Improving Class VIII D Students' Participation and Vocabulary Achievement by Using Crossword Puzzles At SMPN 1 Tanggul

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Abstract: This research investigated the improvement of students' participation and vocabulary achievement by using crossword puzzles in the classroom. The research design was classroom action research conducted in two cycles. The research subjects were the eighth grade students and the research area was at SMP N 1 Tanggul. The data were collected by using observation and vocabulary achievement test, interview and documentation. The collected data were analyzed statistically by using percentage formula. The students' participation improved from 63.86% in Cycle 1 to 79.43% in Cycle 2. Meanwhile, the students' vocabulary achievement improved from 70.27% in Cycle 1 to 83.78%.in cycle 2. In conclusion, using crossword puzzles improved the selected eighth grade students' participation and vocabulary achievement at the school.

Keywords: Crossword puzzles, Students' participation, Vocabulary achievement

An international community needs an international language to communicate with each other. English is one of the international languages which plays an important role in the international society. Crystal (2003:110) notes that English is used as the media in the world's knowledge. It is not only used for transferring information for any field or study, science, technology, academic, and many others, but it is also used in the international communication. Therefore, everyone must be able to master English well when he/she wants to have a chance to communicate in international community. With English, people can communicate each other although they come from many different countries with different languages. In conclusion, teaching English should be able to increase students' ability to communicate in the international community.

Based on the 2006 curriculum, English is a compulsory subject in Indonesia, starting from junior high school until university level. The objective of teaching English is to develop English skills including listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Besides, there are three language components that the students should master, they are: pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar. Among the objectives above, vocabulary is one of the language components that is very important in the teaching learning process. Wilkins (in Thornbury,2005:13), states that someone gains more improvement in learning a language if they learn more words and expressions. He also says that without vocabulary, no information is delivered. In line with this, Thornbury (2005:23), states that learners' needs not only to learn a lot of words but also remember them. Therefore, having sufficient vocabulary is very important for the students in delivering information.

Based on the result of the preliminary study conducted in 2015 at SMPN 1 Tanggul, there were some problems faced by the students in mastering vocabulary. Many students of VIII D experienced difficulties to enrich and enlarge their vocabulary because they forgot vocabulary materials taught by the teacher easily. In mastering vocabulary, the teacher gave a list of word and discussed the meaning. Moreover, sometimes the teacher wrote difficult words and the meaning in the whiteboard and asked the students to memorize them. They felt bored with the way to learn vocabulary class. This condition was shown by the vocabulary achievement result conducted by the teacher of VIII D of SMPN 1 Tanggul. There were 53% (17 students out of 32 students) got the score below 70 which means that they did not reach the standard score in that school that is 70. In order to avoid that situation and to motivate the students' participation in learning vocabulary, the teacher needs to provide interesting media in teaching vocabulary. Hatch and Brown (2001:375)

have argued that "when students have seen an object or an action, their desire to know the label (word) for it may increase. This means the teacher needs to provide some suitable media, games, or techniques to make the class more interested in learning vocabulary.

In this research, games were used to motivate the students because they can help and encourage many learners to sustain their interest and work. The games in this research were crossword puzzles that were used as a technique to improve students' participation and vocabulary achievement. Karim and Hasbullah (1986: 2.36) argue that an interesting technique in teaching vocabulary is crossword puzzles. This is because crossword puzzles gain students' interest so that they become more motivated during the teaching and learning process. Furthermore, they also feel more interested in finding the correct words to fill the squares in crossword puzzles.

Many researchers have done their research by using crossword puzzles. One of them was Aisah (2012) who conducted her classroom action research at SMPN 1 Glagah Banyuwangi. She found that the use of crossword puzzles was able to improve the eighth grade students' vocabulary achievement. The differences between Aisah's research and this research were laid on the kinds of crossword puzzles and the research subjects. Similarly, Trisna's (2014) research findings at SMPN 2 Rambipuji showed that the use of crossword puzzles could improve the students' vocabulary achievement. The differences between this research and Trisna's research were on the research subjects, kinds of crossword puzzles, and also the procedures in applying crossword puzzles. Therefore, it was still necessary to conduct a classroom action research on "Improving Class VIII D Students' Participation and Vocabulary Achievement By Using Crossword Puzzles at SMPN 1 Tanggul".

Research Method

This research was intended to improve the students' vocabulary achievement by using crossword puzzles. Therefore, the research design used in this research was classroom action research because according to Elliot (1993:69) action research is a kind of study of a social function with the aim to increase the quality of a certain problem. The classroom action in this research was conducted in cycles containing four stages of activities, namely (1) planning of the action, (2) the implementation of the action, (3) the classroom observation and evaluation (4) the reflection of the action (Arikunto, 2010:31). The research was done collaboratively with the English teacher. The collaboration in this research focused on identifying and defining the research problem, planning the action, carrying out the action, class observation and doing the reflection of the results of the actions in each cycle.

The area of the research was determined by using purposive method as what Arikunto (2010:23) notes that it is a method that is used by considering certain purposes and reasons suitable with the objective of the research. The research area was at SMPN 1 Tanggul, Jember for some reasons. First, the students of class VIII D were readily used as the research subjects who got the lowest score in vocabulary test. Second, crossword puzzles have never been used by the English teacher to teach vocabulary. Third, the principal of the school supported the research project to conduct a classroom action research.

The collected data were analyzed by using percentage formula. There were four kinds of data collection method applied in this research. They were a vocabulary

test, observation, interview and documentation. The research data were collected by a vocabulary test and observation, interview, and documentation.

The students' vocabulary achievement in this research was represented by the students' scores of a vocabulary test covering nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs. The vocabulary achievement test conducted after the students had been taught vocabulary by using Crossword Puzzles in each cycle. The research target of vocabulary achievement was 75% of the students are successfully achieved the minimum requirement score that was 70.

Student's participation deals with students' willingness to get involved during the teaching and learning vocabulary by using crossword puzzles. It can be seen from the students' activities during the teaching and learning process. There were 4 indicators that the students should fulfil. It covered students' activity in answering the teacher's oral questions, discussing with their group in finding nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverb in the text, discussing with their group about the clues in the Crossword Puzzle, doing the vocabulary exercises by using Crossword Puzzles. The students were considered to be active if they could fulfil three of four indicators used. Then, this research was considered to be successful if there were 70% of the students active during the teaching and learning vocabulary by using crossword puzzles

Research Results

The actions were done in two meeting and ended by administering a vocabulary test. In Cycle 1, the first meeting was conducted on October 20th, 2015, and the second meeting was conducted on October 24th, 2015. Then, a vocabulary achievement test was administered on October 27th, 2015. Meanwhile, in Cycle 2,

the first meeting was conducted on October 29th, 2015 and the second meeting was conducted on October 31st, 2015. After that, the researcher administered a vocabulary test on November 3rd, 2015.

In Cycle 1, the average percentage of the students' participation was 63.86%. It means the average percentage in Cycle 1 did not achieve the success criteria of students' participation. Therefore, the action was continued to the second cycle. In Cycle 2, the average percentage of the students' participation was 79.43%. It means, the average percentage achieved the target of the research. The results showed that the improvement of the students' participation from Cycle 1 to Cycle 2 was 15.57%.

The result of students' vocabulary achievement was 70.27% in cycle 1. It means that Cycle 1 had not achieved the standard minimum score that was 70 or higher. Therefore, the second cycle was necessary to be done by revising the weaknesses found in cycle 1 in order to reach the research target totally. The students' vocabulary achievement in cycle 2 was 83.78%. The result showed that there was improvement from cycle 1 to Cycle 2, was 13.51%. It means that crossword puzzles could improve class VIII D students' vocabulary achievement.

Discussion

This research was a classroom action research focusing on the use of crossword puzzles to improve class VIII D students' participation and vocabulary achievement at SMPN 1 Tanggul, Jember. The researcher conducted the research in two cycles and each cycle consisted of three meetings. Moreover, the researcher conducted the research collaboratively with the English teacher.

In this research, the researcher used crossword puzzles as a technique to teach vocabulary in order to improve students' participation and vocabulary achievement. This research was supported by Gilbert, Robin and McNeil (2011:178) who state that crossword puzzles are entertaining and are very useful in increasing vocabulary. By solving the clues in the form of phrases and sentences, the students were expected to learn or memorize the words, spell the words, and understand the meaning of the words.

In Cycle 1, the result showed that both the students' participation and vocabulary achievement had not achieved the research target yet. Then, the Cycle 2 was conducted by revising the weaknesses found in Cycle 1. After conducting Cycle 2, the result showed that the actions successfully improved the students' participation and vocabulary achievement. In detail, the students' participation improved from 63.86% in Cycle 1 to 79.43% in Cycle 2. The percentage of the students who got score at least 70 also improved from 70.72% in Cycle 1 to 83.78 % in Cycle 2. It means that all research targets had been achieved in Cycle 2. Therefore, the cycle was stopped.

The classroom observation result showed that there was an improvement during the teaching and learning process of vocabulary by using crossword puzzles. It can be said that crossword puzzles could motivate the students in learning vocabulary. It is appropriate with the argument stated by Davis (2006) that crossword puzzles are useful tool for the students in learning vocabulary since it helps students to identify the area of understanding and comprehension. They mostly answered the teacher oral questions, found vocabulary covering nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs, discussed with the group about the clues in the crossword puzzles and did the exercises well.

Based on the result above, crossword puzzles could improve the students' participation and vocabulary achievement. It showed by the result of improvement in each cycle. The students easily memorize the words provided in the crossword puzzles. According to Cheryl (2012:3-4), crossword puzzles help the students develop their memory and vocabulary. Therefore, crossword puzzles could be used to help the students memorize the words in learning English vocabulary.

The result of this research was in line with some previous researchers. One of them was conducted by Aisah (2012) who reported that crossword puzzles could improve students' vocabulary achievement at SMPN 1 Glagah Banyuwangi. The present research finding was also consistent with Trisna's finding. She found that the use of crossword puzzles in teaching vocabulary could improve students' vocabulary achievement in SMP 2 Rambipuji. Both previous studies found that the use of crossword puzzles in teaching vocabulary could improve the junior high school students' vocabulary achievement.

As a result, it could be concluded that the use of crossword puzzles could improve class VIII D students' participation and vocabulary achievement at SMPN 1 Tanggul.

Conclusion

Based on the research results and discussion, it can be concluded that the use of crossword puzzles could improve class VIII D students' participation and vocabulary achievement at SMPN 1 Tanggul. This means that crossword puzzles can be used to improve students' vocabulary achievement

Therefore, the English teacher should use crossword puzzle in teaching vocabulary in the classroom. Crossword puzzles motivate the students to participate actively during the teaching and learning process. Besides, it can also decrease the teacher's difficulty in choosing the technique of teaching the students new vocabulary.

Besides, the students should practice studying English by using crossword puzzles in the teaching and learning process of vocabulary. In this way, the students can enlarge, memorize, and understand the words meaning by solving the clues in the Crossword Puzzles.

Moreover, the future researchers should conduct further research by using crossword puzzles to improve students' participation and vocabulary achievement in different levels of students and different research design for example by conducting an experimental research to know the effect of crossword puzzles on the students' vocabulary achievement. Further, the future researchers should conduct a research which is intended to improve students' vocabulary at elementary level.

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