

## **USING HIDDEN MESSAGE WORD SEARCHES METHOD IN TEACHING ENGLISH VOCABULARY**

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**Abstract :** The purpose of the study was to know whether using Hidden Message Word Searches could show better achievement in vocabulary or not. In this study, there were two groups in this study, such as: experimental and control groups. In other word, the samples were two classes (VIII.2 and VIII.3) in academic year 2011/ 2012. The writer chose them based on their report book and the same teacher of English. The techniques for collecting the data used test and questionnaire. The writer used the quasi-experimental design. As the results, this strategy showed that there was a significant difference between the students who were taught by using hidden message word searches than those who were not. Finally, the results of questionnaire indicated that this strategy was very beneficial as teaching media in vocabulary.

**Keywords:** teaching vocabulary, hidden message word searches

## **INTRODUCTION**

Vocabulary influences someone to have a good communication. As stated by Alqahtani (2015, p.25), vocabulary is a series of single unit of language which has meaning obtained by someone to communicate ideas and to say something meaningfully. Nordquist (2018) also says that vocabulary refers to the words applied by a specific person or group which is also called word stock, lexicon, and lexis.

Since teaching students to learn about vocabulary using an appropriate strategy is assumed to produce a good result, it is necessary for the teacher to find one strategy that can lead to the communicative language teaching classroom. One of the available strategies is hidden message word searches.

According to Bowers (2006), word search puzzles are puzzles which

was made up of letters spell horizontally, vertically, or diagonally. The person who plays it should identify the words and give the mark in the puzzle in the puzzle. These puzzles were not also assist to learn vocabulary, but also to teach the students spelling.

Based on Lizzie (2001), the used of hidden message word searches are useful for the students, namely it assists phonetic and letter recognition when scanning and finding specific groups or letters, increases the brain ability with processing information and picking out the relevant parts of the information, is an excellent activity because using a visual learning style as the information showed visually, is able to improve develop literacy skill using scanning information and letter arrangements, and assists students to improve their spelling ability. Besides, an interesting activity to do is to get children to design their own word searches. This can

incorporate numeracy skills if they do this manually. They may have also provided students with some interesting resources for future lessons.

Based on the writer's observation and interview with some students who took vocabulary subject, she found that students had many difficulties concerning memorizing the detail information of vocabulary and how to differentiate words, such as verb, adjective, noun, and so on. Consequently, students felt burdened with so much work, and this ultimately reduced their motivation and interest to vocabulary. The last, the writer also interviewed the teacher. She mentioned that the students had obstacles in learning vocabulary. They always find some difficulties in learning English vocabulary because they did not know the meaning of the words, got confused to pronounce the words, and always forgot the vocabulary because they

seldom used it in daily life. The writer chose SMP Negeri 33 to the eighth grade students because of the idea above and the writer wanted to improve their motivation to learn vocabulary. Therefore, it was interesting to conduct a research entitled “Using Hidden Message Word Searches Method in Teaching English Vocabulary to the Eighth Grade Students of SMP Negeri 33 Palembang”.

The objective of this study was to find whether or not the students who were taught by using hidden message word searches show better achievement in vocabulary. By doing this experimental research, the writer hopes it would be beneficial for learner and teacher. For instances, they can improve their motivation to learn using this method, develop the strategies in learning English, increase their vocabulary skills, and improve their collection of words.

Furthermore, in this research, there was an example of Hidden Message Word Searches are presented.



Find out the words below.



The task of the students were to find out all of the words from the pictures above which is showed in the example below.

The List of “Hidden Words Searches”:

Koala	Bear	Cat	Zebra	Frog
Horse	Antelope	Vole	Elephant	Snake
Rat	Parrot	Mouse	Tiger	Iguana
Owl	Warthog	Jaguar	Leopard	Girrafe

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study applied the quasi-experimental design, nonequivalent control group design. Meanwhile, there were dependent and independent variables. The dependent variable was “Teaching Vocabulary”, and independent variable was “Hidden Message Word Searches”.

In academic 2011/2012, the population was 266 students. Thus, the writer chose the sample both based on their report book and the same teacher of English. The sample was 40 students which divided into two groups. Therefore, there were not only 20

students in experimental, but also control group.

Moreover, the writer taught the experimental and control groups each for 16 meetings in 90 minutes from 27 July until 17 September 2011. The writer gave pretest and post test. Pretest is used to find vocabulary mastery, and post test is used to know the final result.

Before giving test, the writer tried out the instrument at SMP Negeri 33 Palembang to find reliability and validity. The questions consisted of 30 for essay and 20 for multiple choices.

The instrument was tested to 20 students. The writer wrote the test based on the 2011 English curriculum for junior high school. Another example of the book title is ”Have fun with English Puzzles for children, teenagers, and adults”.

For questionnaire, the writer distributed for experimental group at the end experiment. It consisted of ten

items. The questionnaire is used to get the information about the problems in the school, and to know whether the students like hidden message word searches or not. This questionnaire aimed to find the students like learning vocabulary by using hidden message word searches.

To check the reliability of the test, half-split with Spearman Brown Formula was used. The reliability coefficient is between 0 and 1. In addotion, t-test was used to test the hypothesis. The writer used significant of  $p < 0.05$ . On the other hand, if the value of  $t_{obtained}$  was lower than of value  $t_{table}$  the research hypothesis was rejected. If the value of  $t_{obtained}$  was higher than of  $t_{table}$ , the research hypothesis was accepted. For scoring the test, the writer used FKIP Sriwijaya University scoring system.

**Table 1**  
**Score Interval**

Score	Category
86-100	Excellent
71-85	Good
56-70	Average
41-55	Poor
<40	Failed

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data were obtained from the pretest and the posttest of the both groups. The pretest held previously and the posttest gave beyond the treatment. There were 35 questions to test the vocabulary's achievement. The score ranged from 0-100 which was converted using the score used at Sriwijaya University.

**Table 2**  
**Experimental Group's Score Distribution**

Score Interval	Category	Pretest Frequency		Posttest Frequency	
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
86-100	Excellent	2	10%	13	65%
71-85	Good	10	50%	5	25%
56-70	Average	4	20%	2	10%
41-55	Poor	4	20%	0	0%
0-40	Failed	0	0%	0	0%
Total		20	100%	20	100%

Based on table 2, it showed that in pretest of experimental group, there were some categories, such as: 10% students in excellent, 50% students in good, 20% students in average, and 20% in poor. Besides, in the posttest, there were 65% students in excellent, 25% students in good, and 10% students in average.

**Table 3**  
**Control Group's Score Distribution**

Score Interval	Category	Pretest Frequency		Posttest Frequency	
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
86–100	Excellent	3	15%	7	35%
71–85	Good	8	40%	10	50%
56–70	Average	7	35%	2	10%
41–55	Poor	2	10%	1	5%
0–40	Failed	0	0%	0	0%
Total		20	100%	20	100%

Furthermore, based on table 3, it showed that in pretest of control group, there were some categories, such as: 15% students in excellent, 40% students in good, 35% students in average, and 10% students in poor. Besides, in posttest, there were 35% students in excellent, 50% in good, 10% in average, and 5% students in poor.

**Table 4**  
**Paired Sample T-Test Results**

Group	Test	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	T	df	Sig. (2 tailed)
Experimental	Pretest	24.70	4.473	1.000	6.812	19	.000
	Posttest	30.10	3.959	.885			
Control	Pretest	25.25	3.582	.801	5.517	19	.000
	Posttest	27.70	3.922	.877			

Table 4 showed in experimental group, the mean scores were 24.70 for pretest and 30.10 for posttest. In addition,  $t_{\text{obtained}}$  was 6.812, degrees of freedom was 19, and  $t_{\text{table}}$  was 2.093. Since  $t_{\text{obtained}}$  was higher than  $t_{\text{table}}$ , it showed that there was improvement for students in learning vocabulary. In other words, the students who learned vocabulary using hidden message word searches method had better improvement because it can motivate the students to more memorize vocabulary well.

Besides, in control group, the mean scores were 25.25 for pretest and 27.70 for posttest. Moreover,  $t_{\text{obtained}}$  was 5.517, degrees of freedom was 19, and  $t_{\text{table}}$  was 2.093. Since,

$t_{obtained}$  was higher than  $t_{table}$ , it indicated that there was significant difference for students in conventional method. The students had better improvement because the students had background knowledge about the words so that they knew the meaning of the words.

**Table 5**  
**Independent Sample T-Test Results**

Group		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pretest	Experimental	24.70	20	4.473	1.000	.429	38	1.281
	Control	25.25		3.582	.801			
Posttest	Experimental	30.10	20	3.959	.885	1.926	38	.062
	Control	27.70		3.922	.877			

Based on analysis table 5 above, the results of  $t_{obtained}$  in pretest was 0.429, degrees of freedom was 38, and  $t_{table}$  was 1.686. Besides, the result of  $t_{obtained}$  in posttest was 1.926, degrees of freedom was 38, and  $t_{table}$  was 1.686. Since  $t_{obtained}$  was higher than  $t_{table}$  in posttest, it indicated that the students could improve their knowledge better than before the treatments. Thus, hidden message word searches method was suitable method to improve students'

achievement that made students more enjoyed in learning vocabulary and had fun to learn it. As a result, the students could memorize the words and used it in daily communication.

**Table 6**  
**The Questionnaire Results**

No	Questionnaire	Students' Response	
		Frequency	Percentage
1.	Do you like learning English?		
	a. I like it very much	5	25%
	b. I like it	15	75%
	c. I don't like it	0	0%
	d. I don't like it very much	0	0%
2	What lessons do you like best?		
	a. Listening	3	15%
	b. Reading	9	45%
	c. Speaking	4	20%
	d. Writing	4	20%
3	Do you have difficulties in learning vocabulary?		
	a. It is very difficult	0	0%
	b. It is difficult	6	30%
	c. It is not very difficult	13	65%
	d. It is not difficult at all	1	5%
4.	What difficulties do you often have in learning vocabulary?		
	a. I don't know how to spell the words	4	20%
	b. I don't know how to pronounce the words	4	20%
	c. I don't know the meaning of the words	11	55%
	d. .... (other, mention)	1	5%
5.	Do you follow the lesson well?		
	a. Often	14	70%
	b. Sometimes	6	30%
	c. Seldom	0	0%
	d. Never	0	0%
6.	Does your teacher give you vocabulary practice through media?		
	a. Very often	0	0%
	b. Often	7	35%
	c. Seldom	9	45%
	d. Never	4	20%
7	Has your teacher ever taught vocabulary using Hidden Message Word Searches?		
	a. Yes	0	0
	b. No	20	100%
8	Can Hidden Message Word Searches help you in learning English vocabulary?		
	a. they help very much	8	40%
	b. they help	12	60%
	c. they do not help	0	0%
	d. they do not help at all	0	0%
9.	If you answer the questions number 7 by choosing A or B, in what ways that it can helps you?		
	a. Give the real illustrate about the lesson will be learned	4	20%
	b. Help me more interested in learning English	6	30%
	c. Help me to think and make the words	9	45%
	d. .... (others, mention)	1	5%
10.	Can the Hidden Message Word Searches method make you more focus to learn vocabulary?		
	a. Often	17	85%
	b. Sometimes	3	15%
	c. Seldom	0	0%
	d. Not at all	0	0%

Additionally, based on the results of the questionnaire in table 6, it showed that 75% students loved to learn English, 45% students loved to read, 65% students was not very difficult in learning, 55% students did not know the meaning of the words, 70% students followed the lesson well, 45% students seldom got the vocabulary lesson through media, 100% students said that the teacher never taught vocabulary by using hidden message word searches, 60% students said that hidden message word searches could help them in learning English vocabulary, 45% students said that hidden message word searches helped them more interested in learning English, and 85% students said that hidden message word searches could make them more focus to learn vocabulary.

Based on above explanation, the writer found that teaching vocabulary through hidden message word searches

activity can be encouraged as one of the activities in learning vocabulary, especially for the eighth grade students of junior high school.

## **CONCLUSION**

There are four conclusions are drawn in this study. First, the writer concludes that teaching vocabulary through hidden message word searches is very useful for the students. They got better scores than before the treatment. Second, due to the result of the questionnaire, this method was helpful for the students to add theirs' new vocabulary. This word search made them curious in getting new vocabulary. Third, it could make students more effective to learn new words. Fourth, it also could make them more creative and innovative at how to remember and spell the words. Therefore, hidden message word searches can be recommended as one of the techniques



for teaching and learning process, especially, in learning vocabulary. In other word, it is believed that this activity could increase the students' achievement in vocabulary.

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