

THE USE OF FLASHCARD IN ENGLISH VOCABULARY LEARNING

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ABSTRACT

Vocabulary plays an important role in oral and written communication of foreign language (Laufer and Nation, 1999). Vocabulary is one of the language aspects that is very pivotal in English learning. If we have less vocabulary, we will not clearly enough to gain the information in communication. The language learning approach using flashcards provides an effective training and learning method for teachers, and flashcards can also be used effectively as teaching resources to help students learn and understand vocabulary. One of the main advantages of flashcards is, they can be carried anywhere and can be studied at any time (Brown, 2000). Flashcards are a fun strategy and can increase students' reading interest. This study is a library research which aimed to describe the use of flashcard in English vocabulary learning. The method used in this research is the study of literature. The results showed that the use of the flashcard strategy in English vocabulary learning at the elementary school and high school levels were preferred and interested in using flashcards equipped with various images and has a variety of colors. Moreover, flashcards also make students more active and they did not get bored easily when learning English vocabulary.

Keywords: vocabulary, flashcard, strategy

INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary is an important component of language learning, especially foreign languages since without vocabulary mastery we might not be optimal in communicating both listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Mastery of vocabulary is the main piece in the success of mastering a foreign language and at the same time plays an important role in oral and written communication (Laufer and Nation, 1999). Moreover, we can know how to use language properly and correctly by learning vocabulary. In learning vocabulary, obstacles are often found at school, for example, the

students are not diligent in learning to remember vocabulary and are less interested in learning vocabulary. Even though students have studied English for several years, they still find it difficult to learn vocabulary.

Adequate mastery of vocabulary is essential for the successful use of a foreign language, without a broad vocabulary, someone will not be able to use its structures, and functions that we may have learned for comprehensible communication (Rivers, 1983). The success of foreign language learning, especially vocabulary, is very important for students because vocabulary is

an inseparable part of the language. Without understanding vocabulary, the students cannot understand their ideas in listening and reading and find difficulties in expressing their ideas in speaking and writing.

In addition, an effective way to assist students in communicating is to increase their vocabulary knowledge (Celce-Murcia, 1991). The language learning approach using flashcards provides an effective training and learning method for teachers, and flashcards can also be used effectively as teaching resources to help students learn and understand vocabulary.

One of the main advantages of flashcards is, they can be carried anywhere and can be studied at any time (Brown, 2000). Flashcards are a fun strategy and can increase students' reading interest. This is a strategy that presents visuals in the form of symbols, numbers, ideas with words, and pictures (Herlina & Dewi, 2017). Flashcards can create a pleasant atmosphere for students to enrich their vocabulary. Therefore, flashcards are an effective strategy in education which is a visual source and approach to ensure the learning process becomes meaningful.

This study is related to the use of flashcard in learning English, especially

vocabulary to improve students' understanding and vocabulary skills. The results of this study are expected to be useful and provide a good learning experience and useful information for teachers, students, and researchers. This research can make teachers know the strategies that can be used in teaching vocabulary therefore, they can be used to improve students' understanding and skills in English vocabulary.

Based on the background of the study above, the researcher formulates the research problems in this study, namely: what are the stages in using the Flashcard Strategy in vocabulary learning and what are the advantages and disadvantages of the Flashcard Strategy in vocabulary learning? There are several different strategies and approaches to improve students' understanding and skills in learning English, especially vocabulary learning. In addition, research objectives are goals that researchers plan to do or achieve during research or are intended to answer and solve research problem formulations. Therefore, based on the formulation of the research problem stated above, the purpose of this study is to find out the stages in using the flashcard and to find out the advantages and disadvantages of the use of flashcard, therefore, to be able

to get the results in which students' understanding of vocabulary can be improved through the use of the flashcard to improve students' vocabulary mastery.

In general, vocabulary is a list of words, including an explanation of their meaning. According to Schmitt (2000), to be able to understand a word, we not only need to study the meaning of the word, but we also need to understand registers, associations, collocations, grammatical patterns, written and spoken forms, and the frequency of the use of the word. This is called word knowledge.

For many language learners, mastering the meaning of words is considered as mastering the definitions of words in the dictionary. According to Schmitt (2000), word meaning includes the relationship between words and their referents which can be people, objects, actions, and situations. The meaning of the words in the dictionary is an element of basic meaning. A word can have different meanings in different contexts. For example, the basic meaning of the word 'pet' in English is 'pet'. But in informal situations, the pet is used to refer to 'the person we like'.

Vocabulary is defined as all the words that a person used when they talk about a

particular subject in a particular language (Hornby, 2006). It can be said that vocabulary is a basic element of language that is needed by someone in learning a language, especially to communicate effectively with other people. Vocabulary has an important role in learning English because it is one of the elements that connect the four language skills, namely speaking, listening, reading, and writing simultaneously (Huyen and Nga, 2003).

Vocabulary can be classified into two types, namely productive and receptive vocabulary (Hibert and Kamil, 2005). Productive vocabulary is a collection of words that a person can use when writing or speaking, these are words that are often used. Receptive vocabulary is a collection of words that a person can give its meaning to when they listening or reading, these are words that are used less often.

Vocabulary development is very important for students since they can understand the language being studied. The use of flashcards is one way to improve student's vocabulary skills. Flashcard is a learning strategy in the form of cards containing images, text, or symbols that can remind or guide students to do something related to images (Kupzyk, 2011). The

pictures on the flashcard are a series of messages that are presented in the form of information on each image (Hatiningsih & Adiyati, 2018).

Many people use flashcards to increase students' vocabulary (Nikoopour & Azemi, 2014). According to Erbey, McLaughlin, Derby, and Everson (2011), flashcards are used to teach letters and words. The results showed that some students were more successful in understanding and vocabulary skills using flashcards than others. Komachali and Khodareza (2012) also examined the use of flashcards to increase students' vocabulary. The results showed that students in the experimental group using flashcards were superior to other students in vocabulary knowledge.

Currently, the way students learn English vocabulary is simply by writing the words into a notebook and then writing down the meaning of those words in the next of those words. Flashcards are used to understand the meaning of words and their pronunciation in English (Milles & Ehri, 2017). The teacher finds that this strategy is very helpful when using flashcards during English vocabulary lessons, and it is easier for the students to understand the material presented (Hamer & Rohimajaya, 2018). The

advantage of using flashcards as a learning strategy is that they can be taken anywhere and used flexibly. Therefore, it was concluded that the flashcard strategy in teaching vocabulary to students led to an increase in vocabulary at a higher level.

Vocabulary is one component of English and is very important to learn. Vocabulary is the words we must know to communicate effectively; words in speaking (expressive vocabulary) and words in listening (receptive vocabulary) (Neuman, S.B., & Dwyer, J., 2009). Before students master the four skills they have to know some vocabulary to support them in learning English, English vocabulary as an element of language skills has an important role for students in learning a foreign language. In teaching English, especially vocabulary, teachers must be creative in choosing materials and be able to motivate students' interest in learning. Teachers need to apply several strategies to support the teaching and learning process, especially in vocabulary.

Mastering a language requires good understanding and skills in vocabulary. Strategy is a step or action taken for the maximum purpose, or understanding strategy is an attempt to achieve a successful goal. Thus, strategy is a plan, method, or series of

activities designed to achieve educational goals. In learning English, the basic element that needs to be considered is vocabulary. Vocabulary is one element that has an important role in communication, both in oral and written form. All words in a language are referred to as vocabulary to achieve language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing). Mastery of vocabulary is needed when people want to listen, speak, read, and write to understand the meaning, diction, sentence structure, or pronunciation of words. Therefore, vocabulary is a fundamental element of language skills.

As it is known that vocabulary learning does not receive adequate attention because most of them pay more attention to grammar instructions than vocabulary. However, the teacher must implement the right strategies to enable the learners to achieve good results. This lack of attention to learning vocabulary is considered a serious problem to expand the vocabulary learned by students. Students who use flashcards can learn better than those who do not use flashcards in learning English vocabulary. Students can learn various words faster and can memorize many words by applying flashcard strategies.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The Use of Flashcard in English Vocabulary Learning

Vocabulary teaching can be applied to all school levels because this flashcard strategy can improve students' understanding and skills of English vocabulary. For the implementation of vocabulary teaching at the elementary school level, vocabulary learning activities using flashcards will become more interesting. Flashcards can be applied in the form of games with picture cards that can improve students' ability to read and retell stories with what was in the images on the flashcards. This flashcard can be made using a 25x30 cm or 8x12 cm picture card. First, provide thick cardboard as the base page of the story to make it look good. The size was adjusted to each story that will be made to present. Second, attach the story sheet that will be presented on the cardboard as the base for the story sheet. The cards were presented in the form of pictures. The picture was a series of messages that were presented in a randomly illustrated pattern and then arranged and made into a short story.

For junior high school level, teaching English vocabulary using flashcards was also very interesting for students. Flashcards which have many advantages are applied under the name Computer-based Flashcard

Program (CFP) as a medium for students to be able to understand English vocabulary. At the first meeting, students were given a pretest. After that, do teaching and learning using CFP to improve students' vocabulary skills. After learning English vocabulary for five meetings, then the students were given a post-test. The results of the pre-test and post-test were calculated to determine the understanding and vocabulary skills of students using CFP. Therefore, the Computer-based Flashcard Program (CFP) is a program designed to provide an experience of implementing flashcards to communicate by logically arranging the cards. CFP was able to present new cards and provide an effective way to learn without affecting information overload.

Furthermore, for the high school level, the application of flashcard strategies is very important to implement. Students will be greatly helped by this strategy because flashcards have advantages in learning English vocabulary. Students were divided into several groups and used flashcards. Vocabulary was presented to students in three example sentences; furthermore, new vocabulary appears in a short passage; The last part of each lesson was a series of exercises that provide opportunities for

students to practice using new words. Next, the test carried out on the first 6-units of 504 words that matter was to find out the results of the flashcard strategy implementation. The test consists of 50 questions that should have been answered in 35 minutes provided that all items in the test were multiple choice questions or fill in the blanks according to the English vocabulary they are learning.

As for other examples of using flashcard media in vocabulary learning, namely:

1. Memory Activities

- Place a selection of flashcards on the floor in a circle.
- Students have one minute to memorize the cards.
- In groups, they have two minutes to write down as many names as they could remember.

2. Identification Activities

- Cover the flashcard or word card with a piece of card and gently open it.
- Students guess which one is the card.
- After the cards were shown, practice the word in a chorus with the group using different

intonations and silly sounds to keep it fun.

- Vary the volume too, whispering and shouting the words. Children will automatically copy your voice.
- Or, flip the cards very quickly so the children can see at a glance.
- Repeat it until the students guess the word.

3. TPR Activities

- Paste flashcards around the classroom. Say one of them and students point to it or race for it.
- Then, students can give instructions to classmates.
- You can extend this by saying 'jump to the cat' or even 'if you have blonde hair, swim to the fish' etc.
- You can also insert flashcards into the Simon Says game. 'Simon says to jump in T-shirt' etc.

The Advantages and Disadvantages of Flashcard

Flashcards are one of the best strategies to apply for learning vocabulary. Flashcards have two sides, namely front and back, the front side contains images or symbols while the back side contains definitions, image descriptions, answers, or explanations.

1. The Advantages of Flashcard

According to Indriana (2011), the advantages of the flashcard strategy were visible, as the flashcards are easy to carry everywhere. Students can practice making flashcards and use them to learn vocabulary. Flashcards help in summarizing and memorizing vocabulary; they were also very fun to use in vocabulary learning because they can be used in the form of games. Therefore, the advantages of flashcards were useful for improving understanding and skills of new letters and words.

2. The Disadvantages of Flashcard

In addition to their advantages, flashcards also have some drawbacks, according to Asnawir and Usman (2010), the size of the flashcard is usually not large enough owing to those students sitting in the front can see the flashcard perfectly, but students sitting at the back cannot see clearly. Therefore, some students will find it difficult to understand the teacher's explanation by his knowledge of the material explained by the teacher, thus the planned goals were not less achieved.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and discussions described in previous chapters, the use of the flashcard strategy in learning vocabulary in English can be seen that students at the elementary school and high school, levels were preferred and interested in using flashcards equipped with various images and has a variety of colors. Moreover, flashcards also make students more active and they did not get bored easily when learning English vocabulary.

In conclusion, the results showed there are strategies on the use of flashcard then the advantages and disadvantages of using flashcard in learning English vocabulary. Furthermore, in line with the objectives of this study, it can be concluded that students' understanding and skills of English vocabulary can be improved through the use of flashcard strategies. This can be seen in flashcard learning when students were trained to be able to read, write, listen, and speak. Flashcard learning was very effective to use to develop students' understanding and vocabulary skills. The benefits have included improving language skills, improving the ability to compose stories, memorizing, analyzing problems, and enriching

vocabulary. Apart from the cognitive side, the benefits of flashcards can also increase self-confidence, develop good and effective communication, and increase creativity. Therefore, flashcards were a fun learning strategy and were able to attract the attention and motivation of students to learn.

Based on the findings and discussions, English teachers were advised to apply the flashcard strategy, since it was proven that students' understanding and vocabulary skills can be improved when the students learn to use flashcards. In addition, the application of the flashcard strategy makes learning English, especially vocabulary, more interesting and fun for students. Thus, English teachers were also advised to always motivate students. For example, the teacher asks students to practice vocabulary at home starting from simple topics using flashcards to improve students' understanding and vocabulary skills more intensively. The teacher can assign the students to use flashcards to find new words. Therefore, flashcards should be useful for teachers and students to apply effective learning strategies and make students more interested in learning English vocabulary. Although there were many approaches, strategies, or other methods for teachers to teach English

vocabulary for the students, applying the flashcard strategy has many advantages that can improve understanding and learning skills of English vocabulary for students.

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