Implementing the Use of Flashcards to Improve Students' Vocabulary Mastery; Classroom Action Research

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Abstrak

Salah satu masalah yang menyebabkan siswa mengalami kesulitan dalam meningkatkan kemampuan bahasa Inggris mereka adalah kurangnya penguasaan kosakata. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui apakah penggunaan media pembelajaran flash card dapat meningkatkan penguasaan kosakata siswa. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain penelitian tindakan kelas dengan metode kuantitatif yang dilakukan pada siswa kelas empat di SDN Pondok Jagung Timur di Tangerang Selatan. Peneliti mempresentasikan hasil dan analisis data yang dikumpulkan yang terdiri dari pre-test, siklus 1, dan post-test. Setiap siklus penelitian terdiri dari kegiatan perencanaan, tindakan, observasi, dan refleksi. Dalam penelitian ini, ada beberapa langkah sebelum siklus 1, yaitu observasi dan pre-test. Langkah terakhir setelah siklus 1 adalah post-test. Hasil dari penelitian menunjukkan bahwa flash card dapat meningkatkan penguasaan kosakata siswa. Hal ini dapat dilihat dari nilai rata-rata tes yang meningkat dari 69,8 pada pre-test menjadi 91,0 pada post-test. Penggunaan kartu flash dapat menarik perhatian siswa terhadap pelajaran dengan baik. Hal ini juga dapat meningkatkan partisipasi siswa dalam pembelajaran. Mereka tidak malu-malu lagi dan termotivasi untuk mengikuti proses pembelajaran.
Kata kunci: Kartu flash, Kosakata, Penelitian Tindakan Kelas.

Abstract

One of the problems that causes students to have difficulty in improving their English skills is the lack of vocabulary mastery. This research aims to determine whether the use of flash card teaching media can improve students' vocabulary mastery. This research uses a classroom action research design with a quantitative method conducted on students in the fourth grade at SDN Pondok Jagung Timur in Tangerang Selatan. The researcher presented the result and the analysis of data collected that consisted of pre-test, cycle 1, and post-test. Each cycle of the research consists of planning, action, observation, and reflection activities. In the research, there are some steps before cycle 1, there are observation and pre-test. The last step after cycle 1 is the post-test. The result of the research showed that Flash cards could improve the students' mastery of vocabulary. It can be identified from the mean score of the test which increased from 69,8 in the pre-test to 91,0 in the post-test. The use of flashcards may attract the student's attention to the lesson well. It also might improve the participation of students in learning. They were not shy anymore and were motivated to attend the instructional process
Keywords: Flashcards, Vocabulary, Classroom Action Research

INTRODUCTION

As a foreign language, English is difficult to learn, especially in Indonesia, because of the differentiations between the two languages. Hence, learning a language requires genuineness and also good skills to get as familiar with English promptly. To be able to understand a language, the most important thing is that students must learn the vocabulary first (Wahyuni & Yulaida, n.d.). English is a foreign language addressed in schools, from elementary school to university level. English is an international language used to communicate with other people in the world. At the educational level, English is the target language, because it is an international language that functions as a means of global communication. (Siti et al., 2020). In order to know the meaning of words and their use in English, students need to learn vocabulary first. From the large number of vocabulary words that are understood, this will make it easier for students to speak English. On the other hand, if students do not know vocabulary and do not have the will to develop language skills, then over time students will increasingly lose interest in learning.

Knowing vocabulary well is the main indication of reading success. Moreover, the literature also emphasizes that one of the strongest indicators of a person's success in reading is the amount of vocabulary understanding they have (Basuki et al., 2018). According to (Hakim et al., 2020), all English language skills, including macro skills, are greatly influenced by the amount of vocabulary have. In this way, vocabulary has a big role in influencing what each speaker must understand. Furthermore, the meaning of vocabulary will be explained in more depth so that readers understand why vocabulary is very important in a language. (Diamond & Gutlohn, 2009).

Several linguists placed onward explanations for vocabulary. (Hornby, 1995) Vocabulary can be illustrated as the whole of words an individual is aware with or employs, containing all the words within a precise language, the words used in discussions connected to a particular topic, and a compilation of words along with their definitions, particularly seen in educational materials for developing a foreign language. In accordance with (Richards & Renandya, 2002), Language ability relies greatly on vocabulary. It serves as a basic element that affects the ability of learners in speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Furthermore, according to (Richards & Schmidt, 2013), vocabulary comprises a group of lexemes, covering single words, compound words, and idioms.

Vocabulary contains words functioning as teams within grammatical marks. In this context, a word can be used as an independent phrase and cannot be divided into two or more components with parallel characteristics (Lado & Robert, 1964). One of the problems that causes students to have difficulty in improving their English skills is the lack of vocabulary mastery.

Gaining vocabulary is an important elements of language learning, and one of the challenges lies in preserving emphasis on vocabulary. Thus, teachers need to utilize innovative strategies to sweeten students' vocabulary. (Adwin, 2003) stated there are several principles for teaching vocabulary; highlighting the most utilized words, using appropriate teaching methods, focusing on high-frequency words across study strands, and encouraging thinking and self-responsibility in learners.

To successfully teach English to young students, teachers must take into account the characteristics of this age group and operate proper techniques to ensure stimulation and enjoyment in the teaching-learning method (Nugroho et al., n.d.). The purpose of introducing English vocabulary in elementary schools is to create the learning journey more enjoyable for students (Rini & Pd, n.d.). Nevertheless, challenges appear due to English being a foreign language, with determined usage by students outside the classroom. Students face problems such as low motivation and problem understanding English. Additionally, problems occur with the methods, procedures, and media used in education, which may not align with students' claims and contribute to their intense motivation for learning English. Classes become noisy and boring. Elementary school students in Indonesia also face these problems. Therefore, teachers need to be creative to stimulate students' interest in learning and understanding English easily.

Given the aforementioned challenges, it is important for teachers to contain entertaining media to enhance students' involvement in understanding vocabulary (Rahmawati & Ria Utami, n.d.). One effective method concerns using flashcards as a tool for teaching vocabulary, as emphasized by (Aba & Sultan Amai Gorontalo, 2019). Flashcards, as defined by (Widiastuti, 2012), are cards featuring printed words and/or pictures, while (Cross, 1991) describes them as easy pictures on card or paper typically used as an educational

device. The scope of flashcards can be modified based on students' expertness levels, whether they are at a basic, intermediate, or advanced phase.

Numerous scholars have examined the application of flashcards as a means of enhancing pupils' lexicon. For instance, a study by (Permata Yulsardi, 2021) titled "The Effect of Digital Flashcards on Students' Vocabulary Mastery: An Experimental Research at SMPN 12 Padang" found that students at SMPN 12 Padang who used digital flashcards had better vocabulary mastery than those who used traditional teaching methods. Digital flashcards significantly increased the group's vocabulary scores from 47.2 on the pre-test to 82.0 on the post-test, according to their findings. On the other hand, the group that acquired knowledge by traditional means had just average improvement, rising from 47.7 on the pre-test to 57.9 on the post-test.

The efficacy of flashcards in teaching English vocabulary is the subject of the second study (Wulandari & Chadafi, 2022). The average of the pretest and posttest results was discovered in this study. 55,3333 was the pretest score, while 78,3333 was the posttest score. The results indicated that the pretest score (before to treatment) was lower than the posttest score (after Flashcards). The study demonstrated that teaching English vocabulary to fifth-graders in MI Maarif Nu Plumpang improves significantly from the use of flashcards. Maarif Nu Plumpang.

The third research titled The Effectiveness of Using Flashcards to Improve Students' Vocabulary Mastery (Syamsiyah & Ma'rifatulloh, 2023). After collecting the data, the researcher received before and after test results, with a pretest mean score of 74.32 and a posttest mean score of 90.53. Based on the results of the data analysis, many conclusions have been obtained. It has been concluded that flashcard media has been useful in the vocabulary of students of class VII D MTs Salfiyah Safi'iyah Seblak Diwek Jombang.

The Use of Flashcards in English Vocabulary Learning is the title of the fourth study (Agung et al., 2021). According to this study, using flashcard strategies can help students become more proficient with vocabulary in English. This is evident in the way that reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills were taught to kids using flashcard learning. Using flashcard learning to help kids improve their vocabulary and comprehension was a very successful strategy.

While (Permata Yulsardi, 2021) used digital flashcards in their research, this research used conventional flashcards as a learning media. (Wulandari & Chadafi, 2022) used experimental design in their research, while this research used classroom action research design. (Syamsiyah & Ma'rifatulloh, 2023) used junior high school students in their research as a subject, while this research used elementary school students as a subject of the research. (Agung et al., 2021) used study literature as their methods, while this research used quantity methods with test and observation instruments as the data.

According to previous research, the researchers conducted a classroom action research, because the writer wants to know how far flashcards can improve the students' interest in learning English and vocabulary mastery. In fourth grade of SDN Pondok Jagung Timur.

METHOD

The research focused on fourth-grade pupils at SDN Pondok Jagung Timur in Tangerang Selatan. In this study, the researcher employed Classroom Action Research.

According to Kemmis and McTaggart (1998), the core component of creating Class Action Research consists of four steps: planning, acting, observing, and reflecting in one cycle. Depending on the difficulty of the problem, a researcher may go through more than one or two cycles. Each cycle is followed by another, with the preview cycle serving as the basis for determining what should be done in the following cycle.

The conducted of research starts on 3 September 2023 for the pre-test, 6 September for cycle 1, and 10 September 2023 for the post-test. The subject of this research were fourth grade students from SDN Pondok Jagung Timur consisting of 24 students.

In this study, the data collected using instruments were observation and tests. in the observation stage, the researcher as a teacher observed classroom learning activities using an observation checklist sheet. students' activeness, interaction, skills, behavior, and performances in the learning process were recorded in the observation sheet. this observation was carried out after the cycle was completed.

The following stage was the test, which was separated into two parts: pre-test and post-test. The pre-test was administered before the treatment to determine the pupils' previous level of language skills. Following the treatment, a post-test was administered to see whether the pupils had met the target value and improved their vocabulary. The pre-test and post-test consisted of 20 objective questions, 10 of which were multiple choice questions and 10 of which were fill in the blank questions based on profession-related vocabulary.

In this situation, students' scores are examined by looking for the mean score in each test, including pre-test and post-test. The mean score for each test is compared to determine advanced proficiency in recognizing English language.

Test results can explain the problem of whether the application of flashcards could improve students' vocabulary. This can be identified from the mean differences in pretest and posttest.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The researcher will discuss the findings of the study and outline the teaching methods used to improve vocabulary mastery with flashcards, as well as the effectiveness of utilizing flashcards to teach vocabulary to students. The researcher presented the results and analysis of the data obtained, which included pre-test, cycle 1, and post-test. Each cycle of the research includes preparation, activity, observation, and reflection activities. Before cycle 1, the research includes certain phases such as observation and pre-testing. The final stage following cycle 1 is post-testing. The outcomes of all cycles are shown below:

a) Analysis of Pre-Test
    The pre-test was conducted before the first cycle or before students were treated using flashcards in learning to identify students' vocabulary skills. At this time, the researcher decided to give vocabulary about profession. Below is a diagram of the percentage of students' pre-test scores.
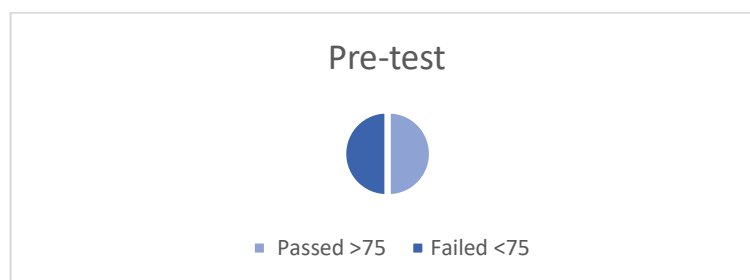
Figure 1. Percentage Students's Score on Pre-Test in Pie Diagram

From the result, the students do not know well about the vocabulary in professions. In this step, the researcher gave the pre-test to students without learning the flashcard. There are 20 questions which consist of 10 multiple-choice questions and 10 fill in the blank questions. Based on the pre-test results, there were 12 students or 50% whose scores exceeded the minimum completeness criteria. The computation of the average of the score was as follows:

$$\text{Average} = \frac{F}{n} = \frac{1675}{24} = 69{,}8$$

The next analysis conducted on the pre-test scores was to calculate the average of the total student scores. The calculation is done by adding up all student scores and then dividing by the total number of students, then from there, the researcher gets the results that the mean score of the students in the pre-test was 69,8. However, the criteria for an English passing grade is 75.00. It means that the student could be categorized as poor and their vocabulary was very low.

b) Analysis Cycle 1

After doing the pre-test, the researcher continued to the next step, which is cycle 1. In cycle 1, there were four steps, namely: planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. This cycle consists of 2 meetings

1. Planning

Based on the pre-test problem, the researcher intended to employ flashcards to teach vocabulary and increase students' vocabulary mastery. During planning, the teacher created materials to support learning and teaching activities, such as flashcards as the primary medium, as well as lesson plans for each session.

2. Acting

In this stage, the researcher acted as a teacher. In the first meeting, students were introduced to flashcards learning media, then the researcher as a teacher explained the contents of the flashcards, namely vocabulary about professions one by one to students and asked students to take notes in the book, and then ask students to explain/describe additional details (e.g. explain what the doctor's job is like, where the doctor works, etc.) Then on the second meeting, learning was carried out using the method of playing games, we made students into groups. In one group consisting of 4-5 people, one student gave directions to the picture on the flash card above their friend's head, then the student who held the card above their head answered based on their friend's directions.

3. Observing

The observation occurred during the learning process. It was done to identify the use of flashcards to help pupils enhance their vocabulary. In this cycle, we employed strategies such as explaining, exhibiting, repeating, and playing games. The pupils enjoyed the learning process, particularly when we played games.

4. Reflecting

Based on the observation in the first cycle, The researcher found that students were very enthusiastic when we used the playing games method during the learning process, they remembered vocabulary faster and became active in the learning process, but it cannot be denied that there are still some students who are not very active and still do not fully remember the vocabulary that has been taught.
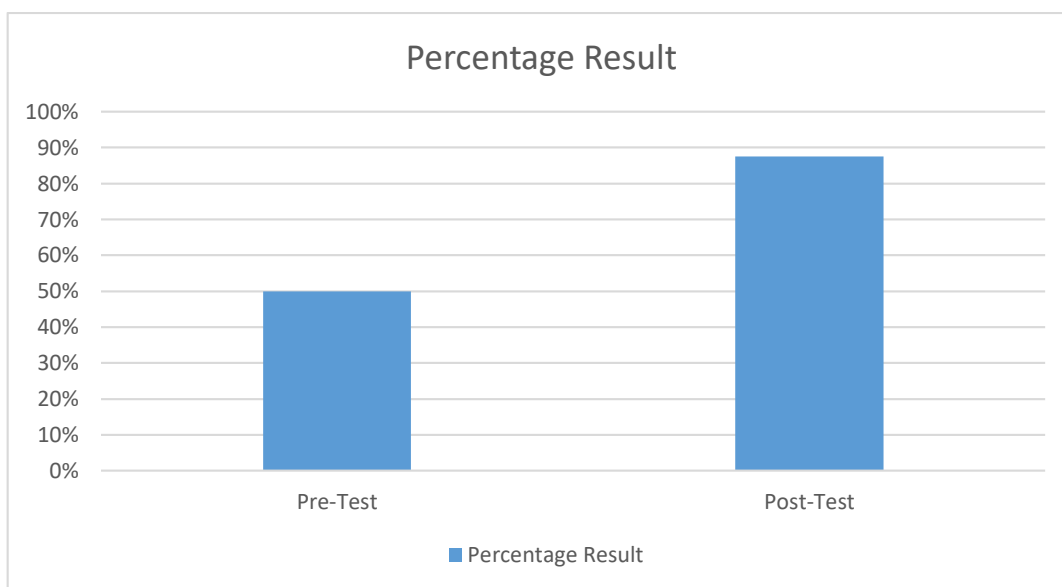
c) Analysis of Post-Test

The post-test was conducted after the cycle was completed or after the treatment had been carried out. students' scores were much improved on this test. Classroom conditions were very conducive where students paid attention and became more active in participating in the learning process using flashcards. Below is a diagram of the percentage of students' pre-test scores.
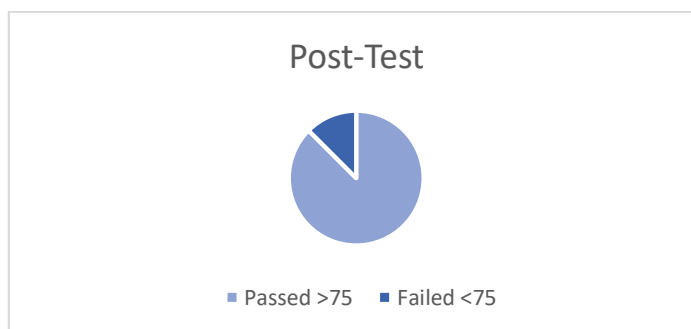
Figure 2. Percentage Students's Score on Post-Test in Pie Diagram

After the cycle was completed or after the learning treatment using flashcards had been completed. researchers gave a post-test containing 20 questions of which 10 were multiple choice questions and 10 were fill in the blank questions. based on the results obtained, researchers found that 21 out of 24 students scored above the minimum criteria. It was revealed that 87,5% of students got scores higher than the minimum criteria. This certainly shows a very significant improvement from the pre-test conducted at the beginning of the cycle.

Based on the data analyzed above, the researcher claims that students' scores increased after the implementation of vocabulary learning treatment using flashcards applied to the research subject. below is a diagram of student scores from the pre-test and post-test.

Figure 3. Percentages of Student's Score Improvement

From the results of research analysis in the form of pre-test-post-test and observation, researchers found that students' vocabulary has increased by using flashcards as teaching media. students' improvement can be seen from the increase in the average pre-test and post-test scores. The average score is summarized in the table below:

Table 1. Table of the Finding Result

Kind of Test	Pre-Test	Post-Test
Total Score	1675	2185
Mean Score	69.8	91.0
Increase of The Student Mean Score	-	21.3

(Lisa, 2019) Wrote, "The flashcards were proved to gain a better result when they were used as follow-up exercises in teaching vocabulary to elementary school fourth-grade students.". This remark was supported by the data, which showed that students' scores increased from 50% to 87.5% of students whose scores exceeded the minimal passing criteria, as well as from 69.8 to 91.0 on the mean score. (Nashir et al., 2018) According to their research, "Using flashcards to teach vocabulary could maximize photographic

memory, train students' concentration, increase students' vocabulary, and control students' subconscious and creative minds.". By using flashcards, students retain new information more easily, and it also helps students to train their memory because it is helped by the visualization of the vocabulary they have just learned.

(Hamer & Rohimajaya, 2018) In their research found that students give good response when the teacher explains the material. This is also found in this research that the students become more active and involved themselves in the process of learning. (Harianingsih & Hastini, 2023; Mojarradi, 2014; Nabilla et al., 2022; Nurhaliza & Sari, 2023; Rahmi Dewi, 2017; Sitompul, 2013) in their research conclude that the use of flashcards as media does improve students' vocabulary mastery.

According to the explanation, the researcher came to the conclusion that flashcards could help students' vocabulary based on the examination of data from the pre-test to the post-test. The rise in the student's score served as evidence. The use of flashcards in the learning process made the pupils delighted. The student's vocabulary improved greatly with the help of the flashcards. Thus, the study on the use of flashcards to increase students' vocabulary was successful..

CONCLUSION

Based on the earlier discourse, the researcher concludes that while there exist certain limitations associated with the utilization of flashcards, the benefits of using them in vocabulary education outweigh the drawbacks. Students now perform better and are more motivated as a result. Students' attitudes during class can also be used as an indicator of improved motivation. The pupils were beaming when the teacher walked into the room. The teacher presented some flashcards, which piqued the kids' curiosity greatly. With bated breath, they watched to see what the teacher would do with the flashcards and what knowledge they would acquire from them. The lessons were enjoyable to them as well. Additionally, students were very interested, energetic, and cooperative whenever the teacher asked them to guess and provide an answer.

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