who apply it because it is designed to make the process easier for students.

3.   CONCLUSION

The use of the crossword puzzle technique in order improves students learning outcomes such as greeting card and zookeeper. The crossword puzzle technique can be used to improve vocabulary mastery. The findings of learning tests in cycles I and II got improvement, it was 44% to 96% score. So, this study can be concluded that crossword puzzle technique can improve students' vocabulary mastery.

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FINAL GRADE

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GENERAL COMMENTS

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