

## **IMPROVING STUDENTS' VOCABULARY MASTERY BY USING FLASHCARDS**

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### **Abstrak**

Nur Hikmah Laila, penelitian ini ditulis untuk mengungkapkan apakah pengajaran kosakata dengan menggunakan flashcard dapat meningkatkan penguasaan kosakata siswa dan untuk menggambarkan situasi kelas ketika flashcard diimplementasikan di kelas kosakata. Penelitian tindakan kelas ini dilakukan pada siswa kelas tiga sekolah dasar di Ngemplak Boyolali. Penelitian ini dilakukan dalam dua siklus. Data kualitatif diperoleh dari wawancara, kuesioner, buku harian guru, dan observasi. Hasil penelitian ini mengungkapkan bahwa (1) kartu flash dapat meningkatkan penguasaan kosakata siswa dalam semua aspek; mereka adalah (a) makna: siswa dapat memahami dan menghafal makna kata-kata; (B) pengucapan: siswa dapat mengucapkan kata dengan benar; (c) ejaan: siswa dapat menulis kata-kata; (D) penggunaan: siswa dapat menggunakan kata-kata dalam kalimat sederhana. (2) kartu flash dapat meningkatkan situasi kelas dalam belajar bahasa Inggris. Melalui pengajaran bahasa Inggris dengan menggunakan kartu flash, siswa menunjukkan peningkatan motivasi dan minat yang besar. Para siswa menjadi aktif terlibat dalam semua kegiatan kelas. Dari temuan penelitian ini, peneliti menyarankan bahwa guru Bahasa Inggris menerapkan kosakata untuk membantu siswa meningkatkan penguasaan kosakata mereka.

Kata kunci: Flashcards, Penguasaan Kosakata, Penelitian Tindakan Kelas

### **INTRODUCTION**

Vocabulary is an essential component in second/foreign language learning because it is needed for expressing meaning and conveying thoughts through both receptive and productive skills (Copor, 2011: 10). A term "vocabulary" refers to a list or set of words for particular language or a list or set of words that individual speakers of language might use. Here, vocabulary is a series of words individual speaks of certain language. Furthermore, Cameron (2001: 46) believes that vocabulary is central to the learning of language at primary level to enrich learners' language. Thus, there should be a strategy to help students learn

vocabulary. Many strategies can be applied by a teacher to teach vocabulary effectively, such as flashcards. Flashcard is a set of cards bearing information as words or numbers, on either or both sides used in classroom drills or in private study. One writes a question on a card and an answer overleaf. Flashcards can bear vocabulary, historical dates, formulas, or any subject matter that can be learned via a question and answer format. Flashcards are widely used as a learning drill to aid memorization by way of spaced repetition. Flashcards are some kind of media that can be used by the teacher in the classroom. They can increase students' span of attention and concentration to study new words in English, as stated by Haycraft (Broman, 1978: 102) flashcards can be used for consolidating vocabulary, practicing structure and words order or a variety of games.

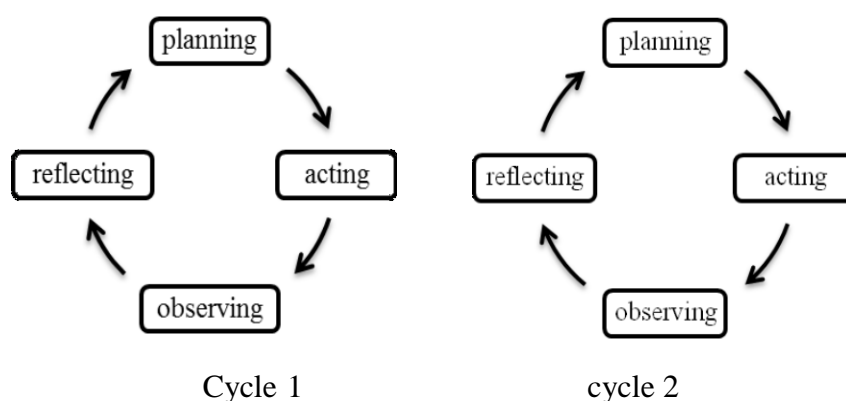
Hornby (1995: 131) defines vocabulary as a total number of words in a language, all words known to a person or used in a particular book, subject, etc. A list of words with the same meaning, especially one that accompanies a text book in a foreign language. Burns (1975: 295) defines vocabulary as the stock of words used by a person, class, or profession. Hatch and Brown (1995: 1) state that a term "vocabulary" refers to a list or set of words for particular language or a list or set of words that individual speakers of language might use. Here, vocabulary is a series of words individual speaks of certain language. Cross (1992: 5), a major aim of most teaching program is to help the students to gain a large vocabulary of useful words. This statement is supported by Allen and Vallete (1997: 149); they state that the teacher should give attention in teaching vocabulary and select the vocabulary that has to be taught. Burns and Broman (1975: 295) say that the teacher must give attention to develop the vocabulary of students through carefully planned instruction and to do so, he/she must be aware of what words are (verbal representations of concept) and how they are formed. Allen (1983: 23- 28) states about the more techniques for beginner classes namely: using commands, using real object, using communication experiences, and the value of pictures that the students draw.

Haycraft (1978: 102) defines flashcards as a card on which words and/ or pictures are printed or drawn. Urbom (1998: 87) says that flashcard is a card with

a word or words, number, or a picture on it that you look at to help you learn or remember. In line with them, Doff (1998: 129) states that flashcards are cards with simple picture (or words or numbers) which can be held up by the teacher or given out to students to use in pair or group work.

### **Methology**

This research used a classroom action research. A form of research which is becoming increasingly significant in language education is *action research*. This research has been defined in a number of different ways. Kemmis and McTaggart (1998) in Nunan (1992: 17) argue that the three defining characteristics of action research are that it is carried out by practitioners (for our purposes, classroom teachers) rather than outside researchers; secondly, that it is collaborative; and thirdly, that it is aimed at changing things. The real point about action research is that it is closely tied to the particular interests and needs of particular teachers-but these require the same kind of careful support as any other serious investigation. Action research, on the other hand, is less interested in obtaining generalizable scientific knowledge than knowledge for a particular situation or purpose. Action research is situational, or context-based, collaborative, participatory, and self-evaluative. There are four steps in implementing the action research: (1) planning; (2) acting; (3) observing; and (4) reflecting. The cycle of research steps can be visually seen as follows:



In this classroom action research, each procedure takes six steps that form one cycle. They are as follows:

- a. Identifying the Problem
- b. Planning the Action
- c. Implementing the Action
- d. Observing/Monitoring the Action
- e. Evaluating and Reflecting the Result of the Observation
- f. Revising the Plan

The instruments of collecting the data used by the teacher are observation form, questionnaire, interview, and a test. There were two techniques in analyzing the data: qualitative and quantitative. In analyzing qualitative data, the writer analyzed the improvement of the students' vocabulary mastery by identifying appropriate data analysis and data interpretation techniques. The quantitative data were analyzed by comparing the mean score of the pre-test and the post-test to know the difference before and after the cycle. In analyzing the data in the form of numbers as the result of the test, the researcher compared the mean score of the pre-test and the post-test. The improvement could be seen from the score in post- test which should be higher than the score in the pre-test.

### Discussion And Finding

The findings of this research shows that the use of flashcards could improve students' vocabulary mastery and class situation. The improvement of the students' mastery in vocabulary can be showed in table 1 and table 2.

Table 1 The Scores of Pre-test, Test 1 and Post-test 2

No	Kinds of scores	Highest	Lowest	Average
1	Pre-test	72.47	23.75	54.83
2	Test 1	77.9	50.62	64.58
3	Post-test 2	88.32	66.85	77.72

Table 2 The Average Scores of the Test Viewed from the Students' Vocabulary Aspects

Aspect of Vocabulary	Pre-Test	Test 1	Post-test 2
Meaning	63.31	69.21	84.07
Pronunciation	39.42	58.65	68.65
Spelling	63.85	67.69	80.76
Use of words	52.27	62.79	77.4

The result of the research showed that there is an improvement on the students' vocabulary mastery. From the explanation above, it can be concluded that flashcards can improve students vocabulary mastery. As stated by Mak (2009: 3), vocabulary teaching, the use of teaching aid will enable the students particularly for elementary school to increase their vocabulary mastery.

### **The improvement of class situation**

Flashcards encouraged students to be engaged in learning process. The students were enthusiastic with the new games. The class condition made the students feel secure, happy, and learn better. The students' self-confidents increased. It was proven when the students were involved actively in the learning process. They feel save and had higher self-esteem and self-confidence. The students also spoke confidently in delivering their work. It can be concluded that flashcards can improve class situation. Haycraft (1978: 102) states that flashcards are motivating and eye-catching. Colorful flashcards can motivate the students, make them want to pay attention and want to take part in teaching and learning process. Williams (1991: 207) in Walker (1997) states that children learn better if they have a positive attitude toward what they are doing and if they are motivated or want to do it.

### **Discussion**

From the findings, it can be concluded that flashcards can improve the students vocabulary mastery. As stated by Mak (2009: 3), vocabulary teaching, the use of teaching aid will enable the students particularly for elementary school to increase their vocabulary mastery. That is why, as English as foreign language teacher, we should use proper media to deliver the materials to our students, especially for young learners. Memorizing the meaning of words is easier when the students find the relation of with the visual aid. As stated by Surana (2012), flashcards is a form of educational games in the form of pale cards containing pictures and words are deliberately designed by Doman to improve various aspects, including: developing a memory, independence training, and increasing vocabulary. As stated by Budden (2004), for children at reading age, flash cards can be used in conjunction with word cards. These are simply cards that display the written word. Word cards should be introduced well after the pictorial cards so as not to interfere with correct pronunciation. Arsyad (2011), flashcards are divided

into several types , one of which is a useful picture cards to train students' spelling and vocabulary enrichment. Haycraft (1978: 102), he says that flashcards can also be used for practicing structure and word order or for a variety of games.

## **Conclusion**

Having finished explaining the result of the study, the researcher drew two conclusions. The first conclusion is that flashcards can improve the students' vocabulary mastery in all aspects: meaning, pronunciation, spelling, and using the words. In this case, the students could grasp and memorize the meaning of the words; pronounce the words correctly; write down/ spell the words correctly; and use the words in other context such as in making simple sentence. The second point to be concluded is that the use of flashcards can improve the class situation in learning English. Flashcards can make the environment in the class live. Using flashcards in teaching learning process reduces the students who were not active in teaching learning process. Through flashcards, the students became happier and enjoy in learning activities. It also changed their perception toward English that is a difficult subject became interesting easy and interesting subject.

Based on the research findings, the researcher would like to propose some suggestions related to this research. She hopes that the suggestions will be useful for the English teachers: the teacher should know how to enhance their ability in teaching and to develop a good atmosphere in the class, so that the students learn easily and comfortably in their class; for the institutions: the institution should encourage and support the English teachers to improve the quality of their teaching. The institution should also give an opportunity to the teacher with a brand new idea in teaching English. It can be done by providing facilities needed by both teachers and students so that the teaching learning process will run well; and the other researchers: this study discusses the implementation of teaching vocabulary using flashcards in improving the students' vocabulary mastery. It is expected that the result of the study can be used as an additional reference for further researches, especially researches dealing with the teaching of vocabulary.

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