The Implementation of Crossword Puzzle Games to Improve Student Vocabulary Mastery at SMPN 3 Muara Bungo

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Abstract – This study aims to improve the English vocabulary mastery of VIIIth grade students of SMPN 3 Muara Bungo by using Crossword Puzzle Games as learning media and to find out whether the use of Crossword Puzzle Games can improve the student learning process during teaching and learning activities. This study also aims to provide alternative learning media that are effective, interesting, and able to motivate students in English. This research is classroom action research, which consists of two cycles, each cycle consisting of two meetings, each cycle consisting of four stages, namely planning, implementation, observation and reflection. The subjects of this research were eight grade Junior High School 3 Muara Bungo students. This research data was collected through qualitative and quantitative data analysis techniques. The results of this research show the implementation of the use of Crossword Puzzle Games and learning outcomes (improvement) English vocabulary at eight grade of Junior High School 3 Muara Bungo. Details of teacher observation results in cycle I with an average of 86.66% in the very good category and in cycle II it was 93.33% in the excellent category. The results of student observations in cycle I were 65% in the sufficient category and in cycle II 85% in the good category. Student learning outcomes in cycle I were 60% sufficient criteria and in cycle II 80% were good/very good criteria (completed). It was concluded that using the Crossword Puzzle Game could increase students' vocabulary.

Keywords – camera ready paper, candika: master journal of future education, guideline

I. Introduction

Mastery of vocabulary is one of the main aspects for realizing ideas and ideas. Vocabulary has an important role because it appears in every language skill. Vocabulary refers to the wealth of words of a particular language. Mastery of vocabulary is very important in any language learning. Language mastery requires a large vocabulary and adequate grammatical forms. Mastery of vocabulary will influence the construction of sentences, suitability of content and explanations expected in English. Mastery of vocabulary will have an influence on composing English sentences and understanding English. Mastery of vocabulary is the basis of the concept of understanding English.

Mastery of English vocabulary also influences conversation, grammar and English tenses at the next level. Mastery of English vocabulary is important to teach at the junior high school age level because students can remember and understand more vocabulary. However, in reality, not many junior high school students have mastered vocabulary.

The opinion above can be understood that vocabulary mastery is very important in every language learning. Mastery of vocabulary, especially in English subjects, is the basis of the concept of deep understanding in English language. Mastery of vocabulary will influence the construction of sentences, suitability of content and explanations expected in English.

Regarding the problem of vocabulary mastery above, this happened to students at Muara Bungo State Junior High School (SMPN3) located at Raden Mattaher Street Rimbo Tengah, Bungo Regency, Jambi Province. Most of students have low mastery of English vocabulary. There are still many of them who don't know the meaning of the word. Based on interviews and observations carried out on Monday 2 June 2025 with English subject teacher. The same thing was experienced by class VIII students. students in class VIII have low vocabulary mastery. This is caused by English learning activities which are teacher centered and students pay less attention to the teacher's explanations. As a result, in learning English there is a lack of mastery of vocabulary and a pleasant classroom atmosphere in learning is almost invisible. Lack of vocabulary mastery makes students less optimal in understanding reading, questions and less understanding of instructions. This has an impact on the value of English vocabulary mastery which is less than optimal.

The English teacher at SMPN 3 Bungo has made efforts to improve mastery of English vocabulary, such as conducting discussions and questions and answers in class. The question and answer method is a method in education and teaching where the teacher asks questions and Students answer the material they have obtained. This method is centered, so it produces unidirectional communication, namely the process of conveying information from teachers to students, while a good learning process is interaction in carrying out an activity, so that an effective and enjoyable learning process occurs. However, these efforts have not been able to make students enthusiastic about learning, students are less active in asking questions when participating in learning. Teachers use conventional learning strategies which tend to be monotonous. Another effort made by teachers is to hold small group discussions. However, these efforts were not optimal because the learning atmosphere was less enjoyable and the learning strategies used did not suit the characteristics of the students. Vocabulary mastery is also influenced by the teaching strategies implemented by the teacher in delivering the material. When teachers apply innovative strategies, students will easily master vocabulary in English. One learning strategy that can be applied to overcome this problem is the Crossword Puzzle Game learning strategy.

(Said and Budimanjaya, (2015) stated that the Crossword Puzzle Game is a game of filling in empty columns that begins with questions horizontally and downwards. The application of the Crossword Puzzle Game strategy "encourages" students to know and remember terms they have encountered/learned before.

This strategy really requires students to know a lot of knowledge and information and also aims to foster and develop vocabulary mastery. The results of Charles Hall's research from the Albert Einstein College of Medicine, New York in (Said and Budimanjaya, 2015) "said that the Crossword Puzzle Game activity is able to strengthen memory, aka as an anti- senile medicine". This game makes it easier for students to train their memory in mastering vocabulary, especially English, and students will be happier and more active in participating in lessons.

II.   Methodology Section

The research was conducted using classroom action research design. The research site is located in SMPN 3 Muara Bungo, Raden Mattaher Street, Rimbo Tengah, Muaro Bungo Regency, Jambi Province. The researcher prefers this school for a variety of reasons. When the researcher observed and interviewed the students , he discovered various issues/weaknesses in language mastery. The research subjects are VIII th grade students of SMPN 3 Muara Bungo from the 2024/2025 academic year. This study incorporates 2 kinds of data there are quantitative data and qualitative data. Interview transcripts will include observations from field notes and interviews. The assessment of students' vocabulary knowledge, which will be based on their pre-test and post-test scores, will give quantifiable data.

This study employs the classroom action research (CAR) approach. According to (Burns, 2020), action research is part of a larger shift that has been occurring in education for some time. This is linked to the concepts of'reflective practice' and 'teacher as researcher'. CAR entails taking a self- reflective, critical, and systematic approach to investigating your own educational environment. Action research is undertaken by teachers in the classroom to solve problems and improve learning. The instructor determines the problem or area for improvement based on the theory, experience, or hypothesis that they consider intervention.

The researcher was teach english vocabulary usimg crossword puzzle games, with the primary goal of determining whether or not these games are effective in enchancing students vocabulary. According to (Malunui,(2014), crossword puzzle are type of game in which players fill out blank forms with word-forming letters as responses to provided questions. Synonyms or word definitions are provided with the number that corresponds to the number in the box. Letters/ words are entered into a numbered grid pattern in response to the clues.

Table 1. The result Pre Test of Class VIII SMPN 3 Muara Bungo

No	KKM	Score	Category	
			Complete	Incomplete
1.	73	73-100	7	
2.	73	0-73		20
Many students Completed			7	
Percent Complete			25,9%	
Many Students Are Not Complete			20	
Percent Not Complete			74,07%	

Based on table 1 The result Pre test score data from 27 students only 7 (25,9%) have reached the KKM, while 20 students (74,07%) below KKM. Based on the problem that have been described so that the process and learning outcomes of speaking skills in English subjects become effective, efficient, fun and able to arouse the motivation of students, researcher using Crossword Puzzle Games learning media to improve the process learning and Vocabulary mastery students.

The learning strategy can be interpreted as a plan that contains a series of activities designed to achieve educational goals. Crossword Puzzle Strategy is one of the active learning strategies. In this strategy, students are invited to participate in all learning processes, not only mentally but also physically. (David Sanjaya, 2010) states that a learning strategy is defined as a plan, method, or series of activities designed to achieve a particular educational goal. So, thus learning strategy can be defined as a plan that contains a series of activities designed to achieve certain educational goals effectively and efficiently. There are several learning strategies such as conventional learning, lectures, role playing, active learning and co-operative learning. Learning strategies have an important role in learning, because through the right strategy can direct teachers to the quality of effective learning and support student activities during the learning process. One of the innovative and fun learning strategies is the Crossword Puzzle strategy.

Crossword Puzzle learning strategy is a puzzle game used as a fun learning strategy, without losing the essence of ongoing learning (Zaini, 2008). Crossword puzzle learning strategy, involves active learner participation since learning activities begin. With this, students will feel a more pleasant atmosphere so that learning outcomes can be achieved optimally. Almost the same opinion was also expressed by (Said and Budimanjaya, 2015), which stated that Crossword Puzzle is a game of filling in empty columns starting with horizontal and descending questions. The application of the Crossword Puzzle strategy "encourages" students to know and remember vocabulary or terms. Remember vocabulary or terms that they have encountered/learned before. This strategy is very demanding for students to know a lot of knowledge information and also aims to foster and develop vocabulary mastery. Based on the above opinions, it can be concluded that the Crossword Puzzle type active learning strategy is a learning activity plan in the form of a crossword puzzle to remember the vocabulary or terms of the lesson they have.

Based on the background of this research, the research question is formulated as follows:

1. How does the Crossword Puzzle Game learning can improve students learning process?
2. How does Crossword Puzzle Game improve the student vocabulary mastery?

III.   Results and Discussion

This chapter describes the learning process and improving vocabulary mastery. In this case, improving the learning process of teachers and students is seen by using teacher and student observation sheets. Improving the vocabulary mastery of VIII grade students using the Crossword Puzzle Games. with assessment using a Pretest and Posttest. This research was conducted in 2 cycles in learning and the time allocation was 2 x 40 minutes. The implementation of this classroom action research was carried out at SMPN 3 Muara Bungo, where the researcher acted as a teacher while the English teacher acted as an observer teacher and peers as observer students.

Table 2. Teacher Observation Sheet Percentage of Cycle 1 and Cycle 2

Cycle	Percentage	Categories
Cycle 1	86,66	Very Good
Cycle 2	93,33	Excellent

Based on the table above researcher obtained data from the results of teacher observation sheets and students observation sheets, in cycle I and cycle II. From teacher observation sheet, the implementation of cycle I obtained a percentage of 86,66% and increased again in cycle II obtained a percentage of 93,33%

From these data it can be concluded that the implementation of Crossword Puzzle Game in English learning has increased from cycle I to cycle II. On the teacher observation sheet, there was an increase in several aspects in the learning process using the Crossword Puzzle Game from cycle 1 to cycle 2. In cycle 1, there were several activities that were not implemented. First, in the aspect of the teacher's ability to manage the class where

the teacher did not guide the students in the process learning.

Table 3. Students' Observation Sheet Percentage of Cycle 1 and Cycle 2

Cycle	Percentage	Categories
Cycle 1	65%	Enough
Cycle 2	85%	Very Good

Based on the result of student observation sheets in cycle I it was 65%, while in cycle II it was 85%, it can be concluded that the application of the Crossword Puzzle Game in English learning has increased from cycle I to cycle II.

On the student observation sheet, there was an increase in several aspects of the learning process using the Crossword Puzzle Game from cycle 1 to cycle 2. In cycle 1 there were several aspects of learning activities that were not followed well by students. including aspects of the learning process. Students were found to pay less attention to the teacher when the teacher gave an explanation about the series of activities that would be carried out in class. Some students were found to be paying little attention to the teacher when the teacher explained the learning material in front of the class, At the end of the learning activity, students were found to be still a little afraid to ask the teacher when the teacher opened the question-and-answer session and some students did not pay attention to the teacher when the teacher gave conclusions.

In cycle 2 there were only a few aspects of learning activities that students had not followed well. Most students have participated in a series of learning activities well, such as students paying attention to the teacher when explaining the material. students followed the instructions given by the teacher. In the second cycle there were only a few students who did not follow the series of learning activities, such as not paying attention to the teacher when writing vocabulary on the blackboard, students paying less attention when the teacher provided learning conclusions at the end of the learning activity. This showed that there has been an increase in aspects of the teaching and learning process activities for class VIII students at Junior High School 3 (SMPN 3) Muara Bungo.

The increase in the implementation of the student learning process is due to teachers being able to carry out English learning using the Crossword Puzzle Game as expected. Where the teacher sees the results of the implementation which are assessed by observers at the end of the learning implementation so that deficiencies are identified during the learning process so that similar mistakes do not occur at the next meeting. From student

observation sheets, researchers can reduce errors from meeting to meeting so that improvements can be seen from cycle I to cycle II.

Table 1.4 Percentage of Students Vocabulary Improvement

Cycle	Percentage	Categories
Cycle 1	60%	Enough
Cycle 2	80%	Good

Based on table it can be seen that the test results have increased Student learning in cycle I and cycle II experienced an increase, in cycle I obtained a score with an average of 60% and increased in cycle II with an average of 80%. In this case, there is visible improvement from cycle I and cycle II

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The ways to make vocabulary easy to be learned by students, Crossword Puzzle was the better media that could use in teaching learning vocabulary process. According to (Haryono, 2018), Crossword Puzzle Game allows learning to be more encouraging and can motivate children to learn to understand easy vocabulary, since technology is rapidly becoming essential in the learning process. (Zaini,2008) "Crossword Puzzle Game learning strategy is a puzzle game used a fun learning strategy, whitout losing the essence of on going learning". Crossword Puzzle learning strategy involves active learner participation since learning activities begin. With this, students will feel a more fun atmosphere so that learning outcomes can be achieved optimally.

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In this research it was discovered that learning outcomes or vocabulary test results given to students increased significantly. in cycle 1 it was found that 60% of students were successful in increasing their vocabulary, and in cycle 2 it was known that 80% of students were successful in increasing their English vocabulary. It can be concluded that using the Crossword Puzzle Game can make improvement of students' vocabulary.

IV.   Conclusion

Based on the results of action research in eight grade of Junior High School 3 Muara Bungo (SMPN 3), through the use of the Crossword Puzzle Game it can improve the English vocabulary of eight grade students of Junior High School 3 Muara Bungo, it can be seen as follows:

The use of the Crossword Puzzle Game in improving students' vocabulary can be seen from the calculation of teacher observation sheets in learning in cycle I, namely 86,66% to 93,33% in cycle II. The student observation sheet in the learning process in cycle I obtained an average percentage score of 65% (fair category) and the average percentage score in cycle II was 85% (very good category).

The improvement in student vocabulary as seen from the results of the first cycle learning test was 60%, 16 students were good/very good (completed), cycle II was 80% good/very good (completed) 23 students and experienced an increase of 20%.

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