

## THE USE OF FLASHCARD TO IMPROVE THE MASTERY OF ENGLISH CONCRETE NOUNS OF YOUNG LEARNERS

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### ABSTRACT

The first Grade of SDN Sambong 3 Batang were having a lack of vocabulary. They were challenging to pronounce things around. The researcher conducted Class Room Action Research in an educational attempt to improve the student's mastery of vocabulary. The Flashcards as teaching media could be used to improve the students' interests. The writer used a Classroom Action Research method consisting of Planning, Acting, Observing, and Reflecting to apply the Flashcards. This method was done in two cycles to get a better result of the research. The subject of the study is the first Grade of SDN Sambong 3 Batang. The 2nd cycle showed 64, 210, which was good categorized by calculating the students' individual scores. It was then increased from 1<sup>st</sup> cycle, which showed 49,210. The students looked more enthusiastic with the material than previously. Thus, Flashcards as the media could help the students improving their vocabulary. The activity itself helped the students became interactive and communicative with their friends.

**Keywords:** *Learning Vocabularies, Flashcard Media, English to Young Learners*

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### INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary is the key to the language. In mastering the four language skills, the students should develop their vocabulary first. Most of the students lack vocabulary, which made them confusedly begin to speak or write. It is impossible to use language skillfully when the students have limited numbers of vocabulary memorization. Without much vocabulary, the students cannot speak and express their ideas to other people. Based on the writer's observation, the students with a lack of vocabulary have difficulties confuse what they should speak and write.

When the writer asked the students to speak or to write something in English, most of them remained silent. Gaining the information from teacher's perceptions regarding teaching vocabulary in the classroom makes it not very easy to teach vocabulary in the junior high school level. The students are not interested in getting involved during the teaching-learning process. To make the students interested in the learning process, the teacher must know how to get the

students' attention. One of the most important things is making students easily understand the material using learning media to support the learning process which could be in the way of various and meaningful activities or attractive materials.

According to Mohammadnejad, Nikdel and Oroujlou (2012) vocabulary is a basic element of a language used to label things such as objects, properties and verbs to explain the meaning of what is being conveyed. Khasanah, Chamdani and Susiani (2014) state that vocabulary is an important part in learning English but is often ignored in learning activities. Without knowing vocabulary, students will experience obstacles in learning English. Mastering vocabulary is an important part, but this is difficult for some teachers because they have limitations in using the learning media. Therefore, to help the students, particularly to enrich their vocabulary, the writer provides a learning media that can enable them to learn and master vocabulary.

One of the learning media that is flashcards is considered the interesting learning media that can be used to teach vocabulary to the students, especially in junior high school. Flashcards support the students in learning English vocabulary, enjoying the activity, and becoming more active during the learning process. Using flashcards as learning media can help the English teachers teach vocabulary because students tend to be interested and attracted to learn. The students then learn, know, and memorize vocabulary easily using flashcards, which means their vocabulary can probably be enriched and increased. Flashcards used as teaching media by the writer in this research aims to enrich the students' vocabulary. Flashcards are easily created and brought, so flashcards can also become a media for playing a game. The writer believed that flashcards could help the students enrich their vocabulary as observed in First Grade of SDN Sambong 3 Batang which became the participants in this research.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Brown (2000:7) says, "Teaching is guiding and facilitating learning, enabling the learner to learn, setting the condition for learning". At the same time, Harmer (2001:114) argues that teaching means the interaction between the teacher and the students in many cultures. Besides teaching in the classroom, the teacher must consider the teaching model itself. Both teachers and students agree that vocabulary acquisition is a central factor in teaching a language (Walters, 2004). When the teaching and learning process takes place, problems would appear to the teachers which one of them is how to teach students to gain for satisfying results. Looking at this case, the teacher should prepare and find out the appropriate technique, which could be implemented successfully to the students.

Vocabulary should be taught especially for foreign language learning activity; because even the students have mastered the grammatical form, they could not communicate using the foreign language without mastering a vocabulary. To master a language seems not easy because some aspects of language are difficult to learn. It is impossible to learn English as a foreign language without mastering vocabulary.

Teaching vocabulary is one of the most discussed parts of teaching English as a foreign language. Recent research indicates that teaching vocabulary probably

becomes such problematic because many teachers are not confident about the best practice in vocabulary teaching. At times, they do not know where to begin to form an instructional emphasis on word learning (Berne & Blachowicz, 2008). Vocabulary can be defined as a sound that expresses an independent unit's meaning and form in a language. It could be said that vocabulary is the smallest unit of speech that processes an individual learner to speak. Vocabulary can also be used to interact to other people.

Further, vocabulary can be identified as a group of words on certain language, which is a part of teaching and learning in a foreign language. According to Richard (2001:4), vocabulary is one of the most noticeable components of language, and one of first things applied linguistic turned their attention to. In addition, Rivers (1981) stated that vocabulary cannot be taught, but it can be presented, explained, included in all kinds of activities, but the individual must learn it. Pavicic (in Khodashenas, Farahani and Alishahi, 2014), said teachers should look for ways to improve students' abilities to explore, store and use some vocabulary types and create activities and assignments to help students improve their vocabulary and develop strategies for learning vocabulary. One of the kinds of visual media used in teaching vocabulary is flashcards. Flashcards are easy to use, which can help the teaching and learning process especially in English vocabulary. Flashcard is one of learning media to teach English vocabulary. There is no single definition about Flashcard. There are some relevant explanations from some experts define about the definition of Flashcard.

According to Geltgren (2012: 11), Flashcards can be used for any subject, for example elementary or more advanced language training (Vocabulary and grammar), mathematics, biology, and geography. They are excellent for presenting vocabulary, drilling, and repetition. For many students, using flashcards is a fun way to learn new vocabulary and grammar. (Fitriyani et al, 2017) states that to improve the English vocabulary skills of elementary school students, to assist schools in improving students' English vocabulary skills

Chesla (2002:12) says that flashcards are simple but very effective study tool. Flashcards are teaching aids that are composed small pieces of paper. Flashcards refers to the cuts of pictures that the teacher uses to teach. The term picture refers to any two-dimensional representation. Flashcard is considered as a helpful strategy because of its benefits.

Moreover, teachers can also use flashcards for drilling and presenting new words. Flashcards that can be used as learning media can be classified based on a specific category or a class, such as; the flashcards of food, fruits, vegetables, household, transportation, or clothes. To avoid misunderstanding on the picture of flashcards, the teacher should try or show the flashcards to other teachers to get the reviews or suggestions before the flashcards are ready to support the learning process with students. For describing activities, for describing things, the flashcards can be stocked in a board or a box not to damage the picture. This is because the pictures use colors which are more attractive to students.

Komachali & Khodareza (2012: 137) explain that Flashcard is cardboard consisting of a word, a sentence, or a simple picture on it. Flashcard is very simple and suitable media for an individual to study a topic. It is a two-dimensional card containing daily life elements like the activity of a human,

animals, events, places, etc. Usually, the students can easily remember English occurrences if many teachers show cards that consist of words or pictures. Flashcards are a practical medium to help students and teachers in the teaching and learning process, especially in teaching students flashcards (Nugroho et al., 2012). The media flash cards can easily help students recall new vocabulary that is being studied because flashcards have two sides, namely words and their meanings (Khodashenas et al., 2014). Flashcards are small cards that contain pictures, text, or symbols that remind or guide students to something related to images that can be used to practice spelling and enrich vocabulary (Arsyad, 2011). The size of the text and images on the flashcards must be made large enough so that all class members can see the content on the flashcards (Muhammadnejad et al., 2012). The result of significant difference between pretest-posttest experimental and control group showed that flashcards can improve students' English vocabulary ( Fitriyani et al, 2017)

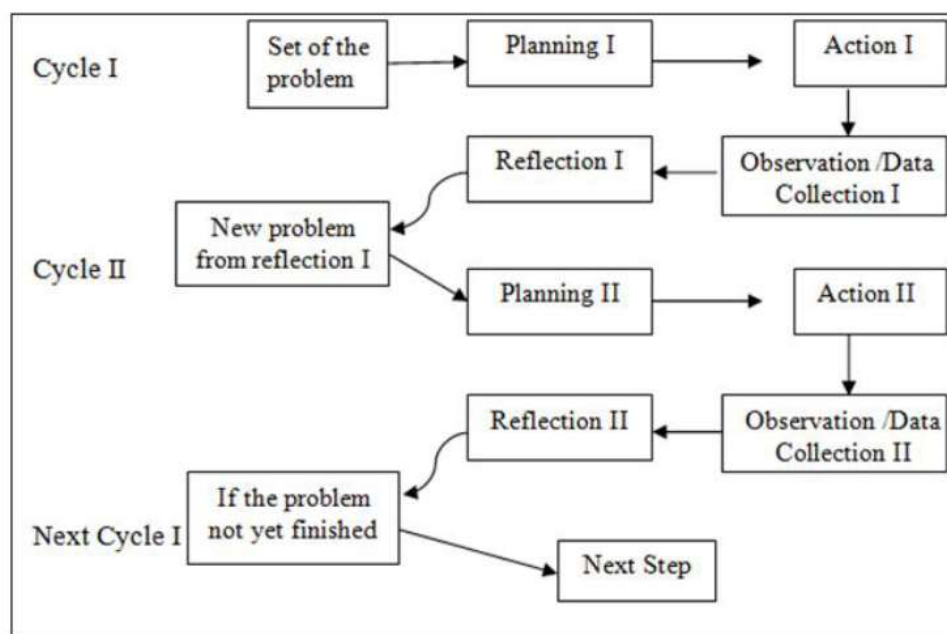
Flashcards are cards bearing pictures and words given by the teacher to handle and teach the material to students more easily. Flashcards have various sizes based on students' specific needs. Flashcards are created to be colorful, which can support effectively to memorize and understand new vocabulary. Besides, flashcards are one of the visual aids used to make the students more interested in the learning process and improve students' understanding of the teacher's material.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This research uses Classroom Action Research (CAR) which is adopted from Kemmis & McTaggart (1988, as cited in Burns, 2010) that involved four phases in a research cycle, such as planning, action, observation, and reflection. The lesson plans were laid out to the planning step to implement for English vocabulary using flashcards. The research was conducted in two cycles. Every process of meetings were completed in two hour. The observation step was applied during the process of teaching and learning process on the classroom. Based on the observation and posttest in the first cycle, the reflection step was settled down. The consequence of reflection in the first cycle was able to continue to the second cycle by repairing the action step.

This research was conducted in the classroom which the writer has already planned to do the treatment based on the cycle of classroom action, which particularly aims to ensure the students' mastery of learning vocabulary. Pavicic (in Khodashenas, Farahani, and Alishahi, 2014), said teachers should look for ways to improve students' abilities to explore, store and use some vocabulary types and create activities and assignments to help students improve their vocabulary and develop strategies for learning vocabulary.

**Table 1. 1: Steps of Action Research**



Taken from LP3 UNNES (2007: 63)

Action research is conducted in four certain cycles. The procedures include (1) planning, (2) Action, (3) Observation, (4) Reflection.

The research participants were 22 students of First Grade of SDN Sambong 3 Batang because the writer found that this class faced problems due to the lack of vocabulary. The data were gained from the result of scoring. The pattern of the average in student's individual score is shown below:

$$S = \frac{A}{N} \times 100 \quad \dots\dots\dots (1)$$

Where: S = students individual score  
R = the right answer  
N = total of test item

The data collection technique should be appropriate because it is considered essential to answer the research problems. There are many techniques can be used in research, but the writer chose flashcards as learning media. In this research, the writer used observation and measurement techniques. Measurement is used to measure students' achievement during the implementation in each cycle by using written multiple choices in which the students are asked to write the names of flashcards.

Tools for collecting the data that are used in this research are: (1) multiple choices test by asking students to write s of flashcards in each cycle which would be graded, and the result of each cycle was compared to know students'

achievements after learning vocabulary with the use of flashcards, (2) observation checklist used to observe the students and teacher's actions when using flash cards as teaching media in the classroom activity, and (3) Field note is the note made by doing collaboration with the teacher when she was on duty, teaching vocabulary using the flashcards. The field note contained the things that are becoming an obstacle in the research process and the things that indicated the improvement made, including the students' interaction and activity during the students learning vocabulary using flashcards to support the data from the observation checklist.

The writer analyzed the data from the field notes and the scoring table. The students' achievements in every cycle could be recognized from the improvement of score, which can be shown as follows:

$$M = \frac{\sum x}{N} \dots\dots\dots (2)$$

$\sum x$  = the sum of total score

N = the number of student being observed

Data Analysis was to know whether teaching vocabulary using flashcards could make students understand the topic that the writer taught them. The writer was doing an observation in every cycle in which the criteria of the students' achievement could be seen in table.

The process of teaching and learning in every cycle can be known from the observation checklist table and field notes. The data taken from the recording and the scoring table wer analyzed to see the progress of students' performance from one cycle to another cycle.

## **RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Research Findings**

The findings of Classroom Action research were gained from Cycle 1 and Cycle 2 and the observation checklist from the teacher as the collaborator.

#### **First cycle (August 31<sup>st</sup>,2020)**

In this planning stage, the writer was helped by the English teacher to prepare and determine some important things to support the research. There was collaboration between the writer and the English teacher. The writer acted as the teacher who taught the students using Flashcard in classroom and the English teacher acted as the collaborator. The writer prepared the lesson plan that represented all the activities in teaching vocabulary during the classroom learning process.

In the action stage, the writer researched teaching vocabulary using flashcards. The writer explained the definition of concrete nouns. Then, the teacher showed the flashcards of concrete nouns and the meaning. The writer also asked some questions to students about materials, so the writer knows whether the

students understand or not.

After explaining all of the materials, the writer explained flashcards in group activity and showed the examples to the students. The writer then divided the students into six groups consisting of five to six students in each group with one student becoming a leader. After that, the writer gave the flashcards about the things around the classroom to each group. The writer delivered clear instructions to every group on how to apply the learning technique using flashcards media. Next, within the members of each group started doing the exercise using flashcards lead by the leader. Each group leader would describe the things around the class, and the members of the group took one Flashcard related to the description. The leader also can use flashcards, which the leader showed the flashcards quickly and then the members guess the flashcards.

After the students had done their group task and the writer confirmed that all of the students already understood, the writer measured the students' vocabulary using the question task. The writer gave an individual task to each student. The task was multiple choices. The task consists of 20 items with 4 multiple choices of answers related to concrete nouns. After the students finished their tasks; the writer ended the class by concluding the material together with the students.

The tools were using field notes and an observation checklist table which it aimed to make the observer easier to see the improvement of the teacher and the students in classroom

Based on the observation in cycle 1, the whole activity in the classroom did not run well. While the students performed the group activity, some problems happened during the implementation of using the flashcards. The group consists of five to six students boisterous with their group and other groups and the activity did not run effectively. The students are confused with the writer's instruction, so it took times for them to understand what they are going to do in group. Some of the students remain silent while the writer asked to do the task. They did not know what they need to do or where they should start from. So, the writer explained the instruction one more again to the students in each group which could not be understood.

While the students did the individual task, some of the students did not understand the test items. Furthermore, the class atmosphere in that day was noisy, so some students could not fully concentrate on their task. After measuring the students' vocabulary mastery through flashcards, the writer then analyzed the score. By calculating the students' individual score, both the writer and the teacher got the students' mean score. The result of the first meeting was 49,210, which was categorized into "*average*".

The writer reflected what had been done in this cycle. The writer found the solutions and weaknesses which have been found in the first cycle. The writer made a summary of the problems. Then, the writer found better solutions to

correct the mistakes, so that the teaching learning process and the students' achievement can be improved.

Therefore, the writer did correction and reflection to the second cycle. The teacher should give more enrichment to the students, so their lack of vocabulary and other expressions during the discussion and teaching-learning process can be covered.

### **Second cycle (September 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2020)**

The teacher and the writer managed the students' seat position to the highest students to help the lowest students based on cycle 1. The passive students are mixed with the active students. After all the students were sitting in their group, the writer distributed the discussion materials. The students are given the exercises working within their group. Next, the students then discussed concrete nouns with their groups.

The next is, the group discussion results were presented in front of the classroom in which the teacher and the students discussed together. After doing the discussion, the students assessed the form of multiple choices. The writer went around the class to monitor the students to help them focus on a discussion and guide them. At last, they did the discussion well, all the members got involved to the discussion. They built good teamwork in the cycle. Compared to the previous cycle, students had shown their improvement.

In this second meeting, the students' vocabulary about concrete nouns then could be improved. The students could also learn to know more about concrete nouns using flashcards made by the writer and their own.

By calculating the students' individual score, both writer and the teacher got the mean score of students. The result of the second meeting showed 64, 210 which was categorized into "good". It was then increased from meeting 1, which showed 49,210. The students looked more enthusiastic with the material than previously. It was shown from the students discussing the material together with their group. The students who remain silent in first meeting began to be more active by giving ideas. The last, in the second cycle, both teacher and the students have done better than in the previous cycle. Based on discussion between the writer and the collaborator, the writer and his collaborator decided that the second cycle was the last cycle of the research.

The teacher and collaborator evaluated the students' achievement using the vocabulary test through flashcards media. Based on students' scores, it could be concluded that the students were enabled to get good scores in using concrete noun. The last cycle was considered successful because the students' achievement increased.

### **Discussion**

From the research finding, it could be seen that the students' vocabulary increased from the first cycle to the second cycle. There were some improvements



on the students' vocabulary in teaching learning process. After the writer achieved the indicators that had to be successfully achieved by the students, the writer had finished doing the research. In this part, the writer tried to answer the research problem, which the purpose of this research is to find out whether the use of flashcards as learning media could enrich the students' vocabulary mastery.

There was students' scores improvement that refers to the comparison in two cycles. The improvement can be seen from the mean score of the test. In the first cycle, the students' activity using Flashcard was unsatisfactory. This unsatisfactory result took place because the class situation was not quite conducive which the students kept talking with others. In this situation, there were 10 students from 38 students which kept silence when the activity was running. So far, they did not being active during the class activity. It could be seen that the students mean score in individual test was not satisfying. From this condition, both the writer and the collaborator decided to do the next cycle.

In cycle 2, after learning from deficiency from cycle 1, the students made a lot of progress in their activity. The students that remain silent in the previous first meeting began to be quite active by sharing their ideas. There were no more students who were getting busy with their own business; they were focused and concerned on the activity. In this cycle, the teacher monitored the students, focusing on the discussion by giving direct guidance. They did the discussion satisfactorily enough which all the members showed got involved to the discussion. They built good teamwork in this cycle. There were 10 students were passive on the first cycle, after the writer applied the teaching media, unfortunately, there were students who are still being passive learners during the teaching-learning process.

From the result in cycle 2, the students who had limited vocabulary in cycle 1 about things around the classroom became improved. The students knew more about things around the classroom than in the cycle before. They also had been given the task to make their own flashcards using things around the classroom. From this activity, the students' vocabulary improved not only things around the classroom but also things around their house. This was proven by their individual test which could be seen from their scores. Action Research facilitate this connection and role to knowledge transfer from university to business context. Another aspect relevant to further study is decisive what situations or for what types of studies in the managerial Action Research field are suitable research methods. Most widely, we can conclude that AR is a suitable approach when a holistic Comprehending of a problem is required and different methodology must be done. However, it is more detailed research can extend the analysis to other features AR database papers, such as related topics, the scope of empirical analysis, and different research and advantages approaches.

For instance, Dick et al. (2015) used AR as a meta-methodology, that is, a

process that can subsume multiple subprocesses and under which contradicting demands can be satisfied. According to the authors, and because of those reasons, AR can be described as an umbrella process. This means that AR may be used jointly with other methods. Moreover, AR is a collaborative method (Cordeiro et al., 2017; Denis & Lehoux, 2009)

Flashcard is one of teaching media considerably to teach English particularly in vocabulary. Flashcards are cards with a word, number, or picture provided by the teacher to support teaching and help the students learn and memorize many new words. Flashcards are the learning media that are easy to use to help students and teacher supporting the teaching-learning process. Expressing the images contained on the flashcard will help improve children's memory because visuals have a more significant influence on understanding and understanding something than verbal/audio. This affects students, students quickly understand and understand the words being learned and can easily return the information that students have received, namely some vocabulary that has been introduced with flashcards.

Flashcards have a significant effect on improving the vocabulary skills of elementary school students. Flashcards can help students learn to be more focused and can recognize words easily. Based on observations in the field, students became very excited and enthusiastic about learning vocabulary. Flashcards can be used in pairs while advancing to the front of the class, allowing students to learn while playing and increasing their interest in learning vocabulary. Using flashcards as a learning medium also makes students brave and not ashamed to appear in front of the class

In conclusion, from the result of analysis, the research finding of the classroom action research was satisfactory. Flashcards as the media could help the students improving their vocabulary. The activity itself helped the students became interactive and communicative with their friends. The group discussion also helped them to improve their vocabulary which they involved with their group members to do group task using flashcards.

## **CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION**

### **Conclusion**

Based on the students' learning analysis, the writer showed the conclusion of this research that the students' vocabulary mastery was improved, which was indicated by the result of the test. In the group discussion, the students could involve one another doing the task together. Initially, flashcards engage the students to familiar with some certain words. The students could easily memorize the words, pay more attention, enhance self-motivation, and of course improve their achievement in mastering English vocabulary.

It can be shown that not only the students' score are getting improved doing the individual test, but also their motivation in learning process was

enhanced through the use of flashcards in each activity. The students' motivation in learning English were influenced their participation in the class. The class situation became active and interactive because they enjoyed it and they were motivated in teaching-learning process.

The students showed better results in the process of the students' group discussion and individual test. This was proved by the mean score of 49,210 (1<sup>st</sup>Cycle) to 64,210 (2<sup>nd</sup> Cycle). Teaching vocabulary using Flashcard could also positively involve the students in teaching learning activity and could enrich their vocabularies mastery.

### **Suggestion**

Hopefully, this research will inspire the following researcher who would like to conduct similar research related to use flashcards to improve students' mastery of vocabulary. They should be more creative in making or using Flashcard, creating motivating and interesting activities with the flashcards. Thus, it could help the students easily comprehend and memorize the vocabularies by reading various text easily.

Furthermore, the English teachers are expected to use flashcards in the classroom to teach other types of nouns in the English language as well, such as the abstract nouns, and the last. The English teacher should be creative in using flashcards and other techniques instead of pictures, which is also interesting and effective to help the students increase their vocabulary mastery. Then, The colorfully design and structurally story can favorable the students' motivation to involve practically in teaching and learning process, especially for young learners.

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