



THE USE OF HALF A CROSSWORD PUZZLE IN TEACHING VOCABULARY TO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

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Abstract

This paper explains about how to implement half a crossword puzzle in teaching vocabulary related to job and people for Elementary School students grade two. This game could be played in two groups, which are group A and B. In this game, teacher distributes different board for each group. Half of each board already filled and the filling boards are the answers of the opposite group. To play this game, group A gives a clue about a word to group B, and then group B tries to guess the clue given by group A. The group that can fill all the blank part correctly will be the winner. This game eases the students in mastering vocabularies related to job and people in English. It could also increase the students' motivation because this game is interesting and fun.

Key words: Vocabularies, half a crossword puzzle

A. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays learning English is very important in order to adapt with global world. Therefore, students must understand the four main skills of English, such as speaking, listening, reading and writing. Beside those four skills, another aspect that needs to be concerned is the mastery of vocabularies. Vocabularies need to be mastered because they are linked to those four skills of English. Besides, it is impossible to master a language without having adequate knowledge of the vocabularies. The more vocabularies students know the more easily they communicate, and the few vocabularies students know the more difficult they communicate well in English. Students should acquire a lot of vocabularies or words and know how to use them accurately.

Vocabularies as the core of learning English must be taught since young age; if the students have studied English since they are young, they will be easy to learn English in the next level of the education. For instance, if the students have already studied a number of vocabularies since they are in elementary schools,

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eventhough the level of difficulties of the vocabularies is in lower level, it will not be hard for the students to master the vocabularies in upper level in the junior high schools.

Since learning vocabularies is very important, special treatments of how the vocabularies will be taught to students need to be considered carefully. However, it seems like the process of teaching and learning vocabularies in the classroom is not very interesting, and therefore does not really encourage the students' motivation in learning them, especially for young learners. For example, all this time many teachers merely teach vocabularies to the students by giving a piece of paper containing the vocabularies which must be memorized by the students, or the teachers just simply show a list of vocabularies through power point presentation or even by writing them down on the white board, then they directly ask the students to memorize those vocabularies.

The way of teaching vocabularies like this only result in students' lack comprehension toward the vocabularies being taught. It is because the way the teacher teaches the vocabularies is not interesting, and the students find it boring which finally decrease the students' motivation in learning vocabularies. If the students have no motivation in learning vocabulary the purpose of the lesson would not be reached. Then the students will think that learning English is difficult. Another result is even worst; students will easily forget the vocabularies that they have just learned because there is no such a good impression related to the learning process of those vocabularies which lead the students to think that those vocabularies are not important to be remembered.

All of these problems happen because of the strategy being used by the teacher in the teaching process is not interesting for the students. The students in elementary school need a strategy which is appropriate for their ages. The teacher needs to apply a strategy that can boost the students' motivation in learning vocabularies. In other word, the teacher needs to be able to create an enjoyable situation in order to make the students interested in the learning process. If the students enjoy learning vocabularies, the students will be easy to remember what the teacher teaches, and the lesson they have already got related to vocabularies will not be easily forgotten.

Based on these problems, a new strategy needs to be applied in order to increase the students' motivation in memorizing English vocabularies. There were some researchers which had been conducted related to crossword puzzle. One of them was Annisa and MARlina (2014) who conducted the crossword puzzle in teaching writing descriptive text. Therefore, the writer intends to propose an alternative strategy in teaching vocabularies through Half A Crossword Puzzle: Jobs and People. This game will really help the elementary school students in learning a number of vocabularies related to some kinds of occupations and

people. The writer agrees that this game will be fully useful for students in memorizing the vocabularies because this game is really fun and enjoyable. It is because the vocabularies that will be taught in this game is related to the students' real life. For example, the student will be taught some words like *doctor*, *nurse*, *teacher*, and *boss* for occupation category; the students will also be taught some words like *friend*, *girl*, *mother*, and *brother* for people category.

This game is more easily applied because the teacher does not need to prepare many things for implementing this game in the classroom. Half a crossword game is easy to be implemented because this game already sounds familiar for both students and teachers. However, this game is not like a common crossword puzzle game that a teacher usually finds in most English textbooks. This game is different from others because the rules applied in this game are slightly different from the other crossword puzzle. To play this game, the students will be divided into two groups, group A and B. The answers of group A are in group B's crossword board, and vice versa. In order to find the answer, group A and B need to have a conversation. If the first group who gets the chance is group A, group B will ask what number across or down that will be filled first for them. After getting a clue, each member of group A must think a word that is related to the clue that has been uttered by group A. group A must guess the word and fill it in crossword puzzle board. The number of vocabularies that will be tested depends on the number of the students. The Half a Crossword Puzzle boards provided by the writer in this paper could be played by twenty students. This game will not only ease the students in memorizing the vocabularies, but it will also encourage the students to participate actively in the classroom. Therefore, this game is highly recommended to be used by the teachers in teaching vocabularies to the students, particularly for elementary school students.

B. DISCUSSION

Vocabularies are the knowledge of meaning of words (Hiebert and Kamil, 2005: 13). Vocabularies consist of every word in English that is needed as the basic aspect in understanding English. Furthermore, many vocabularies should be learned by students since they are young in order to ease them mastering a language as Hiebert and Kamil (2005:17) say that vocabulary growth occurs as children gradually learn the meanings of new words through repeated encounters with the word in the text or in conversations. In order to teach young learners, the teacher needs to use an interesting strategy to increase the willingness of the students in learning. One of the strategies could be used by the teacher in teaching vocabulary is Half a Crossword Puzzle. This game is used to teach some vocabularies related to nouns: jobs and people. These are the way in using this game in the class.

1. Teacher's Preparation

The preparation that the teacher needs to prepare before playing the game is Crossword puzzle boards. There are two kind of crossword puzzle boards are needed in this game. One will be for group A, and another will be for group B. Each of board consists of eighteen numbers, for 'across and down'. Nine of the numbers will be filed with nine nouns related to job and people, so that there will be nine blank across and down. There will be two different nouns of jobs and occupations in each board. The teacher must prepare the boards as the number of the students.

2. The Implementations of Half Crossword Puzzle Game

In order to activate students' background knowledge, the teacher shows a number of pictures related to jobs and people, like the following pictures:



The procedures of this game are; Firstly, the teacher must divide the students into two groups, group A and B. Each group will face each other, group A will be on the right side of the teacher meanwhile group B will be on the left. Then, the teacher distributes the boards to the students. The number of vocabularies that will be tested depends on the number of the students. The Half a Crossword Puzzle boards provided by the writer in this paper could be played by twenty students. Each person in the group will get a crossword puzzle board that nine across and down have been filled, and the others are not filled yet. Board for group A will be like this:



Meanwhile, the board for group B will be like this:



The teacher checks whether every student has got the correct board. Group A will get Board A and group B will get Board B. After distributing the boards to all of the students, the teacher will decide which group will do the first turn. In order to be fair, the teacher can use a coin just like in soccer competition. It has been mentioned before that the answers of group A's crossword puzzle will be in the group B's board, and vice versa. If the first group who gets the chance is group A, group B will ask what number across or down that will be filled first for them, for example,

B: “What number do you want to feel?”

A: “We want to fill number 6.”

B: “Across or down?”

A: “Across”

B: (Takes a look to the board: the word is ‘mother. Gives a clue) “It is a woman who born you.”

After getting a clue, each member of group A must think a word that is related to the clue that has been uttered by group A. group A must guess the word and fill it in crossword puzzle board. Group A will be given 15 seconds to figure out the word. When the members have known what word that group B means, they fill it in the crossword puzzle. Whether group A can guess the word or not, after 15, the chance will be for group B. Then group B will tells what number they want to fill and then group A gives a clue. That process will be held until all of the crossword puzzle has been filled. For this process, each students must participate in giving a clue, so that they will be given a chance to speak in English. The clue will also be spoken in English.

After all of the number has been filled, the teacher will check the correctness of the answers. Each group chooses one person to represent their own group’s answers. Then both teacher and student discuss whether that is the correct answer. Every word that is correct will get one point and every word that is wrong will get zero point. Finally, the group who gets more points will win the game.

To make sure that all the students have comprehended the lesson of today, the teacher shows the pictures that the teacher has showed in the opening lesson. The teacher shows the picture one by one and asks the students to mention what picture that is, whether it is a picture of teacher, doctor, nurse, mother, or baby.

For closing the game, the last thing should be done is giving a reward for both the winners and the losers. Reward is very important for young learners because it can increase their motivation in learning, besides young children very like to get a gift.

C. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Vocabulary is a basic aspect in mastering a language because it is linked to other skills in English. to make the student in beginning level easier learning the vocabulary, the writer offers a strategy in teaching vocabulary to Elementary School students by using half a crossword puzzle game. This game is very fun because students could learn vocabulary trough playing game, it also teaches the students to work cooperatively.

Since this strategy use for grade two elementary school several things need to considered before applied this game such as: This game is not very effective if student in the classroom more than twenty students. If teacher still want applied

this game for more than twenty students, teacher need to prepare more vocabularies depend on the student. Teacher can make another half a crossword puzzle not only related to job and people but also for teaching sports, hobbies, etc.

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