INTRODUCING ENGLISH VOCABULARY TO YOUNG LEARNERS WITH FLASHCARDS

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ABSTRACT

English has become the most commonly spoken language in the modern era. English should be taught in every primary school because it is widely used. The most important skill to master when studying the English language is vocabulary. Hence, before learning any language skill, such as reading, writing, or listening, students must first learn vocabulary. Flashcards are a visually appealing medium that can help students understand vocabulary. This study aimed to improve the vocabulary of sixth-grade pupils at an elementary school in Lam Awee, Aceh Besar, using flashcards. The sample was taken from the sixth grade which consisted of 6 students. The data was collected using a vocabulary matching test consisting of questions covering parts of body, family, color, and fruit. The data were analyzed by testing the hypothesis at the significance level of 0.05. The results showed that the student vocabulary score improved significantly after learning the language using flashcards. Therefore, it is recommended for teachers to use flashcards to provide a basic vocabulary to beginners because it helps boost students’ motivation to learn new English vocabulary.

Keywords: flashcard, vocabulary, young learners

INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic that swept over several nations, including Indonesia, has altered daily life. The government has taken a number of steps to prevent the spread of COVID-19. One of them is the

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education department, which developed an online learning or distant learning policy to protect the nation's generation from the transfer of COVID-19. When it comes to learning during the pandemic, online or distant learning is not yet totally effective. A policy of the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia was implemented because the learner was ineffective, named Kampus Mengajar.

Kampus Mengajar Bacth 1 was located in remote areas to overcome learning obstacles in schools, specifically devoted to elementary school education levels. During the epidemic, Kampus Mengajar presents pupils in Indonesia to aid studying, particularly in primary schools in the 3T areas (Leading, Remote, Left Behind) or remote locations. One such school is SDN Lam Awee, which is located in Lam Awee Village, Peukan Bada District, Aceh Besar District, Aceh.

Many children are unfamiliar with English because there are no English lessons and no English teacher who specializes in teaching English in SDN Lam Awee. As a result of this situation, researchers aim to use the flashcard approach to teach English to pupils in order to boost their vocabulary. Latifah (2020) investigated the use of flashcards in English vocabulary learning and found that it must be accompanied by the usage of tools or media learning. When learners use a medium, it can only be claimed to have benefits over other learning media if they have qualities (including learning style) that match the learning medium. As a result, audiovisual interactive media learning media can make the learning process more active, motivating learners to study according to their interests and abilities. One of the aspects that can provide stimuli, that make learning events more qualified, is learning media that corresponds to the qualities of learners. Flashcards used during learning, according to Alam and Lestari (2020), have a significant role in the development of early childhood receptive language. When the child sees and hears the teacher present flashcards and when children are required to re-pronounce vocabulary using flashcards, it is seen as a process of defense actions that promote receptive language, which is the ability to hear or listen. Productive vocabulary refers to words that are produced and frequently employed in writing sentences, essays, and speaking. Susanto (2011) found that vocabulary mastery can be a good predictor of variable speaking and writing skills.

Previous studies have investigated the use of flashcards for vocabulary learning, and the research results have shown positive
effects. However, there are few researches on the use of flashcards for young learners learning English for the first time. As a result, this study investigated into the impact of employing flashcards on pupils in grade VI at SDN Lam Awe's vocabulary enhancement. It is expected to provide students with relevant experiences and make the materials delivered by teachers easier to comprehend.

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

This section is intended to review previous studies related to flashcard for language learning and how it is used in vocabulary teaching. In addition, this section also covers the procedure of using flashcards in teaching.

**Vocabulary**

There has been a lot of research on foreign language vocabulary learning until now. Vocabulary is one of the essential aspects that connects the four language abilities of speaking, listening, reading, and writing at the same time because it plays such an important role in understanding any notion in the process of learning a foreign language. With the growing popularity of pedagogy and a focus on games, it is important to be "involved in the design and implementation of new media systems before they are institutionalized" (Steuer, 1992, p. 91). Vocabulary is the total number of words that makes up a language. Someone can deliver their idea by arranging the words in the right structure to a complete meaningful sentence (Hornby, 1995). In addition, Keraf (2007, p. 24) states that the vocabulary of a language is all words in a language. He also referred to the word selection as a diction. Word choices or dictions include the meaning of which word is used to convey an idea, the proper way of grouping words, the proper use of phrases, and which styles are best used in certain situations. Word choice also means the ability to distinguish precisely the nuances of meaning from the idea to be conveyed, and the ability to find the appropriate word for the situation and sense of value that the listener community has.

Lehr and Osborn (2001) define vocabulary into two aspects, i.e. oral vocabulary form and vocabulary knowledge. For the first aspect, words come in two forms which are oral and print. Oral vocabulary includes the words that are recognized and used in listening and speaking, and print vocabulary includes the words that are recognized
and used in reading and writing. For the second aspect, vocabulary knowledge comprises receptive and productive. Receptive vocabulary includes words that are recognized when we hear or see them. It is the ability to comprehend passive vocabulary which is used in reading and listening contexts. Meanwhile, productive vocabulary includes words that are recognized when we speak or write. It is an active ability that is used in speaking or writing.

According to Nation (2001), receptive vocabulary refers to the words that native and foreign-language speakers recognize and understand but hardly ever use, it is used passively in either listening or reading. Productive vocabulary is utilized actively either in speaking or writing. One's listening vocabulary is generally larger than his speaking vocabulary while his reading vocabulary is relatively larger than his writing vocabulary.

**Flashcards in Vocabulary Instruction**

Flashcards are non-moving visual media in the form of images created using photography and similar processes. The media type is in the form of photos, pictures, paintings, and so on. Images can be interpreted as an imitation of goods (animals, plants, objects, etc.) available on the internet and created using ink, paint, portraits, and more. Flashcards are picture cards that come with words in the form of cards introduced by Glenn Doman. Glenn Doman's learning methods are gradually using the flashcard media tool which is a word written on white cardboard with a font size of 10 x 12.5 cm, with letters written in red letters capital (Rohman, 2010). Susanto (2011) suggests that flashcards are picture cards with words. The images on the flashcard are grouped among others: series of animals, fruits, clothing, colors, number shapes, and etc. These cards are played by being shown to the child and read quickly. The purpose of this method is to train the right brain to remember images and words, so that vocabulary can increase and increase.

Flashcards are the most convenient way to learn and discover new knowledge. Education specialists such as Glenn Doman and Maria Montessori frequently employ flashcards to assist students in learning. By using this medium, students can quickly acquire the name of an image (Rohman, 2010). A visually appealing flashcard might attract students to participate. This makes it easier for kids to recall English vocabulary. Colored flashcards can help students relax and enjoy learning English.
According to Zaini et al. (2005), the flashcard game approach is a game-like teaching method in which students are given a piece of information relating to the subject matter in a lesson on a piece of paper or a flashcard. According to Sadiman (1993, p. 29), there are several reasons for using media Flashcard: its concrete nature, its image adapts to the limitations of space and time, it is easy to obtain and use without the need for special equipment, it is affordable, it help us to overcome our limitations and explain the lesson. Hamalik (1986, p. 87) stated that using this flashcard media has several advantages, including reducing verbalism, being able to overcome the limitations of the ability of the five human senses, being able to explain the problem, and being easy to use both individually and in groups.

As a result of this study, the vocabulary was taught using flashcards because it is claimed to aid in developing writing skills and word comprehension. Indriana (2011, p. 68) mentions that flashcards have the advantage of being easy to carry around because of the postcard size and easy to remember because of the appealing design. Flashcards stimulate the brain, allowing it to remember messages on the card for longer periods of time. Because it may be used in the form of games, this medium is also a lot of fun to use.

The application of flashcards in teaching vocabulary
According to Harmer (2001), flashcards are particularly useful for learning vocabulary. There are various ways to use flashcards as a vocabulary teaching tool:
1. Drills can be performed frequently to help the student understand the new vocabulary.
2. Matching Activity: the students need to match the written flashcards with the pictures in face down memory game.
3. Guess the card: the students try to guess what the picture is.
4. Guess the word: one of the students is asked to act out the word and the other guess the word.

Advantages and Disadvantages of Flashcards
The advantages of flashcard learning media presented by Susilana and Riyana (2009) are as follows:
1. Easy to carry. A small size flashcard can be stored in a bag or even in a pocket and can be used anywhere, in the class or outside.
2. Practically, in using this media teachers do not need to have special skills. This media also does not need electricity.

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3. It is memorable. The characteristic of flashcard is to present short messages on each card presented. Serving these short messages will make it easier for students to remember the message.
4. It is fun. Flashcard can be used through games.

The disadvantages of flashcards are as follows:
1. The price of flashcards is too expensive. The teachers can make their own flashcards but it costs a lot of time.
2. If the picture on the flashcards is not clear enough, it will be hard for the student to understand the teacher’s explanation, thus the goal cannot be achieved.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The method used in this study was quantitative research by using a pre-experimental design. The design used was pre-experimental research on one group pretest and posttest. According to Arikunto (2019), pre-experimental is the simple form of research design. Thus, the researcher gave the pre-test at the beginning of the research, the next step is the treatment, and the post-test at the end of the meeting to know how far the improvement of the subject was after the treatment.

Participants

This research was conducted at SD Lam Awe, located in Aceh Besar. The participants of this research were six sixth-grader students. In this study, the researcher used purposive sampling. According to Sugiyono (2017), purposive sampling is the drawing of a sample based on a specific purpose by considering the time consumed and other factors.

Instruments

To collect the data in this study the researcher gave a set of tests to students in the form of flashcards. The test analysis consisted of pre-test and post-test. The pre-test was aimed to know the students’ initial vocabulary mastery before the researcher gave the treatment. The test consisted of ten questions in the form of matching. The questions cover the vocabulary about fruits, colors, families, and parts of the body. The number of questions and the coverage in the post-test were similar to those in the pre-test, but the questions were made different.
Data Collection

The experiment was started with a pre-test of 30 minutes followed by teaching students vocabulary using flashcards in several meetings. At the beginning of the meeting, the researcher taught vocabulary related to "parts of the body". In the next meeting, the topic was "family", followed by "colors", and "fruits". Finally, in the last meeting, the post-test was delivered to know if students who were taught by flashcards acquired a better achievement in vocabulary skills.

Data Analysis

The score in the pre-test was compared with the post-test using a t-test to find out whether there is any effect of flashcard games in improving the students' vocabulary or not. The hypothesis to be tested was that "the vocabulary score obtained in the pre-test was not significantly different from the vocabulary score in the post-test". The hypothesis was rejected at the significance level of 0.05.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Results

In this section, the researchers explained the results of the study. There were two types of results, i.e. pre-test and post-test results. The results are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. The result of the pre-test and post-test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Pre-test</th>
<th>Post-test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participant 1</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 2</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 3</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 4</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 5</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 6</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 shows that students obtained better vocabulary score in the post-test. The following table shows the descriptive statistics of the results of pre-test and post-test.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of the pre-test and post-test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Q1</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Q3</th>
<th>Max</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>33.33</td>
<td>5.16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The table above shows that the post-test was considerably different than the post-test for all five number summary statistics. However, t-test was used only to show that the data in the pre-test and post-test was statistically proven to be significantly different. The result of hypothesis testing with paired sample t-test is presented in Table 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Diff</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>Statistics</th>
<th>P-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-test</td>
<td>33.33</td>
<td>48.33</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15.727</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-test</td>
<td>81.67</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 shows that p-value was 0.000, which is lower than the significance level of 0.005. Therefore, the null hypothesis "the vocabulary score obtained in the pre-test was not significantly different to the vocabulary score in the post test" was rejected. Therefore, the score that the students obtained in the post-test was significantly different to that in the post-test. The difference (Diff) shown in Table 3 suggests that the score improved by 48.33.

**Discussions**

According to the results of the study given at the beginning of the meeting, the pre-test results showed that all students received a score below 50. The highest score in the pre-test was 40.

In contrast, the post-test results showed that all students received significant score differences compared to pre-test results. Some students score higher which is 90. Flashcards can improve their English competencies as it is easier to understand the meaning of vocabulary and can increase their motivation. In addition, the results from lower-level students in the pre-tests also got some improvement in their scores in the post-test even though their scores were not as high as others.

Based on the results of the pre-test and post test conducted above, the results showed that the p-value was lower than the significance level of 0.05, which suggest that there was a significant difference between pre-test and post-test in vocabulary teaching. Therefore, according to the calculations, the null hypothesis was rejected, and thus the alternative hypothesis was accepted, that is “the vocabulary score obtained after the treatment with flashcard is significantly different to the score obtained before the treatment”.

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Flashcards help students enhance their English skills by making vocabulary meanings easier to understand and increasing motivation. It becomes easier for children to recall the words without having to look at the flashcards as they become more familiar with the pictures and words shown on them. In this respect, Harmer (2001) states that by constantly encountering those words in the flashcards, each time expanding the students’ knowledge of what the words mean and how they are used in the foreign language. Thus, flashcards can help students enhance their English skills by making terminology easier to understand and increasing enthusiasm. Nadziroh (2010) also mentions the other benefits of learning by using flashcards, she suggests that flashcards can increase student’s interest through the appealing images and the various way of learning. Concerning to this, the results shows that during the treatment students’ showed some interest toward learning with flashcards and it can be concluded that flashcards boost the students’ motivations in learning English.

The results are in line with the results of a previous study by Sholihat et al. (2014) who found that a flashcard is one of the visual aids that can attract students to learn. Through the flashcard, the learning process becomes more active. The students have an interest in seeing colorful images on flashcards that facilitate them to induce simple new vocabulary. In much the same way, Latifah (2020) showed the same results through her study which is the way of learning by using flashcard had been proved to be able to improve students’ vocabulary mastery. The results are also similar with Sholikhah (2013) who investigated through action classroom research, which students showed improvements in vocabulary skill. Supported by the findings of the several analysis, it can be concluded that flashcards can help students in learning vocabulary.

The researchers encountered some challenges in conducting this study, particularly in collecting samples because SDN Lam Awee is a secluded school with only a few students, making data processing difficult. With only six students in sixth grade at SDN Lam Awee, the researcher’s data was less concrete. Another difficulty that researchers face is the ability of students at the school. According to the researchers, the school does not offer English classes, thus kids do not understand English. The school also does not supply varied learning tools for the English subject, in contrast to other subjects where special resources are provided.
The results of this study are subject to some limitations. Firstly, the sample size was rather small, and thus the use of inferential statistics might be not accurate because the sample size for a t-test should not be less than 30. However, the researcher did not have a bigger sample due to the limited number of students in the research location. Secondly, this study only investigated student achievement and did not look into other significant indicators of effectiveness such as student perception, classroom engagement, and student participation. Further study is expected to conduct qualitative research to find a more in-depth overview of the effect of flashcards among complete beginner young learners.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Conclusion

Based on the analysis of the data, the testing hypothesis, and the discussion in the previous chapter, the conclusion can be drawn that flashcards are effective in teaching vocabulary to sixth-grade students of SDN Lam Awee. It can be seen from the result of the mean score of the post-test was higher than the pre-test. In addition, the result of the t-test was higher than the t-table (15.7>2.77). It can be concluded that the use of flashcards in teaching vocabulary is effective to increase their vocabulary mastery. So, the hypothesis was accepted.

Suggestions

It is expected for this study to be useful for the teachers and the others researcher. The teacher should be creative in using methods, techniques, or media in the teaching-learning process. It is also suggested for the teacher to be flexible and understand student's needs, so the teaching-learning process can be fun, enjoyable, and interesting. The teacher can apply flashcards as techniques for teaching not only can used to teach vocabulary but also all subjects. The flashcard method can be developed and applied to the other researchers. The researcher expected this research to be a reference for the next researchers. In addition, the researcher also aimed for the other studies to use more samples.

REFERENCES


