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The Use of Crossword Puzzle to Improve Vocabulary Mastery (An Experimental Study At Ban Chokok School Thailand)

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ABSTRACT

The objective of the research is to prove whether the use of crossword puzzle to improve vocabulary mastery. This pre-experimental study uses 24 students as a sample. The result of the analysis shows that crossword puzzle used to teach vocabularies contributes greatly to increase the students' vocabulary. It is believed that the increase of a learner's vocabulary will affect better speaking and writing. Besides, their researches shows that the results of speaking and writing tests tend to increase. In short, vocabulary is the main core of language skills that provide the basis for how students use the language.

ABSTRAK

Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk membuktikan apakah penggunaan teka-teki silang dapat meningkatkan penguasaan kosa kata. Penelitian pra eksperimen ini menggunakan 24 siswa sebagai sampel. Hasil analisis menunjukkan bahwa teka-teki silang yang digunakan untuk mengajarkan kosa kata berkontribusi besar dalam meningkatkan kosa kata siswa. Diyakini bahwa peningkatan kosa kata pembelajar akan mempengaruhi berbicara dan menulis yang lebih baik. Selain itu, penelitian mereka menunjukkan bahwa hasil tes berbicara dan menulis cenderung meningkat. Singkatnya, kosakata adalah inti utama dari keterampilan berbahasa yang memberikan dasar bagaimana siswa menggunakan bahasa.

Keywords: Crossword puzzle, English learning, Vocabulary mastery

Introduction

English has four skills; they are listening, speaking, writing, and reading. Based on Ban chokok school, The curriculum emphasis that students are able to communicate in English by mastering the whole skills. However, mastering all skills is not easy for Thai students should have learned a lot about English vocabulary. Reading, speaking, writing, and listening skills need a wide vocabulary acquisition. The acquisition of vocabulary becomes the most important part of learning a foreign language. It is fundamentals of a language because vocabulary has a significant role in the communication process.

The communication is a success or not depends on the accurate vocabulary understanding. Vocabulary consists of words that construct a language. Jackson as cited in jaya, (2017) argues that terms vocabulary, lexis, and lexicon are synonymous. That refers to the total stock of words in a language. Along with s or sets of words, vocabulary items that have a specific meaning. Kamil and Hiebert as cited in jaya (2017) state that words represent complex and, often, multiple meanings. Moreover, she adds that furthermore, these complexes, multiple meanings of words need to be understood in the context of other words in the sentences and paragraphs of texts.

Crossword puzzles would help the students to improve their vocabulary. Crossword puzzles can help the students to have more effort to guess the answer in the order they can finish the game quickly and correctly so they would be the winner. Therefore, they have to recall the vocabulary that is related to the question and fill the puzzle. This research aimed at figuring out the teaching procedures of using crossword puzzles to improve the students' vocabulary mastery.

All of above explanations create inspiration to the writer to make action research because the writer wants to know how far crossword puzzle can improve students' vocabulary mastery and can answer students` questions in Ban Chokok? so the writer makes action research with the title The Use of Crossword Puzzle to Improve Vocabulary mastery of eight grade students at Ban Chokok school (Thailand). In addition, there are several studies on vocabulary and how to improve it (Ainiyah & Training, 2019; Patahuddin, Syawal, & Bin-Tahir, 2017; & Alqahtani, 2015), but there are still few studies using crossword puzzles in Thailand. So we offer empirical and methodological novelty.

From the statement, it can be deduced that vocabulary is one aspect of language which is important in learning a language because vocabularies carry meaning which is used in communication. Vocabulary is one of the aspects of English. It is very important for studying English. A learner who just learns grammar without vocabulary will be difficult to convey what he or she wants to say. However, a learner who just learns vocabulary or just reads text or opens a dictionary will be able to say something Harmer (as cited in Alqahtani, 2015). Vocabulary is needed to improve the four English skills; listening, speaking,

reading, and writing. This means that vocabulary plays an important role for the study in their field of study. The students who are less in the vocabulary will be difficult in understanding the text, unable to speak English, and difficult to write their ideas. Besides, students with a small vocabulary also read slowly because they do not understand many words or have to stop and look them up in a dictionary (Edwards, 2006; 177 as cited in Arwandi et al., 2020).

Literature Review

There are several research related to the use of crossword puzzle in teaching learning process and differ from this research. The first is conducted by Muzdalifah (2018), she was successful to improve the students' vocabulary mastery because crossword puzzle facilitates the students to be familiar with the words so that they could memorize them well because they were attended several times in playing crossword puzzle. Another researcher, Dini (2012) used crossword puzzles to improve the student's vocabulary mastery and give a good effecting teaching-learning process.

The crossword puzzle is 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 numbers corresponding to numbers in the squares. Letters/words are fitted into a pattern of numbered squares in answer to clues. Crossword puzzle has been proposed as one of the alternatives in teaching-learning (Dhand as cited in Jaya, 2017). According to Widyasari (2010) 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 game, those are:

- Oral Puzzle. It is a puzzle that is giving orally by teachers, and students are given only empty crossword puzzles without a clue.
- Picture Puzzle. It is a puzzle using the picture as a clue. And only give the students the puzzle without the clues. For each clue, replaced with pictures. It works very well with a unit which embroiled many new vocabulary.
- Object Puzzle. It is the crossword where inside the object is written a clue. A blank puzzle is given 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.

According to Plaister (as cited in Jaya, (2017) in teaching vocabulary there are some advantages of crossword puzzle:

- Learning vocabulary by doing, because doing action would be more meaningful and motivating students.
- By doing a puzzle, students are trained to involve in the problem-solving.
- It is interesting and challenging for students. It can avoid students' boredom

of monotonous learning. In this case, puzzle tries to increase students' attention, their lesson materials, and this procedure better learning.

- The puzzle in group or classroom discussion students is trained to be more critical thinking.
- The puzzle in a group will make the students feel fun, enjoy their learning English. This is meaningful and helpful for students in learning English. It can encourage students to participate in their learning English.

In reference from the statements above, crossword puzzles are categorized into a challenging game. Crossword puzzle has become one of the alternative games in teaching-learning, including language learning that has sets of grids to be filled with words or letters. Crossword puzzle is a popular game, and among other games, crossword puzzles seem to be more attractive than others. The crossword puzzle is a kind of word game. To finish a crossword puzzle, the player has to accurately fill in all the blank squares with letters that form words. The words are based on the clues provided, which can be complete sentences, phrases, or words. Since crossword puzzles are usually considered a game, something to be enjoyed rather than slogged through, they tend to be fun and learner-friendly (Childers, 1996 as cited in Orawiwatnakul, 2013). Apart from motivating student learning, these puzzles can help students to extend their vocabulary knowledge. Crosswords can be used to teach terminology, definitions, spelling, and pairing key concepts. Since students need to spell items correctly to complete the puzzle, they gain greater retention and memorization of vocabulary (moore & dettlaf, 2005 as cited in Orawiwatnakul (2013).

Methodology

In this study, the researcher used the form of classroom action research (CAR). Classroom action research is a kind of research that is conducted in the classroom by a teacher. According to Mulyasa (2009), classroom action research is a kind of research that has re-emerged as a popular way of involving practitioners, both teachers, and supervisors so that they better understand their work. Therefore classroom action research is a form of research that is conducted by practitioners to improve practices in the educational setting. This study used observation data on the process of teaching-learning in the classroom. Those data will be analyzed through some steps in the cycles. (Kemmis and taggart as cited in Mulyasa (2009) in Cohen's book state:

"Action research is concerned equally with changing individuals, on the one hand, the culture of the groups, institutions, and societies to which they belong. The culture of a group can be defined in term of the characteristic substance and form of the language and discourses, activities and practices, and social relationship and organization which constitute the interaction of the group. From the explanation above, the researcher can conclude that classroom action research is a classroom

action in research, which can be done by the teacher, researcher, and teacher with his or her colleague with involves a group of students to improve teaching and learning process or to enhance the understanding of the students to the lesson. In this research, the researcher used the use of crossword puzzles to improve vocabulary mastery".

The Result of Pre-Test

The Researcher gave a pretest to students from 22 February 2022 until 28 February 2022. This is done before providing treatment to them. It is very important to measure students' skills in vocabulary. Pretest results are presented in the following table.

The Result of the Students Pretest

Test items		Maximum score	Total score	Classification	Criteria
No	Students name				
1	ND	50	70	Poor	Failed
2	NS	50	70	Poor	Failed
3	NUS	50	75	Good	Successful
4	MF	50	70	Poor	Failed
5	KY	50	60	Very poor	Failed
6	AK	50	70	Poor	Failed
7	SC	50	60	Very poor	Failed
8	FD	50	60	Very poor	Failed
9	NN	50	75	Good	Successful
10	NSH	50	70	Poor	Failed
11	SA	50	70	Poor	Failed
12	HS	50	60	Very poor	Failed
13	SOC	50	70	Poor	Failed
14	RS	50	60	Very poor	Failed
15	AL	50	60	Very poor	Failed
16	ND	50	70	Poor	Failed
17	NUC	50	50	Very poor	Failed
18	AIS	50	80	Very good	Successful
19	SD	50	80	Very good	Successful
20	WW	50	75	Good	Successful
21	RAD	50	60	Very poor	Failed
22	SL	50	70	Poor	Failed
23	SD	50	75	Good	Successful
24	AP	50	90	Very good	Successful

The table above shows that there were 23 out of 3 students (13%) got very good score, 3 out of 23 students (13%) got good score, 9 out of 23 students (37%) got poor score and 9 out of 23 students (37%) got very poor.

The Result of Posttest

The researcher administered post-test to was conducted after giving treatment to the students that presented in the following table:

Test items		Maximum score	Total score	Classification	criteria
No	Students Name				
1	ND	50	100	Excellent	Successful
2	NS	50	100	Excellent	Successful
3	NUS	50	80	Good	Successful
4	MF	50	80	Good	Successful
5	KY	50	80	Good	Successful
6	AK	50	80	Good	Successful
7	SC	50	85	Good	Successful
8	FD	50	80	Good	Successful
9	NN	50	100	Excellent	Successful
10	NSH	50	100	Excellent	Successful
11	SA	50	90	Very good	Successful
12	HS	50	90	Very good	Successful
13	SOC	50	100	Excellent	Successful
14	RS	50	100	Excellent	Successful
15	AL	50	100	Excellent	Successful
16	ND	50	100	Excellent	Successful
17	NUC	50	100	Excellent	Successful
18	AIS	50	100	Excellent	Successful
19	SD	50	90	Very good	Successful
20	WW	50	100	Excellent	Successful
21	RAD	50	85	Good	Successful
22	SL	50	80	Good	Successful
23	SD	50	80	Good	Successful
24	AP	50	100	Excellent	Successful

Students' score in posttest

Based on the table before, it was found that there were 24 out 12 students (56%) got score in a range of interval 100, 3 out 24 students (6%) got score in a range of interval 90, 9 out 24 students (38%) got score in a range of interval 80-85.

After analyzing the data, it shows that the mean score of students in the pretest is 40. This indicates that students' ability of vocabulary was relatively low. And the second step of this research, the researcher conducted the treatment. It was done three times of treatment. The researcher taught the '{students by using crossword puzzles. This technique was applied to train the students to increase their vocabulary. At the beginning of the treatment, the researcher explained to the students about vocabulary and instructed the students to read the question and answer the questions independently. In the next meeting, the researcher review about the text with the students and the researcher help them when they got difficulties in understanding the text question. After that, the researcher gave to them a crossword puzzle and guided them while they did the exercises. At the end of the meeting, the researcher gave the students a post-test to know the increasing the vocabulary. The students were easy to answer the question because they already understand well how to answer the question of the crossword puzzle. After conducted post-test, the researcher calculated and processed their scores. Based on the result was presented previously the mean score of post-test was100. The students score in post-test was better than pre-test. It proved that the treatment through crossword puzzles was effective to increase students' vocabulary.

About the significance of vocabulary for someone`s competencies in speaking a language, Richards and Renandya 2002 as cited in Stephens (2019) states that vocabulary is a core component of language proficiency and provides much of the basis of how well learners speak, listen, and write. It explains that vocabulary plays a big role in supporting someone`s ability in different skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing).

Usually after students learn new words, they tend to forget as time passes. So, one way to help them retain new words is to expose them to those words repeatedly. Given the nature of crossword puzzles, students can practice more on new words they have just learned from the textbook. They can also use them to review for the exam. Based on the above statement, the writer concluded that by using puzzles game is a good way to improve students' vocabulary because using the crossword puzzle game has some benefits to increase students' ability in learning English. Vocabulary also gives bigger involvement in conveying the meaning of a language than grammar does yet. Lightbown and Spada (2006) as cited in Ainiyah et al.,

(2019) 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 breaks down if we do not use the correct word.

Conclusion

The result of this action research could show the improvement of students crossword puzzles to improve vocabulary mastery and the effect of the teaching-learning process the improvement of student's vocabulary mastery could be seen in the increase of mean score of pre-test 60, and post-test 100, the students could memorize and can spell the vocabularies taught and their meaning and pronounce the words correctly. So, the students` pronunciations increased. The effect of the teaching-learning process could be indicated by: The students were more active in following the lesson, most of the students were not ashamed to answer the question, students became less noisy so, they could focus more on the lesson and could actively follow teacher`s instruction. From the statements, it can be concluded that crossword puzzles can improve the student's vocabulary mastery, and the teaching-learning process of using crossword puzzles game give good effect on students.

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