

THE USE OF CROSSWORD PUZZLE IN TEACHING ENGLISH VOCABULARY

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Abstract:

The purpose of this research is to find out how crossword puzzle learning media is used in the teaching of English vocabulary. The method used in this study is qualitative descriptive approach. Qualitative descriptive approach is a series of activities to obtain data that is as it is without existing under certain conditions whose results further emphasize the meaning. The study is based on secondary data that are collected from a variety of sources. Data are composed of various books, journals, research papers, and other print media, on the use of crossword puzzles as a learning medium for teaching vocabulary. The results of this study show that crossword puzzles can be used by teachers as ideas for learning media because this crossword puzzle media can enliven the learning atmosphere in the classroom, build new vocabulary and can attract the attention of students in teaching-learning activities. Adapted from Paralleling Weisskireh's (2006) results, the students deemed the use of crossword puzzle exercises as a fun way to learn the material (4.143 mean) and asked for more of them for subsequent chapters' vocabulary (4.459, the highest mean score). The overall mean score for all sections and questions was 4.23 out of 5.

Keywords: *Crossword puzzle, Teaching English Vocabulary*

1. Introduction

Language is needed for humans to communicate with others. Language plays a role in the communication of the technology base as well as interacting directly. The use of English as an international language is critical in adapting to increasingly advance global developments. English is a foreign language that has been used in Indonesia as a subject from the early childhood level to college. In English learning, the first thing a teacher does is teach their students vocabulary so that they know how to compose sentences orally or in writing that they can use to communicate. Harmer (2007: 17) states that teaching vocabulary is clearly more than just presenting new words. What a teacher has to do to liven up the atmosphere and attract students' attention is to prepare learning methods to build students' enthusiasm for learning, a teacher has their method of teaching English so that his students pay close attention to what is being taught. According to Ahmad Izzan (2008: 39-47), there are several methods in the English learning process: (a) direct methods (e.g. the practice of associating words and sentences with meaning through demonstrations, movements, and expressions), (b) psychological methods (such as vocabulary grouped into short phrases related to a problem), (c) phonetic method (e.g. sound pronunciation exercises), (d) reading methods (understanding text), and (e) grammatical methods (translating sentences and paragraphs).

In teaching English, a teacher not only needs a method, but a teacher also requires a learning medium to support every learning that takes place. Bretz (in Widyastuti and Nurhidayati, 2010: 17-18) classifies media into seven categories: (a) audio media (radio), (b) printed media (books, modules, etc.), (c) silent visual media (such as photos, slides, pictures), (d) motion visual media (silent movies, silent video), (e) semi-motion audio media (e.g. voiced distance writing), (f) silent audiovisual media (such as audio series films, sound sequence slides), and (g) motion audiovisual media (documentary film). Radio, books, films, and pictures are supporting media teaching and learning activities that are easy to find in daily life.

The definition of the game expressed by Ernest Adam (2010) states that a game is a type of play activity, conducted in the context of a pretended reality, in which the participant(s) try to achieve at least one arbitrary, non-trivial goal by acting following rules. Similar to the above opinion, Joan Freeman and Utami Munandar (Andang Ismail, 2009: 16) define the game as an activity that helps the child achieve complete development, both physical, intellectual, social, moral, and emotional.

Students' interest in English subjects can be seen from their activeness in the classroom during the lesson. That way, a teacher should be able to create an effective classroom atmosphere by using learning methods or strategies that can encourage

students' activities in learning. A teacher is not only able to convey learning but must also be able to evoke the atmosphere of students to be active. Therefore, teachers should be able to improve these conditions by updating learning strategies in the classroom. Understanding that every student is not always focused on the learning process, teachers should provide media that keeps them active and attentive to learning. To provide new learning media for the learning process, teachers can use game-shaped learning types, one of which uses Crossword Puzzle type to give an active atmosphere for students.

Crossword Puzzle is a game consisting of a row of squares with the same side that can be drawn with an across or down pattern, where each box has a different color, namely black and white. This Crossword Puzzle game requires students to fill each blank space in their squares with letters that form a word based on the questions that have been given. The question is divided into two groups, namely the question for the across lane group and the question for the down lane group. According to Amin in Cahyo (2011:61): Crossword puzzle game is a brain training game that is in demand by many people. This game is not only played by adults, but it is also useful for sharpening children's left brain. In this game, the player must fill an empty column with the appropriate answers based on the instructions. Instructions are divided into the "across" and "down" categories to see which parts of the word to fill in.

Crossword Puzzle is a game that is suitable to be applied to theoretical materials in the form of the introduction of foreign names or a tool because in this study students are trained to remember, understand and match words according to the name and function of the tool. Crossword puzzles are a remembering activity, looking to match the right words, not only matching the answer but also according to the boxes available (Cahyo, 2011:63).

Crossword Puzzle learning can be used as one of the strategies in learning as stated by Slameto (2003:180) Learning using crosswords will arouse students' interest in learning because students are involved in an educational game. Besides, students' interest in learning will encourage students' activeness in the learning process, not only expressed by statements indicating that students prefer something over others but implemented through actively participating in learning activities.

In the use of this type of Crossword Puzzle learning, to solve each puzzle, students must be able to identify, understand the terms used, and evaluate the choices that students have chosen. That way students will be active and their learning spirit increases. The purpose of the research to be achieved in this study is to find out how crossword puzzle learning media is used in the teaching of English vocabulary.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Understanding Learning Media

In general, learning media can be interpreted as a means used in the learning process of teaching. Something that can encourage the learning process of teaching is used to stimulate thoughts, attention, and skills or abilities.

According to Azhar (2011), learning media is a component of learning resources containing instructional materials or physical rides that can stimulate students to learn. Another opinion expressed by Sadiman (2008: 7) that learning media is everything that can be used to transmit messages from sender to recipient of messages. In this case, it is the process of stimulating students' thoughts, feelings, attention, and interests, so that the learning process can be intertwined. Furthermore, Schramm (in Putri, 2011: 20) states that learning media is a messenger technology that can be utilized for learning purposes. So learning media is a tool that can be used for learning.

2.2 Definition Of Language

Language is a series of sounds that symbolize human thoughts, feelings, and attitudes (Suhartono, 2005: 8). While Abdul Chaer (2006: 1) suggested that language is a system of symbols in the form of sound, it has an arbitrary nature, which is used by the public to cooperate, communicate, and identify themselves.

2.3 Vocabulary Understanding

Based on the Great Dictionary of Indonesian Language (2003:597) vocabulary is the vocabulary of words or the number of words that a language has. Furthermore, Lehr, Osborn and Hiebert, in Hanson and Padua (2011: 5), state that vocabulary refers to words we use to communicate in oral and print language. Hence, we know that vocabulary is word included in the list which has meaning approvingly, so we use it as language to communicate in oral and print language. It means that in learning vocabulary we have to know the meaning of it and also understand how to use it with suitable context, so at the last we can communicate easily when we have a lot of vocabulary and are able to use them with appropriate context. Teaching vocabulary has been declared by Susanto (2019) he talked about a qualitative study of EFL English teacher's perceptions towards teaching vocabulary using word games for Junior High schools in Semarang Central Java: to Use or To Reject?

2.4 Understanding Crossword Puzzle

Crossword Puzzle, in Indonesian means crossword (TTS). Crossword Puzzle consisting of a series of squares with a flat or descending design, to fill in a series of those boxes has prepared several questions, questions, or words as the key to filling a series of blank boxes designed in such a way. Rinaldi Munir (2005) (<http://www.cse.ohio.html>) describes in general that crossword puzzle is a game with a rectangular template consisting of black and white squares, and comes with 2 columns that are across (a set of squares in the form of one row and several columns) and down (a collection of squares of one column and several rows). As Collins revealed, that Crossword puzzle, a puzzle in which the solver deduces words suggested by numbered clues and writes them into corresponding boxes in a grid to form a vertical and horizontal pattern. (Collins. [2005]. *thefreedictionary*. [Online]. Available: <https://encyclopedia2.thefreedictionary.com/crossword+puzzle>. [June 20, 2020]).

Previous Study

This research is similar to previous research in the Journal entitled “Teaching Tip Accelerating Student Learning of Technology Terms: The Crossword Puzzle Exercise” by Thomas G. Whisenand and Steven M. Dunphy, conducted in 2010. The purpose of this research is to provide knowledge of phraseological information systems and vocabulary by using Crossword Puzzle as its medium. His research showed that of the 92 business information training students divided into 2 groups, the first group as an experimental class with 50 students given treatment using Crossword Puzzle had a high average score compared to scores in the second group with 42 students as a control class. From the study can be concluded that Crossword Puzzle can help students in building and maintaining their vocabulary about technology. Therefore, researchers recommend using Crossword Puzzle to teachers so that it can be applied as a learning medium for students.

The second research was conducted by David C. Berry and Michael Miller in their article titled “Crossword Puzzles as a Tool to Enhance Athletic Training Student Learning: Part 2”, conducted in 2008. In their research, they involved 27 athletic training students (18 men and 9 women) divided into 2 separate classes. The first class contains 15 students as an experiment class, and the second class contains 12 students as a control class. This research uses experimental methods. The purpose of the study was to evaluate the effectiveness of Crossword Puzzle in student athletic learning. From the study, it can be concluded that the post-test test scores are significantly greater than the pre-test test scores. Students who receive Crossword Puzzle treatment agree that Crossword Puzzle is very helpful in the learning process.

Another similar research was conducted by Suci Kurnia Sari titled “The Effectiveness of Crossword Puzzle Game towards Students’ Vocabulary Mastery” (A Quasi-Experimental Study at Second Grade of SMP Puspita Bangsa Ciputat) in 2017 at SMP Puspita Bangsa Ciputat. Meanwhile, Suci Kurnia Sari’s research aims to find out if Crossword Puzzle game is effective against the mastery of English vocabulary in the second grade of Puspita Bangsa Ciputat Junior High School or not. There were 70 students as a sample of 99 populations divided into 2 classes: 35 students for experiment classes and 35 for control classes. His study can be concluded that the Crossword Puzzle is effective for mastering the vocabulary of students in the second grade of Puspita Bangsa Ciputat Junior High School. The implementation of the crossword puzzle game showed a positive response in the experiment class with an increase in the average score and the total of students receiving higher scores. Facts show that students who received higher scores after being treated more than half the class. Crossword Puzzle games can have a significant impact at all levels of students if organized as a well-organized learning strategy.

3. Research Methodology

The method used is the study of literature. The study is based on secondary data collected from a variety of sources. Data is composed of various books, journals, research papers, and other print media, about the use of Crossword Puzzles as a learning medium in the learning process of teaching.

According to (Zed, 2014), in library research, library research is not only for the first step of preparing a research design framework but at the same time utilizing library resources to obtain research data. In addition to data, some things that must be in a study to be scientific, also require other things such as problem formulation, the foundation of theory, data analysis, and conclusion making. Research with literature studies is research that is the same preparation as other research but data collection sources and methods by retrieving data in libraries, reading, recording, and processing research materials.

This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach. Qualitative descriptive research is shown to describe and describe existing phenomena, both natural and human engineering, that pay more attention to characteristics, qualities, the interconnectedness between activities (Nana Syaodih Sukmadinata, 2011: 73). Also, descriptive research does not provide manipulation or alteration treatment on the variables studied, but rather describes a condition as it is. The only treatment given is the research itself, which is done through observation, interviews, and documentation.

4. Findings

Crossword puzzle learning media can be used as a good and fun learning medium without eliminating the essence of ongoing learning.

Based on this thinking, teaching strategies are developed that have a pleasant atmosphere, one of which is using crossword puzzles, learning models. The steps of learning English vocabulary by using a crossword puzzle are as follows:

Table 1 Crossword Puzzle Learning Steps

The Steps	Description
Step 1	Write the keyword (clue) terminology or related to the subject matter that has been given.
Step 2	Make boxes that can be filled to the length or short of the answer
Step 3	Make questions that lead to keywords
Step 4	Share crossword puzzle sheets to students
Step 5	Work time limit
Step 6	Students are assessed individually as well as groups

From the table of steps, six steps need to be prepared before applying crossword puzzles in English learning especially to teach vocabulary.

5. Discussion

The first step that needs to be done is to write keywords or names related to the material that has been given. For example, the material that has been given is parts of the body, then the keyword that can be written is about parts of the body.

Example: 1. Nose

2. Mouth

The second stage is to create squares with across or down patterns that are adjusted to the length or shortness of the answer, so that when filling them no less or more.

Example:

1. K N E E

1.K.	N	E	E
------	---	---	---

2. E L B O W

2.E
L
B
O
W

The two examples above are across and down patterns, where the number of squares adjusts from the choice of answer words.

The third stage that needs to be prepared is to register questions that lead to keywords that have been prepared.

Example:

1. Question: The senses used to breathe
2. Question: The senses used to hear

From that question, students are asked to find the answer to each question. After finding the answer, the student fills the answer into across or down patterned boxes that match the question number.

Next stage four, after the questions and boxes are finished, the crossword puzzle sheet may be shared with students to practice answering questions and remembering each answer to the question.

The fifth is to give students a working time limit. This time limit is given so that students focus on every question on the crossword sheet of the puzzle.

The last stage of the sixth stage is to give scores to the students' work. Grades can be awarded individually or in groups depending on the student's agreement with the teacher at the beginning of the lesson, wanting to create an individual or group system for their work.

So these six stages are the first steps to note before crossword puzzles are used for English learning especially to learn vocabulary.

Below is an example of the use of crossword puzzles that have been supplemented by questions and the application of answers into the crossword puzzle boxes.

Table 2 Crossword Puzzle
Parts of Body

		2. C								
		3. H	A	N	D					
		E							7. M	
1. E	Y	E		5. T		8. E	L	B	O	W
A		4. K	N	E	E				U	
R				E					T	
			6. S	T	O	M	A	9. C	H	
				H				H		
						10. H	A	I	R	
			11. N	O	S	E		N		
						A				
	12. S	H	O	U	L	D	E	R		

Across:

1. An organ that can detect color
3. Parts of the body that can form a fist
4. Meeting between the thighs with the calves
6. Part of the body below the chest cavity
8. Part of the body that looks like a knee
10. Serves to protect the scalp from sunburn
11. Human sense had responded to stimuli in the form of smells
12. Between neck and base of arms

Down:

1. One of the five senses of human being that serves to hear
2. Fleshy areas of the face, under the eyes and between the nose and left or right ears
5. To rip and chew the food
7. Consisting of teeth and tongue
9. Facial under mouth
10. Top human body parts

From the example of the application of the crossword puzzle above can be seen that in the crossword box of the puzzle fourteen words have been filled into it, those words are the answers of fourteen questions that have been divided into two categories, across and down. Fourteen of these questions, two of which are numbers 1 and 10 are in two lanes, namely in the across and down lanes that distinguish is the location of each answer answered in an across or down the way. For example, at number 1 has a question that goes into the category of across and down, which in the final answer will be filled into the box that has been matched with the answer of the question, if the answer is the number 1 in the across the category, then the answer is filled in the box number one of the across column as well as vice versa.

The crossword puzzle table above is an example of the application of English vocabulary learning in parts of body material. It can be seen from the list of questions that give a clue about the body parts that are the object, and the answer is also according to the given clue. For example, in the across category question number 11 which is “Human sense had responded to stimuli in the form of smells”, the question provides a clue about the part of the human sense that responds to odor stimuli. From the question is answered namely the nose, where the nose is a part of the body that is sensitive to smell. The next example of the question is in the number 10 drop category with the clue “Top human body parts”, the clue asks about the upper part of the human body and the answer is the head because the head is the part of the human body that is at the very top. After the answer is solved, the next step is to fill the answer into the box according to the question number and the location of the column. Fill in all the boxes until not a single question is missed. If all are filled, the teacher can rate the student for his or her work.

In this case, a teacher can see the changing atmosphere in the classroom when teaching and learning activities using the crossword puzzle take place and see students being active when taking the lessons with pleasure without feeling bored, the teacher can also see the level of vocabulary understanding in his students through how well them in answering any questions given or when students compile vocabulary in a sentence, and the teacher can see an increase in student learning outcomes.

The use of crossword puzzles in learning can also train students’ accuracy or foresight during their daily activities and can attract or stimulate student interest in learning so that students are excited and can contribute when teaching and learning activities take place. Also, the use of crossword puzzles can hone students’ memory so that students can remember vocabulary or something that has been learned or has happened. Not only sharpening memory, but crossword puzzles can also increase students’ creativity to improve students’ ability to analyze.

There are several objectives in learning using crossword puzzles, namely to strengthen students' memories of terms or vocabulary in the subject matter that is being taught, besides learning using crossword puzzles is also expected to encourage students to think critically and be active so they can face and solve problems. Before applying the crossword puzzle for learning, the thing that needs to be done is to prepare carefully the learning materials to be delivered so that no material is left behind. When filling out the crossword puzzle it takes time, therefore, creating time is also needed to manage time during activities.

Working on crossword puzzles can also foster curiosity in students, when filling out crossword puzzles and students find an interesting answer then further curiosity about the word arises. Besides to fostering curiosity, crossword puzzles can also foster competitive traits in students. The more often students work on crossword puzzles, the more students want to rely on their abilities without having to ask others. This motivates students to win and to be able to complete a mission honestly and fairly.

The crossword puzzle can also improve social skills between students who are involved in filling out the crossword puzzle because when filling the crossword puzzle in groups, students must communicate between group members to create solidarity within the team. That way, the speed of thinking, speaking, and social bonding between students who work on them increases. Besides that, crossword puzzles can also make students more exploratory. When students are stuck on one question in the crossword puzzle they are working on, usually, students will ask friends or other groups or search for answers through other sources such as books or the internet. This activity of seeking answers that makes students more exploratory.

6. Conclusion

Crossword puzzles for English learning, especially for vocabulary learning, have six stages to look out for before applying them for learning. Crossword puzzles involve student participation to be active, which is not only mental but also physical. Thus students will feel a more pleasant atmosphere so that the learning results can be maximized.

This crossword puzzle method has drawbacks such as the wrong student answer due to lack of concentrating or when working on it the given time has run out so hurry when answering it. Therefore, teachers are required to further innovate to cover the shortcomings. One way to minimize that weakness is to give bonus letters to both across and down answer boxes. This bonus letter can be placed on the front, center, or back of the available answer box. The bonus of this letter can give instructions for students in filling in the answer box because there are already letters listed on the box.

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