

Application of Game Based Learning Using Crossword Media in Improving English Vocabulary

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Abstract

English has become an important international language in communication between countries, business, technology, and access to educational resources around the world. In this case, English language skills are not only a necessity, but also a competitive advantage in facing global competition. However, unfortunately, English learning for Selat village students is currently still not achieving maximum results due to the low interest in learning and motivation of students in learning English vocabulary. Therefore, this research was conducted with the aim of increasing children's understanding of basic English vocabulary in Selat Village through the application of Game Based Learning (GBL) with Crossword media. The method used is PALS (Participatory Action and Learning System), namely a participatory approach that involves students and teachers in planning, implementing and evaluating learning actions. Initial problem identification indicates low mastery of English vocabulary and lack of student motivation. The improvement plan is in the form of implementing Game Based Learning using crossword puzzles. The results showed a substantial increase in students' understanding and memorization of English vocabulary, with students' positive response and enthusiasm for this learning method. The conclusion of this research is that Game Based Learning using crossword puzzles is effective in increasing students' understanding of basic English vocabulary in Selat Village.

A. Introduction

Education is an activity carried out in a planned manner with the aim of creating effective learning conditions and encouraging students to express their potential, both in religious and intellectual terms (Hasibuan et al., 2021). Education is not only in formal institutions, but also involves informal institutions which have the same function, namely increasing knowledge and forming individual self-quality. The main purpose of education is as a medium for developing human potential and preparing for life in the future. Educational objectives can be classified into three parts, namely cognitive, affective and psychomotor. Education also has noble values that provide beauty in life, and the goals of education will determine success in forming a quality person. However, the reality on the ground shows that access and quality of education in rural areas, such as Selat Village, often faces various challenges and obstacles. Education in villages like Selat faces limitations in terms of resources, facilities and support needed to achieve optimal quality of education.

Meanwhile, in an increasingly connected era of globalization, the importance of English language skills cannot be ignored (Marita et al., 2022). English has become an important international language in communication between countries, business, technology, and access to educational resources around the world (Dewati, 2020). In this case, English language skills are not only a necessity, but also a competitive

advantage in facing global competition. In the era of globalization, the placement of Indonesian and English as the medium of information in learning exercises is becoming increasingly commonplace. Language is a tool that plays an important role in our routine routines, both in life in the public arena and in the climate in which we work. People cannot interact without the help of language

In the realm of education, students at several events are expected to master English correctly as much as possible. This shows that English as a foreign language has begun to increase in use. In general, every individual needs to have good language skills. In order to optimize language skills appropriately, the skill that must be mastered is vocabulary. Vocabulary is a basic part of the English language that English students must master. With Vocabulary students can communicate in English. Vocabulary is also needed by students to hone their English skills; listening, speaking, reading carefully, and composing. In this way, students who do not master much vocabulary will have difficulty understanding text, speaking, and subsequently organizing their thoughts (Lestari & Yulia, 2018).

Basically, English children in Selat village are expected to have a good foundation of English because English is now popular and English has been taught almost from an early age, which they have acquired since Kindergarten or during Kindergarten. However, in reality the English of children in Selat Village is not good.

Currently, English language learning for Selat village students has not yet achieved maximum results. Among the learning problems that often arise include low interest in learning and student motivation, students are not yet able to think critically and creatively. The low level of student interest in learning can be seen in the number of students who are not active in the learning process and are not even present in the learning process provided by the teacher. Students seem uninterested or bored with English lessons.

Teaching young learners to learn English vocabulary requires seriousness and patience. Teachers should use interesting learning media. Effective learning for children is more play-oriented. Through play activities, children can improve motoric, cognitive, creativity, language and social emotional abilities. Education that is carried out through play will make children feel comfortable in learning. By choosing the right method, children do not feel forced (Adha et al., 2021).

From the identification of the problem, there is a need for learning methods that are fun and can increase student motivation, namely through Game Based Learning in increasing the basic English vocabulary of Selat Village children. Game-based learning is an appropriate teaching method that teachers use to increase students' interest in learning in class Bakhsh (2016) stated that teaching using games can not only motivate students but can increase students' interest in using English. When teachers use games during the learning process, students will easily master the material being taught. Games, which means games or matches, are structured activities carried out for fun. According to Anggra in Modjanggo et al (2022). Games are something that is played with certain rules so that someone wins and someone loses, usually in a non-serious context with the aim of refreshing. Harsono in Modjanggo et al (2022) states that games are a form of entertainment to refresh the mind from feelings of fatigue and boredom caused by our activities and routines.

Learning English through games needs to be done to increase students' enthusiasm in learning English and increase their knowledge. This approach combines game elements, such as challenge, interaction, and competition, with learning material. By using game media as a learning support, students can better acquire new concepts, skills and competencies. Game media can help students gain thinking stimulation and interest in learning so that learning can take place well (Hasan et al., 2021).

In the context of learning media, Crossword Puzzles are considered an effective learning tool for expanding students' vocabulary. This media triggers cognitive thinking and promotes students' active interaction with words in a meaningful context. Crosswords are a game that is known to almost all levels of society. The crossword puzzle game is a language game where you fill in the boxes with letters so that words can be read both vertically and horizontally (Dewi & Puspitasari, 2021). According to Saputri (2017), crossword puzzles are very appropriate to apply to theoretical material, such as recognizing the names of objects or foreign names because in this activity students are trained to understand, remember and match words. In line with Revelation in Adha et al (2021). In the research conducted, it can be concluded that providing game methods, especially crossword puzzles, can help students learn vocabulary, of course in a pleasant atmosphere in accordance with the natural conditions of elementary school age children.

In children's learning theory, there is a constructivist approach which emphasizes the learning process through practical experience and interaction with the environment. In this approach, students are considered

as active subjects in learning and are given the opportunity to explore and discover new things independently. Apart from that, the constructivism approach also emphasizes the importance of social interaction and collaboration in the learning process, where students learn from peers and work together in groups (Ningsih, 2019). Thus, the application of Game Based Learning (GBL) using crossword puzzle media is expected to be able to facilitate children's learning more effectively through action-based and participatory learning experiences.

The problem formulation in this research focuses attention on efforts to improve the quality of education in Selat Village. First, this research examines whether the application of Game Based Learning (GBL) is effective in increasing the basic English vocabulary of Selat Village children. This is an important step in responding to educational challenges in rural areas. Apart from that, the research also seeks to understand children's responses to the use of GBL in English language learning. How children respond to these learning methods and the extent to which they are engaged in the learning process are important factors that need to be assessed. Lastly, this research tries to identify the obstacles that may be faced in implementing GBL in the context of Selat Village. By understanding these barriers, we can plan better solutions to address educational challenges in rural areas and ensure that English learning becomes more effective and relevant for children in Selat Village.

This research was carried out as part of Real Work Lecture or in Indonesian called Kuliah Kerja Nyata (KKN) activities with the aim of making a positive contribution to the development of education and English language skills of Selat Village children. It is hoped that the results of this research will provide valuable insight into the effectiveness of GBL in rural education contexts and can serve as a basis for the development of more innovative and relevant learning methods.

B. Research Methods

The implementation method in this research is the PALS (Participatory Action and Learning System) method, which is a participatory approach that involves various parties in planning, implementing and evaluating the actions taken (Jarkiewicz, 2020). In applying the PALS method, students and teachers can actively participate in the learning process and problem solving through games. The PALS approach is supported by the use of crossword puzzle learning media, which is designed to improve the understanding of basic English vocabulary among Selat Village children. This research was carried out in the context of the English Course program, which is a self-help activity carried out by the Scholar KKN group in Selat Village in 2023.

The first step in the PALS method is problem identification. There are several basic problems faced by students, namely 1) students' low mastery of English vocabulary. This causes students' English vocabulary skills to be limited because students do not yet know the meaning of words in English, 2) lack of student motivation to learn English. The results of this problem identification become the basis for designing improvement steps.

After identifying the problem, the next step is planning. In this case, the proposed solution is the application of Game Based Learning (GBL) using Crossword Puzzle media as an innovative and interactive learning tool. Crosswords are a popular game and are familiar to many people, including students. Therefore, using crossword puzzles as a learning medium can attract students' interest and make them more enthusiastic about learning (Wulan, 2017).

The plan to implement crossword puzzles as a learning medium is based on the understanding that crossword puzzles can provide significant benefits in improving students' understanding of basic English vocabulary. In crossword puzzles, students are faced with the task of finding words that match the given definitions. This process effectively expands students' vocabulary and helps them understand the meaning of words in relevant contexts (Aini et al., 2019). Implementing Game Based Learning using crossword puzzles can create an innovative and interactive learning experience for students (Mailis, 2022). Through GBL, students have the opportunity to learn in a more fun and interesting way. Game activities in Game Based Learning create a learning environment that motivates and increases students' interest in learning.

By involving students in the use of crossword puzzles as a learning tool, this research aims to harness the potential of GBL in creating a more meaningful and effective learning experience, while ensuring a better understanding of Selat Village children's basic English vocabulary in a different context. more fun and interactive. Planning includes selecting learning tools, implementation stages, and setting learning targets.

Implementation is the next stage, where GBL TTS is implemented in accordance with the plans that have been made. The implementation of English Course activities with the application of Game Based Learning (GBL) using Crossword Puzzle (TTS) learning media was carried out in Selat village, namely in one of the schools that could be loaned as a place to hold the English Course (ECO), a location that had been chosen as the place implementation of learning programs. This activity was carried out 2 (two) times, each meeting took 1 (one) hour from 14.00 to 15.00, with the following details: (1) Providing materials, (2) Providing training using the Games Based Learning method using crossword puzzle media, (3) Giving a test at the end of each meeting with questions and answers and discussion of crossword puzzle questions. This program facilitates the participation of 20 students who actively participate in learning.

During implementation, the crossword puzzle media that has been prepared is in the form of printable paper to facilitate distribution and use. Crossword puzzle material is designed taking into account the level of difficulty that is appropriate to students' abilities at the basic level. The students were grouped evenly, and each group was given a set of crossword puzzles. The facilitator or teacher guides students in explaining instructions and ensuring understanding of concepts before starting the game.

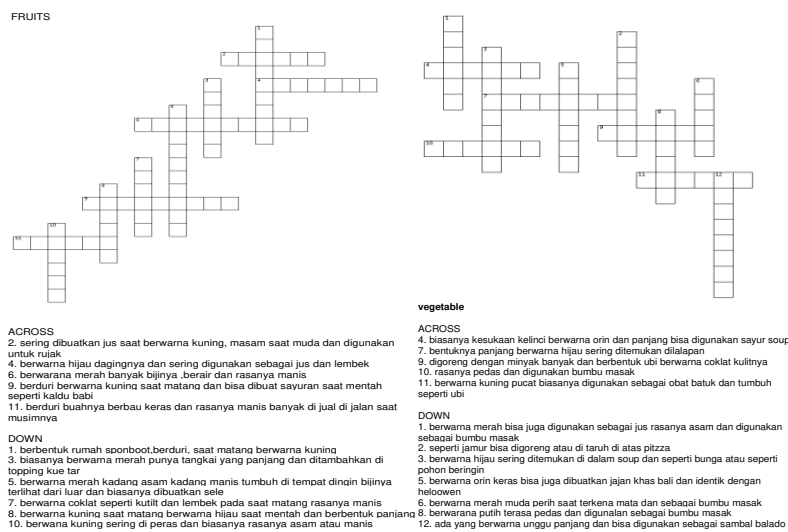


Figure 1. TTS sheet

During the learning session, each group is given the opportunity to work together to complete the crossword puzzles. They are expected to look for words that match the definitions given. The teacher functions as a facilitator who guides and provides direction if necessary. Apart from that, a competitive aspect is also integrated by giving awards or points to each group that successfully completes the crossword puzzles correctly and quickly.



Figure 2. Student responses to GBL

As part of the implementation, monitoring was also carried out on student responses to Game Based Learning (GBL) using Crossword Puzzles. Student interaction, level of participation, and immediate feedback are the focus in evaluating learning effectiveness. Additionally, notes are taken to understand obstacles or challenges that may arise during learning sessions, including time constraints and facility limitations.



Figure 3. Student evaluation

Next, an evaluation is carried out. Evaluation is an important part of the PALS method. All parties are involved in evaluating the impact of GBL TTS on student learning. Evaluation includes measuring increases in vocabulary understanding and student responses to learning methods. Evaluation data is used to reflect on results and plan improvements if necessary.



Figure 4. Reflection stage

Finally, the reflection stage allows all parties to discuss and reflect on the learning process. The evaluation results are used as a basis for designing improvements that may be needed in implementing learning methods. In the context of writing scientific articles, this reflection stage allows researchers to compile findings and discussions based on evaluation data and reflections about the application of Game Based Learning using crossword puzzles.

C. Results and Discussion

The results and findings obtained from this research offer significant insight regarding the effectiveness of implementing Game Based Learning (GBL) with Crossword Puzzle media in improving understanding of basic English vocabulary among Selat Village children. In-depth analysis of the research data revealed a substantial increase in students' understanding of basic English vocabulary after participating in the learning program. Students' scores in the aspects of understanding and memorizing vocabulary have increased

consistently, reflecting the positive impact of the learning approach implemented. This is proven by quite high learning outcomes in understanding and memorizing vocabulary by students. This is in line with research conducted by [Jannah \(2021\)](#) which states that crossword puzzle learning media can improve students' mastery of English vocabulary. Participatory evaluation and assessment of student learning outcomes in Selat Village confirm the positive impact of implementing Game Based Learning Crossword Puzzles in the learning process. In line with this, [Hasibuan \(2018\)](#) stated that Crossword Puzzles have many uses and motivating benefits, students' enthusiasm for learning is increased, so that vocabulary learning results are in the good group. The results of this research illustrate that Game Based Learning Crossword Puzzles succeeded in achieving the main objective of this research, namely increasing students' understanding of basic English vocabulary.

One of the previous studies that supports this research is research conducted ([Perveen et al., 2016](#)). His research concluded that vocabulary mastery was more effectively taught to students through games. Furthermore, through research conducted by [Derakhshan and Khatir \(2015\)](#), the results obtained show that using vocabulary games in learning can make learning more communicative, interesting and effective.

Furthermore, student responses to the GBL crossword puzzles demonstrated a high level of enthusiasm and engagement. Students responded positively to the fun learning atmosphere and challenges presented by Crossword Puzzles. Students are actively involved, show increased interest in learning English, and involve themselves in the learning process with a competitive spirit that drives their motivation. This is in line with research conducted by [Meiriyanti \(2022\)](#) shows that crossword-based English learning is an option to create an interesting atmosphere for students and can increase students' vocabulary.

Student involvement in learning, especially through collaboration in groups, has proven to be effective. Students not only actively participate in searching for crossword puzzle answers, but also interact with each other, support each other, and build mutual understanding. Thus, these positive findings provide a solid basis for the development of sustainable learning programs that can be adopted in educational contexts in rural settings.

However, in addition to the success found in this research, there are a number of obstacles that may be faced in implementing Game Based Learning Crossword Puzzles in the context of Selat Village. One of the main obstacles is the time required to play Crossword Puzzles, which tends to be longer than conventional learning methods. This constraint needs to be taken into consideration in planning and managing learning time. Apart from that, limited facilities, especially in terms of access to digital media, are also a challenge in the Selat Village context. These obstacles must be considered and can be a focus in developing further learning programs in rural environments.

Overall, the results and findings of this research not only provide strong evidence of the success of Game Based Learning Crossword Puzzles in improving students' understanding of English vocabulary, but also provide insight into how this approach can be adapted and applied more effectively in rural environment. The identified obstacles also provide a basis for improvement and development of better programs in the future, thereby creating better learning opportunities for children in Selat Village.

Based on the results and findings of this research, a number of recommendations can be proposed to increase the effectiveness of implementing Game Based Learning (GBL) with Crossword Puzzle media in improving children's understanding of basic English vocabulary in Selat Village. First, it is necessary to develop learning content that is more varied and interesting. Designing content with a variety of colored crossword puzzles and gradual levels of difficulty will maintain student interest and motivation throughout the learning program. Second, it is important to identify digital media solutions that are affordable and easily accessible in rural settings. Although paper crossword puzzles are effective, the use of technology such as crossword puzzles applications can provide additional flexibility and sophistication in learning, ensuring wider access for Selat Village students. Third, increasing participation and support from parents, teachers and local communities is a key factor. Strong collaboration between all stakeholders will increase the effectiveness and sustainability of the program. By involving the entire community, the GBL learning program with crossword puzzles can become more integrated and can provide long-term benefits for the development of education in rural environments.

By implementing these recommendations, it is hoped that the GBL learning program with crossword puzzles can make a significant positive contribution to increasing the English vocabulary of Selat Village students. Along with that, it is hoped that this effort can support the development of education in the rural environment as a whole.

D. Conclusion

This research shows that the application of Game Based Learning (GBL) using Crossword Puzzles media in the English Course program by the 2023 Selat Village Scholar KKN has had a positive impact in improving children's understanding of basic English vocabulary. Game Based Learning (GBL) using Crossword Puzzle media is effective in achieving learning objectives. The positive response and enthusiasm of children towards this learning method also shows that Game Based Learning (GBL) using Crossword Puzzle media can create a fun and interesting learning environment, thereby increasing students' motivation and interest in learning. However, this research also identified a number of obstacles in implementation, such as the time required to play crossword puzzles which tends to be longer than conventional learning methods, and limited facilities, especially in terms of access to digital media. Therefore, recommendations for improving learning programs in the future involve adjusting time, being more efficient in implementation, as well as efforts to mitigate barriers to access to digital facilities in rural environments.

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