

A Study on The Implementation of Flashcards in Teaching Vocabulary

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ABSTRACT

The objectives of this research are to describe how flashcards are implemented in vocabulary instruction and how students learn vocabulary through their use. This research applied a qualitative design by using a library research method. The data sources were obtained from libraries and online academic databases. The data were analyzed using content analysis, which involved identifying, categorizing, and describing the information from the selected studies. The six previous studies analyzed in this research were conducted by Yusriadi (2021), Mita Agustina Hedyati (2021), Widya Astuti (2022), Fitri Harianingsih (2023), Lisa Febrianti (2024), and Yudit Ba'dung (2024). The results of the data analysis showed that flashcards were used in various ways depending on students' levels, classroom conditions, and the research design. Generally, the teaching procedures involved introducing vocabulary using flashcards, explaining word meanings through pictures, practicing pronunciation, and reinforcing learning through drilling and repetition activities. The findings revealed that students learned vocabulary effectively through flashcards. Flashcards helped students understand vocabulary more easily through visual media, improve pronunciation through repetition, and remember vocabulary through continuous practice. In quantitative studies, students showed improvement in vocabulary mastery, as indicated by higher post-test scores than pre-test scores, while in qualitative studies, students demonstrated greater engagement, motivation, and understanding of vocabulary. Overall, this study concludes that flashcards are an effective medium that supports both teaching and learning in vocabulary instruction.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary is an important aspect of developing students' language comprehension. It also helps them communicate effectively. According to Fauziati [1], vocabulary is

central to language and critical to the typical language learner. This means that vocabulary mastery is essential in language learning, as having a large vocabulary enables students to express themselves clearly and communicate effectively.

According to Nation [2], many students have difficulty learning vocabulary because they still open dictionaries, memorize word lists, and do not pronounce the words correctly. In addition, Rohmatillah [3] states that most students have difficulty selecting appropriate meanings for words and remain confused about how to use them in context. Similarly, Schmitt [4] argues that vocabulary learning is not only about memorization, but also requires repeated exposure and meaningful use of words in context. Oxford & Scarcella [5] emphasize that effective vocabulary instruction should include meaningful repetition, context-based activities, and strategies that actively engage learners in using new words, rather than relying solely on memorization.

There are a few problems in teaching and learning English vocabulary, especially in English education in Indonesia. First, the learners are still dominated by the view that knowledge is a set of facts to be memorized. The teaching learning process emphasizes the teacher as the primary source of knowledge. So, students are struggled to understand academic concepts. According to Cahyono and Widiati [6], memorization may help students acquire a small number of words they are already exposed to. As a result, they frequently forget the words because they are not saved in their long-term memory. Thornbury [7] also states that vocabulary learning becomes ineffective when students are not actively involved in using words meaningfully. Many students can memorize the teaching material well, but do not understand it at the end of the teaching-learning process. Then, the other problem is that students are quickly getting bored with vocabulary learning due to monotonous learning models, such as writing words on paper and then memorizing them, or learning passively in class through teacher explanations. Therefore, to be more interesting, teachers have to create ways to explain the English material, such as using instructional media to teach vocabulary.

Many researchers have proven that instructional media can make students more interested in learning vocabulary. According to Waruwu [8], using instructional media enables students to increase their motivation to learn vocabulary and also helps them master their knowledge of English words. Lehr, Osborn, and Hiebert [9] argue that a strong vocabulary foundation is essential for reading comprehension, and the use of visual aids can significantly enhance learners' retention and understanding of new words. In line with this, Paivio [10] explains, through the Dual Coding Theory, that information presented through both verbal and visual channels is more easily understood and remembered by learners. Using instructional media can make student learning more enjoyable and effective, making it easier for students to remember and understand new English vocabulary.

Furthermore, Heinich [11] stated that there are three kinds of instructional media; they are visual media, audio media, and audiovisual media. Visual media includes blackboards, pictures, flashcards, flannel boards, etc. Audio media includes tape and a language laboratory. In addition, examples of audiovisual media include film, television,

and DVD players. Visual media is the least expensive and easiest to create of the three types, especially Flashcards.

Flashcards are picture cards with words on them that are shown to students quickly, and in turn, with each word lasting two seconds. Wright [12] stated that flashcards as instructional media are easy to prepare and organize in the classroom. According to Heinich [11], teaching vocabulary using flashcards helps facilitate students' acquisition of language skills, enabling them to use the language actively. Furthermore, teachers can develop their teaching by using flashcards as a medium.

2. METHOD

In this research, the researcher used a qualitative research design and the library research method. According to Creswell [13], qualitative research focuses on understanding and interpreting phenomena based on the analysis of texts and documents rather than numerical data. In line with this view, library research was chosen because the data for this study were obtained from written sources, such as journal articles, theses, and academic publications on the implementation of flashcards in vocabulary instruction. Zed [14] defines library research as research that uses library sources to obtain data. Library research is a collection of information sources and related resources made accessible to a defined community for reference or borrowing. According to Khatibah [15], library research is an activity carried out systematically to collect, process, and analyze data using specific methods or techniques to find solutions to problems. The researcher will collect information and data from journals and related studies on the implementation of Flashcards to improve students' vocabulary mastery, and then review them.

The data sources for this research were secondary data from previous studies on the use of flashcards in vocabulary instruction conducted between 2021 and 2024. These sources included journal articles and research reports that discussed the implementation of flashcards and students' vocabulary learning. Fraenkel, Wallen, and Hyun [16] explain that secondary data are suitable for educational research when the researcher aims to analyze existing findings and identify patterns across studies. Therefore, the researcher reviewed and analyzed previous related studies to answer the research questions concerning the implementation of flashcards and students' vocabulary learning.

The researcher applies the content analysis method to analyze the data. Luo [17] states that content analysis is a research method used to identify patterns in recorded communication. The research data were analyzed, described, and interpreted in light of the research questions. After all the steps in the data collection technique were completed and the required information was obtained, the researcher analyzed and interpreted the data from the secondary data sources using the following procedures, adapted from Sari & Asmendri [18].

- a. Reading and identifying the data sources to find the information needed.
 - b. Understanding the content and key information of the data sources.
 - c. Describing the information found in the data sources.
 - d. Organizing the information and explanations.
 - e. Concluding the descriptions of the obtained data sources.
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3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Results

This study analyzed six prior studies on the implementation of flashcards in vocabulary instruction. The findings revealed that flashcards were implemented in various ways depending on the research design, students' level, and classroom conditions. Despite procedural differences, all studies showed that flashcards were systematically used in vocabulary instruction. Generally, the teaching procedures involved introducing vocabulary with flashcards, explaining word meanings through pictures, practicing pronunciation, and reinforcing learning through repetition or drilling.

The findings also showed that flashcards functioned effectively as visual learning media. In qualitative studies conducted by Hedyati (2021), Astuti (2022), and Harianingsih (2023), flashcards helped students understand vocabulary more easily and increased students' motivation and participation during classroom activities. Students became more engaged in learning because flashcards provided visual support, making vocabulary learning more interesting and meaningful. The learning process was more interactive, as students actively responded to the teacher's flashcards.

In quantitative experimental studies conducted by Yusriadi (2021), Febrianti (2024), and Ba'dung (2024), the use of flashcards led to significant improvements in students' vocabulary mastery. Higher post-test scores indicated this improvement compared to pre-test scores. Flashcards helped students remember vocabulary more effectively through visual representations and repetition. Overall, the results indicate that flashcards are effective teaching media that support both the teaching process and students' vocabulary learning. These findings answer the research questions about how flashcards are implemented in vocabulary instruction and how students learn vocabulary through their use.

3.2. Discussion

This section discusses the implementation of vocabulary instruction through flashcards and how students learn vocabulary with them, as reported in six previous studies. Although each study used different procedures and techniques, all showed that flashcards provide significant support for vocabulary learning. This finding is consistent with Nation [2], who states that vocabulary learning is more effective when learners receive repeated exposure and visual support. The discussion is divided into six parts based on the six selected studies used in this library research.

Yusriadi (2021)

In his research, the researcher conducted a quantitative experimental study to investigate the use of flashcards in teaching vocabulary. The purpose of the study was to examine the effectiveness of flashcards as instructional media in improving students' vocabulary mastery. Flashcards were implemented as learning media to support vocabulary learning through visual representation and repetition. This approach is consistent with Schmitt [4], who states that vocabulary learning is more effective when learners are exposed to words repeatedly through meaningful activities. In addition, Brown [19]

explains that effective language instruction should actively engage learners through clear input and practice, which supports the use of flashcards as instructional media.

The teaching process was carried out through several systematic procedures. First, the teacher introduced new vocabulary by showing flashcards containing pictures and written words. This step aimed to attract students' attention and provide visual support for vocabulary learning, which aligns with Nation and Webb [20], who argue that visual input helps learners form strong connections between word forms and meanings. Second, the teacher pronounced each vocabulary item clearly and asked the students to repeat after her. This activity helped students practice correct pronunciation and become familiar with spoken word forms. According to Harmer [21] and Cameron [22], repetition and oral practice are essential techniques in vocabulary instruction, particularly for beginner and young learners. Third, the students were guided to understand the meaning of the vocabulary through visual clues presented on the flashcards. Flashcards functioned as visual aids that helped students associate word forms with meanings more easily. This finding supports Mayer's [23] multimedia learning theory, which explains that learning is more effective when verbal information is combined with visual elements. Finally, drilling and repetition activities were conducted to strengthen students' memory and help them memorize vocabulary effectively, in line with Thornbury [7], who emphasizes that repeated exposure is crucial for long-term vocabulary retention.

The study found that students learned vocabulary more effectively through the use of flashcards. This improvement was indicated by higher post-test scores compared to pre-test scores after the implementation of flashcards. The results suggest that flashcards contributed positively to students' vocabulary mastery by helping them recognize word meanings, improve pronunciation, and retain vocabulary through repetition. This result is also supported by Richards and Rodgers [24], who state that appropriate teaching methods and media significantly influence learners' language achievement. Based on these findings, the researcher concluded that flashcards are an effective medium for teaching vocabulary, addressing both research questions regarding their implementation and students' vocabulary learning outcomes.

Mita Agustina Hedyati (2021)

In her research, the researcher conducted a descriptive qualitative study of the use of flashcards in vocabulary instruction. The study aimed to describe how flashcards were implemented in the teaching and learning process and how students responded to their use in vocabulary learning. This research focused on describing classroom activities and learning situations in which flashcards were used as learning media. This approach is consistent with Creswell [13], who states that qualitative research emphasizes the description of learning processes and participants' experiences in natural classroom settings. The data were obtained from classroom observations and descriptions of the teaching process using flashcards.

The vocabulary-teaching procedure in this study followed several systematic steps. First, the teacher introduced new vocabulary by showing flashcards containing pictures and written words. According to Cameron [22], visual support such as pictures is very effective

in helping learners, especially young learners, understand and remember new vocabulary. Then, the teacher explained the meanings of the vocabulary items by referring to the pictures displayed on the flashcards. Students were guided to pronounce the words correctly and to understand their meanings. This pronunciation practice reflects Brown's [19] view that repetition and guided practice are essential in language teaching to help learners internalize new language forms.

In addition, students were asked to identify, mention, and match vocabulary items based on the flashcards shown by the teacher. These activities demonstrate that flashcards were used as visual aids to support students' vocabulary understanding. Schmitt [4] explains that vocabulary learning becomes more effective when learners actively manipulate and use new words rather than simply memorize them. Furthermore, Nation and Webb [20] emphasize that repeated exposure to vocabulary items through meaningful activities strengthens learners' vocabulary knowledge.

The study found that flashcards helped students learn vocabulary more easily. Students were able to understand word meanings through visual support and became more interested in the learning activities. Flashcards made the learning process more engaging and helped students retain vocabulary more effectively. Moreover, the use of flashcards encouraged students to participate actively during the lesson. This finding supports Mayer's [23] multimedia learning theory, which states that combining visual and verbal information enhances students' learning and memory. Based on these findings, it can be concluded that flashcards are an effective learning medium for teaching vocabulary. Flashcards supported students' vocabulary learning by helping them understand and remember new words, addressing both problem statements regarding how flashcards were implemented in vocabulary instruction and how students learned vocabulary through their use.

Widya Astuti (2022)

In her research, the researcher conducted a descriptive qualitative study of the implementation of flashcards in vocabulary instruction. The purpose of the study was to describe how flashcards were used in the teaching and learning process and to explain how students learned vocabulary through their use. The study focused on classroom activities and students' responses during the learning process rather than measuring students' achievement statistically. Therefore, the findings were presented descriptively to describe the implementation of flashcards and students' learning experiences, consistent with Creswell [13], who explains that qualitative research emphasizes describing learning processes and participants' experiences in natural classroom settings.

The vocabulary-teaching procedure in this study used flashcards and was carried out through several classroom activities. First, the teacher introduced new vocabulary by showing flashcards containing pictures and words. Then, the teacher explained the meaning of the words by referring to the pictures on the flashcards. Students were asked to observe the pictures carefully and relate them to the vocabulary being taught. Nation and Webb [20] state that visual input helps learners build strong connections between word forms and meanings, which supports vocabulary comprehension. The teacher also guided

the students in pronouncing the words correctly and encouraged them to repeat them together. This pronunciation practice aligns with Harmer [21], who emphasizes that repetition and drilling are effective techniques for helping learners acquire new vocabulary. Through these steps, flashcards functioned as visual learning media that helped students understand vocabulary meaning. This also supports Wright [12], who argues that pictures provide concrete visual representations that facilitate vocabulary learning, clearly answering the first problem statement of this study.

The findings revealed that students learned vocabulary more easily when using flashcards. The visual support provided by the pictures helped students understand and remember new vocabulary more effectively. Thornbury [7] explains that repeated exposure to vocabulary items in meaningful contexts supports long-term vocabulary retention. In addition, the use of flashcards increased students' motivation and active participation during the learning process. Students became more engaged because the learning activities were more interactive and enjoyable. This finding aligns with Cameron [22], who states that young learners learn vocabulary more effectively when visual media and active involvement support learning activities. Based on these findings, the study concluded that flashcards play a positive role in supporting students' vocabulary learning, thereby answering the second problem statement regarding how students learn vocabulary through the use of flashcards.

Fitri Harianingsih (2023)

In her research, the researcher conducted a study on the use of flashcards in teaching vocabulary to students. The purpose of the study was to describe how flashcards were implemented in the classroom and how students learned vocabulary using them. Flashcards were used as a learning medium to help students recognize and understand vocabulary more easily through visual representations. The researcher focused on describing the teaching process and students' learning experiences during the implementation of flashcards in vocabulary instruction, which is consistent with Brown [19], who states that effective language teaching should emphasize meaningful learning experiences rather than rote memorization.

The vocabulary-teaching procedure in this study followed several systematic steps. First, the teacher introduced the lesson topic and explained the learning objectives to the students. Then the teacher showed flashcards with pictures and vocabulary related to the lesson. The teacher pronounced the vocabulary items clearly, and the students were asked to repeat the pronunciation together. This practice reflects Harmer's [21] explanation that repetition and drilling are essential techniques in vocabulary teaching, especially at the early stages of language learning. Subsequently, students were guided to understand the meaning of the words by observing the pictures on the flashcards. According to Nation and Webb [20], visual input combined with repetition helps learners form stronger connections between word form and meaning. The teacher also asked students to answer simple questions and mention the meanings of the vocabulary shown on the flashcards. In this study, the vocabulary taught focused on nouns, verbs, and adjectives, and the learning activities emphasized understanding word meanings and correct pronunciation. This focus

is supported by Cameron [22], who argues that vocabulary learning is more effective when concrete word categories are taught through visual media. These procedures demonstrate how flashcards were implemented in vocabulary instruction, addressing the first problem statement of this research.

The findings revealed that students learned vocabulary effectively through the use of flashcards. Students showed improvement in vocabulary mastery after using flashcards. Flashcards helped students understand vocabulary more easily because the visual images supported their comprehension and memory. Mayer's [23] multimedia learning theory explains that learning is more effective when visual elements support verbal information. In addition, the learning process became more engaging and enjoyable, making students more active and enthusiastic during classroom activities. This finding aligns with Ellis [25], who states that active engagement and repeated exposure contribute significantly to successful vocabulary acquisition. Overall, the study concluded that flashcards had a positive impact on students' vocabulary learning. Flashcards helped students improve their understanding of vocabulary meanings and pronunciation, thereby addressing the second problem statement about how students learn vocabulary through flashcards.

Lisa Febrianti (2024)

In her research, the researcher conducted a quantitative experimental study to investigate the use of flashcards in teaching vocabulary. The purpose of the study was to examine whether the implementation of flashcards could improve students' vocabulary mastery. Flashcards were used as the main instructional media to support students' vocabulary learning through visual representations and structured classroom activities, consistent with Fraenkel, Wallen, and Hyun [16], who state that experimental research aims to measure the effect of a treatment on students' learning outcomes.

The vocabulary-teaching procedure in this study followed several systematic steps. First, the teacher introduced the lesson topic and explained the lesson objectives to the students. Next, the teacher presented flashcards containing pictures and vocabulary items related to the lesson. The teacher pronounced each vocabulary item clearly, and the students were asked to repeat the pronunciation together in order to practice correct pronunciation, as emphasized by Harmer [21], who argues that repetition and drilling are essential techniques in vocabulary instruction. After that, the teacher guided the students in understanding the meanings of the words by referring to the pictures on the flashcards. According to Nation [2], visual support helps learners build strong connections between word forms and meanings, making vocabulary learning more effective. Students were also asked to respond to questions and participate in simple classroom activities related to the vocabulary shown on the flashcards. In this study, the vocabulary taught focused on nouns and verbs, and the learning activities emphasized students' understanding of word meanings, pronunciation, and simple usage of vocabulary.

The study found that students learned vocabulary more effectively through the use of flashcards. This was indicated by improvements in students' vocabulary achievement after the implementation of flashcards, as shown by higher post-test scores than pre-test scores. Thornbury [7] explains that repeated exposure to vocabulary items supports long-

term retention, which helps explain the improvement in students' scores. In addition, students became more motivated and actively involved in the learning process because the use of flashcards made classroom activities more interesting and engaging. This finding aligns with Waruwu [8], who reports that instructional media increase students' motivation and engagement in vocabulary learning. Overall, the study concluded that flashcards are an effective medium for teaching vocabulary, as they help improve students' vocabulary mastery and support active learning, thereby addressing the second problem statement regarding how students learn vocabulary through the use of flashcards.

Yudit Ba'dung (2024)

In her research, the researcher conducted a quantitative experimental study to examine the use of flashcards in teaching vocabulary. The purpose of the study was to investigate how flashcards were implemented in the teaching process and how students learned vocabulary through their use. Flashcards were used as the main instructional media to support students' vocabulary understanding through visual representation and repetition, consistent with Fraenkel, Wallen, and Hyun [16], who state that experimental research is designed to examine the effect of a treatment on students' learning outcomes.

The teaching procedures were carried out systematically. First, the teacher introduced the vocabulary material and explained the learning objectives to the students. Then the teacher presented flashcards with pictures and vocabulary related to the lesson. The teacher clearly pronounced each vocabulary item, and the students were asked to repeat it together to practice correct pronunciation. This activity reflects Harmer's [21] view that repetition and drilling are essential techniques in vocabulary teaching to familiarize learners with spoken forms of words.

Furthermore, the teacher guided the students to understand the meaning of the vocabulary by observing the pictures displayed on the flashcards. According to Nation [2], visual support helps learners build stronger connections between word forms and meanings, making vocabulary learning more effective. Students were also asked to answer questions, mention the meanings of the words, and respond to the flashcards shown by the teacher. The teaching activities focused on improving students' vocabulary mastery, particularly nouns and adjectives. The learning process emphasized understanding word meanings, pronunciation, spelling, and simple vocabulary usage.

The study found that students learned vocabulary more effectively through the use of flashcards. This improvement was indicated by the increase in students' vocabulary achievement after the implementation of flashcards. Thornbury [7] explains that repeated exposure to vocabulary items supports long-term retention, which helps explain the improvement in students' vocabulary scores. Flashcards helped students remember vocabulary more easily because the pictures supported their memory and made the learning process more interesting. In addition, students became more active and motivated during the learning activities. This finding supports Waruwu [8], who reports that instructional media can increase students' motivation and engagement in vocabulary learning. Therefore, the study concluded that flashcards are an effective medium for teaching vocabulary and support students' vocabulary learning in an enjoyable and meaningful way.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this library research, it can be concluded that flashcards are an effective medium for teaching and learning vocabulary. The implementation of flashcards in the six previous studies varied across studies, depending on students' levels, classroom conditions, and research designs. However, all studies showed that flashcards were systematically used through activities such as introducing vocabulary, explaining word meanings with pictures, practicing pronunciation, and reinforcing learning through repetition or drilling.

The findings also indicate that flashcards help students learn vocabulary more effectively. Flashcards support students in understanding word meanings through visual media, improving pronunciation through repeated practice, and remembering vocabulary more easily. In quantitative studies, students' vocabulary mastery improved, as evidenced by higher post-test scores, while in qualitative studies, students showed greater motivation, participation, and engagement in learning activities. Therefore, flashcards can be considered an effective teaching medium that supports both the teaching process and students' vocabulary learning.

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