# INVESTIGATING
# SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS
# IN LEARNING VOCABULARY
# THROUGH CROSSWORD PUZZLE GAME



## WULAN CAHYA KARARAH

### NIM. 2521009

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## A THESIS

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of *Sarjana Pendidikan* in English Education

**By:**

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**ENGLISH EDUCATION DEPARTMENT**
**FACULTY OF EDUCATION AND TEACHER**
**TRAINING UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI**
**K.H ABDURRAHMAN WAHID PEKALONGAN**
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**2025**

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Dengan ini saya:

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      Dengan ini menyatakan bahwa skripsi yang berjudul **"Investigating Senior High School Students in Learning Vocabulary Through Crossword Puzzle Game"** ini benar-benar karya saya sendiri. bukan jiplakan dari karya orang lain atau pengutipan yang melanggar etika keilmuan yang berlaku, baik sebagian atau seluruhnya. Pendapat atau temuan orang lain yang terdapat dalam skripsi ini dikutip berdasarkan kode etik ilmiah. Apabila skripsi ini terbukti ditemukan pelanggaran terhadap etika kelimuan, maka saya secara pribadi bersedia menerima sanksi hukum yang dijatuhkan.

      Demikian pernyataan ini saya buat dengan sebenar-benarnya.

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*Assalamu 'alaikum Wr.Wb.*

    Setelah diadakan penelitian dan perbaikan, maka bersama ini saya kirimkan naskah Skripsi :

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NIM           : 2521009

Jurusan       : FTIK/Tadris Bahasa Inggris

Judul         : Investigating Senior High School Students' in Learning Vocabulary Through Crossword Puzzle Game

Dengan ini mohon agar skripsi tersebut segera dimunaqosahkan.

    Demikian nota pembimbing ini dibuat untuk digunakan sebagaimana mestinya. Atas perhatian bapak/Ibu, saya sampaikan terima kasih.

*Wassalamu'alaikum Wr.Wb.*

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## APPROVAL SHEET

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# MOTTO

*"The greatest cowardice is to prove our strength against another's weakness."*

*(Jacques Audiberti)*

# ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini dilatarbelakangi oleh pentingnya penguasaan kosakata bahasa Inggris bagi siswa SMA sebagai dasar keterampilan berbahasa, namun pembelajaran kosakata sering dianggap membosankan dan monoton. Beberapa penelitian sebelumnya telah mengeksplorasi berbagai media pembelajaran kreatif, tetapi penggunaan crossword puzzle game sebagai media untuk mendukung pembelajaran kosakata dengan pendekatan Self-Regulated Learning (SRL) masih jarang dikaji. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengisi kekosongan tersebut dengan menginvestigasi bagaimana siswa SMA mempelajari kosakata melalui permainan teka-teki silang dengan memanfaatkan strategi SRL. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan desain studi kasus, melibatkan tiga siswa SMA yang dipilih sebagai partisipan, dengan pengumpulan data melalui catatan harian (diary) dan wawancara semi-terstruktur selama dua minggu. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa siswa mampu menjalankan tiga fase utama SRL perencanaan, pelaksanaan, dan refleksi dengan menunjukkan motivasi belajar yang tinggi, strategi belajar mandiri yang bervariasi, serta kemampuan mengevaluasi dan menyesuaikan pembelajaran mereka secara reflektif. Namun, siswa menghadapi tantangan seperti petunjuk teka-teki yang membingungkan, kosakata baru yang sulit, dan gangguan belajar di rumah. Implikasi dari penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa permainan teka-teki silang dapat menjadi media alternatif yang efektif dan menyenangkan untuk mendukung pembelajaran kosakata jika diintegrasikan dengan strategi SRL yang tepat.

**Kata kunci**: Self-Regulated Learning (SRL), kosakata, crossword puzzle game, siswa SMA

# ABSTRACT

This study is based on the importance of English vocabulary mastery for senior high school students as a foundation for language skills. However, vocabulary learning is often perceived as boring and monotonous. Several previous studies have explored various creative learning media, but the use of crossword puzzle games as a medium to support vocabulary learning through the Self-Regulated Learning (SRL) approach remains underexplored. Therefore, this study aims to fill that gap by investigating how senior high school students learn vocabulary through crossword puzzle games by applying SRL strategies. This research employs a qualitative method with a case study design, involving three senior high school students as participants. Data were collected through diaries and semi-structured interviews over a two-week period. The findings reveal that students are able to engage in the three main phases of SRL planning, performance, and self-reflection demonstrating high learning motivation, varied independent learning strategies, and the ability to evaluate and adapt their learning processes reflectively. However, students also face challenges such as confusing puzzle clues, unfamiliar vocabulary, and learning distractions at home. The implications of this study suggest that crossword puzzle games can serve as an effective and enjoyable alternative medium for supporting vocabulary learning when integrated with appropriate SRL strategies.

*Keywords*: Self-Regulated Learning (SRL), vocabulary, crossword puzzle, senior high school students

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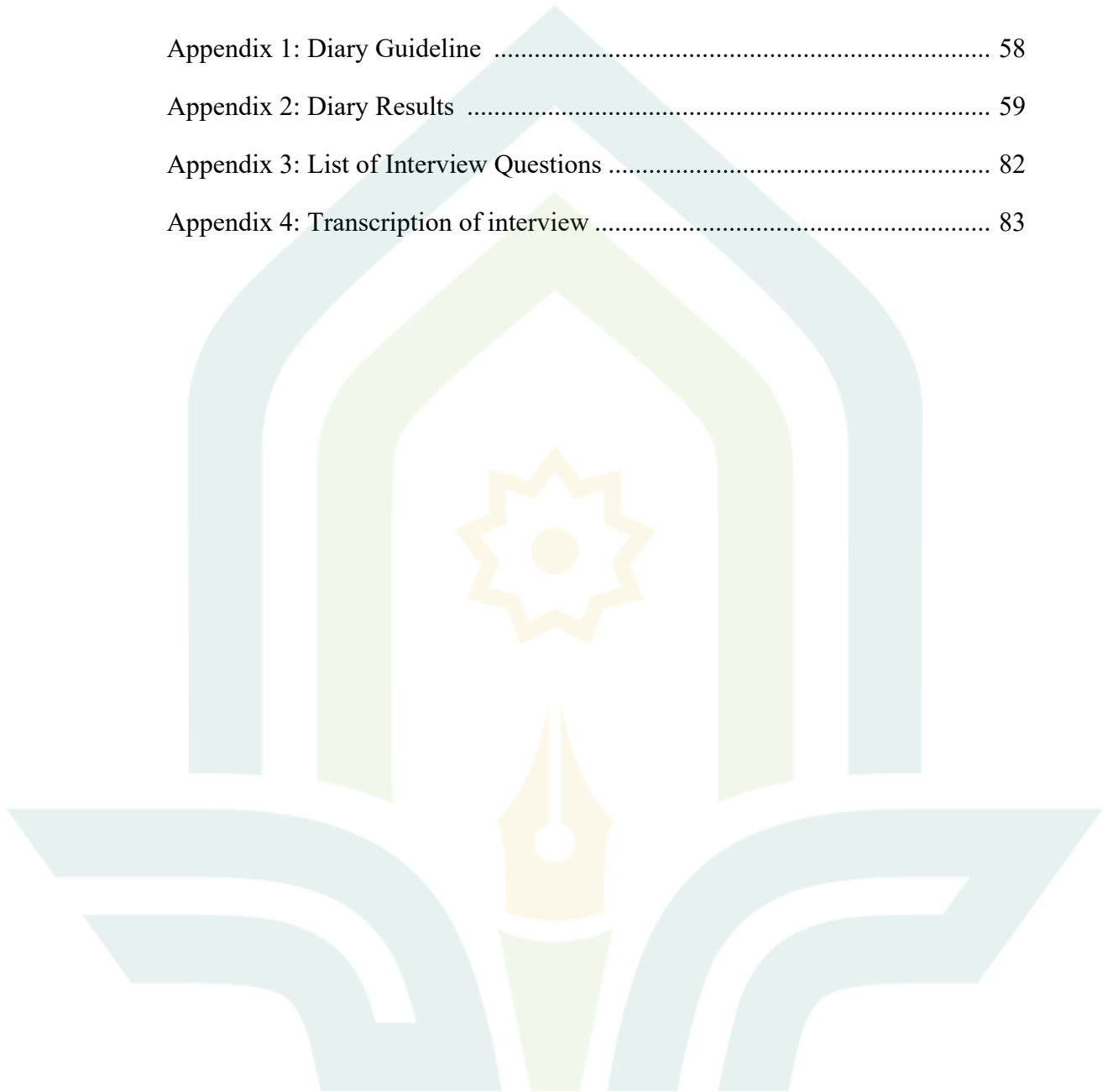
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The Writer

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# CHAPTER I
# INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background

Vocabulary is a fundamental component that serves as the foundation for reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills (Tarigan, 1984). A good command of vocabulary enables students to understand texts, communicate effectively, and express their thoughts clearly. The conventional teaching methods applied in schools not enough to improve students' vocabulary because the advancement of time, vocabulary continues to expand and evolve (Nation, 2001). Therefore, there is a need for a more innovative, creative, independent, and enjoyable approach so that students can master vocabulary efficiently, systematically, and in accordance with the demands of the times (Schmitt, 2000).

One innovative approach in learning is the use of crossword puzzles. This game is an interactive method that involves searching for words based on numerical clues in the puzzle boxes (Collins, 2006). In addition to being engaging, crossword puzzles offer numerous benefits, such as increasing student learning activity and their learning outcomes. In addition, crossword puzzles also contribute to the efficiency of independent learning outside of school, as they allow students to study more flexibly according to their time and ability. While solving puzzles, students learn in a relaxed, focused, and calm atmosphere, which can enhance their memory (Syofiani et al., 2019).With this game, students can repeat and deepen their understanding of vocabulary, while practicing critical thinking and problem-solving skills, so that the learning process becomes more effective, fun and sustainable. Furthermore, this game can also broaden students' horizons and increase their interest and participation in the learning process (Melasari et al., 2019).

With the increased interest and participation of students in the vocabulary learning process, the success rate in mastering vocabulary also rises. A strong command of vocabulary has been

shown to enhance students' ability to interact in English, both in extracurricular activities and in intensive English classes (Holidazia & Rodliyah, 2020). Good vocabulary not only includes the ability to memorize and spell words but also an understanding of how to use words in the appropriate context. The ability to comprehend vocabulary in context helps students interpret meanings according to situations, thereby improving their communication skills (Thornbury, 2002). This indicates that having a broad vocabulary not only supports academic success but also strengthens everyday communication competence (Holidazia & Rodliyah, 2020).

Understanding vocabulary in context is also crucial for high school students in comprehending academic texts, communicating confidently, and effectively developing ideas (Grabe & Stoller, 2002). Although the benefits of crossword puzzles in vocabulary learning have been widely recognized, many high schools in Indonesia still rely on conventional methods that focus on memorization without context. This often makes it difficult for students to understand vocabulary deeply and hinders their ability to use it effectively. Previous research, such as that conducted by Utami (2014), has explored the use of crossword puzzles to enhance vocabulary. However, that study only highlighted student participation in class and general aspects of vocabulary without delving into self-regulated learning and understanding words in a broader context.

Based on observations during a teaching practicum at a senior high school in Pekalongan, it was found that students often struggle to understand vocabulary in certain contexts, which affects their ability to communicate and comprehend English texts. In addition, vocabulary learning methods used in the classroom tend to be monotonous, causing students to feel bored and less motivated to study vocabulary in depth. Therefore, this study aims to explore how crossword puzzles in self-regulated learning can help students understand vocabulary in relevant and authentic contexts. This research is expected to improve students' mastery and effective use

of vocabulary, as well as contribute to the development of more innovative and engaging vocabulary learning methods.

## 1.2 Formulation of the Problem

1. How does the use of crossword puzzle games help senior high school students in learning English vocabulary?
2. What are the challenges for senior high school students in learning vocabulary through crossword puzzle game?

## 1.3 Aims of the Study

1. To investigate how crossword puzzle games help senior high school students in learning English vocabulary..
2. To identify the challenges for senior high school students when learning vocabulary through crossword puzzle game.

## 1.4 Operational Definitions

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Senior High School Students | : | According to the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture (Kemdikbud, 2020), senior high school refers to the formal education level in Indonesia that comes after junior high school and typically includes students aged 15 to 18 years. In the context of this study, senior high school is operationally defined as an educational institution that serves students in grades 10 to 12, where they are expected to develop more advanced academic skills, including English language proficiency. Senior high school students are generally at a cognitive and emotional developmental stage where they are capable of abstract thinking, self-regulation in learning, and engaging in complex tasks such as critical reading, vocabulary development, and problem-solving. |
| 2. Vocabulary | : | According to Snow (2010), vocabulary refers to the collection of words known and used by an individual or a group of people in a particular language, serving as the foundation of |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | | communication by enabling individuals to convey meaning, express ideas, and understand others. In the context of this study, vocabulary is defined as a crucial element in mastering the English language, encompassing not only the recognition of word forms but also the understanding of meanings, appropriate usage in context, and the ability to recall and apply words in both written and spoken communication. Therefore, vocabulary is understood as an essential component of language proficiency that directly supports students' abilities in reading, writing, listening, and speaking in English. |
| 3. | Crossword Puzzle Game | In the context of this study, a crossword puzzle is defined as an instructional medium in the form of a game that requires participants to guess and fill in words into blank boxes based on given clues or definitions, in which the boxes consist of black and white squares arranged horizontally and vertically, with the black squares functioning as separators between words (Wahyuningsih, 2009). This game does not only rely on the ability to recall vocabulary but also demands critical thinking skills, contextual reasoning, and the ability to connect clues with existing language knowledge. Therefore, in this study, a crossword puzzle is understood as an interactive and challenging learning activity that encourages students to actively engage in the process of discovering, understanding, and applying English vocabulary. |

## 1.5 Significances of the Study

1. **Theoretical use** : This study is expected to provide significant contributions to language learning theory, particularly in the context of teaching vocabulary through game-based methods.

2. **Empirical use** : These findings can be a reference for other researchers who want to develop similar learning methods or compare results with other learning approaches.

3. **Practical Use** : Practically, the results of this study can provide real examples for teachers in designing interesting and effective teaching methods to teach vocabulary.

# CHAPTER V
# CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

## 5.1 Conclusion

Based on the findings, using crossword puzzle games has been shown to help senior high school students learn English vocabulary independently through the Self-Regulated Learning (SRL) approach. The three participants were able to apply the three SRL phases forethought, performance, and self-reflection by setting learning goals, choosing suitable strategies, creating a supportive learning environment, and evaluating their learning process and results. These findings show that crossword puzzles are not only fun and interactive but also effective in helping students develop independent learning skills. Students can use games like crossword puzzles as an enjoyable learning tool and become more confident in managing their own learning outside of formal class hours.

However, the students also faced several challenges when learning vocabulary through this game, such as unclear instructions, unfamiliar vocabulary, and noisy learning environments at home. Despite these challenges, the participants found ways to overcome them by using dictionaries, asking friends, or choosing better times and places to study. This shows that learning challenges can help students build perseverance and independence. In this way, students learn to be more proactive in identifying learning problems and developing strategies to solve them.

## 5.2 Suggestion

Based on the results of the study, the researcher suggests that English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners utilize crossword puzzle games as an enjoyable and effective alternative learning medium to support independent vocabulary learning. Through this game, students can train themselves to manage their own learning process while also increasing their motivation and persistence in learning English vocabulary.

However, this study has several limitations, including the small number of participants only three students and the specific context limited to one school with a particular background. Therefore, future researchers are encouraged to involve more participants with diverse backgrounds and conduct the study in different learning contexts. In addition, future studies are expected to explore other types of educational games that support independent learning strategies in vocabulary acquisition.

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