Flashcards as a Media to Increase Vocabulary

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Abstract

Vocabulary holds significant importance in a language as it enables communication between individuals. However, students often struggle with comprehending and retaining vocabulary. Thus, it is crucial to employ effective techniques in language learning to assist students in acquiring vocabulary. One such method is the use of flashcards to teach vocabulary. Flashcards aid students in comprehending words. This study focused on first-year students at Universitas Tama Jagakarsa and utilized the classroom action research approach in two cycles. The initial pre-test revealed poor scores, averaging 49.1. Following the implementation of flashcard-based instruction in the first cycle, the post-test scores significantly improved to 66.3, indicating notable progress. Consequently, a second cycle was conducted to further enhance results, which yielded a post-test score of 87.4, successfully achieving the desired target. The findings demonstrate that teaching and learning vocabulary through flashcards can effectively enhance students' vocabulary skills.

Keywords: *flashcards, Media, Language Learning, Vocabulary*

INTRODUCTION

Proficiency in the English language has become increasingly crucial in the 21st century. English serves as an international language and is widely spoken as a second language in numerous nations worldwide. Its proficiency enables effective communication and facilitates connections with individuals across the globe (Rao, 2019). Consequently, it is imperative that students, particularly at the elementary level, are adequately prepared to recognize, comprehend, and master English to enhance their quality of life. Therefore, early preparation becomes indispensable in order to confront the escalating challenges of the future.

Recognizing the significance of English, educational institutions have started incorporating it into their curricula, including primary schools. However, teaching English to primary school students poses its own set of challenges, as these young learners often perceive English as a difficult subject and consequently exhibit a lack of interest in its acquisition.

Evidently, many students display disinterest during English lessons, as reflected in their behavior within the classroom. They tend to remain restless and fail to pay attention to the teacher's explanations (Mertala, 2019). Given this circumstance, it becomes incumbent upon teachers to adopt creative and engaging teaching methods that generate students' interest in learning English. By making English enjoyable and accessible, teachers can effectively capture the attention and enthusiasm of primary school students.

Building a strong foundation in English necessitates the mastery of a wide range of vocabulary. Vocabulary serves as a vital tool for effective communication. However, primary school students often find it challenging to acquire and retain a substantial vocabulary (Gruss, 2016). Consequently, teachers must employ engaging and enjoyable methods to facilitate vocabulary learning, with the aim of enhancing students' language proficiency. One effective tool that can be utilized by teachers to improve students' vocabulary is the flashcard.

Flashcards, consisting of words, numbers, or pictures, are displayed to the class by the teacher. They serve as a valuable medium in the learning process, augmenting the effectiveness and ease of teaching and learning activities through visual aids (Nicolaou, *et al*, 2019). Therefore, the researcher has chosen to investigate the use of flashcards as a means of improving students' vocabulary in this study.

Based on the aforementioned research background, the researcher has identified the following problem: how can flashcards be utilized to enhance students' vocabulary? To narrow down the scope of the research, the problem is limited to improving students' vocabulary through the use of flashcards at Universitas Tama Jagakarsa.

Building upon the problem identification and limitation outlined above, the researcher can formulate the following research question: Does the use of flashcards effectively improve students' vocabulary? The objective of this research is to identify effective strategies for students to enhance their vocabulary and assess whether the use of flashcards contributes to improvements in students' vocabulary skills.

The research findings are anticipated to yield significant outcomes for the students after receiving the treatment. This research aims to benefit both teachers and students alike. For the researchers, it serves as a valuable reference and contributes to the expansion of theoretical knowledge, particularly regarding the practical application of theory through research and data analysis related to student learning. For Universitas Tama Jagakarsa, the research is expected to contribute to the College of Teacher Training and Education, serving as a valuable resource and knowledge base for colleagues working on similar topics. The primary focus of this research is on improving students' vocabulary through the use of flashcards.

METHOD

The chosen research methodology for this study is Classroom Action Research (CAR), which involves identifying a problem and determining the appropriate treatment or action to address the problem (Sadimin, *et al*, 2017). In this particular research, the issue of students lacking vocabulary skills is recognized as a problem that needs to be resolved. The researcher assumes the role of the teacher and possesses a thorough understanding of the classroom dynamics. However, in order to gain a comprehensive view of the teaching-learning process, the researcher needs to closely observe it from start to finish.

The action research is structured into two cycles, with each cycle comprising two meetings (Narmaditya, *et al*, 2017). Each cycle involves several key steps: firstly, identifying a classroom problem (planning). The researcher initially identifies the students' vocabulary-related issues and proceeds to develop lesson plans that outline various steps to address these concerns. Additionally, a collection of flashcards with different themes is prepared as the treatment to be taught to the students. Secondly, the research plan is developed and implemented (action and observation). During the first meeting, the students are administered a pre-test to assess their vocabulary knowledge and establish a baseline. Subsequently, the teaching-learning process is carried out, encompassing pre-teaching, whilst-teaching, and post-teaching activities. The pre-teaching activity involves warming up the students by posing relevant questions related to the topic at hand. The whilst-teaching activity entails the use of flashcards as a teaching tool to enhance vocabulary acquisition. Lastly, in the post-teaching activity, the teacher assesses the students' vocabulary by posing additional questions and concludes the lesson. Thirdly, reflection takes place, where the

teaching-learning process is critically analyzed, allowing for the decision of whether another cycle is necessary.

To gather data, both pre-tests and post-tests are administered, along with the use of observation forms. The tests are conducted to gauge the students' progress in mastering and understanding the vocabulary presented throughout the process. The pre-test involves students filling in the blanks with the appropriate words. Following the completion of the first cycle, the students undergo the first post-test. However, if the results of the first post-test fall below the anticipated level, the researcher proceeds with the next cycle. Once the second cycle is completed, the students are given the second post-test, consisting of 15 questions, to assess any improvements in their vocabulary skills.

Throughout the research process, observation notes are utilized to record various aspects, including student responses, motivation, attention levels, and participation, all measured on a scale ranging from 5 (Excellent) to 1 (Poor). Furthermore, the researcher observes the teaching-learning process in the classroom to ensure adherence to the lesson plan (sumber). The observation notes serve to document the application of flashcards in accordance with the lesson plan, describe student participation and responses during activities, and provide an overview of the research process.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Description Of The Data
Within this chapter, a comprehensive analysis of the research data is presented, encompassing the results of the pre-test, first cycle post-test, and second cycle post-test. In order to provide clarity, a detailed explanation of the activities conducted during each cycle is also provided, offering a comprehensive overview of the research process.

Pre test

The pre-test served as an initial assessment to gauge the students' vocabulary levels. The findings of this test indicated a significant deficiency in the students' vocabulary skills. Consequently, the researcher devised a treatment plan that incorporated the use of flashcards to address this issue. The treatment plan was designed to span four separate meetings, allowing for ample exposure and practice.

The outcomes of the pre-test scores shed light on the students' limited vocabulary knowledge pertaining to the given topic. The data depicted in the table below clearly illustrate the extent of the students' struggles in vocabulary acquisition.

Table 1
The result of pre-test

Respondent	Pre-test	
	Score	Criteria
1	65	Fair
2	70	Fair
3	70	Fair
4	35	Poor
5	30	Poor
6	35	Poor
7	50	Poor
8	45	Poor
9	40	Poor
10	70	Fair
11	70	Fair
12	55	Poor
13	30	Poor
14	55	Poor
15	30	Poor
16	40	Poor
17	55	Poor
18	30	Poor
19	30	Poor
20	45	Poor
21	45	Poor
22	65	Fair
23	40	Poor
24	35	Poor
25	40	Poor
26	65	Fair
27	70	Fair
28	50	Poor
29	70	Fair
30	40	Poor

The aforementioned data effectively highlight the challenges faced

by the students in their vocabulary learning journey. A substantial majority of the students received poor ratings, as their scores fell below the 60-point threshold. As a result, the researcher opted to implement two treatment cycles, with a post-test being administered following each cycle.

First Cycle
First meeting in this cycle

Following the administration of the pre-test on the first day of the research, the teacher proceeded to deliver the treatment to the students. During this session, the teacher introduced the flashcard as the chosen instructional media for the research. To commence the class, the students were engaged in a warm-up activity consisting of questions related to the topic. Subsequently, the teacher introduced the new theme of the day, which focused on greetings. Utilizing the flashcards, the teacher commenced the vocabulary instruction, employing visual aids to facilitate learning.

Second meeting in this cycle

After the initial treatment in the first cycle, the teacher continued to provide further treatment sessions to the students. In this subsequent meeting, the teacher once again introduced the flashcard as the chosen instructional media. The warm-up phase entailed posing questions related to the topic to the students. Following this, the teacher introduced the new theme of the day, which revolved around fruits. Employing the flashcards as a teaching tool, the teacher effectively facilitated the vocabulary instruction, ensuring student engagement and active participation.

The results of the first cycle post-test indicated a notable improvement compared to the pre-test scores. One student achieved an excellent rating, falling within the 95-100 range, while eight students attained a very good rating, scoring between 85-90. Additionally, one student received a good rating, scoring 75-80, seven students achieved a fair rating,

scoring 65-70, and thirteen students obtained a poor rating, scoring between 30-60. These outcomes are presented in detail in the table below, effectively demonstrating the progress made by the students after the implementation of the first cycle treatment.

Table 2
The result of first cycle post-test

Respondent	Post-test	
	Score	Criteria
1	85	Very Good
2	90	Very Good
3	90	Very Good
4	55	Poor
5	30	Poor
6	50	Poor
7	50	Poor
8	60	Poor
9	45	Poor
10	90	Very Good
11	90	Very Good
12	80	Good
13	70	Fair
14	65	Fair
15	90	Very Good
16	40	Poor
17	70	Fair
18	70	Fair
19	35	Poor
20	70	Fair
21	50	Poor
22	90	Very Good
23	55	Poor
24	55	Poor
25	45	Poor
26	85	Very Good
27	95	Excellent
28	70	Fair
29	70	Fair
30	60	Poor

The students vocabulary score shown on table can be describe into a pie chart on the percentage form, as follow:

Figure 1
The result of first cycle post-test

The First Cycle Post-Test
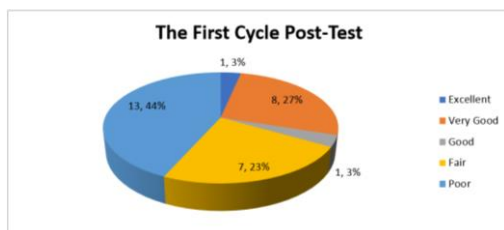
Reflection

The score is better from the pre-test, but the target is not achieved. Therefore the second cycle is needed to apply.

Second Cycle
Second cycle activities
First meeting in this cycle

Following the administration of the treatments during the second meeting of the first cycle, the teacher proceeded with the cycle treatment for the students. During this session, the teacher introduced the media to be utilized in the research, namely images. Subsequently, the students were engaged in a warm-up activity consisting of topic-related questions to stimulate their thinking. The teacher then introduced the new theme for the day, centered around animals. Employing flashcards as a teaching tool, the teacher initiated the vocabulary instruction, utilizing a range of visual aids.

Second meeting in this cycle

Following the implementation of the treatment during the first meeting of the first cycle, the teacher continued with the cycle treatment for the students. During this session, the teacher introduced the media to be employed in the research, specifically flashcards. Subsequently, the students were engaged in a warm-up activity involving topic-related questions to activate their prior knowledge. The teacher then introduced the new theme for the day, focusing on the topic of family. Utilizing flashcards, the teacher commenced the instruction on descriptive writing, providing the students with various flashcards to facilitate vocabulary acquisition.

The outcomes of the post-test within the cycle reflect the significant progress made by the students. A notable number of students achieved excellent ratings, with seven students falling within the 95-100 range. Furthermore, four students attained very good ratings, scoring between 85-90, while six students received good ratings, scoring 75-80. Additionally, six students obtained a fair rating, scoring 65-70, and seven students were classified under the poor rating category, scoring between 50-60.
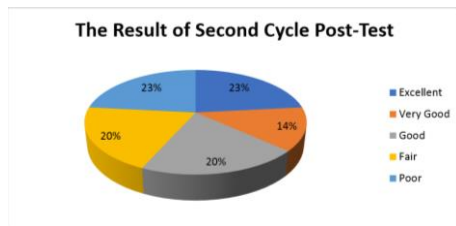
Table 3
The result of second cycle post-test

Respondent	Post-test	
	Score	Criteria
1	95	Excellent
2	90	Very Good
3	100	Excellent
4	65	Fair
5	45	Poor
6	65	Fair
7	70	Fair
8	60	Poor
9	55	Poor
10	90	Very Good
11	95	Excellent
12	85	Very Good
13	75	Good
14	75	Good
15	95	Excellent
16	60	Poor
17	75	Good
18	90	Very Good
19	50	Poor
20	70	Fair
21	60	Poor
22	100	Excellent
23	65	Fair
24	60	Poor
25	75	Good
26	95	Excellent
27	100	Excellent
28	80	Good
29	75	Good
30	65	Fair

The pie chart below shows the percentage of students score in table:

Figure 2
The result of second post-test

The Result of Second Cycle Post-Test

| Average | 49.1 | 66.3 | | |

Subsequent to the administration of the second cycle post-test, a comparative analysis was conducted to evaluate the progress in students' vocabulary between the first and second cycles. The results of this comparison are presented in detail in the table below, providing insights into the percentage of improvement observed in students' vocabulary skills.

Reflection

After doing the second cycle post-test the students' progress in highly developed.

Table 4
The result of the improvement between the pre-test and post-test in the first cycle

| Respondent	Score		Criteria	
	Pre-Test	Post-Test	Pre-test	Post-Test
1	65	85	Fair	Very Good
2	75	90	Good	Excellent
3	70	90	Fair	Excellent
4	35	55	Poor	Poor
5	30	30	Poor	Poor
6	35	50	Poor	Poor
7	50	50	Poor	Poor
8	45	60	Poor	Poor
9	40	45	Poor	Poor
10	70	90	Fair	Very Good
11	70	90	Fair	Very Good
12	55	80	Poor	Good
13	30	70	Poor	Fair
14	55	65	Poor	Fair
15	30	90	Poor	Very Good
16	40	40	Poor	Poor
17	55	70	Poor	Fair
18	30	70	Poor	Fair
19	30	35	Poor	Poor
20	45	70	Poor	Fair
21	45	50	Poor	Poor
22	65	90	Fair	Very Good
23	40	55	Poor	Poor
24	35	55	Poor	Poor
25	40	45	Poor	Poor
26	65	85	Fair	Very Good
27	70	95	Fair	Excellent
28	50	70	Poor	Fair
29	70	70	Fair	Fair
30	40	60	Poor	Poor

Table 5
The result of the improvement between the first cycle post-test and the second cycle post-test

Respondent	Score		Criteria	
	First Cycle Post-Test	Second Cycle Post-Test	First Cycle Post-Test	Second Cycle Post-Test
1	85	95	Very Good	Excellent
2	90	90	Very Good	Very Good
3	90	100	Very Good	Excellent
4	55	65	Poor	Fair
5	30	45	Poor	Poor
6	50	65	Poor	Fair
7	50	70	Poor	Fair
8	60	60	Poor	Poor
9	45	55	Poor	Poor
10	90	90	Very Good	Very Good
11	90	95	Very Good	Excellent
12	80	85	Good	Very Good
13	70	75	Fair	Good
14	65	75	Fair	Good
15	90	95	Very Good	Excellent
16	40	60	Poor	Poor
17	70	75	Fair	Good
18	70	90	Fair	Very Good
19	35	50	Poor	Poor
20	70	70	Fair	Fair
21	50	60	Poor	Poor
22	90	100	Very Good	Excellent
23	55	65	Poor	Fair
24	55	60	Poor	Poor

25	45	75	Poor	Good
26	85	95	Very Good	Excellent
27	95	100	Excellent	Excellent
28	70	80	Fair	Good
29	70	75	Fair	Good
30	60	65	Poor	Fair
Average	66.3	76		

Figure 3
The result of the improvement between the pre-test and post-test in the first cycle
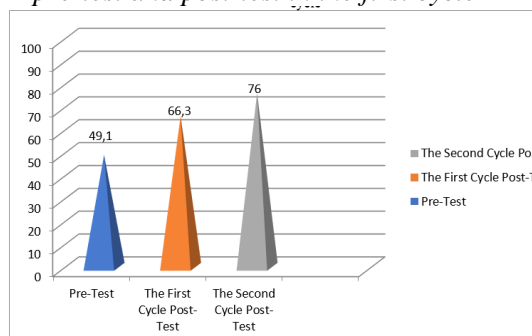
Data from the observation note

Throughout the instructional process, two observers were present to closely monitor the teacher's practices as well as the students' engagement. These observers meticulously documented their observations using two distinct note-taking forms: the language classroom observation form and the students' observation note. The language classroom observation form aimed to collect information pertaining to the teacher's preparation, language usage, lesson presentation, classroom management, classroom atmosphere, and the utilization of technology. On the other hand, the students' observation note was employed to gather data on the students' presentations, participation, and responses during the various activities conducted in the classroom. These comprehensive observation notes ensured a thorough understanding of the teaching and learning dynamics within the classroom setting.

Discussion

In this research, thorough preparation was conducted by the teacher prior to commencing the study. This preparation involved the creation of a comprehensive lesson plan, selection of appropriate materials and media, development of pre-test and post-test assessments, as well as the preparation of observation notes. To begin the research process, a pre-test was administered to the students. The results of the pre-test during the first cycle revealed that the students' scores were exceptionally low, with all of them scoring below 60. These outcomes clearly indicated that the students' vocabulary proficiency remained at a significantly low level.

The students encountered difficulties in comprehending words primarily due to their infrequent practice of vocabulary. Consequently, in order to address this issue and enhance vocabulary learning, the implementation of flashcards was introduced subsequent to the pre-test. The treatments were carried out across two separate meetings. Analyzing the results of the post-test conducted after the first cycle, notable progress was observed among the students. Specifically, one student (1.3%) achieved the excellent criteria, eight students (8.7%) demonstrated very good performance, one student (1.3%) fell within the good criteria, seven students (7.23%) attained the fair criteria, while thirteen students (13.44%) scored in the poor range.

During the second cycle, significant improvement in vocabulary skills was observed among nearly all students, primarily attributed to the extensive vocabulary exposure facilitated through the use of flashcards. This improvement is evident from the results obtained in the post-test conducted at the end of the second cycle. The number of students meeting the excellent criteria increased from one to seven (23%), those achieving the very good criteria increased from one to seven (14%), students within the good criteria decreased from eight to seven (20%), students meeting the fair criteria increased from one to six (20%),

and students categorized as poor decreased from thirteen to seven (23%). These results clearly illustrate the positive impact of the flashcard intervention on the students' vocabulary acquisition and demonstrate the effectiveness of the second cycle in further enhancing their vocabulary skills.

CONCLUSION

In this study, a two-cycle process was implemented by the researcher, with two treatments administered during each cycle. Prior to the treatment, a pre-test was conducted to assess the students' proficiency in vocabulary. The results revealed that the majority of students faced difficulties in vocabulary learning, as their scores were all below 60. Following the implementation of the treatments, a post-test was administered at the conclusion of the first cycle. The improvement observed during the first cycle demonstrated that progress was being made. In order to achieve the desired target score, the treatment was continued into the second cycle, where an additional activity was introduced. This activity involved students working in pairs to complete tasks that required them to identify new words from the flashcards. The teacher also utilized visual aids such as pictures, prompting students to guess the meanings of the depicted words. The results obtained from the second cycle further validated the effectiveness of the treatment. Furthermore, the findings from the observation indicated that the students exhibited high levels of cooperation, attention, and participation throughout the teaching-learning process. The teacher's careful preparation of lesson plans and clear explanations of the material contributed to the successful implementation of the treatments. Therefore, based on the results of the post-test and the observation form, it can be concluded that the use of flashcards is beneficial in enhancing students' vocabulary skills, and it serves as an alternative approach to teaching vocabulary.

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