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IMPROVING VOCABULARY MASTERY THROUGH CROSSWORD PUZZLE

Nurfauziah Mansur¹, Fatima², Zulfikri³

nurfauziahmansur@gmail.com

English Tadris Study Program, Tarbiyah and Teacher Training Faculty
Datokarama State Islamic University

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ABSTRACT

This research aims at finding out the use of crossword puzzle in improving vocabulary mastery at seven grade students of SMP Negeri 10 Palu. This research applied a quasi-experimental design, in which there were two groups, an experimental and a control group. Seven grade E was the experimental group, while seven grade F was the control group. This research involved 50 students of SMP Negeri 10 Palu. The samples of this research were taken from the population of grade seven students by using a purposive sampling technique. The researcher used tests as the instrument for collecting data. The tests were divided into two; pre-test and post-test which were given to the experimental and control group. The treatment was conducted six times and was given to the experimental group by using a crossword puzzle, while the control group used the other technique. The data obtained from the test were analysed statistically. From the analysis, there was a difference between the achievement of the experimental (85.5) and the control group (44.2). It was based on the hypothesis testing done, by using 0.05 level of significance and 48 degrees of freedom (df), the researcher found that t-counted (6.08) is higher than t-table (2.0126). It means that the hypothesis (Ha) is accepted or in other words, the use of crossword puzzles has a significant effect on students' learning outcomes in learning vocabulary.

Keywords: *crossword puzzle; improving; vocabulary.*



INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary is one of the components that play an important role in language teaching. Vocabulary consists of words that have meaning. We can say or write something, express our ideas, and talk with people using those words. When someone has mastered the vocabulary, he/she can utter his/her ideas more effectively.

Vocabulary that is mastered by students can be seen from the mastery of synonyms, antonyms, and the meaning of terms. Tarigan states that synonyms are words that have the same central meaning but are different in word value (2011:78-79). Antonym is another name for other things (Manaf, 2008:73).

In learning English, many students get difficulty in mastering vocabulary. They are difficult to remember or memorize words, to use the words in the sentences, and to guess the meaning of the words. As a teacher, we must emphasize to the students that without vocabulary we cannot deliver or express our idea completely to others.

In the teaching and learning process, an English teacher must have certain ways or techniques to attract the students' interest in learning English. There are some techniques that may be used by the teacher in order to make it easier for students in learning English, memorizing, and using the word well. One of the techniques in teaching is the game. The fact shows most of the students are interested in the game, so the researcher chose crossword puzzle as one of the games to increase the students' vocabulary mastery. Crossword puzzle itself is one of the games that consist of some statements or clues that must be guessed and to be filled into the blank boxes or puzzle table horizontally or vertically according to its direction.

Some studies found that crossword puzzle is effective in improving students' vocabulary mastery. Widyasari (2010) conducted classroom action research to find out whether the interactive method of applying crossword puzzles can improve the vocabulary mastery of first-year students in MA Al Bidayah Candi Bandungan. The finding of the research shows that crossword puzzle has a positive effect on the improvement of students' vocabulary mastery and their motivation in English class. Dini et al, (2014) conducted classroom action research entitled Improving English Vocabulary Mastery by Using Crossword Puzzles stated in their findings that crossword puzzle gives a good effect on the teaching and learning process. The students are more involved in the teaching and learning process; students are less noisy; students answer the question confidently; and students can focus more on the lesson.

Based on the reason above, the researcher intended to improve the students' vocabulary mastery, especially to the seventh grades students of SMP Negeri 10 Palu through crossword puzzle. The researcher expects by using this technique, the students will enjoy learning English.



LITERATURE REVIEW

Vocabulary

Vocabulary is a stock of words that have meaning. It is the fundamental component in using the language because knowing the vocabulary, we cannot understand what people talk or write. Napa (1993:6) states that words are interpreted as signs, and there is no language without the existence of words. People exchange their thoughts and idea by using words. The more words we master, the more ideas we have, and we can communicate our ideas effectively.

Based on the statement above, it can be said that we express our ideas by producing words. By having many words, we can construct many ideas to communicate with people effectively. Therefore, we should have more vocabulary to master the language. A person will not be able to communicate without any words in her/his mind. Communication cannot run well if we don't know the vocabulary of the language. No language exists without words in this case we call vocabulary. Cameron (2001:94) states that vocabulary is seen as a main source for language use.

Landau and Bogud (1975:827) define vocabulary as the list of words and phrases especially arranged in alphabetical order defined or translate in lexicon and glossary. All the words used or understood by a particular person or group of people. The definition above indicates that vocabulary is the total number of words that exist in a language. People can use language if they have a stock of vocabulary. In contrast, without having adequate vocabulary, it is impossible for them to communicate well.

The existence of the language is based on vocabulary. Someone should have a great number of words to interact with other people, especially in studying a foreign language. An English teacher should teach students by giving many words that they usually see and need in their activities. It is important to teach vocabulary to students because most of the students' problems in communication are dealing with their vocabularies. They are still afraid of talking with each other because they don't know what will they say in their conversation.

Vocabulary mastery means the students have the ability in understanding and using the vocabulary. The role of vocabulary cannot be ignored in learning English in order to comprehend the target language. So, English should be introduced earlier because the younger a learner learns a foreign language, the better she/he is at producing the language. Rivers (1981:462) proposes that it is impossible to learn a language without vocabulary or without knowing the meaning of words. It means that mastering vocabulary is very important in life because it is the key to communication. Vocabulary not only aids in understanding other people but is also essential in mastering the four language skills.

Crossword Puzzle

Many ways can be used in teaching vocabulary to make the students easily understand the subject. One of them is a game, Various types of games used in teaching and learning vocabulary as media will be chosen by a teacher. One of the interesting games is a



crossword puzzle. Through games, especially crossword puzzles, the students can improve their vocabulary mastery in the teaching and learning process unconsciously. Napa (1993:2) defines the aim of games is definitely to make the material more interesting and challenging. In this research, the researcher will improve the students' vocabulary mastery, especially in nouns, verbs, and adjectives. In addition, Napa (1993:2) states that "The vocabularies are developed using different methods and techniques, such as word game, crossword puzzle, snake coil, word selection, word definition, letter and number game, search word, missing letters, word formation, matching, identifying words and completion".

According to Widyasari in Anwar Yayang (2018), there are some kinds of crossword puzzles that can be performed in the process of teaching and learning vocabulary in the classroom using crossword puzzle games:

- a. Oral Puzzle. It is a puzzle that is given orally by teachers, and students are given only empty crossword puzzles without a clue. Giving instructions orally can train hearing students. Tell students to fill out what they could and then repeat the instructions until they understand.
- b. Picture Puzzle. It is a puzzle using the picture as a clue, and the teacher only gives the students the puzzle without the clues. For each clue, replaced it with pictures. It works very well with a unit that embroiled many new vocabularies.
- c. Object Puzzle. It is the crossword where inside the object is written a clue. give a blank puzzle without a hint to the student. The goods were placed around the room, each given a label with the prompts number. Then the students are asked to go around at different stations; allow them to pick up the objects as they complete the puzzle.

An English teacher should provide some techniques to make the situation of the class more interesting. According to Anthony in Brown (2001:16), techniques are the various exercises, tasks, or activities used by the teacher in a language classroom to achieve learning goals. A puzzle is one of a technique of teaching vocabulary, it will make students interested in learning vocabulary. Adenan (1984:9) defines that "Puzzles and games are obvious types of self-motivating material. They have strong appeal". It shows that puzzles can motivate the students because they offer challenges.

Students enjoy most kinds of puzzles, but in particular, the crossword puzzle can be an active teaching technique. The students can understand and memorize the meaning of the material given because this technique is enjoyable for them. Crossword puzzle is an edutainment technique because they can educate the students to use their language ability in answering the question and it can entertain them in learning vocabulary. Crossword puzzle is a technique that can be used in the teaching and learning process. This technique is used to attract the students' interest in learning vocabulary and to make students more active in searching the word according to the instruction is given.

Crossword puzzle has some of advantages:

1. Crossword puzzle can stimulate students to learn and memorize English vocabulary.



2. Crossword puzzle can enrich the student's vocabulary.
3. Crossword puzzle makes the students directly know the meaning of unfamiliar words.

Based on description above, the researcher concludes that crossword puzzle has great role in process of teaching vocabulary because it can help and motivate the students to guess the meaning of the words.

METHOD

This research was carried out using a crossword puzzle. Since the researcher assessed the independent variables, the students' learning outcomes in learning vocabulary, the researcher used a quasi-experimental design to analyze the main effects for both variables, as well as an analysis of the interaction between the treatments; using crossword puzzles and without using crossword puzzles..

The design of this research was proposed by Cohen *et al.*, (2007:214) as follows:

Group A	O1	X	O2
Group B	O3		O4

Where :

O1 : pre-test of experimental group

O2 : post-test of experimental group

O3 : pre-test of control group

O4 : post-test of control group

X : Treatment

In conducting this research, the population and sample of the research are needed to determine. Cresswell (2005:145) states that a population is a group of individuals with similar characteristics. The population of this research was grade seven of SMP Negeri 10 Palu. The total number of students in class VII was 145 students.

The classes were divided into six classes, they were included VII A consisted of 25 students, VII B consisted of 23 students, VII C consisted of 25 students, VII D consisted of 24 students, VII E consisted of 25 students, and VII F consisted of 23 Students. In this research, the researcher chose 2 classes as the experimental group and the control group as the sample. This research applied a purposive sampling technique. The sample of this research is VII E as the experimental group and VII F as the control group because they still had problems in learning English, especially in Vocabulary.

The researcher chose both classes as the research samples because of some considerations. Firstly, they are considered homogenous sample that shares the same characteristics and same abilities in the English subject. Secondly, most of the students from both classes faced equal vocabulary mastery and need to overcome it. Finally, it is impossible to create a new class. Because they still have extra-curricular classes.



This research used a test as the research instrument. The test is the main instrument for collecting the data for this research. The test related to the students' vocabulary mastery. The test was given twice, before and after treatment, namely pre-test and post-test. The pre-test was administrated before the treatment while the post-test was administrated after the treatment. The pre-test and post-test must be the same items. The result of both tests was compared by the writer in order to find out the significance of the treatment between the experimental group and the control group. The test consists of multiple choices, jumbled letters, and a completion test. Multiple Choices consist of 20 items, Jumbled Letters consist of 10 items and Completion Tests consist of 10 items.

The researcher gave a pre-test to the students for both experimental and control groups. The pre-test was administered to know the students' prior achievement of vocabulary. The post-test was given to the experimental and control group after the treatment. The aim of this test is to measure and to know the comparison of both groups, whether the treatment in the experimental group is effective or not. The researcher gave the treatment to the experimental group and applied crossword puzzles as a treatment in teaching vocabulary to the students for the experimental group, while the control group was not given any treatment. Through this, the researcher wanted to know the difference in the students' results between experimental and control groups.

To know the effectiveness of crossword puzzle on students' learning outcomes in learning English vocabularies of the seven grade students of SMP Negeri 10 Palu, the researcher tested the hypothesis. The hypothesis (H_a) is accepted if the t-counted is higher than t-table.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The data that were analyzed in this research were the results of the tests. The pre-test was conducted before the treatments. The treatment was applied only to the experimental group. Next, the researcher gave the post-test to both groups. In this research, the researcher used the material taught based on English Syllabus for Junior High School levels. The achievement scores are compared by using a t-counted formula to prove whether the use of crossword puzzle have a significant effect on students' learning outcome in the experimental group.

Findings

This research was conducted in six meetings for giving a treatment in the experimental group using a crossword puzzle. While in a control group, the researcher did not give any treatment. The researcher then measured students' learning outcomes in learning vocabulary by using tests.



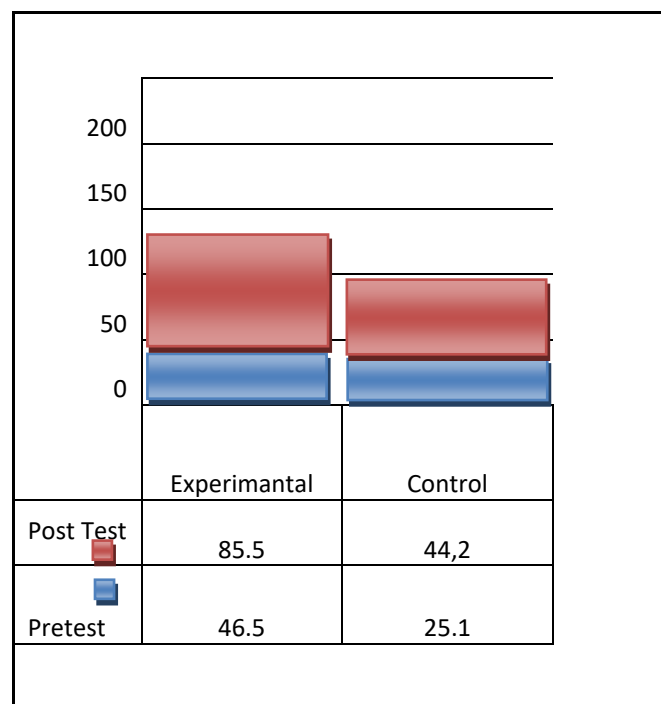


Figure 1. Mean score of pre-test and post-test

Based on the result, there was a difference in students' learning outcomes in the experimental group after getting the treatment. After calculating the mean score of both groups, it shows that the mean score of the experimental group was higher than control one. The mean deviation of the experimental group on pre-test and post-test was 37.83, while the mean deviation of the control one was 19.1. Next, the researcher continued to find out the score of the two groups using a t-table to see whether there was a significant difference between the means of the two classes, and the result shows that the t -counted was 6.08.

To achieve the t-table value, the researcher applied an interpolation formula because the degree of freedom (df) 48 ($N_1 + N_2 - 2$) with the level of significant 0.05 cannot be found in the t-table list, the researcher applied the interpolation computation and found t-table value is 2.0126. The result of the test shows that the t -counted (6.08) was higher than the t-table (2.0126). It means that the researcher's hypothesis was accepted. In other words, the use of crosswords can improve vocabulary mastery of seven grade students in SMP Negeri 10 Palu.

Discussion

In teaching vocabulary to grade seven, the researcher used the crossword puzzle technique. The researcher used a crossword puzzle to support the teaching and learning activity in the class to make the students more interested in learning vocabulary. Most of the students were interested in listening to the teacher's explanation. The researcher found



that all students looked enthusiastic in doing the teaching-learning process. Teaching a crossword puzzle could help the students to understand and memorize the vocabulary. In addition, it can make the students enjoy the class. The students tried to answer every question from the researcher, although not all students could answer it. The students still had difficulty in spelling the words and pronouncing them.

Based on the data gained in this research, crossword puzzle has a significant effect on the students' learning outcomes. It is helpful since the number of the students' learning outcomes improve from meeting to meeting. However, in the first meeting, some of the students still lack of vocabulary. In connection to the implementation of the crossword puzzle, it was found that, in the first meeting, only fast learner students who were active and could memorize the vocab. By contrast, slow learner students only kept silent because they felt hesitant and they did not have enough self-confidence.

The researcher applied experimental design by using two kinds of tests. There were pre-test and post-test. The test was administered to the experimental and control class. The aim of the pre-test was to know the students' prior ability in vocabulary mastery before conducting a treatment. The test was in the form of written tests. Related the pre-test result, it shows that the students had some problems in vocabulary mastery. After getting the result of the pre-test, and seeing the students' problems, the researcher wanted to solve students' problems in vocabulary through crossword puzzles. In her research, the researcher only focused on nouns. The students' activities are only to get the name, meanings, and spelling of the things.

Based on the data analysis, it is proved that there was a significant difference between the result of the mean score of the post-test. The mean score of the experimental group (85.5) was higher than the mean score of the control group (44.2). Whereas in the pre-test, the mean score of the experimental group was (46.5) and the control group was (25.1). Besides, the comparison between the deviations of both, the experimental and control groups, is different. It has been known that the deviation is the result of the post-test subtracted from the result of the pre-test in order to know how much the increase was gained or whether or not there is any significant improvement after conducting the treatment. In the data analysis, it can be seen clearly that the sum of deviation of the experimental group (Σx) was 945.75, while the sum of deviation of the control group (Σy) was only 477.5. So, it is clear that the deviation of the experimental group is higher than the deviation of the control group, and it affected the mean deviation of both groups, where the mean deviation of the experimental group (Mx) is 37.83, while the mean deviation of the control group (My) is 19.1.

CONCLUSION

The result of the data analysis shows that the mean score in the pre-test of the experimental group is 46.5 while the mean score of the post-test in the experimental group is 85.5. A significant improvement can be seen in the experimental group after giving the treatment. The data analysis shows that the experimental group taught by using crossword puzzles has better achievements than the control group that was taught by other technical in learning vocabulary. The data gained from both groups are statistically analyzed by t-



test. The degree of freedom was counted by the formula $(df) = 25 + 25 - 2 = 48$, with a significant probability level of 0.05. The result of the t_{counted} value of 6.08 is higher than the t -table value of 2.0126. So, the hypothesis (H_a) is accepted. That means the use of crossword puzzles can improve students' vocabulary mastery of seven grade students of SMP Negeri 10 Palu.

This research found that the use of crossword puzzle in learning vocabulary run well. The students enjoy learning, working cooperatively, and sharing their knowledge with each other freely which motivated them to achieve the better score. Therefore, the crossword puzzle can solve the students' problem in learning vocabulary. It is easy for them to memorize the words because they feel enjoy playing the game during learning process. In conclusion, the researcher can say the crossword puzzle technique is appropriate to answer the students' problem in learning vocabulary.

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