

IMPROVING VOCABULARY MASTERY OF THE EIGHTH GRADE STUDENTS THROUGH CROSSWORD PUZZLE

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Abstract

This research is aimed to prove that the use of crossword puzzle technique can improve the vocabulary mastery of the eighth grade students at SMP Negeri 1 Kulawi. This research applied pre-experimental research design. There was only one class which given pre-test and post-test. The research population was the eighth grade students at SMP Negeri 1 Kulawi and the sample was 28 students of class VIII A. The sample was selected by using the purposive sampling technique. The data was analyzed by using a statistical analysis in order to know the significant difference of the students' achievement both in pre-test and post-test. The result of data analysis showed that the t_{counted} (12.70) was greater than the t_{value} (2.052) by applying 0.05 level of significance and the degree of freedom (df) was 28 (28-1) 27. In conclusion, the use of crossword puzzle can improve the vocabulary mastery of the eighth grade students at SMP Negeri 1 Kulawi.

Keywords: Vocabulary Mastery; Crossword Puzzle.

INTRODUCTION

As a foreign language, English has been taught in Indonesia from kindergarten to university. However, that fact does not still guarantee that the students have mastered English. In mastering English, they must be able understand how to use English components firstly such as grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary. By mastering those English components they will be easier in English skills. There are some skills in English have to be mastered by students, namely, speaking, listening, reading and writing. It is supported by Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan (KTSP) of junior high school (2006: ix) :

Dalam belajar bahasa, orang mengenal keterampilan reseptif dan keterampilan produktif. Keterampilan reseptif meliputi keterampilan menyimak (*listening*) dan keterampilan membaca (*reading*), sedangkan keterampilan produktif meliputi keterampilan berbicara (*speaking*) dan keterampilan menulis (*writing*). Baik keterampilan reseptif maupun keterampilan produktif perlu dikembangkan dalam

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proses pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris. Agar dapat menguasai keterampilan tersebut di atas dengan baik, siswa perlu dibekali dengan unsur-unsur bahasa, misalnya kosakata. Penguasaan kosakata hanya merupakan salah satu unsur yang diperlukan dalam penguasaan keterampilan berbahasa.

From the above statements, it can be concluded that before mastering language skills, students need to master language components. English skills are supported by language components, such as vocabulary, pronunciation and structure. Vocabulary must be firstly mastered by the students who want to learn or master English. By having or knowing sufficient stock of words, they can communicate well. It can make them easier to understand reading material or passage and what the speaker says as well as to convey ideas or thought in English.

When learn about language, means that learn about vocabulary of the language. In teaching-learning process, mastery of vocabulary is necessarily needed by the students to form sentences. It concerns with Allen (1983:17) “Vocabulary is best learnt when someone feels that a certain word is needed”. Thus, it can be concluded that vocabulary is very important to study because of its function in mastering a language.

Indonesian students prefer their first language or mother tongue in daily activities rather than English because they have lack of vocabulary mastery and they consider that it is not important to learn. In addition, the lack of vocabulary influences the students’ understanding to achieve a learning purpose. According to Thornbury (2002:13) “Without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed”. This statement appears vocabulary is an important thing that should be mastered by students in learning English as a foreign language.

In mastering a language, there are some tips that make learner become easier to learn vocabulary. Palmberg (1986:18) states that mastering a foreign language, the learner:

1. is able to recognize it in its spoken and written form
2. is able to recall it all will
3. is able to relate it to appropriate objects or concepts of the word and not just one specific meaning.
4. can use it in the appropriate grammatical forms.
5. is able to pronounce it in a recognized way.
6. can spell it correctly.
7. knows what why it can combine with other words, either a lexical set.
8. is aware of its connotation and can use on the appropriate level of formality in the appropriate situation.

From the quotation above, it is clear that in mastering a language the learner must pay attention seriously to the vocabulary. The students have to know the meaning of the words, recognize how the spelling, how to use it in sentence, how to pronounce it, and so on.

In fact, the students at some levels of education have adequacy of vocabulary. Vocabulary seemed to be the most important in mastering a language. This research, focused on students' problem at the eighth grade students of SMP Negeri 1 Kulawi in improving their vocabulary mastery covering meaning, spelling and pronunciation.

There are many ways that can be used to improve students' vocabulary mastery. One of them is by using games. Ohoiwutun (2005:69) suggests, "Using games, song, quiz and poems in teaching can make the students enjoy". In addition, Napa (1993:2) defines, "The purpose of game is of course to make the material more enjoyable, interesting, and challenging". Both of above statements emphasize that games can be useful in teaching vocabulary, and help student improve their vocabulary without feeling bored and unhappy.

There are various kinds of games which be applied in teaching English such as singing songs, pictures, word list cards, puzzles, words association, etc. It is better if the students are familiar with games. This study attempts to present one of the games that can be applied by English teacher in teaching vocabulary, namely, crossword puzzle. According Hornby (1976:351) "a crossword puzzle is a game in which words have to be fitted across and downwards into spaces with number in a square diagram. The words are found by solving clues". Crossword puzzle covers several skills in learning English such as vocabulary, reasoning and spelling. In performing this game, the students will try to guess the answer by using some clues provided and learn the meaning from the clue while constructing the word. This game can also be used at any levels and wonderful way to teach vocabulary from many different lessons because it makes students think critically.

By applying crossword puzzle games in teaching vocabulary, the students will be entertained. This game also stimulates the students to think what words are appropriate to fill the blank boxes, affect the students' psychologically and make the teaching learning process more enjoyable, interesting and challenging. Tarigan (1989:254) states, "Pada umumnya para siswa menyenangi dan menghayati aneka permainan dan latihan yang mencakup penggunaan permainan kata-kata, teka-teki dan teka-teki silang kata." Based on the above statements it can be concluded that crossword puzzle game can be applied in teaching and learning activity.

Since Indonesian students still have lack of vocabulary mastery and they consider that is not important to learn. The researcher formulated his problem statement in following

questions *Can the use of crossword puzzle technique improve the vocabulary mastery of the eighth grade students at SMP Negeri 1 Kulawi?* It proved that the use of crossword puzzle can improve the eighth grade students at SMP Negeri 1 Kulawi vocabulary mastery.

METHODOLOGY

In this research, the researcher applied pre-experimental research design. Therefore, in this research there was one group only; an experimental group. The research conducted based on the research design recommended by Arikunto (2002:78) as follows:

Pretest	Treatment	Posttest
Q ₁	X	Q ₂

Where:

Q₁ = pretest

X = treatment

Q₂ = posttest

The population of this research was the eighth grade students of SMP Negeri 1 Kulawi consisting of 28 students. The population became the total sampling of this research. Based on the title, there were two variables of this research. Arikunto (2006:97) defines, “All experiments have one fundamental idea behind them: to test the effect of one or more independent variables on a dependent variable. It is possible to have more than one dependent variable in experiments”. Referring to Arikunto’s statement, the dependent variable in this research was the vocabulary mastery of the eighth grade students at SMP Negeri 1 Kulawi. Thus, the independent variable was teaching vocabulary through crossword puzzle.

In conducting this research, the researcher used test to collect the data. Before conducting treatment to the students, the researcher administered pre-test to the students. He had designed the pre-test into three forms. They were meaning test, pronunciation test and spelling test. Meaning test consisted of 30 items, pronunciation test consisted 15 items and spelling test consisted 15 items. The information about test distribution was presented in the following table below:

Table 1: Kinds of Test

No	Kinds of test	Number of item	Score for each correct answer	Total score
1	Meaning Test	30	30 (2-0)	60
2	Pronunciation Test	15	15 (2-0)	30
3	Spelling Test	15	15 (1-0)	15
	Total	60		105

Then, the researcher applied the analytic scoring procedure for vocabulary assessment to analyze the level of students' ability in vocabulary as follows:

Table 2: Scoring Guide for Meaning Test

No	Criteria	Score
1	Every correct item	2
2	Every incorrect item	1
3	No answer	0

Table 3: Scoring Guide for Spelling Test

No	Criteria	Score
1	Every correct item	2
2	Every incorrect item	1
3	No answer	0

Table 4: Scoring Guide for Pronunciation Test

No	Criteria	Score
1	Every correct item	1
2	Every incorrect item	0
3	No answer	0

After giving the pre-test, the researcher gave the treatment by using crossword puzzle as a medium to the experimental group for eight meetings. The meeting was held based on school schedule and each meeting took 80 minutes or 2 x 40 minutes. After conducting the treatment, the teacher was giving the post-test. The aim of doing post-test was to prove that the treatment was effective or not by comparing the result of pre-test and post-test. The test had the same form as the test in pre-test which means the instruction was alike, but the question was different. To analyze the result of both pre-test and post-test, the writer used statistical analysis in order to get the final result. The researcher analyzed the data by using statistical analysis. Then, the writer calculated the individual score by using formula which was recommended by Arikunto (2002:276):

$$\Sigma = \frac{x}{N} x 100$$

Where:

Σ = standard score (nilai standar)

X = total score (nilai perolehan)

N = maximum score (nilai maksimal)

100 = constant score (nilai tetap)

After obtaining their standard score, the researcher counted the mean score of the class. To get the mean score, the researcher added all scores and divided the sum by the number of scores. To compute this, the researcher used the formula proposed by Arikunto (2006:307) as follows:

$$M = \frac{\Sigma X}{n}$$

Where:

M = average score (nilai rata-rata)

Σx = nilai yang dicapai

N = number of students (jumlah siswa)

In addition, after obtaining the mean scores, the researcher counted mean deviation by using formula proposed by Arikunto (2002:276), which could be seen as follows:

$$Md = \frac{\Sigma d}{N}$$

Where:

Md = mean dari perbedaan perbedaan pre-tes dengan pos- test (*post test – pre test*)

Σd = jumlah nilai dari deviasi

N = number of students (jumlah siswa)

After that, the researcher computed the square deviation by using the formula which recommended by Arikunto (2002:277) as follows:

$$\Sigma x^2 d = \Sigma d^2 - \frac{(\Sigma d)^2}{N}$$

Where:

$\Sigma x^2 d$ = jumlah kuadrat deviasi

After getting the mean score, the researcher used t-test to prove the treatment was effective. To get the t-test, he used a formula proposed by Arikunto (2002: 275):

$$t = \frac{Md}{\sqrt{\frac{\sum x^2 d}{N(N-1)}}}$$

Where:

- t = t-test score (nilai t-test)
- Md = mean dari perbedaan perbedaan pre tes dengan pos tes (*post test* – *pre test*)
- Xd = deviasi masing-masing subjek
- $\sum X^2 d$ = jumlah kuadrat deviasi
- N = number of students (jumlah siswa)

RESULTS

Before giving the treatment, the researcher was administered pre-test to the students. The pre-test was conducted on September 3rd, 2013. Having noted the pre-test score, the researcher counted the mean score of the students. The researcher added all the standard score and divided with the number of the students. The mean computation was as follows:

$$M_{pre} = \frac{\sum x}{N}$$

$$M = \frac{1088.46}{28}$$

$$M = 38.87$$

The representation of test result can be seen in the following table:

Table 5: Results of Pre-Test

No	Students Initial	Kinds of test			Total Score	Maximum Score (105)	Students Score (0-100)
		Meaning (60)	Spelling (30)	Pronounce (15)			
1.	ADR	31	14	6	51	105	48.57
2.	ALE	31	12	7	50	105	47.61
3.	BAY	31	10	4	45	105	42.85
4.	CHR	30	13	9	52	105	49.52
5.	DAV	29	8	6	43	105	40.95
6	DEI	29	11	8	48	105	45.71
7	EKA	5	6	4	15	105	14.28
8	FAN	33	14	8	55	105	52.38
9	FER	7	10	6	23	105	21.90
10	FLE	32	17	6	55	105	52.38
11	FRI	26	12	9	47	105	44.76
12	GIL	9	9	4	22	105	20.95
13	HAR	23	12	5	40	105	38.09
14	INT	11	12	6	29	105	27.61
15	JER	29	10	6	45	105	42.85
16	KRI	26	13	9	48	105	45.71
17	MIR	18	10	7	35	105	33.33
18	MIS	7	9	5	21	105	20
19	MAR	29	14	5	48	105	45.71
20	NOR	16	9	6	31	105	29.52
21	PRY	27	14	8	49	105	46.66
22	REI	22	13	7	42	105	40
23	RIA	25	11	7	43	105	40.95
24	RIF	30	11	7	48	105	45.71
25	THE	25	13	7	45	105	42.85
26	TWS	26	10	6	42	105	40
27	VAL	22	11	4	37	105	35.23
28	VIC	19	9	6	34	105	32.38
Total		648	317	178	1143	-	$\Sigma x=1088.46$

By looking at the above result, the researcher found that the result of pre-test was surprising because none of the students achieve the standard score. The highest score was 52.38 and the lowest score was 14.28. From the score which was got by the students, it can be concluded that the ability of the eighth grade students of SMP Negeri 1 Kulawi in vocabulary mastery was very poor.

After giving the treatment, the researcher administered post-test to the students. The post-test was conducted on October 3rd, 2013. After computing the mean score of the students' post-test, the researcher totaled the students mean score in post-test. The formula used was the same as in pre-test.

$$M_{\text{post}} = \frac{\Sigma x}{N}$$

$$M = \frac{2186.56}{28}$$

$$M = 78.09$$

The result presentation of the test can be seen in the following table:

Table 6: Post-Test Scores

No	Students Initial	Kinds of test			Total Score	Maximum Score (105)	Students Score (0-100)
		Meaning (60)	Spelling (30)	Pronounce (15)			
1.	ADR	45	26	13	84	105	80
2.	ALE	46	24	13	83	105	79.04
3.	BAY	48	25	12	85	105	80.95
4.	CHR	45	27	14	86	105	81.90
5.	DAV	46	21	13	80	105	76.19
6	DEI	44	23	13	80	105	76.19
7	EKA	48	21	11	80	105	76.19
8	FAN	47	26	12	85	105	80.95
9	FER	35	26	11	72	105	68.57
10	FLE	45	28	14	87	105	82.85
11	FRI	49	27	14	90	105	85.71
12	GIL	39	23	11	73	105	69.52
13	HAR	48	27	13	88	105	83.80
14	INT	43	23	13	79	105	75.23
15	JER	46	24	12	82	105	78.09
16	KRI	47	26	13	86	105	81.90
17	MIR	48	23	12	83	105	79.04
18	MIS	45	20	11	76	105	72.38
19	MAR	43	25	13	81	105	77.14
20	NOR	43	21	10	74	105	70.47
21	PRY	45	27	13	85	105	80.95
22	REI	48	24	13	85	105	80.95
23	RIA	48	25	12	85	105	80.95
24	RIF	45	22	14	81	105	77.14
25	THE	51	26	13	90	105	85.71
26	TWS	46	24	12	82	105	78.09
27	VAL	44	24	10	78	105	74.28
28	VIC	43	20	13	76	105	72.38
Total		1270	678	348	2296	-	Σx=2186.56

The result of the computation of post-test obviously showed that there was a progress which show difference between the students' mean score in pre-test and in post-test. The students' mean score at post-test was 78.09 and the students mean score at pre-test was 38.87. It proved that the students' achievement in the post-test or after treatment was improved. In other words, crossword puzzle was an effective in teaching vocabulary to the

students. The result of post-test passed 65 as a standard score of English subject which is made by the teacher at SMP Negeri 1 Kulawi.

After calculating the mean score of the students pre-test and post-test, the researcher computed the deviation and square deviation of the students score in pre-test and post-test. The result was presented on the table below:

Table 7: Table of Square Deviation

No	Students Initial	Standard Score		Deviation (d)	(d) ²
		Pre Test	Post Test		
1	ADR	48.57	80	31.43	987.84
2	ALE	47.61	79.04	31.43	987.84
3	BAY	42.85	80.95	38.1	1451.61
4	CHR	49.52	81.9	32.38	1048.46
5	DAV	40.95	76.19	35.24	1241.85
6	DEI	45.71	76.19	30.48	929.03
7	EKA	14.28	76.19	61.91	3832.84
8	FAN	52.38	80.95	28.57	816.24
9	FER	21.9	68.57	46.67	2178.08
10	FLE	52.38	82.85	30.47	928.42
11	FRI	44.76	85.71	40.95	1676.90
12	GIL	20.95	69.52	48.57	2359.04
13	HAR	38.09	83.8	45.71	2089.40
14	INT	27.61	75.23	47.62	2267.66
15	JER	42.85	78.09	35.24	1241.85
16	KRI	45.71	81.9	36,19	1309.71
17	MIR	33.33	79.04	45.71	2089.40
18	MIS	20	72.38	52.38	2743.66
19	MAR	45.71	77.14	31.43	987.84
20	NOR	29.52	70.47	40.95	1676.90
21	PRY	46.66	80.95	34.29	1175.80
22	REI	40	80.95	40.95	1676.90
23	RIA	40.95	80.95	40	1600
24	RIF	45.71	77.14	31.43	987.84
25	THE	42.85	85.71	42.86	1836.97
26	TWS	40	78.09	38.09	1450.84
27	VAL	35.23	74.28	39.05	1524.90
28	VIC	32.38	72.38	40	1600
	Total	Σx=1088.46	Σx=2186.56	Σd= 1035.24	Σd²= 44697.82

Next, the researcher computed the mean of deviation in order to know significant difference score between pre-test and post-test. The computation of the students' mean deviation was presented below:

$$Md = \frac{\Sigma d}{N}$$

$$Md = \frac{1035.24}{28}$$

$$Md = 36.97$$

Having counted the mean deviation, the researcher then calculated the square deviation which was presented below:

$$\Sigma x^2 d = \Sigma d^2 - \frac{(\Sigma d)^2}{N}$$

$$\Sigma x^2 d = 44697.82 - \frac{(1035.24)^2}{28}$$

$$\Sigma x^2 d = 44697.82 - \frac{1071721.85}{28}$$

$$\Sigma x^2 d = 44697.82 - 38275.78$$

$$= 6422.04$$

Based on computation above, it was found that the mean deviation of pre-test and post-test was 36.97 and the sum of square deviation was 6422.04.

Moreover, the researcher needed to statistically analyze the data in order to know the significant difference between pre-test and post-test. The computation was as follows:

$$t = \frac{Md}{\frac{\sqrt{\Sigma x^2 d}}{N(N-1)}}$$

$$t = \frac{36.97}{\sqrt{\frac{6422.04}{28(28-1)}}}$$

$$t = \frac{36.97}{\sqrt{\frac{6422.04}{756}}}$$

$$t = \frac{36.97}{\sqrt{8.49}}$$

$$t = \frac{36.97}{2.91}$$

$$= 12.70 \quad (\text{t counted value})$$

DISCUSSION

Related to the result of students' pre-test, none of the students achieve standard score. The standard score at SMP Negeri 1 Kulawi was 65. Meanwhile, the highest score in pre-test was 52.38. It shows that, there was no students who passed the test. The percentage of students who got score lower than 65 was 100%.

In pre-test, there were 2 students who got the highest score and there was 1 student who got the lowest score. In doing the pre-test, the students did not understand well about the meaning of vocabulary that always happen and exist in their real life. Not only the meaning of vocabulary, but also they got difficult to pronounce and spell the words correctly. It was surprising because the students have ever learnt it when they were still at tenth grade and elementary school.

The researcher found that some of students were still confused to spell alphabet “a”, “e” and “i”. It was difficult for them to differentiate those sounds because the sounds almost the same, however those alphabet have different forms. The students also confused how to pronounce the words which have sounds “r” at the end of words, for example *finger*, *sharpener*, *mirror*, *cucumber*, etc. Not only sounds “r”, but also sound “c”, for example *cut*, *cucumber*, *cabbage*, *climb*, etc. Those mistakes indicated that the problem was they did know or did understand well about the rules in pronunciation.

In the treatment, the researcher asked the students to find out vocabulary that have relation with teaching materials. After that, the researcher treated them by using crossword puzzle games in order to make them more enjoyable, easier and interest to learn vocabulary. For each meeting, the researcher asked them to find out the meaning of words which were taken from the answer of crossword puzzle games. After that, the researcher asked them to pronounce and spell those words. It was aimed in improving their vocabulary mastery.

After conducting the treatment, the researcher gave post-test, he found that students already understood how to pronounce and spell the English word correctly. The students also were able understood the meaning of English word which is consisted of verbs, nouns and adjectives. In post-test, there were 2 students who got highest score (85.71) and there was 1 student who got the lowest score (69.52). In other words, students’ score was increased from the pre-test to the post-test.

By comparing the result of pre-test and post-test, the researcher concluded that the use of crossword puzzle games in teaching vocabulary mastery was effective because there was a progress or improvement in students' score. There was also a significant progress by comparing the result of t-counted with t-table.

In order to prove whether the hypothesis of this research was accepted or rejected, the researcher needed to test the hypothesis based on the result of the data analysis. The researcher found that the t_{counted} was 12.70. To know the significant difference of the test, the researcher compared the value of the t_{counted} with the value of t_{table} , by applying the level

significance 0.05 and degree of freedom (df: $28 - 1 = 27$). Due to 27 is listed on critical value table, so the value of t_{table} is (1.703).

The result of data analysis indicated that $t_{counted}$ was 12.70. The researcher compared the value of $t_{counted}$ (12.70) with the value of t_{table} (1.703), he obtained that $t_{counted}$ is higher than t_{table} . It means that the research hypothesis is accepted. In conclusion that the students' vocabulary mastery can be improved by applying crossword puzzle games.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

After discussing and analyzing the data in the previous chapter, the researcher finally draws conclusion as follows:

The result of data analysis showed that the percentage of $t_{counted}$ was higher than the t_{table} . By looking at the result, it can be said that there was a significant improvement in student achievement. It means that the application of crossword puzzle can improve the ability of the eighth grade students at SMP 1 Kulawi in vocabulary mastery. Thus, it can be concluded that the research question or problem statement was solved because the technique which was used by the researcher is effective.

The application of crossword puzzle in teaching vocabulary can be said effective because there was a progress between the pre-test scores and the post-test scores. Moreover, it can be concluded that the application of appropriate approach, technique and strategy in teaching can achieve the objective of teaching effectively.

Referring to the importance of vocabulary in mastering a language, the researcher would like to offer some suggestions as follow that might be important for the improvement. First, teacher should apply the appropriate method, approach and technique when they are teaching especially in vocabulary, for example crossword puzzle games. Crossword puzzles are considered appropriate because its application entertains the students and affect the students' psychologically. It also makes students to think critically, more enjoyable, interesting and challenging.

Second, teacher should improve students' ability in vocabulary because it is important while students learn to speak, to write, to listen, and to read, especially in English. In addition, teacher must be able to give a model or a medium which can be imitated by the students to support the teaching of vocabulary, such as songs, quizzes and poems. Then, teacher must be able to give a technique and a method in teaching vocabulary based on the aids of the students. Furthermore, teacher needs to motivate the students in the teaching

learning process and they must be able to predict students' difficulties during the learning process, thus, it can be solve easily their problems.

Third, for the students, the researcher expects they have to master vocabularies that closely related to their real life. Not only mastered those vocabularies but also, they must understand how to spell, pronounce and use it in sentences, in order to improve their language skills. Finally, for the other researcher who are interested in conducting similar research. The researcher hopes there are more explanation about vocabulary which related to the other part of speech such as pronoun, adverb, preposition, conjunction, interjection or exclamation, so that the students are not confused to differentiate the class of words and the function in a sentence. In addition, the researcher may also give task or the list of vocabulary which is related to the topic before going to the while activity.

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