

The Use of Crossword Puzzle towards the Students Vocabulary

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ABSTRACT

Vocabulary is an important one of the language components that should be learnt by students, so they can master the English well. This research is conducted to know the student vocabulary improving after taught using crossword puzzles. The research used pre-experimental design which is need an experimental class. The sample of this research is the first grade of SMAN 5 Makassar which consist of 20 students. In collecting the data, the researcher used vocabulary test that has administered in pretest and posttest. The result showed that the mean score in posttest was 76.75 that is higher than the mean score in pre-test was 55.5. The score of t-test was 0.02 was smaller than α (0.05). It can be said that using puzzles can improve the students' vocabulary mastery.

Keywords: Crossword Puzzle, Vocabulary

INTRODUCTION

There are two important elements of English, they are grammatical structure and vocabulary. The students should have enough vocabularies as the basic requirement to master those four language skill, because vocabulary is very important to language learning and vocabulary is one of important language elements to support the learners to use the language well. Vocabulary is one of the keys to be successful in mastering English. Without mastering vocabulary they will get trouble in developing their language skills. It is in line with some linguists as stated by (Harris & David, 1973) that we may therefore say that language includes four skills, or complexes of skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

Along with the statements, Nunan (2003) argued the importance of high frequency words, particularly in terms of conducting a course. He stated that "The high frequency words are small enough group to be reasonable goal for two or three years course". It means that at the initial learning of English the group of words is the most important one to be considered acquired by the students.

Some students of Junior High School have difficulties in learning English. The student cannot study or understand vocabulary well without being explained by teacher. Because, they have only two hours in a week to study English at school, these problems make the students lack motivation in learning English. During the teaching learning process, the teacher must be able to present the materials in interesting ways to student make enjoyable condition in the classroom. Media can make the students more interested in teaching learning in the classroom. Therefore, the teacher must be able to use the suitable technique and also should know who the students are. In teaching vocabulary, there are many methods that the teacher apply for the students to improve their vocabulary, for example crossword puzzle game.

As has been stated by Malunui (2014), a crossword puzzle is a kind of games done by filling the blank form presented with letters forming words as the answer of the question given. The game aims to train vocabulary mastery. Another expert, Harry & Dhand (2008) explained different kinds of benefits for using crossword puzzles included, it is as a fun and raise students' motivation, it can be easily made by the teacher and even the students themselves, encourage the use of dictionary and can be used for different types of classroom activities. Therefore, the researcher intended to investigate the use of crossword puzzle in teaching vocabulary for Junior High School Students.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Previous Study

The previous research about the teaching vocabulary by using game was done by Huyen & Nga (2003) at the Distance Education Centre (DEC) in Vietnam. The result of the study showed that the teaching vocabulary by using game is effective and can improve the students' vocabulary. It was found that using game in teaching is effective. The other previous study who have investigated the students' vocabulary improvement through the use of puzzles is Restu (2002). He investigated the use of vocabulary puzzle in teaching vocabulary. It was found that the use of vocabulary puzzle can improve students' vocabulary. In learning a language, vocabulary always becomes the first aspect that must be mastered before the other component of language that supports one skill of English competences. Salim (2008) in his research stated that vocabulary is not an easy item to be mastered in learning English, so that to make students enable to master English vocabulary easy, some possible ways should be applied and one of them is teaching vocabulary by using game. Some students in junior high school tend to learn though playing because playing can increase their motivation and also make the situation fun.

Teaching Vocabulary

Vocabulary is very important role in developing the student's language skills. Jackson, (2000) argues that term vocabulary, lexis and lexicon are synonymous. That refers to the total stocks of words in a language. Brown (2001) also states that words are basic building blocks of language. Along with Brown, Todd (1987) argues that when we think of language we tend to think about words. Moreover, Nunan (2003) states that words are clearly vocabulary. She also adds that vocabulary is not only that, but it also words combination/ multiple units, word families, and core meaning also are counted as vocabulary.

There are different kinds of vocabulary according to different experts' point of views. According to its classes, Morley (2000) elaborates that words are traditionally allocated to one of the following classes: noun, pronoun, article, verb, adjective, adverb, preposition, conjunction and interjection; and genitive phrase. With respect to the meaning which they convey, nouns denote what we will call „entities“. In meaning terms, verbs may be said to express processes which can be classified in one of three broad ways, they can denote actions, record events, and refer to states

Emphasizing how fundamental a vocabulary in assigning meaning in a language, David Wilkins in (Tornbury, 2002) argues without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed. Vocabulary gave bigger involvement in conveying meaning of a language than grammar do yet grammar also completely cannot be overlooked.

Moreover, emphasizing the significant of vocabulary to communicate, (Brown, 2001) states that in fact, survival level communication can take place quite intelligibly when people simply string words together-without applying grammatical rules at all. The point is that vocabulary is what gives big influence to the people's communication. In line with Brown, (Brown & Spada, 2006) stated that we can communicate by using words that are not placed in the proper order, pronounced perfectly, or marked with proper grammatical morphemes, but communication often break down if we do not use the correct word.

Teaching of vocabulary should not interrupt the whole lesson. Nunan (2003), states that one of the difficulties in planning the vocabulary components of a course is making sure that it does not overwhelm other essential parts of the course. Based on this curriculum, the outcome from teaching-learning English are expected to be able to do communication to the global world using English. As has been stated at by The Ministry of Education and Culture at Standard of Content of School-based Curriculum (Kemendikbud, 2013) foreign language particularly English is an international language which has very important role for global communication. There are also

stated that considerable material of foreign language is intended to develop ability to communicate with the world's citizen.

Teaching by Using Puzzles

Crossword puzzle has been proposed as one of alternatives game in teaching-learning. Dand (2008) defines a crossword puzzle as a puzzle with sets of squares to be filled in with words/ numbers, one letter/ number to each square. Synonyms or definitions of words are given with number corresponding to numbers in the squares. Letters/ words are fitted into a pattern of numbered squares in answer to clues. According to Moursund (2016) crossword puzzle is a popular puzzle games which in every case, the puzzle-solver's goal is to solve a particular mentally challenging problem or accomplish a particular mentally challenging task.

Instead of using only one type of crossword puzzle, actually there are variations of crossword puzzle that can be used and adjusted to the students' needs. Dand (2008) stated that crossword puzzle is a good way to teach vocabulary because the definitions of synonyms of the words are right there to provide reinforcement. Puzzle can be made out of the words which have been covered in the class. Using definitions and pictures, students can guess these words and place them in the designated boxes.

Nation (2008) proposed a type of crossword puzzle that suitable for spoken activity, communicative crossword puzzle. He explains the instruction to do as follow; the learners work in pairs. They each have a crossword puzzle. The puzzle has no clues, but learner A has half of the words written in and learner B has the other half. They ask each other for the words missing from their version. They are not allowed to say the words themselves or show their puzzles to each other, but they must give paraphrases of the words. So is A asks "What is 5 down.?" B has to say something like "It is what you use to turn on or turn of the light. It point gives overview the way communicative crossword puzzle game used during the teaching-learning process.

Sentences also become one of ways to help the students find out word meaning. According to Johnson (2008) students use the context of the sentence or paragraph to identify the missing or unknown word. He also adds contextual sentence types named cloze sentences. It's a sentence with one word missing. For very low level readers, provide one letter clue. For instance, "At school I sit in my ____." or "At school I sit in my d____." This types of sentences are also used in the crossword puzzle.

METHOD

Design and Sample

In this research the writer used pre-experimental design which involved only one class sampling. By observing the characteristics of the sample, one can make certain inferences about the characteristics of the population from which it is drawn. The population of this research is all of the students in the first grade. The writer used cluster random sampling in taking the sample. The sample of this research is 20 students that consist of 8 males and 12 females.

Instrument and Procedure

The instrument of this research is crossword puzzle which consist of 30 items. The topic of the instrument are noun and verb. Before teaching the students the researcher gave pretest to measure the students' vocabulary ability before giving the treatment. In treatment, the students was taught using crossword puzzle in six meetings. Basically, the implementation of crossword puzzle is random in each meeting. It applied sometimes in opening activity, running activity or closing activity in each lesson. After six meeting, the researcher gave the pretest in form of crossword puzzle with 30 items like in pretest. The different is the level of word difficulties.

Data Analysis

All the data collected has analyzed using SPSS Statistic version 16. In classifying the students score, the researcher used the following table:

Table 1. Score Classification

No	Classification	Score
1.	Excellent	80-100
2.	Very good	70-80
3.	Good	60-70
4.	Fairly good	50-60
5.	Bad	0-40

(Herlis, 2008)

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

After giving the treatment, the researcher calculated the student score in pretest and post-test. The table below is showing the frequency and the percentage of score classification in pretest and post-test.

Table 2. The Score Percentage between Pretest and Post-test

No	Classification	Score	Pretest		Post-test	
			F	P	F	P
1.	Excellent	80-100	0	-	0	-
2.	Very good	70-80	0	-	5	25%
3.	Good	60-70	0	-	12	60%
4.	Fairly good	50-60	15	75%	3	15%
5.	Bad	0-40	5	25%	0	-
Total			20	100%	20	100%

(Data from Ms.Excel 2007, 2016)

It can be interpreted in the table above that in pretest there were 5 students or 25% of them classified into bad score and 15 students or 75% of them classified into fairly good score. Whereas in posttest, only 3 students or 15% of them were classified into fairly good score, 12 students or 60% of them classified into good score and 5 students or 25% of them classified into good score. From the result it can be stated that there is an improvement in students' vocabulary after giving the treatment. The following chart give more clear explanation.

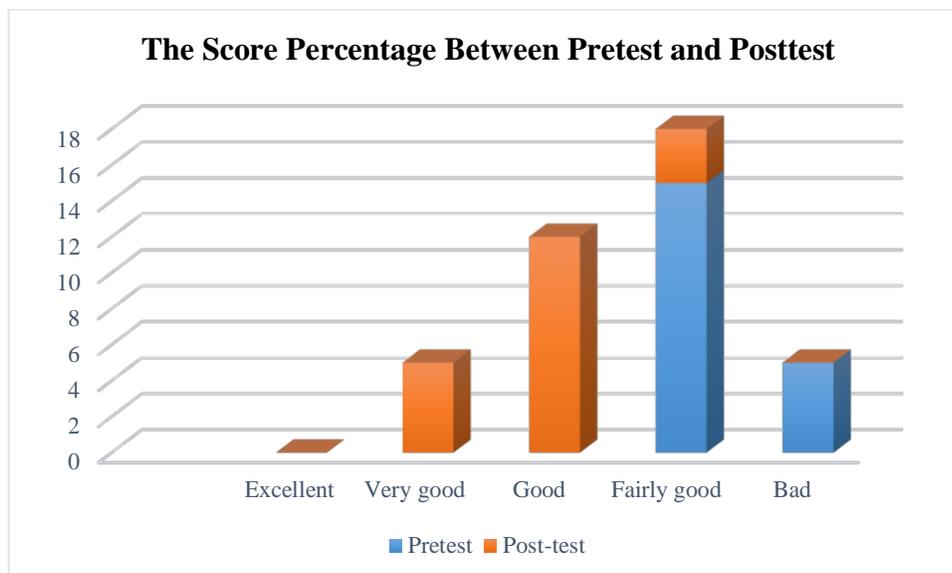


Figure 1. The Score Percentage between Pretest and Posttest

The data about the students mean score in pretest and posttest can be in the following table

Table 3
The Pair Sample Statistic of Experimental Class

	Mean	N	Std.Deviation
Pre-test	55.50	20	8.388
Post-test	76.75	20	4.389

(Data from SPSS Version 16, 2016)

Referring to table 3, the mean score of the pre-test was 55.50 while the mean score of post-test was 76.75. The mean score of post-test was higher (21.25) than pre-test. It indicated that the use of crossword puzzle significantly improved the students' vocabulary.

Table 4
The Pair Sample Test of Experimental One Class

	Paired Differences			t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean			
Pretest and Posttest	21.25	3.232	.705	22.013	35	.000

(Data from SPSS Version 16, 2016)

Referring to table 4 the sig. 2 tailed or probability value of pretest and post-test was 0.000. It was lower than alpha α 0.05 which indicated there is significant different between the score of pre-test and post-test. It means that the hypothesis of this research was approved which said that crossword puzzle can improve the students vocabulary.

From this result, it can be concluded that the use of crossword puzzles could improve the students' active participation in the vocabulary teaching and learning process. The students participated actively during the teaching and learning process of vocabulary by using crossword puzzles because they were interested in the materials. This result was relevant with the theory saying that crossword puzzles are associated with

recreational activity and can be less intimidating for the students (Cheryl, 2012). The students felt that doing crossword puzzles was like a game rather than learning. It was because crossword puzzles were associated with the game playing, therefore it made the students felt free and less intimidating in learning vocabulary by using crossword puzzles.

This successful result was relevant with the theory saying that crossword puzzles can be helpful for developing and learning vocabulary (Spivey & Loraine, 2010). It was because crossword puzzles brought fun activities in developing and learning vocabulary to the students. They learned new words and also the spelling of the words unconsciously since crossword puzzles was kind of word games that required the students to complete the empty boxes with the correct words as well as the correct spelling of the words. The result of this research also supported the theory saying that one of the advantages of using crossword puzzles is crossword puzzles can stimulate and motivate the students on how to use logic, reasoning, vocabulary, spelling and organizational skills (Cheryl, 2012). The students learned how to spell the words unconsciously while doing crossword puzzles. By looking at the clues and the empty boxes in the crossword puzzles, they could know how many letters that should be filled or how many letters the answer had. Besides, after filling the empty boxes with the correct answer, they also gained an additional clue for the answer in the following boxes. The students also could memorize the words and understand the meaning of the words after doing the puzzles because they became familiar with the words they never knew before. It definitely solved the students' problems that had been informed by the English teacher in the preliminary study that the students experienced some difficulties in learning vocabulary especially in memorizing, spelling, and understanding the meaning of the words.

CONCLUSION

Based on the above data analysis and discussion, using crossword puzzles could improve the first grade students' vocabulary mastery and their active participation at SMP Lab.School Arar. Therefore, the English teacher at the school have to use crossword puzzles in teaching vocabulary, since it can improve the students' vocabulary mastery and also their active participation. Further, future researchers have to use these results as information and input to conduct a further research dealing with similar problems by using different research designs such as the descriptive or the same research design but different levels of the research subjects and schools.

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