IMPROVING ENGLISH VOCABULARY MASTERY BY USING CROSSWORD PUZZLE

Dini Restu Profita, Gunarso Susilohadi, Teguh Sarosa
English Education Department of Teacher Training and Education Faculty
Sebelas Maret University Surakarta

E-mail: restudini88@yahoo.com

Abstract

This research is aimed to find out: (1) The improvement of the students' vocabulary mastery through crossword puzzles and (2) The effect of teaching learning process when teaching vocabulary by using crossword puzzle is implemented. The method used in this research is classroom action research. It was carried out in two cycles. The techniques for collecting data are observation, interview, questionnare, field notes, photograph and test. The data were analyzed by using qualitative technique and quantitative technique. The researcher conducted the tests before (pre-test) and after (post-test). The research result shows the improvements in students' vocabulary mastery and gives good effect in teaching learning process. The mean score of pre-test was 50, the post-test 1 was 69, and the post-test 2 was 80. Beside that, there were good effects in the teaching learning process such as the students were more active in following the lesson; the students became less noisy; the students were not ashamed to answer the question; and the students could focus more on the lesson.

Keyword: crossword puzzle, students' vocabulary mastery, the effect of using crossword puzzle in teaching learning process

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui: (1) Peningkatan pengetahuan kosakata siswa dengan menggunakan teka – teki silang dan (2) Pengaruh terhadap proses belajar mengajar ketika pembelajaran kosakata dengan menggunakan teka – teki silang. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah penelitian tindakan kelas. Penelitian ini dilaksanakan dalam dua siklus. Teknik pengumpulan data menggunakan observasi, wawancara, questioner, catatan lapangan, foto dan tes. Data dianalisis dengan menggunakan teknik kualitatif dan teknik kuantitatif. Peneliti mengadakan tes sebelum *(pre-test)* dan sesudah penelitian *(post-test)*. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan ada peningkatan pada kemampuan kosakata siswa dan memberi efek baik pada proses belajar mengajar. Nilai rata-rata dari pre-tes adalah 50; post-tes 1 adalah 69; dan post-tes 2 adalah 80. Disamping itu, ada efek yang baik pada proses belajar mengajar yaitu siswa lebih aktif dalam mengikuti palajaran; siswa menjadi tidak ramai; siswa tidak malu dalam menjawab pertanyaan; dan siswa lebih fokus dalam mengikuti pelajaran.

katakunci: teka – teki silang, kemampuan kosakata siswa, efek dari penggunaan teka – teki silang pada proses belajar mengajar.

The aim of teaching English is to develop the students' ability in communication. Then, teaching English is needed for preparing the globalization era and developing the science. So, we can increase the competition with world community. To master all, they should prepare them self with vocabularies. Vocabulary is one of the language component that support the student in learning language. Burns and Broman (1975: 295) state the definition of vocabulary in general. They say that vocabulary may be defined as the stock of words uses by a person, class, or profession. Almost every individual uses several different vocabularies, all having much in common, yet each distinctly different. Coady (1997: 5) states that vocabulary is central of language and of critical importance to typical language learner. While Candlin in Taylor (1990, ix) states that vocabulary is central to language teaching and learning. Vocabulary is really needed in both English teaching learning. Therefore, the students of elementary school still had difficulty in mastering vocabulary.

The researcher conducted pre-research at fourth grade students of SD Negeri Pakurejo to find the students' problem of English class. The pre-research begins with distributing questionnaire to gather information about the teaching learning English. After that, the researcher conducted observation to know the situation of the teaching learning process, how the teacher teach English, the students' behavior when teaching learning process happened, the method that teacher used in teaching English. Then the researcher had some interview with the teacher and students. Next, the researcher did a pre-test to know the students' vocabulary mastery.

Based on the pre-research, the researcher finds out that the students' vocabulary mastery in SD Negeri Pakurejo is still low, about 75% students get the bad mark (under six). This problem can be seen from their low scores in vocabulary and students got difficulties in four aspects of vocabulary, such as spelling, meaning, pronunciation and using word. The researcher also found that the teaching learning process was not effective as follows: 1) the students were passive during teaching learning process 2) the class was noisy 3) the students were afraid to answer the question 4) the students did not focus on the lesson. The causes of this problem are (1) The teacher uses the same technique each time in teaching vocabulary. It made the students feel so bored, (2) The technique that teacher used cannot motivate the student to learning English, (3) The source that teacher used is only from a textbook.

Based on the fact, the students' vocabulary mastery needs

improvement. So, the writer brings the way of teaching vocabulary by using crossword puzzles, to improve the students' vocabulary mastery. It facilitates the students to get better mastery of vocabulary. Case (1994: 5) states that puzzle are useful for language learners because the enjoyment, satisfaction, reflection, and play can focus learners attention on the language in a concentrated but nonstressful way. Nation (1986: 1) states that puzzles are one obvious type of self-motivating material. For native speakers, puzzles of various sorts have a strong appeal. Puzzles are self-motivating because they offer a challenge that can usually be met successfully. According to the Jones (1992), the crossword puzzles can be used in a variety of ways: to teach new vocabulary, to help students to memorize what they already know.

This research aims to find out that crossword puzzle improve the students' vocabulary mastery and to identify the effect in teaching learning process when crossword puzzle is implemented in the writing class.

RESEARCH METHODS

The research was conducted in SD Negeri Pakurejo, Bulu, Temanggung in academic year 2011/2012. It was conducted at 7th May 2012 until 31th May 2012. The subject of this research was the fourth grade students' of SD Negeri

Pakurejo. There were 20 students, consisting 6 boys and 14 girls.

The research method in this study is an action research. For starting point, it is necessary to give a definition of action research. Mills (2000: 6) says that action research is any systematic inquiry conducted by teacher researchers, principals, school counselors, or other stakeholders in teaching or learning environment, to gather information about the way that their particular schools operate, how they teach, and how well the students learn. Elliot (1991: 69) defines that action research is the study of social situation with a view to improving the quality of action within it. It aims to feed practical judgement in concrete situation, and the validity of the theories or hypotheses it generates depends not so much on scientific test of truth, as on their usefulness in helping people to act more intelligently and skillfully.

Action research is a research that is conducted in cycles. As there are many experts give the definition of action research, there are many experts that give the models of action research too. In this research, the writer followed Kemmis and McTaggart model of action research. They refer to four basic steps or moment of action research: planning, acting, observing and reflecting. Planning is a step that identified the problem, the writer then makes some plan to prepare everything related to

the action. Then, acting is the section which the teacher conducts the teaching and learning activity. Observing is step where teacher observes the teaching and learning process in the classroom. Then the teacher can create the better way of teaching. Then, reflecting is step where the teacher makes an investigation of what she has done to find the strength and weakness of teaching learning process.

In this research, the researcher uses five instruments to collect the data. They are observation, interview, field notes, photograph and test. In analyzing the data, the researcher uses qualitative technique and quantitative technique. In analyzing qualitative data, the researcher uses Burns method. Burns (1999:157) gives several steps in analyzing qualitative data. The steps are given as follows: assembling the data, coding the data, comparing the data, building interpretation, and reporting the outcome. Meanwhile, quantitative data are analyzed by using descriptive statistics. They are analyzed by comparing the result of pre-test and post-test. It is used to know whether there is improvement of students' vocabulary mastery.

RESEARCH RESULT AND DISCUSSION
Pre-Research

Before conducting the action research, the researcher did observation, interviewed the teacher and gave the pre-test to the students. From the observation and interview and pre-test results, the researcher found a fact that the students' score for English was low. About 75% students get the bad score (less than six). The students' mean score was 50 in the scale of 0-100. The researcher concluded that the students' vocabulary mastery was still low. In addition, the classroom situation were inefficient. The students were not active. They kept silent when theacher asked them some questions because they did not know the answer. The method and the materials made them bored and do not focus on teaching learning process.

Based on the fact happened in pre-research, the researcher found these problems: 1) the students' vocabulary mastery was still low; 2) the effect of teaching English was not good. The causes of these problems are: 1) The teacher used the same technique every time she taught vocabulary. It made the students feel so bored. 2) The technique that teacher used could not motivate the student to learn English. 3) The source that teacher used was limited, only from a textbook.

Cycle 1

Planning

Before starting the action, the researcher made lesson plans, the teaching materials, worksheet and test item for the first cycle. It was

planned to have three meetings in the first cycle.

Acting

In this activity, the students are divided into ten groups. The teacher distributes folded paper (written a letter). The students write the blank box with the letter. After the letter could form an English word, the teacher spelled it followed by students. There was a distinction between English language and Indonesian language. In English language, the written was different from the pronunciation. So, the teacher taught how to pronunce the word correctly. The students imitated after the teacher till they could pronunce the word correctly. To introduce an English word, the teacher mentioned the meaning of this word into Indonesian language. She asked the student to memorize the word so that they could use this word in a sentence.

Observing

When the researcher was implementing the action, the collaborator observed the classroom situation and teaching learning process by using crossword puzzles. The effect of teaching learning process by using crossword puzzles was better for students than before. It can be seen from the students' progression in teaching learning process. The students were more active; the students actively followed teacher's instruction. They actively imitated what the teachers said and tried to focus on teaching learning activity. They paid attention in teaching learning activity because they took part in this activity. It was simple and easy for students. So, the students could enjoy the activity. The use of crossword puzzles warmed up the students' motivation to learn English. They were enthusiastic to struggle to come forward to the class. They were confident to write the letters on the blackboard and speak up the English word. They could answer the question although their answer was often false.

The results of post-test showed an improvement comparing with the pre-test. They could do the task and answer the question. The main score of the pre-test was 50, while the post-test one score was 69 from the level 0-100.

There were several problems coming from students. For one thing, the students were noisy. When the teacher divided the students into some pairs, they fell into chaos and confusion. For another thing, some of the students had difficulty in pronuncing the words and remembering the English words and their meaning. Furthermore, some students were still afraid to answer the questions because some of students blamed the other students who made mistakes in answering the question.

Reflecting

According to the observation result, the researcher found some problems during the teaching and learning activity which should be solved in the second cycle were: 1) the students still had difficulty in remembering the English word and its meaning, 2) the students had difficulty in pronouncing the words, 3) the students were afraid to answer the question, 4) the students blamed the other students who made mistakes in answering the question, 5) The students were noisy and did not pay attention the the teacher's instructions. The causes of the problems were: 1) the researcher only asked the student to fill the crossword puzzle by letter that write in folded paper and it can not trigger the students' memory to remember the word, 2) in practicing pronunciation, the researcher asked all the students to imitate what teacher say collectively and it can not control the pronunciation individually, 3) the researcher did not pay more attention to the students who made chaos and noisy during teaching and learning process.

Cycle 2
Revising Plan

Based on the result of reflection above, the teacher and the researcher planned to solve the problem which had occurred in cycle one. The researcher planned to change the form of crossword puzzle. In first cycle, the researcher made a game to fulfill the crossword puzzle. The researcher used folded paper as media. And the researcher found some problems. The researcher solved the problem with solution in second cycle, the researcher would not make a game. To trigger the students' memory about the English word, the researcher would ask the student to fill the uncomplete crossword puzzles by their knowledge. By using it, students would try to remember the English word and would practice to be brave in writing the answer in front of the class. The researcher would focus more in teaching pronunciation. She would give more practice pronunciation to all students one by one. It was done to help students how to pronunce word correctly. The researcher would pay more attention to the students who made chaos and noisy during teaching and learning process. She would warm up the studens' motivation to be active in teaching learning process.

Acting

In this activity, the students write the letter on the blank box. After the letter could form an English word, the teacher spelled the letter and followed by students. There was a distinction between English language and Indonesian language. In English language, the written was different with the pronunciation. So, the teacher taught how to pronunce the word correctly.

The students imitated after the teacher till they could pronunce the word correctly. To introduce an English word, the teacher mentioned the meaning of this word into Indonesian language. She asked the student to memorize the word so that they could use this word in a sentence.

Observing

The observation toward the research implementation in Cycle 2 was also done by the collaborator. The teaching learning process by using crossword puzzles in the cycle also showed the students' improvement on vocabulary mastery and the effect of teaching learning process.

The result of observation showed the improvement on vocabulary mastery. The score of post-test two is better than the one of post-test one. The mean score of post-test two was 80. Besides, students had motivation in following the lesson. Those showed better improvement from the previous test.

The effect of teaching learning process by using crossword puzzle was indicated by the following facts. First, the students were more active in following the lesson. Second, most of the students were not ashamed to answer the question. Third, students became less noisy. They could focus more on the lesson. Fourth, the use of crossword

puzzles in teaching learning activity could warm up the students' motivation to learn English. Finally, the students paid attention in teaching learning activity because the student took part in that activity. It built an enjoyable situation because it was simple and easy for students. So, they could actively follow teacher's instruction.

Reflecting

Based on the observation result, teacher and the researcher reflected the implementation of cycle two as follows: 1) the students could pronunce the word correctly, 2) the students remembered the vocabularies taught and their meaning, 3) the students were active in following the lesson and became more focused on the lesson, 4) the students were not ashamed to answer the question.

The teacher and the researcher concluded that the use of crossword puzzles could improve student's vocabulary mastery and make the teaching learning activity effective. Each cycle of the research showed an improvement. The achievement of the students' vocabulary mastery increased. The mean score of post test one was 69. The mean score of post test two was 80. The students could pronounce the word correctly and more fluently than before. So, the students' pronunciations improved. The

students could remember the vocabularies taught and its meaning.

The teaching English by using crossword puzzle gave the good effect to students. The students were more active in following the lesson because the use of crossword puzzles built the students' motivation in following the lesson. So, the students could focus more on teaching learning activity. Most of the students were not ashamed to answer the question given by the researcher.

DISCUSSION

The last step of this action research was discussing the result of the research as a final reflection. Firstly, teacher and researcher identified some problems as follow: (1) the students' vocabulary mastery was still low; (2) the effect of teaching learning process was not good. The causes of this problem are: (1) The teacher used the same technique each time in teaching vocabulary. (2) The technique that teacher used cannot motivate the student to learning English. (3) The source that teacher used was limited, only from a textbook. It made the students feel so bored. So, they were not active and did not pay attention in teaching learning process.

Based on the problem found, one of the appropriate method in teaching vocabulary is using crossword puzzles. The use of crossword puzzle could improve English vocabulary mastery especially in spelling, pronuncing, using and meaning. Crossword puzzle was a medium to improve students' English vocabulary especially young learner. This medium creates enjoyable atmosphere to the class, it can warm up the students' motivation because the students take part in this activity. In this activity, The students write the blank box with the letter. After the letter could form an English word, the teacher spelled it followed by students. There was a distinction between English language and Indonesian language. In English language, the written was different with the pronunciation. So, the teacher taught how to pronunce the word correctly. The students imitated after the teacher till they could pronunce the word correctly. To introduce an English word, the teacher mentioned the meaning of this word into Indonesian language. She asked the student to memorize the word so that they could use this word in a sentence.

The action reseach had been implemented in two cycles. In the first cycle, the researcher introduced new English words to students about parts of the body by using crossword puzzles. She explained the new words and their meaning to student. She also taught them how to spell and pronunce the words correctly. They were also drilled in pronuncing

the words, such as: *eye, cheek, ear, hair, head, knee, neck, face, hand, nose, elbow, lip, legs, mouth, tooth, finger, arm, eyebrow, tongue,* and *toe.* They practiced to prununce the word although they made mistakes in prununcing the words. The result was not good enough. The mean score of pre-test was 50. The mean score of post-test 1 was 69. Some of the students had difficulty in prununcing the words and remembering the English word and its meaning.

Based on the classroom situation, the effect of teaching learning process was better than before. It could be seen through their paticipating in teaching learning process. The students were more active although there were some students who made noisy. It was seen when the teacher divided the students into some group. They fell into chaos and confusion. The students actively followed the teacher's instruction. They actively imitated what the teachers said and tried to pay attention in teaching learning activity because they took part in this activity. They were enthusiastic to struggle to come forward to the class. Some students bravely wrote letters on the blackboard and spook up the English word. They could answer the question although their answer was false. But some students were still afraid to answer the question because there were some of students who blamed the other student who made mistake in answering the question.

Based on the problem found in the first cycle, teacher and researcher planned to improve the teaching learning activity in cycle two.

In cycle two, the use of crossword puzzles of parts of the body could show the improvement of students' vocabulary mastery and the effectiveness of teaching learning process; the improvement of students' vocabulary mastery included: 1) The mean score of post-test 2 increased to 80; 2) The students could memorize the words and its meaning; 3) The students could pronounce the words correctly. The effects of the teaching learning process could be indicated by: 1) The students were more active in following the lesson; 2) Most of the students were not ashamed to answer the question; 3) The students became less noisy; 4) They could focus more on the lesson and could be actively follow teacher's instruction. The students could pronunce the word correctly and more fluently than before. So, the students' pronunciations increased. The students could memorize the vocabularies taught and their meaning.

CONCLUSION

The result of this action research shows that the improvement of students' vocabulary mastery and the effect of teaching learning process; the improvement of students' vocabulary mastery could

be seen in the increasing of mean score of pre-test 50, post-test 1: 69 and post-test 2: 80, the students could memorize the vocabularies taught and their meaning and pronounce the words correctly. So, the students' pronunciations improved. The effects 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 be actively follow teacher's instruction.

From the statements, it can be concluded that crossword puzzle is able to improve the students' vocabulary mastery and the teaching learning process of using cossword puzzzles give good effect to students.

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