

Teaching Vocabulary by Using Crossword Puzzle

Nurul Puspita *, Nurlaily Sabiqoh

UIN Raden Intan Lampung
Email: nurulpuspita17@gmail.com

Abstract. *This research is about teaching vocabulary by using crossword puzzle at the first semester of the seventh grade students of MTs. The objective of this research are to describe process of teaching vocabulary by using crossword puzzle, to describe the teacher's problems and students' problem in teaching and learning process. In this research, the researcher used descriptive qualitative research. The researcher used purposive sampling technique to determine the sample. The researcher chose class VII C as sample which consisted of 30 students. In collecting the data, the researcher used three kinds of instruments, they are: observation, interview, and questionnaire. The researcher used three major of data analysis: they were data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing or verification. From the data analysis, the researcher found in teaching vocabulary by using crossword puzzle at MTs were as follows: The first, the teaching and learning process by using crossword puzzle was running well, the classroom atmosphere was the students looked active in classroom but some of them looked less response. The second, the teacher got some problems. They were: The teacher had difficulties to handling the class because the students made over-crowded by themselves, faulty method of teaching, and demand to share some words of vocabulary in meeting but the students only could master some of them. The third, the students got some problems in learning vocabulary, they were : the students consider the teacher's explanation boring, and they think of vocabulary learning as knowing the primary meaning of new words that are gotten only from textbooks or from the teacher, so it is difficult for them to use the words based on the appropriate context.*

Key words: *crossword puzzle; descriptive qualitative research method; teaching vocabulary*

* Corresponding author

A. INTRODUCTION

Thornburry (2002:13) said that in learning English, there are three basic components that need to be taught, and they are pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary. All of them have important roles that need to be taught, but vocabulary have a big contribution to support the successful students' of learning English, because without grammar very little thing can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed. It means that vocabulary is very important thing in learning English. If the students have lack of vocabulary, they cannot express their ideas, and it is impossible to communicate effectively among people.

Vocabulary is defined as a total number of words and a language, all the words known to person or used, and it is list of words with their meaning (Hornby, 1995: 1331). Furthermore, Lehr, Osborn and Hiebert, in Hanson and Padua (2011:5), state that vocabulary refers to words we use to communicate in oral and print language. Hence, we know that vocabulary is word included in the list which has meaning approvingly, so we use it as language to communicate in oral and print language. It means that in learning vocabulary we have to know the meaning of it and also understand how to use it with suitable context, so at the last we can communicate easily when we have a lot of vocabulary and are able to use them with appropriate context.

Everyone cannot master a lot of vocabulary easily. Nevertheless, even for students, they are demanded to master as much as vocabulary based on the curriculum created by government. Some students can master it easily, but some cannot. Therefore, it needs ways in order to help the students to master vocabulary easily, and one of the ways is by applying game in teaching learning process.

One of the games is crossword puzzle. Crossword puzzle is a game that can be used to teach vocabulary. According to Webster in Tino (2011) crossword puzzle is an arrangement of numbered squares to be filled in with words, in where a letter

is to each square so that a letter appearing in a word placed horizontally is usually also part of a word placed vertically, and numbered synonyms and definitions are given as clues for the words. Moreover, Njoroge, Ndung'u and Ganthigia (2013: 313-321) define that the crossword puzzle is a game that makes the teaching-learning process attractive and funny, and also gives much opportunity for students to practice and repeat the sentence pattern and vocabulary. Then, crossword puzzle is a suitable game used to help students to master vocabulary easily by giving opportunity for them to memorize as much as possible vocabulary, for there will be many words given as cues that should be understood by them in order to be able to fill the squares with the suitable words too.

Crossword puzzle is effective teaching tool of terminology, definitions, spelling and pairing key concepts with related names, resulting in greater retention and memorization of facts (Hadfield, 2004: 89). Because the need to spell items correctly to complete the puzzle, students will be able too to use the words correctly because they connect facts as the puzzle clue to the words which have to be known the spelling.

Teaching is a teacher's work and a need of students in order that the students can do learning. In the case of vocabulary, McCarten (2007: 21) states that learning vocabulary is largely about remembering, and students generally need to see, say, and write newly learned words many times before they can be said to have learned them. The words that have been memorized need to be called and used correctly not only once but for many times in order to be used effectively based on the correct context by the learners. In this case, teaching vocabulary is needed to be done in order that the learners or students are be able to learn the use of appropriate vocabulary based on the context.

Furthermore, Harmer (2007: 17) states that teaching vocabulary is clearly more than just presenting new words. Teacher must be careful in selecting the

vocabulary that he or she will teach. Teacher and students need to know how it task about language at various points during teaching and learning. It means that the students will learn what the teacher ask them to know, but before that the teacher should determine what words that will taught whether it is suitable or not for the students, so the students not only memorize the word but also know the use and context.

Teaching vocabulary plays important role in learning foreign language. Teacher should choose and apply some teaching techniques and media which are suitable with the students' needs based on the curriculum. To achieve the goal of teaching vocabulary is required creativity of teachers to organize learning vocabulary in accordance with the context that will be taught.

Moreover, according Thornbury (2002: 27-28) In teaching vocabulary, the students will know that some words seem easier to learn than others. Some factors that make some words more difficult than others are:

1. Pronunciation; research shows that words that are difficult to pronounce are more difficult to learn. Potentially difficult words will typically be those that contain sounds that are unfamiliar to some groups of learners.
2. Spelling; sound-spelling mismatches are likely to be the cause of errors, either of pronunciation of spelling, and can contribute to a word's difficulty. Words that contain silent letters are particularly problematic.
3. Length and complexity; long words seem to be no more difficult to learn than short ones. Dealing with complex words also tends to be more difficult than the simple one.
4. Grammar; also problematic is the grammar associated with the word. Grammar of phrasal verbs is particularly troublesome.
5. Meaning; when two words overlap in meaning, learners are likely to confuse them. Words with multiple meaning can also be troublesome for learners.

6. Range, Connotation, and Idiomaticity; words that can be used in a wide range of context will generally be perceived as easier than their synonyms with a narrower range. Uncertainty as to the connotations of some words may cause problems too. Words or expressions that are idiomatic will generally be more difficult than words whose meaning is transparent.

In other word, there are many problems arise in teaching vocabulary. The problems come from the teacher and students. Here is the problem from teacher based on Thakur (2013:127-128):

1. Over-crowded classes: teachers of English experience a lot of problems in handling such a big class. It is difficult to pay due attention to individual students and it is very much desirable in English classroom.
2. Lack of competent teachers: Incompetent teachers are the main source of trouble as far as the teaching of English in schools. They are either trained in old methods and have never cared to look for something better in new techniques or there are those who receive new insight but never apply their knowledge to actual teaching work and remain satisfied with routine methods. Sometimes, English is taught by those who did not offer this subject while under training.
3. Faulty methods of teaching: the teaching of English suffers from the faulty methods of teaching. In most of the schools, the Translation Method is the sole favorite with the teachers. The teacher picks up the reader, translates the paragraph, writes the meanings of difficult words on the blackboard and assigns some homework and that is all. No attention is ever paid to pronunciation practice, listening comprehension and structure practice so that when they pass out, they are as ignorant as they were when they first entered the English class.
4. Non-availability of good text-books: the text books of English used in schools are sub-standard. The books are edited or written by those who are not actual

practicing teachers. No effort is made to select beforehand graded vocabulary for use in the text books.

5. Apathy to new techniques and procedures: most of the teachers working in middle and high schools are both ignorant and apathetic to the new techniques and procedures of teaching of English. The new generation of teachers is being given training in new methods but the teachers fail miserably when they are actually put on the job.
6. Inadequate provision of teaching aids: a general survey of teaching in schools would reveal that most of the teaching is being done without the help of any aid. The teacher of English hardly takes any initiative to prepare even simple charts or flashcards which can greatly help them in teaching their subject well.

According to Harmer (2007: 153) in learning a foreign language, vocabulary plays an important role. It is one element that links the four language skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing all together. It provides the vital organs and fleshes to the language, so students should acquire an adequate number of words and should know how to use them accurately in context. How the students can master as many as possible words to use in appropriate context can be difficult for them. Whereas, they have to do it in order to be able to have ability in all of the language skills.

In addition, Azwani (2010:30) states that most students learn vocabulary passively due to several factors as follows:

1. They consider the teacher's explanation for meaning or definition, pronunciation, spelling and grammatical function boring.
2. Students only think of vocabulary learning as knowing the primary meaning of new words.
3. Students usually only acquire new vocabulary through new words in their textbooks or when given by teachers during classroom lessons.

4. Many learners do not want to take risks in applying what they have learnt. Students may recognize a word in a written or spoken form and think that they already “know the word”, but they may not be able to use that word properly in different context.

Moreover, Richard (2002: 298) states that learning is the process by which change in behavior, knowledge, skills, and so on that comes about through practice, instruction or experience and the result of such a process. In addition, according to Brown (2000: 7), learning is acquiring or getting of knowledge of a subject or a skill by study, experience, or instruction. It is a relatively permanent change in a behavioral tendency and the result of reinforced practice. It means that finally there will be change as the result that is gotten through process continuously. Therefore, we can say that the knowledge gotten by the students or learners will last for long time if it is gotten by practicing whether it is by study, experience, or instruction, so finally the knowledge can give effect to their behavior.

To know how crossword puzzle used in teaching vocabulary the researcher use procedures of using crossword puzzle according to Pinuria *et al.*

Pre-teaching activity

1. Teacher greets the students.
2. The teacher checks student’s attendance.
3. After checking students attendance, the teacher reminds the students about previous subject taught in the last meeting.
4. The teacher introduces the new topic to the students.

Whilst-teaching activities

1. The teacher asks the students about the crossword puzzle.
2. The teacher gives an example of the crossword puzzle to the students.
3. The teacher gives assignments to the students.

4. After the teacher checks the answer of students, the teacher discusses with the students to make a sentence using the appropriate words as the crossword puzzle answer.

Post-teaching activities

1. The teacher asks the students about the crossword puzzle.

B. RESEARCH METHOD

This research used the descriptive qualitative research. According to Fraenkel and Wallen (2008:422), qualitative research is the research that investigates the quality of relationships, activities, situations or material. The natural setting is the direct source of data, and the researcher is the key instrument. The data was collected in the form of descriptive data describing a given state of affairs as fully and carefully as possible. This research is included in qualitative research because the researcher will be the main instrument (an observer) in collecting the data in natural setting without doing any manipulation towards the source of data, and the data gotten was explained the real data of the relationships, activities, situations or material.

According to Sugiyono (2012:216), population is generalization area that consists of objects and subjects that have certain quality and character to be learned and to be conducted. In this research, the population was the seventh grade students of MTs Ma'arif Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) 08 Mataram Baru. Furthermore, In this research, the researcher used purposive sampling technique. According to Sugiono (2012:217), purposive sampling is sampling technique to determine the sample by judgment based on a specific purpose such as to balance: focus on research, scientific judgment; reason limited time, energy and money.

Moreover, The researcher was takes the English teacher and one class as a sample of this research, it is appropriate with purposive sampling, that explain sampling is

based on a specific purpose such as to balance: focus on research, scientific judgment, reason limited time, energy and money, and also students of this class have various capability so that the sample represents the population, for the students in this class have various ability.

Sample is a subset of the population (Sugiono, 2012:216). The researcher took class VIIC as the sample of this research. It consists of 30 students. This class was be chosen as sample than other classes with consideration based on the students' score that the researcher gotten in the preliminary research. Their score was almost balance between the number of the students with score more than or same as 70 as the target score and with their less score.

To collect the data, the researcher used some techniques in qualitative research. They are observation, interview, and questionnaire.

Observation is the process of gathering open-ended, firsthand information by observing people and places at a research site (Jhon, 2005:213). The researcher was not involved directly in the classroom activity. In this research, observation was used to get the data about process of teaching learning vocabulary by using crossword puzzle, the teacher's problem in teaching vocabulary by using crossword puzzle and the students' problems in learning vocabulary by using crossword puzzle at the first semester of the seventh grade students of MTs Ma'arif Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) 08 Mataram Baru.

In addition, after observing their teaching learning process, the researcher was interviewing the teacher's problems in teaching vocabulary through crossword puzzle. Interview is a conversation between two people (the interviewer and interviewee) where questions will be asked by the interviewer to obtain information from the interview (Sugiono, 1972:137). Then, this interview aim to

make sure about the result of the observation and to get more data related to this research.

Questionnaire is a list of questions used by researcher to get data from the students directly through a process of communication or ask questions (Jhon, 2016:1). The researcher was gave questionnaire to the students in order to know the further opinions about the students' problem in learning vocabulary by using crossword puzzle at the first semester of the seventh grade students of MTs Ma'arif Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) 08 Mataram Baru.

From the data collection technique above, the researcher made an instrument:

Observation is the process of gathering open-ended, first hand information by observing people and places at a research sites. In this research was used observation manual that the researcher prepared it before. The aspects of teaching learning process are described as follows:

Table 1 Observation Guideline

No	Component of Observation	Pointer of Observation
1	To know the process of teaching learning vocabulary by using crossword puzzle	Seven steps to apply crossword puzzle
2	To know the teacher's problems during the process while applying crossword puzzle	Seven teacher's problems in teaching vocabulary by using crossword puzzle
3	To know the students' problems in learning vocabulary by using crossword puzzle	Four student's problems in learning vocabulary by using crossword puzzle

The research was used one to one type's interview. The researcher was interview an English teacher to obtain the data about the teacher's problems in teaching vocabulary. The guideline of interview can be described as follows:

Table 2 Interview Guideline for the Teacher

No.	Component of Interview
1.	To know the general process of English teaching learning activity, teaching learning vocabulary and by using crossword puzzle.
2.	To know whether crossword puzzle can improve the students' vocabulary mastery.
3.	To know the teacher's problems during the process while applying crossword puzzle in teaching vocabulary.

The researcher was used the questionnaire to get the detail information of students' problems in learning vocabulary through crossword puzzle. The guideline of the questionnaire can be described as follows:

Table 3 Questionnaire Guideline for the Students

No.	Component of Questionnaire
1.	To know the students' motivation and interest in learning vocabulary.
2.	To know the students' improvement in learning vocabulary by using crossword puzzle.
3.	To know the students' problem in learning vocabulary by using crossword puzzle.

To obtain the accurate data, the researcher will follow the procedures of research in the following steps based on Creswell's, Educational Research (7)

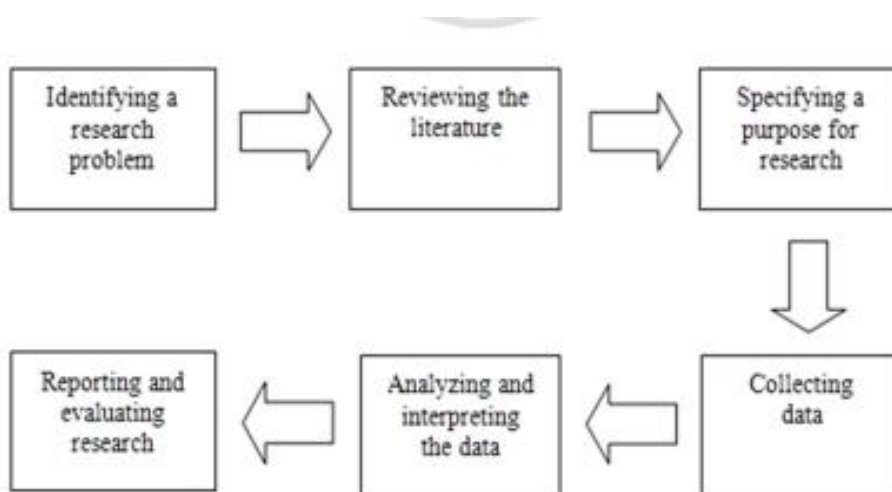


Figure 1 The procedure of research

Data analysis is the process of organizing the data in order to obtain regularity of the pattern of form of the research. According to Miles and Huberman there are three major phrases of data analysis: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing or verification (1994: 12). This following figure illustrates the component of data analysis by Miles and Huberman.

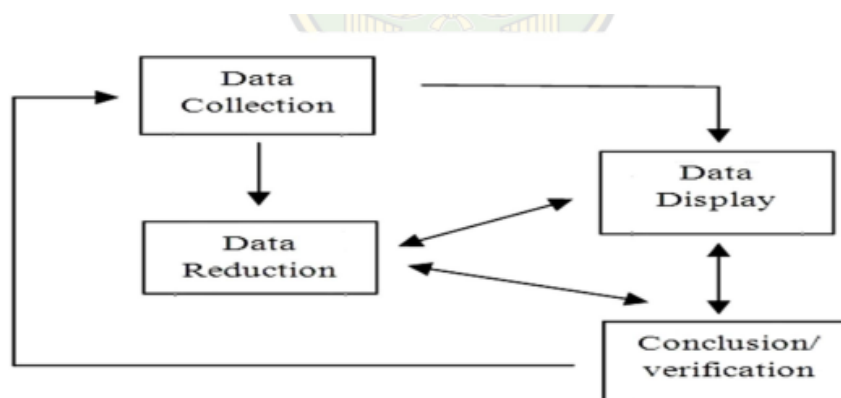


Figure 2 Interactive Model

It shows that qualitative data analysis is a continuous. Issues of data reduction, of display, and of conclusion drawing/verification come into figure successively as analysis episodes follow each other, but the other two issues are always part of the ground. These are clear explanation about data analysis process of this research.

C. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings in this research are seen from three aspects, they are in teaching and learning process, students' problems and teachers problem.

The first, observing teaching vocabulary by using crossword puzzle game was done twice and described as follows:

1. In the first meeting the teacher ran the steps based on Pinuria et al.
 - b) In the second meeting the teacher still run the steps based on Pinuria et al and his own.

2. It could be concluded that teaching vocabulary by using crossword puzzle game was the same of theory of Pinuria

The second, the teacher could run the entire steps in teaching vocabulary. It means that the teacher was competent but she still had difficulties in teaching vocabulary by crossword puzzle game. According to the Thakur (2013: 127-128), there are six problems that may appear to teacher in teaching vocabulary, they are:

1. Over-crowded classes
2. Lack competent teacher
3. Faulty methods of teaching
4. Non-availability of good text books
5. Apathy to new techniques and procedures
6. Inadequate provision of teaching aids.

Based on the result of interview and observation could be concluded that the problems related to the story that appeared in this case was over-crowded class. The teacher could not handle the class well because some students were busy with their own business and had much laugh and kidding. The researcher also concluded that from the observation activity there was no problem appeared because the teacher could run all the steps well. It meant that the teacher was competent enough. The teacher had a good method in teaching. It could be seen from how the way the teacher explained the material. It means that the teacher was not apathy to new technique or procedures and the teacher adequate in teaching. The book that used by the teacher was sub-standard book. It could be concluded that the book used by the teacher was good.

The third, the researcher employed a questionnaire to know the students' problem in learning vocabulary by using crossword puzzle game. According to Azwani,

that there are some problems in learning vocabulary, they are lack of the students consider the teacher's explanation boring, and they think of vocabulary learning as knowing the primary meaning of new words that are gotten only from textbooks or from the teacher, so it was difficult for them to use the words based on the appropriate context.

In this part, the researcher would like to discuss about the findings of the process of teaching vocabulary vocabulary by using crossword puzzle game the students' problems in learning vocabulary and the teacher problems in teaching vocabulary by using crossword puzzle game by the participants of seventh grade of MTs Ma'arif Nahdatul Ulama (NU) 08 Mataram Baru had been observed.

First, From the data gained through observation, the researcher assumed that the teaching and learning process especially vocabulary by using crossword puzzle game was not quite effective. There were many obstacles faced by the teacher and his students, it did not give the big influence for teaching and learning process. Either English teacher or his students could anticipate or solve those obstacles.

The result of interview also showed that almost the problems were caused by the large of students in the class. The teacher had difficulties to calm and handle the students that seemed so noisy during learning activity. The result of questionnaire showed that most of the students had difficulties in learning vocabulary such as they had limited vocabulary, wrong pronunciation and grammar. The students felt shy and afraid to make mistake.

Then, Based on the result of interview and observation can be concluded that the problems related with the story that appeared in this case was over-crowded class. The teacher could not handle the class well because some students were busy with their own business and had much laugh and kidding. The researcher also concluded that from the observation activity there was no problem appeared

because the teacher could run all the steps well. It means that the teacher was competent. The teacher had a good method in teaching. It can be seen from how the way the teacher explained the material. It means that the teacher was not apathy to new technique or procedures and the teacher adequate in teaching. The book used by the teacher was sub-standard book. It can be concluded that the book that used by the teacher was good enough.

The last, After the researcher has analyzed and found the finding of the research, the researcher tried to give contribution of the research to the teaching learning vocabulary for better way. It provides learners with a good encouraging and become positive about their own learning. Moreover, crossword puzzle that had been applied by some teachers is one of the ways that can be used in learning vocabulary because using crossword puzzle can develop the students' vocabulary mastery, exercise their pronunciation, spelling and so on even though either teacher and students still faced some problems when they apply the game. Therefore, actually the teacher can be suggested to apply the game based on expert's theory, so the good result of the using of the game can give good impact to the students' ability in learning vocabulary.

D. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Conclusion

Based on the data analysis, it can be concluded that:

1. The process of teaching and learning vocabulary by using Crossword Puzzle game did not run well. The teachers' problem in teaching and learning vocabulary by using crossword puzzle game were difficulties to calm and control the classes because some students were quite noisy because they were busy with their own activity like chatting and having noisy.
2. The students' problem in learning vocabulary by using crossword puzzle game were lack of the students consider the teacher's explanation boring, and they think of vocabulary learning as knowing the primary meaning of new words

that are gotten only from textbooks or from the teacher, so it is difficult for them to use the words based on the appropriate context. Most of the problem faced by students in learning vocabulary happened

Suggestion

Considering the result of the research, the researcher would like to give some suggestions:

For the Teacher

1. Through crossword puzzle as alternative technique in teaching learning process is a good game to applied in the seventh grade students of MTs Ma'arif Nahdatul Ulama 08 Mataram Baru.
2. The teacher should prepare the material well before teaching by using this strategy such as lesson plan and teaching media.
3. The teacher should manage the class and the time well in order that the implementation of technique can run well and successfully
4. The teacher should be more creative for creating class atmosphere.

For the students

1. The students should be more creative to look for the way to learn English easier at school and have a good motivation in learning and try to practice day by day with friends at school and out of the school.
2. The students should be more serious and never be afraid to make a mistake in learning English.
3. The students should learn and keep trying hard in learning.

For the school

The school provide much more English book to be read by the students so that they can increase their knowledge in learning English especially vocabulary.

provides suggestion(s) related to the upcoming idea(s) coming from the result(s) of the current research.

E. REFERENCES

Azwani. (2010). *Method of Teaching Vocabulary*. Jombang, A Research Paper.

Fraenkel, Jack R. and Norman E. Wallen. (2008). *How to Design and Evaluate Research in Education*. New York: McGraw-Hill

H.D Brown. (2000). *The principle of language learning and teaching*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

Hornby (1995). *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*. New York. Oxford: University Press.

Jack R. Fraenkel and Norman E. Wallen. (2008). *How to Design and Evaluate Research in Education*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Jeanne Mc Carten. (2007). *Teaching Vocabulary, Lesson from the Corpus, Lesson for the Classroom*. Newyork: Cambridge University Press.

Jeremy Harmer. (2007). *The Practice of English Language Teaching*, (New York: Pearson Education Limited.

Jhon W Creswell (2005). *Educational Research*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

Jhon Hendri, *Merancang Kuosioner Riset Pemasaran*, Available on: <http://www.Stm.Kuosioner Riset Pemasaran Universitas Gunadarma, edu, pdf.>, Accesed on February, 25 2016,p.1

John D. Bransford, Ann L. Brown and Rodney R. Cocking. (2000). *How People Learn*. Washington DC: National Academic Press.

Jyoti Thakur, *Journal of Educationia Confab* Vol. 2, No. 1, January 2013: Challenges and Prospects in Teaching English, (Punjab, Chitkara University, 2013), pp. 127-128.

Matthew B. Miles and A. Michael Huberman. (1994). *Qualitative Data Analysis*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Scott Thornburry (2002). *How to Teach Vocabulary*. New York: Longman.

Sugiyono. (2012). *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif, Kuantitatif dan R&D*. Bandung:Alfabeta.

Thornbury, Scott. (2002). *How to Teach Vocabulary*. Harlow: Longman

Susan Hanson and Jennifer F.M. Padua (2011). *Teaching Vocabulary Explicitly*. Honolulu: Pacific Resources for Education and Learning.

M.C., Njoroge, Ndung'u, R.W., and Gathigia. 2013. *International Journal of Current Research Vol. 5(2), 313- 321*: The Use of Crossword Puzzles as a Vocabulary Learning Strategy: A Case of English as a Second Language in Kenyan Secondary Schools. Nairobi: Resources for Education. Available on [:http://www.journalcra.com/article/use-crossword-puzzles-vocabularylearning-strategy-case-english-second-language-kenyan-secon](http://www.journalcra.com/article/use-crossword-puzzles-vocabularylearning-strategy-case-english-second-language-kenyan-secon)

Tino, *Crossword Puzzle*, Available on: <http://ozi379.blogspot.com/2011/04/crosswordpuzzle.html>, 2015, Accessed on December 10th 2015