

Empowering Seventh-Grade Students with Crossword Puzzle for Vocabulary Mastery

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ABSTRACT

Students often struggle with mastering vocabulary in their English learning journey, necessitating English teachers to seek solutions. One viable strategy teachers can adopt is the integration of crossword puzzles to enhance students' vocabulary mastery. Specifically, the study sought to determine if providing crossword puzzles to the SMP Negeri 3 Banawa seventh-grade students could enhance their vocabulary proficiency. To measure the impact of this approach, the researcher employed pre-test and post-test assessments as evaluation tools in a quasi-experimental study. Through purposive sampling, the researcher selected two classes, VII B and VII D, each with 29 students, as the study's sample groups. Subsequently, data analysis revealed a significant disparity between the pre-test and post-test scores in the experimental class. Notably, the computed p-valued (two-tailed) was 0.000, falling below the predetermined significance level of 0.05, signifying the acceptance of the hypothesis. In conclusion, implementing the crossword puzzle in this study led to a noticeable improvement in the vocabulary mastery of seventh-grade students at SMP Negeri 3 Banawa.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary is central to language teaching and essential to a language learner [1]. For those who use English as a second language, learning vocabulary and understanding many English words are essential to good communication. Researchers such as Dimpudus [2], Rodríguez and Sadoski [3], Gu [4], and Nation [5] state that vocabulary is an important aspect of learning a foreign language. Teaching vocabulary is essential to teaching English because it will help students use the grammar and linguistic skills they have acquired more easily in everyday conversations. As stated by Alqahtani [6], building a large enough vocabulary is necessary for effective second language use because, without it, we cannot use the learned structures and functions for clear communication. In the opinion of W. Nugroho

and Suprpto [7], vocabulary is a list of terms a speaker uses to express themselves or transmit meaning. Vocabulary is the collection of words that comprise a language, according to Ekayanti A, Amrullah, and Thohir [8]. Burns [9], furthermore, argued that vocabulary is typically defined as a person's, class's, or profession's stock of words. We can, therefore, say that a vocabulary is a collection of words that have meaning.

Although most students are not interested in learning English, they need to acquire many words in the language. The teacher must use the best approach to ensure that the students are motivated to learn. Tambaritji and Atmawidjaja [10] claim that using games as a teaching tool can help make learning enjoyable and make students look forward to attending class. Khatir and Derakhshan [11] claim that vocabulary games can make students use the language more communicatively. Researchers use Word games in the classroom to increase students' vocabulary. According to Gozcu and Caganaga [12] define a game as an enjoyable activity with goals and regulations. Since they will never feel pressured to learn, it can help the students focus more when learning a language. According to Bakhsh [13], Children will find repetition less tedious and enjoyable, which will help them retain the new words they have learned.

Numerous games, including picture cards, word searches, scramble letter puzzles, spelling bees, crossword puzzles, and more, can be played to help learn vocabulary. According to Paul, as referenced in Illiyin [14], crossword puzzles are well-liked games that use words that kids have learned and specific images as clues. Definitions or sentences with gaps can also be clues if the children's proficiency is high enough. Furthermore, according to Indrasari [15], crossword puzzles are instructional tools that assist students in avoiding passive situations and improving their comprehension of the subject matter. According to Jaya [16], crossword puzzles are an alternative game for teaching and learning. One could argue that crossword puzzles help keep students interested and make vocabulary learning enjoyable.

The researcher discovered that some students were not listening to the seventh-grade English teacher at SMP Negeri 3 Banawa when she was interviewed. Furthermore, the students lacked vocabulary because they did not learn English in elementary school. The researcher is interested in conducting this research because of the problems that the students are experiencing.

2. METHOD

The researchers conducted the study using a quantitative method because this study was presented with numbers. According to Arikunto [17], this strategy necessitates using numbers at every stage, including data collection, analysis, and presentation of the findings. A quasi-experimental design with two class groups is used in this study. There were two groups: the experimental class, which used a crossword puzzle to teach the material, and the control class, which used the teachers' approach.

The participants in the research are the seventh graders from SMP Negeri 3 Banawa. One way to think of a population is a collection of its constituent parts or a sample. Sugiyono [18] states that to obtain conclusions from the study, researchers choose a sample of persons or things with specific amounts and features to form a population. This

study used the purposive sampling method. Researchers employed two classes as samples: VII D (the experimental group) and VII B (the control group), consisting of 29 students for each class. The pupils in such classrooms lacked a sufficient vocabulary; thus, it was necessary.

The instrument of the study was tested. The tests are used to determine students' level of vocabulary knowledge. There are two tests, each with thirty numbers: a pre-test and a post-test. Before starting the treatment, a pre-test and then a post-test were given.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Results

3.1.1 Descriptive Statistics

The researcher used SPSS v.25 for Windows to calculate the mean, standard deviation, minimum, and maximum. The table below displays the outcomes for the experimental and control classes:

Table 1. Descriptive statistics

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
PREEXP	29	30	30	60	41.28	6.627
POSTEXP	29	40	43	83	59.97	9.206
PRECONTRL	29	30	27	57	44.17	7.231
POSTCNTRL	29	37	30	67	44.83	9.274
Valid N (listwise)	29					

Table 1 shows the data for the experimental and control classes, each with 29 students. In the experimental class's pre-test, the students' minimum score was 30, their maximum score was 60, and their mean score was 41.28. Additionally, the experimental class's post-test results show that students' minimum score was 43 and their maximum score was 83, with a significant increase in mean of 59.97. On the other hand, the control class's pre-test scores range from a minimum of 27 to a maximum of 57, with a mean of 44.83. It indicates that the student's test results in the control group have not significantly improved.

3.1.2 Normality Test

The data's normal distribution can be ascertained using a normality test. To examine the data's normality, the researcher employed the Shapiro-Wilk test in SPSS 25, setting a criterion of > 0.05 . Table 2 shows the experimental and control groups' pre- and post-test Sig. Values are more significant than 0.05.

The experimental class's Sig. is 0.069 in the pre-test and 0.299 in the post-test. Additionally, the control class's Sig. is 0.307 in the post-test instead of 0.429 in the pre-test. Because the data meet the requirements for normalcy, it can be said that their distribution is normal.

Table 2. Normality Test Results

Class	Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.
Pre-Test Experimental	.934	29	.069
Post-Test Experimental	.958	29	.299
Pre-Test Control Class	.965	29	.427
Post-Test Control Class	.959	29	.307

*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

3.1.3 Hypothesis Test

The researcher compared the pre- and post-test scores of the students in the experimental class to those in the control class using the t-test for paired samples to see whether there was a significant difference. Acceptance of the hypothesis is predicated on a two-tailed significance value (Sig.) lower than 0.05. In order to reject the hypothesis, one must have a two-tailed significance value higher than 0.05.

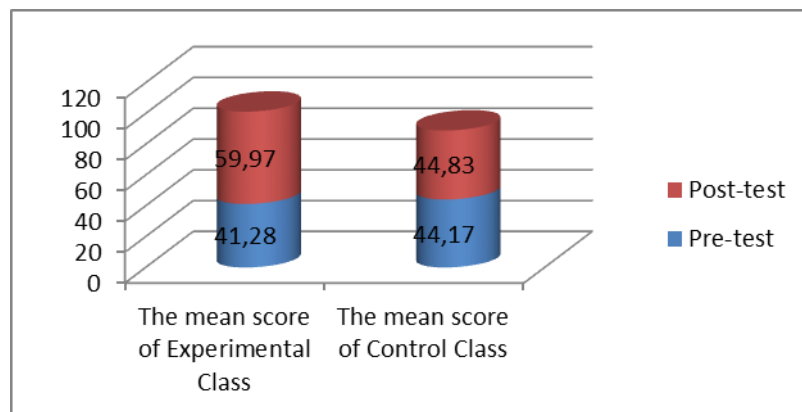


Figure 1. The mean score for the experimental class and the control class before and after the test

Table 3. Paired Sample Test

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	PREEXP - POSTEXP	-18.690	8.405	1.561	-21.887	-15.492	-11.974	28	.000
Pair 2	PRECONTRL - POSTCNTRL	-.655	8.410	1.562	-3.854	2.544	-.420	28	.678

The average scores for the experimental and control groups before and after the treatment are shown in Figure 1. The experimental class's mean score was 41.28 before the intervention; however, it increased significantly to 59.97 after using the crossword puzzle. However, the control group's mean score before instruction using the teachers' approach was 44.17; after instruction, the score increased slightly to 44.83.

The paired sample test results are shown in Table 3. Because output pair 1 produced a Sig. If the value is less than 0.05, the hypothesis is accepted. One potential conclusion is that the median student learning result differs between the pre- and post-tests of the experimental class. The significance level of output pair 2 is higher than 0.05, therefore rejecting the null hypothesis. Doing so might reveal that the control group's mean pre- and post-test scores on the learning outcomes measure are identical. The above description demonstrates that students' learning from instructors' tactics differed significantly from their learning from crossword puzzles.

3.2. Discussion

Research conducted at SMP Negeri 3 Banawa in seventh grade has shown that using crossword puzzles may enhance students' vocabulary. The hypothesis was supported by comparing the pre- and post-test means of the experimental and control groups. The control group's pre-test mean is 44.17, whereas the experimental group's is 41.28. Before the therapy, the student's scores in the control class were more significant than the experimental class's scores. In addition, the control group's post-test mean is 44.83, while the experimental group's post-test mean is 59.97. Following the administration of the therapy, the experimental class's post-test results significantly outstripped those of the control class. This data demonstrates that pupils' vocabulary growth is best accomplished using crossword puzzles.

The effectiveness of crossword puzzle games has been demonstrated by a recent study by Anwar and Efransyah [19], who found that playing them could help students expand their vocabulary. The students in this study well-received the use of crossword puzzles in the vocabulary learning process. Furthermore, They claimed that using it in the teaching and learning process is advantageous, particularly in improving students' vocabulary proficiency.

Putri's [20] research looked at the possibility of vocabulary improvement for students through crossword puzzles. In addition, she reports a noticeable improvement in her studies after using crossword puzzles. The outcome demonstrated how employing crossword puzzles could improve students' vocabulary. Furthermore, Widyasari [21] conducted a two-cycle study using crossword puzzles to enhance vocabulary mastery among first-year MA Al Bidayah Candi Bandungan students. This study confirms the earlier study's findings, which showed that using crossword puzzles to help students learn vocabulary can enhance their proficiency. Additionally, Wahyudi [22], Kurnia [23], Ramadhan and Mufangati [24], Panjaitan and Amaniarsih [25], and Majaga [26] discovered that employing crossword puzzles could enhance their students' vocabulary acquisition.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the research, the author concluded that using crossword puzzles to improve seventh-grade students' vocabulary mastery at SMP Negeri 3 Banawa is beneficial. In the experimental class, the students' scores considerably improved. Comparing the pre-test mean (41.28) to the post-test mean (59.97) demonstrates this. Furthermore, the hypothesis is accepted since the two-tailed significance value was $0.000 < 0.05$. In summary, students taught using a crossword puzzle game scored significantly lower than those taught using a teacher's strategy.

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