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Using Flashcard to Enhance the Vocabulary of Fourth Graders of Elementary School

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Abstrak—Penguasaan kosakata merupakan aspek penting dalam pembelajaran bahasa, terutama bagi siswa sekolah dasar. Namun, banyak siswa kelas empat mengalami kesulitan dalam memperkaya kosakata mereka. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis efektivitas penggunaan *flashcard* dalam meningkatkan kosakata siswa kelas empat sekolah dasar. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode *classroom action research* (CAR) yang dilakukan dalam satu siklus. Siklus terdiri dari tahap perencanaan, pelaksanaan, observasi, dan refleksi. Data dikumpulkan melalui tes kosakata sebelum dan sesudah tindakan, serta observasi selama proses pembelajaran. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa penggunaan *flashcard* meningkatkan penguasaan kosakata siswa secara signifikan. Siswa lebih antusias dan mampu mengingat kata-kata baru dengan lebih mudah dibandingkan metode konvensional. Selain itu, pendekatan visual dan repetisi dalam *flashcard* membantu siswa dalam memahami makna kata dengan lebih baik. Kesimpulannya, *flashcard* merupakan media pembelajaran yang efektif dalam meningkatkan kosakata siswa kelas empat sekolah dasar. Oleh karena itu, guru disarankan untuk menggunakan metode ini guna menciptakan pembelajaran yang lebih menarik dan interaktif.

Kata kunci—*Flashcard*, Kosa Kata, *Classroom Action Research*, Siswa Sekolah Dasar

Abstract—Vocabulary mastery is an important aspect of language learning, especially for elementary school students. However, many fourth grade students have difficulty in enriching their vocabulary. This study aims to analyze the effectiveness of using flashcards in improving the vocabulary of fourth grade students. This study used the *classroom action research* (CAR) method which was conducted in one cycles. Each cycle consisted of planning, implementation, observation, and reflection stages. Data were collected through vocabulary tests before and after the action, as well as observation during the learning process. The results showed that the use of flashcards significantly improved students' vocabulary mastery. Students are more enthusiastic and able to remember new words more easily than conventional methods. In addition, the visual approach and repetition in flashcards help students understand the meaning of words better. In conclusion, flashcards are an effective learning media in improving vocabulary of fourth grade elementary school students. Therefore, teachers are advised to use this method to create more interesting and interactive learning.

Keywords—Flashcards, Vocabulary, Classroom Action Research, Elementary School Students

INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary mastery plays a very important role in the language learning process, especially at the primary school level where basic language skills begin to be formed. The broader and stronger a student's vocabulary, the easier it is for them to develop the four main language skills-reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Rachmawati (2018) states that vocabulary is the main basis in the communication process; without adequate vocabulary mastery, students will face difficulties in conveying and understanding ideas or messages. In the context of primary education, where cognitive and linguistic development is at a crucial stage, vocabulary learning is not only beneficial but also a fundamental necessity for academic success and language competence.

However, although the importance of vocabulary has been recognized, vocabulary acquisition is still a considerable challenge for many primary school students. Observations and interviews with English teachers at SDN Margorejo I show that students have difficulty in memorizing new vocabulary, which is largely due to monotonous and less varied learning methods. Reliance on conventional tools such as Student Worksheets (LKS) and whiteboards leads to low student involvement in the learning process. As a result, students tend to get bored quickly and show low motivation to learn, especially in learning vocabulary independently outside the classroom.

In response to the limitations of these learning methods, the use of more innovative and interesting learning media is now starting to develop, one of which is flashcards. Flashcards are media that combine visual stimuli in the form of images with textual information, so they are considered effective in improving student memory and supporting multimodal learning. Research conducted by Rachmawati (2018) and Ulya & Fauzi (2024) shows that the use of flashcards can increase students' learning motivation, accelerate vocabulary understanding, and support a more varied and enjoyable learning process. In addition, the use of interactive media such as flashcards has been proven to increase students' motivation and engagement in vocabulary learning (Sari, Prastiwi, & Tirnawati, 2023). Contributing significantly to their learning outcomes.

However, although the benefits of flashcards have been widely discussed in various learning contexts, there is still a gap in studies that specifically examine the application of flashcards in vocabulary learning for grade IV elementary school students, especially in schools with limited learning media. In addition, there are still few studies that examine how the use of flashcards can be adapted to the cognitive characteristics and age development of grade IV students. Therefore, this study aims to fill the gap by exploring the use of flashcards as an interesting and effective learning media in helping students master vocabulary better. With a focus on facility-limited learning environments, this study also aims to provide practical insights into cost-

effective yet impactful vocabulary teaching strategies that can be applied by educators in similar contexts.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research uses the Classroom Action Research (CAR) method or Classroom Action Research (PTK). This method was chosen because it is suitable for overcoming problems that occur in the learning process in the classroom and aims to improve the quality of learning through real actions carried out repeatedly and systematically. According to Sanjaya (2016), PTK is a process carried out through a cycle of planning, action, observation, and reflection which aims to improve the quality of the teaching and learning process in the classroom.

Classroom action research is conducted in several cycles, where each cycle consists of four main stages, namely: (1) planning, (2) acting, (3) observing, and (4) reflecting. In the planning stage, the researcher together with the teacher designed the actions that would be taken to overcome the problem of students' vocabulary mastery. The implementation stage was carried out by implementing flashcard media in learning. Then, at the observation stage, the researcher observes the learning process and records any changes that occur. The last stage, reflection, is carried out to evaluate the success of the action and determine improvements in the next cycle.

According to Arikunto (2013), PTK is a systematic effort made by educators through continuous reflection to improve learning practices in the classroom. In the context of this study, the use of PTK allows teachers to directly observe the effectiveness of using flashcards in improving students' vocabulary mastery, while making adjustments to the method according to the needs of the class.

With an iterative cyclical approach, this research is expected to provide concrete solutions to the problems faced by teachers in vocabulary learning, as well as improve motivation, active participation of students, and overall learning outcomes.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the results of research conducted on 22 fourth-grade students of SDN Margorejo I, qualitative data were obtained through interviews with several students and the class IV teacher. The results of the interviews showed that the use of flashcards received a very positive response. The majority of students stated that learning using flashcards was more fun and easier to understand compared to previous learning methods. They felt more interested and less bored during vocabulary lessons because the flashcards were accompanied by interesting pictures and colors. Some students also mentioned that they remembered new words more easily because they could see and hold the vocabulary cards directly.

From the teacher's side, responses also showed enthusiasm for the application of this media. The class teacher noted that students seemed more active and excited during the learning process. Compared to traditional lecture or memorization

methods, the use of flashcards was considered capable of encouraging maximum student involvement. The teacher also found that this method was very helpful in strengthening students' memory through visual and contextual learning. Therefore, the teacher suggested that flashcards be used sustainably and even developed for other materials due to their effectiveness in creating an interactive and fun learning atmosphere.

These findings are in line with the theory proposed by Setiawan & Ariani (2020), who stated that flashcards as visual media can significantly increase student motivation and vocabulary mastery because they are able to attract students' attention through colors and images, thus making learning more meaningful and memorable. This supports the view that visual aids can stimulate interest and improve focus, especially in young learners.

Furthermore, the findings support the study conducted by Rahmawati et al. (2021), which found that the use of flashcards significantly improved elementary students' vocabulary mastery. They argue that flashcards are effective because they allow for repeated and focused exposure to vocabulary items, while also engaging students kinesthetically, visually, and verbally – key components in long-term memory retention.

In addition, the effectiveness of flashcards in this study aligns with the research by Lestari & Haryanti (2022), which emphasizes that the use of interactive media such as flashcards enhances not only vocabulary acquisition but also student confidence and participation in classroom activities. Their study concluded that flashcards create a low-anxiety learning environment that supports student-centered learning, particularly in early grade levels.

The findings from the interviews also reinforce the quantitative data, which showed a significant increase in students' vocabulary mastery after the use of flashcard media. Before the learning action (pre-test), the total score obtained by all students was 1,360 with an average score of 61.81. At that time, the highest score achieved was 92, and the lowest was 36. Only 5 students (23%) reached or exceeded the Minimum Completeness Criteria (KKM) of 70.

After implementing flashcards in the learning process, the post-test results showed a significant improvement. The total score increased to 1,764, with the average score rising to 80.18 – an increase of 18.37 points. The highest score improved to 100, and the lowest to 48. This indicates improvement across all levels of student ability.

Completeness also increased substantially. A total of 18 students (82%) met or exceeded the KKM, while only 4 students (18%) remained below the completeness threshold. This result demonstrates that flashcards not only benefit students with average or high academic ability but also help lower-achieving students improve.

Overall, this data shows that flashcards are very effective in improving students' vocabulary mastery. They increase not only academic performance but also student

motivation and engagement. Considering the diverse learning styles of students, flashcards are suitable for inclusive learning environments. As such, they are highly recommended as an alternative and innovative strategy for vocabulary learning. Further efforts, such as remedial teaching or differentiated instruction, are suggested to help the few remaining students who have not yet reached the desired standard.

Table 1. Statistics of Student Scores Before and After Action Result

No.	Aspect			Description
		Before Action	After Action	
1	Total Score All Students	1360	1764	Increased by 404 points
2	Average Score	61.81	80.18	Increased by 18.37 points
3	The Lowest Score	36	48	Improved, showing better understanding
4	The Highest Score	92	100	Increased (achieved a perfect score)
5	Number of Students Achieving \geq KKM	5 students (23%)	18 students (82%)	Significant increase in students meeting the standard
6	Number of Students Below KKM	17 students (77%)	4 students (18%)	Drastic decrease in non-compliant students
Total Students		22	22	

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research conducted on the use of flashcards in improving vocabulary mastery of grade IV students at SDN Margorejo I, it can be concluded that flashcards have a positive and significant effect on student learning outcomes. This is evidenced by the increase in student test results from pre-test to post-test, both in terms of total score, average score, highest score, and lowest score. The average student score increased from 61.81 to 80.18 after the use of flashcards, and the number of students who reached the Minimum Completion Criteria (KKM) increased from 23% to 82%.

In addition to quantitative data, qualitative findings from interviews also support the success of using this media. Students showed high enthusiasm and

interest in learning, found learning more fun, and found it easier to understand and remember vocabulary. Teachers also observed an increase in students' involvement in the learning process and recognized that flashcards really helped create an interactive and effective learning atmosphere.

Thus, flashcards are proven to not only improve students' academic achievement in vocabulary acquisition, but also support the affective and motivational aspects of the learning process. Therefore, this media is recommended to be used sustainably, especially in learning English or other materials related to vocabulary acquisition at the elementary school level.

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