

## CROSSWORD PUZZLE GAME FOR TEACHING VOCABULARY

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### Abstract

Improving students' vocabulary mastery using Crossword Puzzle Game was the aim of this research. This research was designed by using Classroom Action Research (CAR) which was done in two cycles. The subject of this research was the Eighth Grade Students of SMP Negeri 1. The instruments of collecting the data were observation paper and test. The result of data analysis showed that the result of the researcher's observation paper in the cycle I for the first meeting was 73.68% while in the second meeting was 85.71%. In the cycle II for the first meeting was 88.23% and the second meeting was 100%. The result of students' observation paper on the cycle I for the first meeting was 65.93% and the second meeting was 71.43%. In the cycle II for the first meeting was 87.91% and the second meeting was 98.02%. Furthermore, the average score of the students' test result in cycle I was 40.95 while the average score of students' test result in cycle II was 75. Based on the findings, it is concluded that the implementation of Crossword Puzzle Game is useful to teach vocabulary since it offered a good exercise to help the students to understand and learn different levels of meaning for the same words. In addition, it is suggested to the English teacher to apply Crossword Puzzle Game in teaching English vocabulary and for another researcher as a reference in doing research.

**Key Words:** *Crossword puzzle game; English; vocabulary mastery*

### Abstrak

*Meningkatkan penguasaan kosakata siswa menggunakan Crossword Puzzle Game menjadi tujuan penelitian ini. Penelitian ini dirancang dengan menggunakan Penelitian Tindakan Kelas (CAR) yang dilakukan dalam dua siklus. Subjek penelitian ini adalah Siswa Kelas Delapan SMP Negeri 1. Instrumen pengumpulan data adalah kertas observasi dan tes. Hasil analisis data menunjukkan bahwa hasil makalah observasi peneliti pada siklus I untuk pertemuan pertama sebesar 73,68% sedangkan pada pertemuan kedua sebesar 85,71%. Pada siklus II untuk pertemuan pertama sebesar 88,23% dan pertemuan kedua sebesar 100%. Hasil makalah observasi siswa pada siklus I pada pertemuan pertama sebesar 65,93% dan pertemuan kedua sebesar 71,43%. Pada siklus II pertemuan pertama sebesar 87,91% dan pertemuan kedua sebesar 98,02%. Selanjutnya nilai rata-rata hasil tes siswa pada siklus I adalah 40,95 sedangkan nilai rata-rata hasil tes siswa pada siklus II adalah 75. Berdasarkan temuan tersebut, disimpulkan bahwa implementasi Crossword Puzzle Game berguna untuk mengajarkan kosakata karena menawarkan latihan yang baik untuk membantu siswa memahami dan mempelajari berbagai tingkat makna untuk kata-kata yang sama. Selain itu, disarankan kepada guru bahasa Inggris untuk menerapkan Crossword Puzzle Game*

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*dalam mengajarkan kosa kata bahasa Inggris dan bagi peneliti lain sebagai acuan dalam melakukan penelitian.*

**Kata Kunci:** Permainan teka-teki silang; Inggris; penguasaan kosakata

## A. Introduction

Vocabulary is one of the important language components which play the important role in language teaching. In learning English language, vocabulary becomes the first component that should be acquired by the students in doing interaction either orally or written form and affects the four skills; speaking, listening, reading, and listening. Furthermore, vocabulary can be the measurement of the students' quality and capability to communicate the meaningful information to others and support the students to comprehend the language well. Similarly, Richards, *et al*(2009:185) states that vocabulary is relevant to all sub-skills; therefore the concept of general language proficiency can perhaps be reinterpreted, at least to some extent, as vocabulary knowledge.

Vocabulary is all words in particular language such as English that are used and known by people who use it for communication. In addition, According to Hatch and Brown (1995:1), the term vocabulary refers to a list or set of words for particular language or a list of words that individual speakers of language use. Hence, the words used by the speakers of certain language to communicate or interact to others are known as vocabulary. In addition, Richards and Schmidt (2002:580) stated that vocabulary is a set of lexeme, including single words, compound words, and idioms. It means that vocabulary is not only the single words

but involved various types of words and all of their combinations. Similarly, Ur (1991:60) argued that vocabulary can be defined, roughly, as the words we teach in the foreign language. However, a new item of vocabulary may be more than a single word: for example, post office and mother-in-law, which are made up of two or three words but express a single idea.

To sum up, vocabulary refers to all words regarding to their forms and meanings that are used accurately in the context to deliver and receive the information in oral and written communication. Therefore, teaching and learning vocabulary is a continuously process in learning English language which gives the opportunity to the students to improve their ability in using the language for communication. Moreover, according to Hiebert and Kamil (2005:2) vocabulary is not a developmental skill or one that can ever be seen as fully mastered. The expansion and elaboration of vocabularies is something that extends across a lifetime. Thus, learning vocabulary should be constantly done since it has the obvious effect of the student language quality and fluency.

Vocabulary has an important role since the more vocabulary the students owned, it is easier to the students to understand the speech or writing of other people in that language and also to demonstrate or express their thoughts in that language both orally and written form. Accordingly, the students should

own and master English words as many as possible in order to increase their ability in mastering English skills.

However, it cannot be denied that it is not easy for the students to own and use English words. This case occurred since there are several significant differences between the students' first language with English such as word forms, sentence structure, and so on. Another aspect that also influences students' capability in learning English is tedious teaching method or strategy, and also affected by the language used in the community surrounding the students. This case was found at SMP Negeri1 Telukdalam.

Hence, this case causes the teaching and learning process in the class room cannot run well since it is impossible to teach the students by using their first language all the time. Therefore, it is necessary to improve the students' vocabulary mastery to make the teaching and learning process becomes more enjoyable and run well.

Realizing the problem above, it is important to find a strategy in improving the students' vocabulary mastery. Therefore, it is attempted to propose a new and attractive strategy in teaching the students in order to improve the students' vocabulary mastery by using crossword puzzle game. Crossword puzzle is an active learning method for the students that involve all the students to think when the learning takes place by filling the empty boxes provided so that the students become more enthusiastic in participating in lesson.

Crossword puzzle refers to a word game that was familiar to everyone. It required us to fill the empty

squares provided both vertically and horizontally with the appropriate words so that every word in the squares is suitable with others. In teaching and learning process, additionally, crossword puzzle involves students' participation to be being active since learning activities begin. Students are invited to participate in all learning processes, not only mentally but also physically. Through this situation, students will feel a more pleasant atmosphere so that learning outcomes can be maximized.

Furthermore, the crossword puzzle can be used as well as a learning strategy to review the material that has been delivered. This review is useful to make it easier for students to recall the material which has been delivered. So, students are able to achieve learning goals, namely cognitive, affective and psychomotor aspects.

Teaching English with crossword puzzle is one of interested learning strategies because the students learn through a game. Similarly, Zaini, Munthe, & Aryani (2008:71) states puzzle can be used as a good and enjoyable teaching-learning strategy without losing the learning essence. In fact, this strategy can involve the students' participation actively in the beginning of teaching and learning process. Moreover, Nation (1994:89) states that crosswords are great way recycle and reinforce vocabulary. In other words, crossword puzzle game is a good teaching and learning strategy which enrich learners' vocabulary.

Those statements emphasize the importance and effect of using crossword puzzle as a teaching strategy. The use of crossword puzzle does not

mean to lose the essential of teaching and learning but it can encourage students' curiosity about what is being learnt at the time. Briefly, this research was done to improve the students' vocabulary through the use of the crossword puzzle game.

### **B. Research Method**

This research was carried out through Classroom Action Research (CAR) which oriented to the implementation of actions with the aim of improving quality or solving problems on a group of subjects studied and observing the level of success or consequences of the actions done, then giving further actions that refines the actions as an adjustment to conditions and situations to obtain well result. This research was done in two cycles consisted four stages: planning, action, observation, and reflection. The data were obtained through observation and test.

### **C. Research Findings and Discussion**

The process of teaching vocabulary in this research was done by applying crossword puzzle game. Crossword puzzle game was technique used in teaching vocabulary by asking the students to fill it based on the clues provided. In doing the crossword, the students played while learning that made the learning process became enjoyable and the students were active.

The effect of applying crossword puzzle game in teaching vocabulary was very significant. It could be seen from the students test result in two cycles. Even though that the average scores of students in cycle I was 40.95 with 4 students who passed the test from 21 students, but this could be improved in cycle II. The average score of students in cycle II was 74.76 and 19

students passed the test. The process of the students' improvement in vocabulary was narrated below.

In the first cycle, teaching activities was still not in accordance with what was expected. It happened since the atmosphere and class situation at that time were not adjusted. However, at the second meeting in the first cycle, it was seen that there was a slight increase or improvement in the activities done. This could be seen from the increase of the percentage for the activities done about 10 or 76.92 %, while the percentage for the undone activities decreases about 3 or 23.07 %. Moreover, some students' activities that could not be done as expected. From 13 students' activities observed at the first meeting in cycle I, there was 65.93% activities were done, meanwhile, there was 34% undone in the meeting. On the other hand, there was an improvement occurred in meeting II. It could be seen that from 12 activities, the percentage of activities done increases to 71.43% while the undone activities was 29 %.

At the end of the second meeting in cycle I, a test related to the material that had been learnt in the first and second meetings had been administered to the students. It aimed to measure the improvement of students' vocabulary mastery after applying the crossword puzzle game in teaching and learning process. The number of students who took the test at the time was 21 students with average score about 40.95. The result of the test showed that there were 80.95% of students who did not pass the minimum criterion competence (MCC). In other words, it could be said that the

low achievement of students' test result might be caused by some unexpected problems in the classroom. Therefore, the achievement of students in the test was still far of the expectation and should be continued to the next cycle.

After having the result of the first meeting, a reflection was done to improve learning in first cycle. It was needed some actions to overcome the weaknesses in the first cycle as in the following: a) the details information of learning objectives should be delivered well to the students; b) the students' condition was needed to be understood; c) the way in delivering the material should attract the attention of the students. Therefore, it was decided to do next cycle in order to overcome the weaknesses found in this first cycle.

In the second cycle, all the weakness done in the previous cycle was improved. The number of activities done in the first meeting was 15 from 17 activities observed or 88.23 %. However, in second meeting all the activities were done. In other words, the researcher had done whole activities in second meeting; so, there was an improvement of the researcher in teaching process compared to the previous meeting in cycle I. Therefore, the success of the researchers in this stage affected to the students' achievement in mastering vocabulary. In addition, there was an improvement occurred to the students comprehension as the effect of the researcher improvement as well. In this cycle, the students were enthusiastic and active in learning the materials given.

The test of cycle II was administered with the final material. The cycle II test was done well by the students, they looked very serious in working on the questions and students were not seen cheating, because they were really controlled carefully. The percentage of the students' who passed the test increased in this cycle that reaches 19 students or 90.47% while for not passed students was 2 students or 9.52 % and the average score in this cycle was 74.76. The students' score in this cycle were higher compared to the students' score in cycle I. In this test, most students passed the minimum competence criterion (MCC) even though their scores were different from each other. In conclusion, the use of crossword puzzle game in teaching vocabulary was successful, since all the students were successful in doing the test and could pass the MCC.

Based on the explanation of the findings, it could be known that crossword puzzle was an effective way in teaching vocabulary, this was similar to the statement of Nation (1994:89) who states that crosswords are great way recycle and reinforce vocabulary. It means that crossword puzzle could facilitate the students in memorizing and mastering the vocabulary. In conclusion, crossword puzzle game is applicable in teaching vocabulary and it is suggested to apply it in teaching vocabulary at the school. Based on the result and finding of the research explained above, the hypothesis of action of this research is answered since the Crossword Puzzle Game was applicable and the students' vocabulary mastery improved.

#### D. Closing



Based on the result of this research as explained in the previous chapter, it is concluded that the implementation of crossword puzzle game is useful to teach vocabulary since it offer a good exercise to help the students to understand and learn different levels of meaning for the same words. The success of applying crossword puzzle game in teaching vocabulary could be proved from the result of this research.

Furthermore, through this method, the students would discover new things (words) that encouraged them to know more so that they would continue to dig up information about it which increased their motivation to learn English words. Moreover, the students can learn new words while playing through crossword puzzle game, and reduce their boredom. Students are invited to participate in all learning process, not only mentally but also physically. So, students are able to achieve learning goals cognitive, affective and psychomotor aspects. In other words, crossword puzzle game is applicable in teaching vocabulary and can increase the students' ability in mastering English vocabulary.

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