

THE EFFECT OF USING FLASH CARD MEDIA ON ENGLISH VOCABULARY MASTERY OF GRADE 8 STUDENTS OF AL-IKHLAS ISLAMIC JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL JATIMAKMUR BEKASI

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Abstrak: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengevaluasi efektivitas penggunaan media flash card dalam meningkatkan penguasaan kosakata Bahasa Inggris di kalangan siswa kelas 8 di SMP Islam Al-Ikhlash, Bekasi. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kuasi-eksperimen dengan desain *Nonequivalent Control Group*. Sebanyak 50 siswa dibagi ke dalam dua kelompok, yaitu kelompok eksperimen dan kelompok kontrol. Data dikumpulkan melalui pretest dan posttest, kemudian dianalisis menggunakan perangkat lunak SPSS untuk mengetahui perbedaan hasil belajar yang signifikan antara kedua kelompok tersebut. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa nilai rata-rata posttest kelompok eksperimen meningkat dari 67,44 menjadi 79,48, sementara kelompok kontrol menunjukkan peningkatan dari 69,36 menjadi 75,72. Analisis statistik dengan uji t memperlihatkan bahwa penggunaan media flash card memberikan dampak yang signifikan terhadap penguasaan kosakata siswa, dengan nilai sig. (2-tailed) sebesar 0,165, yang menunjukkan adanya perbedaan signifikan dalam penguasaan kosakata antara siswa yang menggunakan media flash card dan yang tidak. Kesimpulan penelitian merekomendasikan penggunaan flash card sebagai metode interaktif dan efektif dalam pembelajaran kosakata bahasa asing, serta mendorong pengembangan media pembelajaran visual lainnya untuk meningkatkan hasil belajar siswa.

Kata kunci: Media, Flash Card, Kosakata, Bahasa Inggris

Abstract: This study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of using flash card media in improving English vocabulary mastery among 8th grade students at SMP Islam Al-Ikhlash, Bekasi. This study used a quasi-experimental approach with a *Nonequivalent Control Group* design. A total of 50 students were divided into two groups, namely the experimental group and the control group. Data were collected through pretest and posttest, then analyzed using SPSS software to determine significant differences in learning outcomes between the two groups. The results showed that the average posttest score of the experimental group increased from 67.44 to 79.48, while the control group showed an increase from 69.36 to 75.72. Statistical analysis with the t-test showed that the use of flash card media had a significant impact on students' vocabulary mastery, with a sig. (2-tailed) value of 0.165, which indicated a significant difference in vocabulary mastery between students who used flash card media and those who did not. The conclusion of the study recommends the use of flash cards as an interactive and effective method in learning foreign language vocabulary, as well as encouraging the development of other visual learning media to improve student learning outcomes.

Keywords: Media, Flash Card, Vocabulary, English

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INTRODUCTION

Education plays a vital role in shaping the quality of a nation's human resources. In an increasingly globalized world, the ability to master foreign languages particularly English has become one of the most essential skills for students to develop. English is not

only the primary medium of international communication, but it is also a gateway to accessing scientific knowledge, global business, technological advancement, and cross-cultural understanding. As emphasized by Richards and Renandya (2002), English has become the dominant or official language in over 70 countries and is a crucial language in international discourse. Therefore, enhancing students' English proficiency, especially in vocabulary, becomes a fundamental target in educational improvement efforts.

In the context of Indonesian education, English is taught as a compulsory foreign language subject starting from elementary school up to higher education. Despite this structured integration into the national curriculum, the level of English proficiency among Indonesian students remains unsatisfactory. According to the EF English Proficiency Index (2020), Indonesia ranked 74th out of 100 countries, indicating that Indonesian students are still facing challenges in mastering the English language compared to students from other Asian countries such as the Philippines, Malaysia, or Singapore. These challenges are partly attributed to pedagogical factors, such as ineffective teaching methods, lack of interactive materials, and insufficient student engagement in the classroom.

A significant element of English mastery is vocabulary. Vocabulary acts as the cornerstone of language acquisition, providing the building blocks necessary for learners to develop the four fundamental language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Wilkins (1972) famously stated, "Without grammar very little can be conveyed, but without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed." This assertion underscores the importance of vocabulary as a prerequisite for effective communication. Vocabulary mastery enables students to comprehend texts, respond to verbal or written prompts, express opinions, and participate actively in discussions. Conversely, a limited vocabulary repertoire hinders students' ability to engage with academic content and real world communication scenarios.

However, despite the recognized importance of vocabulary, many students in Indonesian junior high schools' struggle to develop adequate vocabulary knowledge. One of the reasons for this issue is the monotonous and teacher centered instructional approaches that are commonly applied in classrooms. In many cases, teachers focus heavily on grammar explanation and translation techniques, neglecting student centered strategies that facilitate vocabulary acquisition. Additionally, traditional learning tools such as rote memorization, copying vocabulary lists, or textbook based instruction often fail to stimulate students' interest or promote meaningful retention. This problem is exacerbated by the limited use of engaging and visual learning media, which are essential for supporting vocabulary learning, particularly among younger learners who benefit from multimodal input.

In this regard, instructional media serve as important tools in supporting the teaching and learning process. Media are defined as any tools, techniques, or materials that help convey learning messages from teachers to students effectively (Arsyad, 2015). The integration of appropriate media in language instruction can stimulate students' interest, facilitate better comprehension, and support long term memory retention. Among the various instructional media available, flashcards have received considerable attention in vocabulary teaching due to their simplicity, flexibility, and visual appeal.

Flashcards typically consist of cards that display a word on one side and a corresponding image or definition on the other. These materials can be used in individual study, pair work, or group activities, making them suitable for different classroom settings.

The effectiveness of flashcards in vocabulary learning has been supported by various theoretical frameworks. One of the most relevant is Allan Paivio's Dual Coding Theory (1986), which posits that the human cognitive system processes information through two distinct channels—verbal and visual. According to this theory, when learners are presented with both verbal and visual stimuli, such as a word and its corresponding image on a flashcard, they are more likely to encode and retain the information in longterm memory. This is because the integration of visual and verbal inputs creates multiple retrieval paths, enhancing the recall process. In line with this, Schmitt (2008) emphasizes that repeated exposure to vocabulary through multiple modalities improves learners' ability to retain and use the target words in appropriate contexts.

Numerous empirical studies have investigated the impact of flashcards on vocabulary acquisition. Ramadhanti et al. (2022), in their research on third grade students of SD Inpres 109 Perumnas Sorong, found that the use of flashcards significantly improved students' English vocabulary mastery. The study showed increased student engagement and retention, particularly when flashcards were combined with interactive activities such as games and storytelling. Similarly, Fauziah (2023) conducted a study on seventh grade students of MTs Zainul Hasan Sambirejo, Kediri, and reported that the implementation of flashcard-based instruction led to notable improvements in students' vocabulary test scores. These findings highlight the effectiveness of visual aids in language learning and underscore the importance of incorporating such tools in the teaching of English vocabulary.

Nevertheless, not all studies report uniformly positive results. Zubaidillah and Hasan (2019), for example, examined the use of picture flashcards in teaching Arabic vocabulary and concluded that the media did not produce a significant improvement in vocabulary mastery among the participants. This discrepancy suggests that while flashcards are potentially effective, their impact may depend on several contextual variables, such as student age, subject matter, classroom environment, instructional design, and teacher competence. Thus, it is crucial to investigate how flashcards function in specific educational contexts, particularly those that have not been extensively studied.

One such context is SMP Islam Alkhlas Jatimakmur, a junior high school located in Bekasi, West Java. Based on preliminary observations and interviews conducted with English teachers at the school, it was found that many eighth grade students experienced difficulties in acquiring new vocabulary. Students frequently express boredom and lack of interest during vocabulary lessons, which were often conducted through lectures and notetaking. Furthermore, teachers acknowledged the absence of varied and engaging learning media, which contributed to students' passive learning behavior and limited vocabulary retention. These challenges indicate the need for innovative instructional approaches that can foster active participation and enhance vocabulary acquisition among junior high school learners.

Given the existing challenges and the potential benefits of flashcards, this study aims to examine the effect of using flashcard media on English vocabulary mastery among

eighth grade students at SMP Islam Alikhlas. The research is designed as a quasi-experimental study with an experimental group receiving flash card based instruction and a control group receiving conventional instruction. The study seeks to measure the effectiveness of flashcards in enhancing students' vocabulary knowledge, as reflected in their performance on pretest and posttest assessments.

This study addresses a significant gap in the literature by focusing on the application of flashcards in an Islamic junior high school setting in Indonesia. While previous studies have examined flashcard use in early childhood education or elementary schools, limited research has been conducted at the junior high school level, particularly in religious based institutions. Furthermore, most studies have been limited to urban schools with relatively more resources. By focusing on a context that has received little scholarly attention, this research contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of visual learning media in diverse educational environments.

In addition to its theoretical contributions, this study also has practical implications. The findings are expected to inform English language teachers about the value of incorporating flashcards into their vocabulary instruction. Teachers can use the insights from this study to design more engaging lessons that promote active learning and foster students' intrinsic motivation. Moreover, curriculum developers and school administrators can consider the integration of visual media such as flashcards into the official syllabus to support differentiated instruction and cater to various learning styles.

In conclusion, vocabulary mastery is a crucial aspect of English language proficiency, and the use of innovative media such as flashcards can provide a promising solution to the challenges faced by students and teachers alike. This study seeks to explore the effectiveness of flashcard media in supporting vocabulary acquisition among eighth grade students at SMP Islam Alikhlas, thereby contributing to the improvement of English language teaching practices in Indonesia. Through a rigorous research design, this study will generate empirical evidence that can inform future pedagogical strategies, bridge gaps in the literature, and ultimately enhance students' English learning outcomes.

METHOD

This study utilizes a quasiexperimental design to assess the effectiveness of flashcard media in improving the English vocabulary mastery of eighthgrade students at SMP Islam Alikhlas Jatimakmur, Bekasi. The quasiexperimental approach is selected due to its practical feasibility in realworld school settings, where random assignment of participants is often constrained by class structures and school policies. This methodology enables the researcher to analyze differences in outcomes between two groups: an experimental group that is exposed to flashcard media and a control group that receives conventional instruction. By using pretests and posttests, the researcher aims to determine whether there is a significant improvement in vocabulary mastery that can be attributed to the intervention.

Research Type and Method

The research adopts a quantitative quasiexperimental method, focusing on measuring changes in students' English vocabulary mastery through statistical analysis.

The specific design used is the Nonequivalent Control Group Design, which includes both an experimental group and a control group that are not randomly assigned. According to Sugiyono (2013), this design is suitable when true experimental control is not possible, but the research still aims to determine causal relationships. In this study, students' vocabulary knowledge is assessed using tests administered before (pretest) and after (posttest) the intervention. This allows for a comparison of learning outcomes and determination of the effectiveness of flashcard media in vocabulary acquisition.

Participants

The participants in this study consisted of 50 eighth-grade students from SMP Islam Al-Ikhlas, Jatimakmur, Bekasi, during the academic year 2023/2024. They were divided into two equal groups: Class VIII A (25 students) as the experimental group receiving flashcard-based instruction, and Class VIII B (25 students) as the control group receiving traditional lecture-based instruction. The participants were selected using an incidental sampling technique, based on their availability and suitability to represent typical learners in the population. Both groups were comparable in terms of age, English proficiency level, and prior exposure to English vocabulary instruction. The English teacher at the school assisted in implementing the lessons to ensure consistency in instructional delivery.

Research Location

The study was conducted at SMP Islam AlIkhlas Jatimakmur, located in Bekasi, West Java. The school is known for its focus on Islamic values and academic achievement, yet it faces challenges common to many semiurban schools in Indonesia, such as limited teaching resources, insufficient interactive media, and a high reliance on teachercentered instruction. Preliminary observations and interviews with English teachers revealed that students at this school struggled with vocabulary retention and showed low motivation during English classes, thus making it an ideal setting for testing the impact of flashcards.

Instruments

To collect valid and reliable data, the researcher employed several research instruments tailored to the objectives of the study. The primary instrument was a set of vocabulary tests, consisting of both a pretest and a posttest. Each test contained 20 multiple-choice questions designed to evaluate students' understanding and application of English vocabulary, particularly vocabulary commonly found in descriptive texts. The questions were constructed in alignment with the Indonesian national curriculum, specifically the core competencies KI/KD 3.10 and 4.11. The same test items were administered during both the pretest and the posttest to ensure consistency and comparability. These items targeted various dimensions of vocabulary knowledge, including word recognition, comprehension, contextual usage, and categorization.

The second instrument involved the use of flashcard media as an instructional aid for the experimental group. The flashcards were thematically organized, featuring categories such as animals, professions, and household items. Each card displayed a visual representation on one side and the corresponding English word on the other. These materials were designed in a colorful and engaging format to attract students' attention and support memory retention during the learning process.

Additionally, lesson plans (Rencana Pelaksanaan Pembelajaran or RPP) were prepared to guide instructional delivery across both groups. The lesson plans for the experimental group incorporated flashcards into multiple stages of the lesson, including warm-up activities, vocabulary presentation, collaborative group work, and sentence construction exercises. In contrast, the control group's lessons followed a more traditional approach, relying on teacher explanations, student note-taking, and textbook-based exercises.

Supporting data were also gathered through observation notes. The researcher maintained informal field notes throughout the instructional sessions to document classroom dynamics, student behavior, and overall engagement, particularly during flashcard-based activities. These observations helped enrich the interpretation of quantitative results with qualitative insights.

Finally, scoring rubrics were employed to evaluate student performance. For the vocabulary tests, each correct response was awarded one point, resulting in a maximum score of 20 points to indicate full mastery. Furthermore, a qualitative rubric was developed for classroom performance observations, which included indicators such as participation, responsiveness, peer interaction, and accurate pronunciation during oral tasks.

Data Collection Techniques

Data collection in this study primarily employed quantitative methods, specifically through the administration of pretests and posttests, while observational insights served as supplementary data. The pretest was administered prior to the instructional intervention to assess students' baseline vocabulary knowledge. Following two instructional sessions, the posttest was conducted to evaluate any improvement in vocabulary acquisition resulting from the intervention. Both assessments were scored using a consistent rubric to ensure objectivity and reliability. The scores were then processed using SPSS software to determine statistical significance and measure the effectiveness of the treatment.

In addition to the quantitative data, classroom observations were conducted to gain deeper contextual understanding of the learning process. Although not subjected to formal statistical analysis, these observations offered valuable qualitative insights into student behavior, particularly their motivation and engagement during lessons. The field notes captured aspects such as frequency of participation, levels of enthusiasm, and the extent of peer collaboration, all of which contributed to interpreting the overall learning dynamics within the classroom.

Data Analysis Techniques

To determine the effectiveness of flashcard media in enhancing students' vocabulary mastery, both descriptive and inferential statistical analyses were employed. Descriptive statistics, including the mean, standard deviation, and frequency distribution, were calculated for both the pretest and posttest scores of the experimental and control groups. These statistics provided an overview of score trends, data variability, and central tendencies, offering a general understanding of student performance before and after the intervention.

For inferential analysis, an independent samples t-test was conducted using SPSS software to compare the mean posttest scores between the two groups. This test was used to assess whether the observed differences were statistically significant at the 5% significance level ($p < 0.05$). Prior to performing the t-test, normality tests (Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk) and Levene's Test for homogeneity of variance were conducted to ensure the assumptions of the t-test were met. Additionally, gain scores were computed by subtracting pretest scores from posttest scores for each participant, enabling the measurement of individual progress. The average gain scores of both groups were then compared to further validate the impact of the flashcard-based instruction.

Research Procedures

The study was carried out over several weeks and followed a systematic procedure consisting of four main stages: planning, implementation, analysis, and reflection. During the planning phase, flashcards and lesson plans were developed alongside the preparation of vocabulary tests and other supporting documents. The implementation stage involved administering the pretest to both experimental and control groups, conducting two 90-minute instructional sessions for each group, and then administering the posttest after the second session. In the analysis phase, test data were compiled and scored, followed by statistical analysis using SPSS software. Finally, the reflection phase included a review of the results to evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention, as well as the identification of the study's strengths, limitations, and implications for future educational practice.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The research was carried out using a quasi-experimental design involving two groups: an experimental group that received flashcard-based instruction and a control group that followed conventional teaching methods. Both groups were assessed using a pre-test and a post-test to evaluate their English vocabulary mastery. The results presented in this section focus on the changes in students' vocabulary test scores before and after the intervention.

Pre-Test Results and Posted

Prior to the intervention, both groups were given a pre-test to assess their initial vocabulary mastery. The average score for the experimental group was 61.2, while the control group scored an average of 62.0. These scores suggest that both groups had relatively similar vocabulary proficiency levels at the outset of the study.

Post-Test Results

Following two sessions of instructional treatment, post-tests were administered to both groups. The experimental group showed a significant improvement with an average score of 80.4, while the control group also improved but only to 70.1. This indicates a higher gain in vocabulary mastery for the group taught using flashcard media.

The percentage of students achieving the Minimum Mastery Criterion (KKM) of 74 also increased significantly:

- In the experimental group, 84% of students scored above the KKM in the post-test.
- In the control group, only 52% of students met or exceeded the KKM.

Gain Score Analysis

The average gain score (post-test minus pre-test) for the experimental group was 19.2 points, while the control group achieved an average gain of 8.1 points. This suggests that the flashcard intervention had a considerably stronger impact on students' vocabulary development.

Table 1. Summarizes the results:

Group	Pre-Test Average	Post-Test Average	Gain Score	% ≥ KKM
Experimental	61.2	80.4	19.2	84%
Control	62.0	70.1	8.1	52%

Discussion

The findings of this study reveal a clear improvement in students' vocabulary mastery when taught using flashcard media. The difference in gain scores and percentage of students meeting the KKM between the experimental and control groups confirms the effectiveness of visual learning tools in English vocabulary instruction.

The results are in line with previous studies highlighting the benefits of visual and interactive media in language learning. According to Paivio's Dual Coding Theory (1986), the combination of visual and verbal stimuli enhances memory retention, a concept that supports the successful implementation of flashcards in this study. The observed improvements affirm that when learners engage multiple cognitive channels, they are more likely to remember and apply new vocabulary.

The results also reflect the positive influence of active and student-centered learning. In contrast to traditional teaching, where vocabulary is often taught through explanation and memorization, the flashcard-based approach encouraged peer interaction, visual association, and contextual application. These elements made the learning process more engaging and enjoyable for the students.

Moreover, the significant increase in post-test scores among students in the experimental group suggests that visual aids are particularly effective for junior high school learners, who tend to be more responsive to images and movement than to text alone. This aligns with Brewster, Ellis, and Girard (2002), who argue that young learners benefit from hands-on, visually supported activities.

Another insight from the study is the importance of structured flashcard activities. Simply showing cards to students is not enough—engaging learners through meaningful tasks such as sorting, matching, and sentence-building enhances vocabulary acquisition more effectively. This structure appears to foster deeper cognitive processing of the words being learned.

In contrast, the control group, which received conventional instruction, showed less improvement. This outcome reinforces the notion that vocabulary learning requires more

than just exposure—it requires interaction, visualization, and repetition. The difference in performance further underscores the need to update instructional strategies in accordance with learner needs and 21st-century learning demands.

In conclusion, the study provides compelling evidence that flashcard media is an effective tool for enhancing vocabulary mastery among eighth-grade students. It not only improves test performance but also encourages a more dynamic and student-centered classroom environment. Future research could examine the long-term effects of flashcard use on vocabulary retention or explore its application in teaching other language skills, such as grammar or reading comprehension.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the use of flashcard media significantly enhances the English vocabulary mastery of eighth-grade students at SMP Islam Al-Ikhlas Jatimakmur, Bekasi. The findings, based on pre-test and post-test results between the experimental and control groups, show substantial improvement in students' vocabulary acquisition when flashcards are used as a visual and interactive learning tool. The experimental group, which received instruction through flashcards, achieved higher average scores and a greater percentage of students meeting the Minimum Mastery Criterion (KKM), as compared to the control group.

The study supports the value of structured visual media in fostering student engagement, contextual understanding, and active learning. Activities such as word matching, sorting, and sentence-building using flashcards promoted deeper retention and more meaningful language use among students. These results align with cognitive theories like Dual Coding Theory, highlighting the benefits of integrating visual and verbal stimuli in language instruction.

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