

Creating CAVEs with Hot Potatoes and Vocabulary Manager

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Abstract

Vocabulary mastery plays a significant role in using a language. Knowledge of words enables us to express our thoughts in various ways. Nevertheless, the fast development in science and technology has also increased the number of novel words. This issue is even more evident in English language which always welcomes new words from various sources and creations, due to its position as a global language. Concerning to this, English language teachers need to be able to create innovative vocabulary exercises promptly to keep abreast with the emergence of new vocabulary. The matter is even higher for teachers of English for Academic Purposes where the technical vocabulary materializes over time. Fortunately, the advancement of technology has resulted in user-friendly computer applications which can help teachers to overcome this matter.

This paper discusses two user-friendly computer programs for creating vocabulary exercises, thus the name given is CAVEs (Computer-Assisted Vocabulary Exercises). The first computer program, Hot Potatoes, enables teachers to create interactive CAVEs, e.g. crosswords, matching, and cloze-tests, by simply entering the data and pressing the buttons which are readily comprehensible to average users. The second program is Vocabulary Manager which is like an electronic flash card system with audio. It can be used to create a database of vocabulary items with an image and two audio recordings (one for a 'citation' form and one for the 'in context' form) for each item. The database can be easily modified any time to meet the recent development.

Keywords: Vocabulary, English for Academic Purposes, Technical Vocabulary, Crosswords, Matching, Cloze-Tests, Electronic Flash Cards.

I. Introduction

The significant role of vocabulary in language learning has been pointed out by several linguists (Wilkins 1972, Rivers 1983, and Nation 2001). Wilkins (1972: 111) stated the role of vocabulary by arguing that without grammar very little can be conveyed, while without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed. This is definitely applicable to many languages. If we do not know any words of the other language, it is impossible to say

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anything in that language. The importance of learning vocabulary is also supported by Rivers (1983:125) who mentions that the acquisition of an adequate vocabulary is essential for successful second language use because, without an extensive vocabulary, we will be unable to use the structures and functions we may have learned for comprehensible communication. The extensive coverage of vocabulary induces Nation (2001:11-12) to classify vocabulary into four kinds, i.e. high frequency words, academic vocabulary, technical vocabulary, and low frequency words

The large quantity and range of vocabulary is also noted by Crystal (2003: 117) who said that vocabulary is the Everest of a language. English language is one of the languages that always welcomes new words into its vocabulary. Consequently, the number of words in the English lexicon is becoming higher and higher. *Oxford English Dictionary* (1992) claims that it includes over 500,000 entries. Nevertheless, the true figure of the English lexicon is a definitely a lot higher than that. Crystal (2003: 126) said that over 350 languages are on record as sources of English language present-day vocabulary.

Considering the rapid changes in the vocabulary, it is necessary for language teachers to have the appropriate tools for coping with the matter. Language teachers should have and know the right computer programmes that will enable them to include new words in teaching and use the new words in the vocabulary exercises. Thus, students will also be exposed to new words and enjoy doing the exercises which have been designed interactively. Two computer programmes which I believe have been highly beneficial for creating Computer-Assisted Vocabulary Exercises (CAVEs) are Hot Potatoes and Vocabulary Manager. HOT POTATOES is created by the Research and Development team at the University of Victoria, whereas Vocabulary Manager is created by Lexicon Consulting and published by SIL International.

II. Creating CAVEs with Hot Potatoes

Hot Potatoes consists of five programs. However, for practical reason and in accordance to the topic of this paper, only three authoring tools are described here, i.e. JCross, JMatch and JCloze programs. Hot Potatoes is not a freeware. However, it is offered free to the educational community for use by state educational institutions which are non-profit making, on the condition that the material produced using the

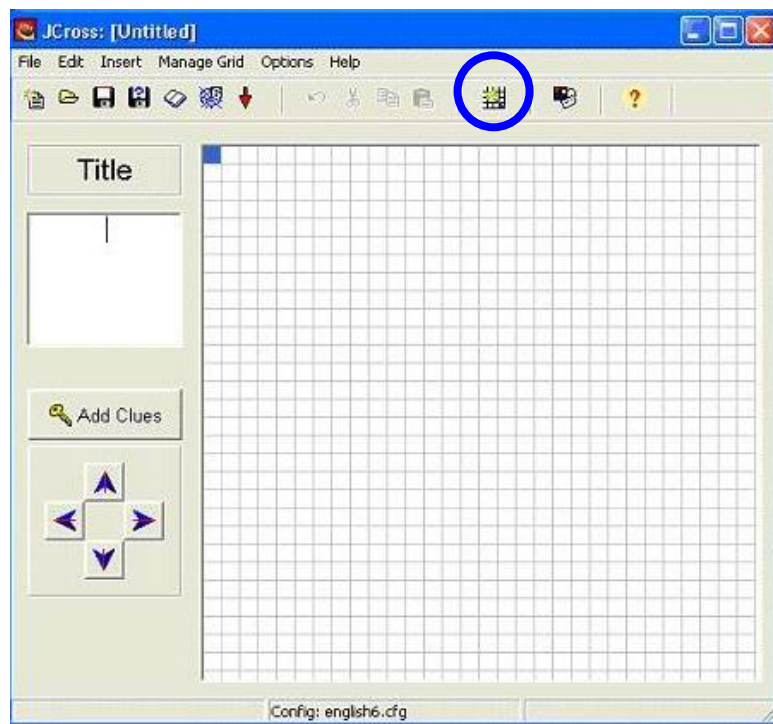
program is freely available to anyone via the WWW. After Hot Potatoes is installed, it has to be registered at <http://web.uvic.ca/hrd/hotpot/register.htm>

2.1 Crosswords

JCross is a program that can create crosswords simply by typing the list of words. Teachers do not need to concern whether or not the words will be suitable for building a crossword, because the program will arrange them automatically. In general, there are four steps to create crosswords CAVEs, i.e. (1) Entering the words, (2) Making the grid automatically, (3) Adding the clues, and (4) Creating the Web page.

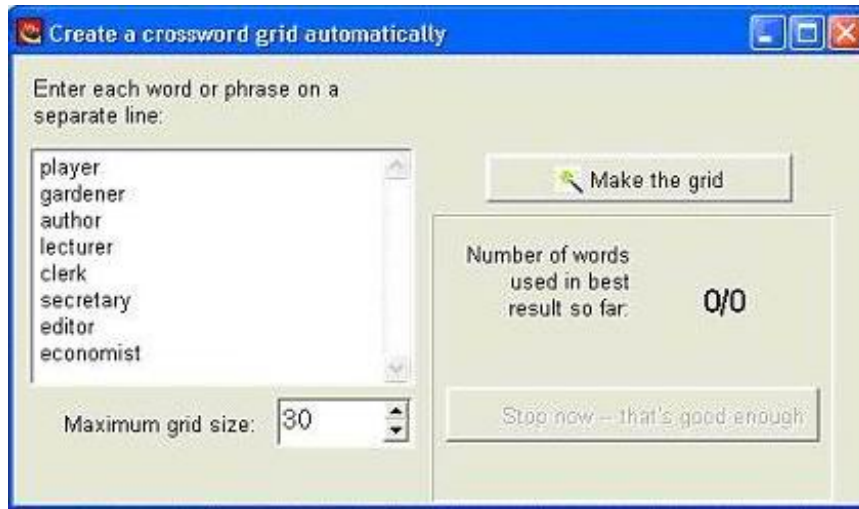
After the JCross icon is clicked, the image shown in figure 1 will appear. Next, click the third button from the right (shown in the blue circle) to open the screen for entering the words. That button is used for creating a grid layout automatically from a list of words.

Figure 1 JCross Interface



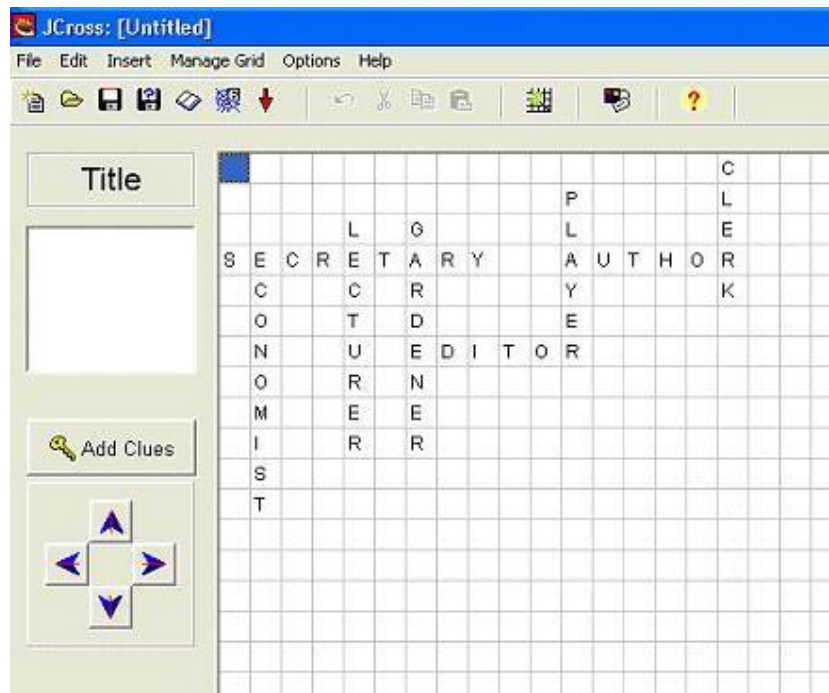
The next screen shown after the button is pressed is shown in Figure 2. Teachers should now type the words on separate lines. The size of the grid can be determined by the teachers themselves. Virtually any size of grid can be created by this program.

Figure 2 Entering the Words



After entering all of the words, click the button “Make the grid” to create the crossword automatically. The result is shown in figure 3.

Figure 3 Creating the Grid



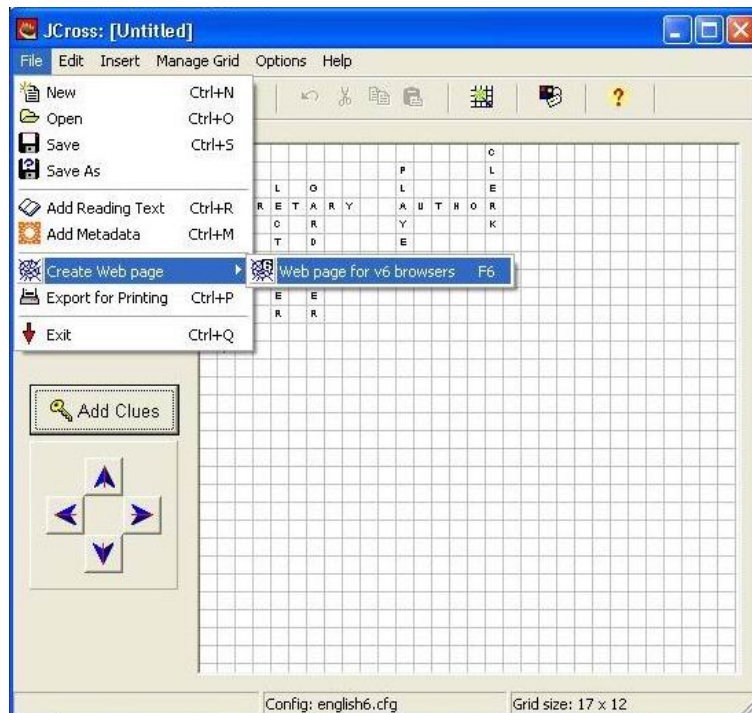
The clues for all of the words can be added by pressing the “Add Clues” button. The view is shown in figure 4. Teachers can simply click the word and add a clue for the word, then press enter or the OK button on the right side.

Figure 4 Adding the clues



If all words have been given the appropriate clues, click the OK button at the bottom of the screen. The next screen appeared is similar to the one shown previously in figure 3. Now, the last step is creating the web page by clicking “File”, “Create web page”, then “Web page for v6 browsers.” This is shown in figure 5.

Figure 5 Creating the web page



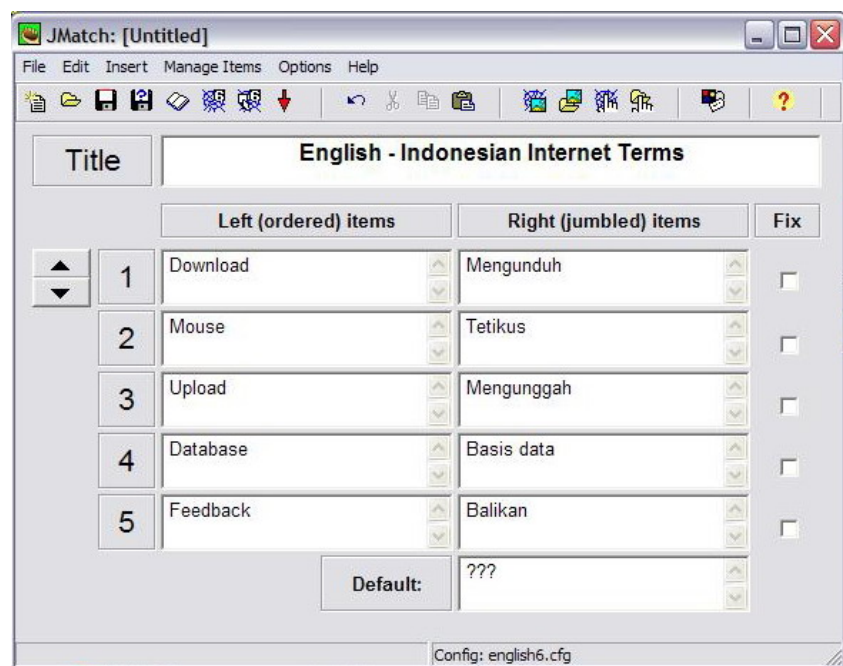
The final result is a file with an .html extension. This type of file can be opened by any Internet browser either online or offline. After opening the file, the student can see the crossword directly. The student can then click on any number in the crossword to see the clue. The student can type in the answer and press enter to see whether it is correct or incorrect. There is also a hint button which allows the student to request a free letter if help is needed.

2.2 Matching

JMatch is a program that can create interactive matching exercises by typing the list of words in order and let the program to jumble the order automatically. The standard output exercise is drag-and-drop. Basically, there are only two steps to create this type of CAVE, i.e. Entering the words and Creating the Web page.

After the JMatch icon is clicked, the image shown in figure 6 will appear. Next, teachers can simply type the title of the exercise, and enter the words. The left side consists of the ordered items, and the right side comprises the item that will be jumbled by the program. The one shown is figure 6 is an example of matching English terms with their Indonesian language equivalents. The web page is created in the same way for JCross, i.e. click “File”, “Create web page”, then “Web page for v6 browsers.”

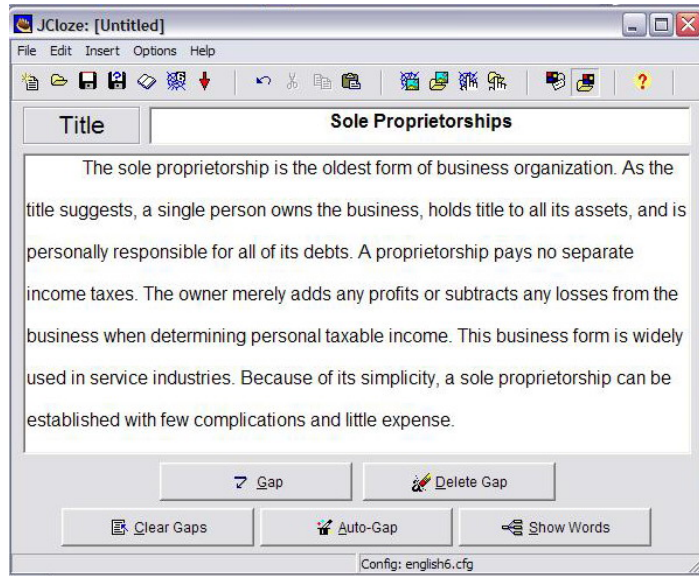
Figure 6 JMatch Interface



2.3 Cloze Tests

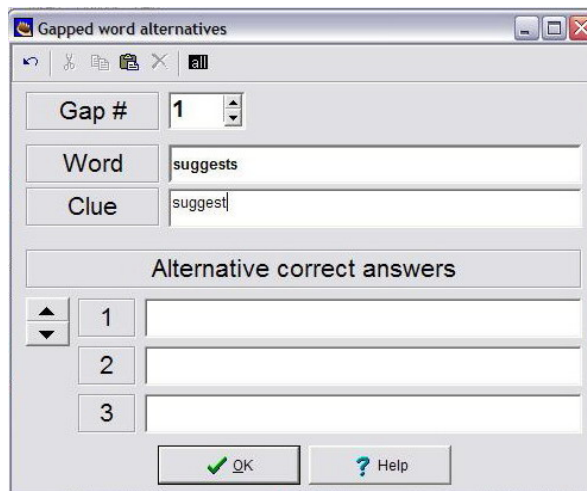
The JCloze program creates gap-fill exercises. In general, there are four steps to create crosswords CAVEs, i.e. (1) Pasting the paragraph, (2) Selecting the gaps, (3) Adding the clues, and (4) Creating the Web page. The paragraph to be used in making the cloze test can be pre-typed in an MS Word Program or taken from the Internet. The teacher simply needs to select the paragraph, press Control C, put the cursor in the JCloze box, then press Control V. The result is shown in figure 7.

Figure 7 JCloze Interface



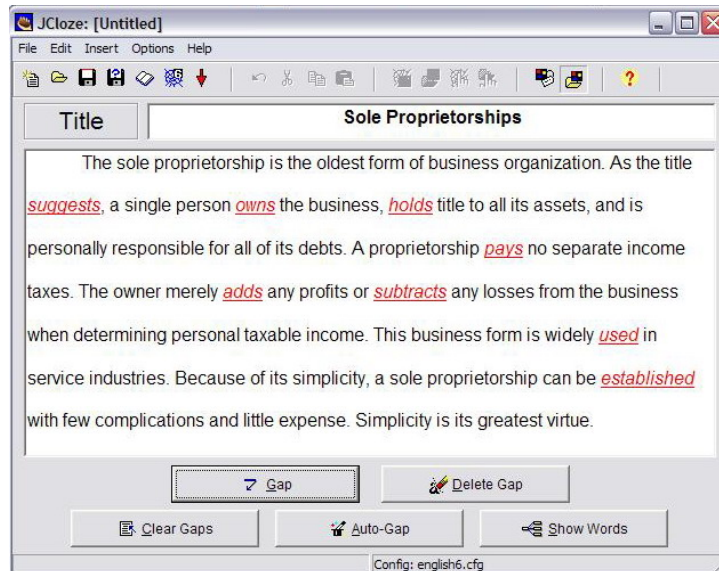
The gaps can be created by selecting the appropriate words, then click the Gap button. The teacher can also give a clue for the answer. This is shown in figure 8.

Figure 8 Adding Clues



After all the gaps are selected, as shown in figure 9, the web page can be created in the same way for JCross and JCloze, i.e. click “File”, “Create web page”, then “Web page for v6 browsers.”

Figure 9 Adding Clues



III. Creating CAVEs with Vocabulary Manager

Vocabulary Manager is an electronic flash card system created by Lexicon Consulting. It was originally designed as a way of keeping track of the words and phrases being learned and to have the ability to review them at will and as often as necessary without boring a native speaker to death. In language teaching, it can be used by teachers to create electronic flash cards which can be used to check the students understanding about the new vocabulary.

In general, Vocabulary Manager is more difficult than Hot Potatoes. However, the data which can be included and arranged in the Vocabulary Manager are a lot more. The flash cards created not only incorporate sounds but also video files. This is particularly useful for explaining action verbs which are difficult to be explained by a single still image, e.g. showing the word “clapping” with a still image is not as effective as showing it with a video file.

Vocabulary Manager is a freeware, but the program does not contain any picture or sound files. Teachers should add the pictures and sounds by themselves. This task is time-consuming; however, it does not need to be completed all at once. The

utterances can be added over time. It is necessary for teachers to spend a good amount of time to record the sounds and search the right pictures in the Internet to add new utterances.

After the sounds and pictures are collected, it is the time to create a database. After opening the Vocabulary Manager, click 'File' and choose 'New'. After that, type the name of the database and click OK. You will also be asked to enter a user name, and click OK. To add a new word, click 'Utterance' and choose 'New.' The interface is shown in figure 10. In that picture, you can see the titles 'Reference', 'Gloss', 'Audio File Path', and 'Picture File Path'. In general, 'Reference' can be considered the Target Language, while 'Gloss' is the Source Language. Another essential aspect of Vocabulary Manager is the ability to incorporate various types of orthographic representations. However, it is necessary to install Keyman program to the computer.

Figure 10 Adding an Utterance to Vocabulary Manager

The screenshot shows a 'New Utterance' dialog box with the following fields and controls:

- Parent Folder: parallelograms
- Reference: [empty text box]
- Gloss: [empty text box]
- Orthographic Representation: [empty text box]
- Secondary Representation: [empty text box]
- Audio File Path (context): [empty text box]
- Audio File Path (citation): [empty text box]
- Picture File Path: [empty text box]
- Date Elicited: 3/18/2007 8:58:25 PM
- Exclude from Random list selection (for all users)?
- Buttons: OK, Cancel, Sync, Paste, Play, View, Modify Note

The text box 'Audio File Path' is used to refer to the file which contains the pronunciation of the source language. Next, the Picture File Path text box is used to put

the picture into the database. An example of an electronic flash card created with Vocabulary Manager is shown in figure 11.

Figure 11 Electronic Flash Card created with Vocabulary Manager



IV. Conclusion

The two computer programs explained in this paper have been used by many teachers and linguists to provide Computer-Assisted Vocabulary Exercises (CAVEs). Both Hot Potatoes and Vocabulary Manager are created using computer programming language, but teachers do not need to know how to make them. What teachers need to know is how to make use of them. Computer programs should be considered like spectacles; we do not need to know how to make them, but we know how to use them and take advantage of them.

As we realize that the vocabulary of a language expands and changes rapidly, it is essential for teachers not to rely only on textbooks for new vocabulary. The Internet definitely provides newer vocabulary. Therefore, teachers should make use the Internet and the user-friendly computer programs to provide up-to-date and more interactive materials in teaching.

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