

IMPROVING GRADE V STUDENTS' VOCABULARY ACHIEVEMENT THROUGH FLASH CARDS

***Sabatini Sitorus and ** Masitowarni Siregar**

ABSTRACT

This study attempts to increase students' vocabulary achievement by using flash cards. The objective of the study is to investigate whether the using of flash card can improve students' vocabulary achievement. This study conduct by applying Classroom Action Research which was carried out in two cycles in six meetings. The subject of this study of SD Negeri 174559 Siraituruk, Porsea which consisted of 34 students. For collecting data, the instruments used were quantitative (vocabulary test) and qualitative data (interview sheet, observation sheet, and diary notes. Based on the data, it was found that the mean of the second cycle (80, 44) is higher than the mean of first cycle (64, 85) and pre-test (44, 41). Based on interview sheet, observation sheet and diary notes, it was found thee students were more active and more enthusiastic during the teaching learning process in the second cycle than the first one. It was concluded that teaching vocabulary by using flash cards can improve the students' vocabulary achievement.

Keywords : *Flash Cards, Vocabulary, Action Research*

INTRODUCTION

The Background of the Study

Language holds important role in every human's life. Communication is the way of human being to express his thought, feeling, and idea by using language. There are many various kinds of language in the world, such as Indonesian, Malay, Mandarin, France, Japanese, English, etc. Nowadays, English is an international language that is mostly used in all countries around the world. It is used in almost every aspect of life, such as in science, technology, business, politic, education, tourism, entertainment and international relationship. In Indonesia, English itself has been taught from the elementary school level up to the university level. And even now, it has been taught in kindergarten school level as well.

Vocabulary is very important part that should not be neglected in language learning and it is very useful for communication with other people either in spoken or writer form.

In general, there are two types of vocabulary:

- a) Words which learners need to understand and also use for themselves, we call this active vocabulary.
- b) Words which students want to understand (e. g when reading a text) but which they do not need to use for themselves, we call this passive vocabulary.

Active vocabulary use in conversation or speaking is vocabulary by which someone can express his thought; while passive vocabulary is vocabulary use in reading.

Therefore, this paper presents various effective activities for EFL learners to learn English Vocabulary effectively. Besides, introducing English vocabulary in story contexts and with visuals, collaboration activities, such as group talk, Readers Theater, retelling, dialogue, writing and role play, can act as a key to increasing students' motivation and involvement in learning English vocabulary.

For the students especially in elementary school, vocabularies are unfamiliar and confused. As a prove in their achievement in the mid-test the students get score ≥ 56.78 . It means that the students don't know about vocabulary yet. And the teacher still tries to evaluate the students in mastering vocabulary. In the semester-1 the students get score ≥ 60 . It means that there is possibility to improve their achievement in mastering vocabulary even increasing the score. That's why; the writer hopes can improve the students' achievement in mastering vocabulary through Flash Card. Many studies have been done to figure out the best way to teach vocabulary. Problems arise because in the English language there are thousands of vocabularies and they can be found even in every book and heard in every conversation. So the important question is why vocabulary still too hard to understand especially for elementary school? Moreover learning a foreign or the second language often causes troubles to many learners because the language has a lot of differences from learners' mother tongue. This kind of difficulty sometimes makes them feel frustrated, and consequently make the students give up learning it. In Indonesia, for example, it is

true that many students of elementary school in first year do not give a serious attention to learning English especially vocabulary.

One of the ways to solve the problem is by proposing a teaching technique by utilizing media. Hamalik (1986) states” the using of media in teaching-learning process can evoke students’ interest, motivation and stimulation, and bring positive effect to students’ psychology”.

Flash Card is one of media that can arouse students’ interest especially in vocabulary. But this media seems to be neglected or ignored by some teachers; therefore, the writer employed this study to see how the media (Flash Card) can significantly improve students’ vocabulary. Hopefully by this way, the teachers do not neglect the use of media in teaching-learning process because it can help the teachers to get students’ mastery in vocabulary.

The writer only focuses this research in vocabulary because the writer interests in studying vocabulary. The purpose of this studying is for the readers to make correct use of vocabulary while using English as medium of communication.

Therefore, the problem of the study is *“Does the students of grade 5 vocabulary achievements improved using Flash Card?”*

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study is designed as action research. Classroom Action Research (CAR) deals with social practice. This kind of research was used because the teacher wants to improve the aspects of teaching and evaluate the success and / or appropriate of certain activities and procedures (Harmer, 2003:334). It is developed to identify social practices and to provide possible solution by producing change in procedures and/ or policies. It is important to locate action research as a strategy of educational research nowadays and that is where classroom action research emerges, because education is a social practice. In most cases it involves the direct interaction of teachers and group of students. (Semi wan 2006: 163)

In addition, Ember (2000 in Semi wan 2008: 164) states that action research has three necessary conditions, they are:

1. It should be a form of strategy action susceptible of improvement.
2. It should proceed through a spiral of cycles of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. All the activities should be critically implemented and interrelated.
3. It should include other parties (parents, colleagues, etc) to participate in the activities and maintain collaboration in the context of the research.

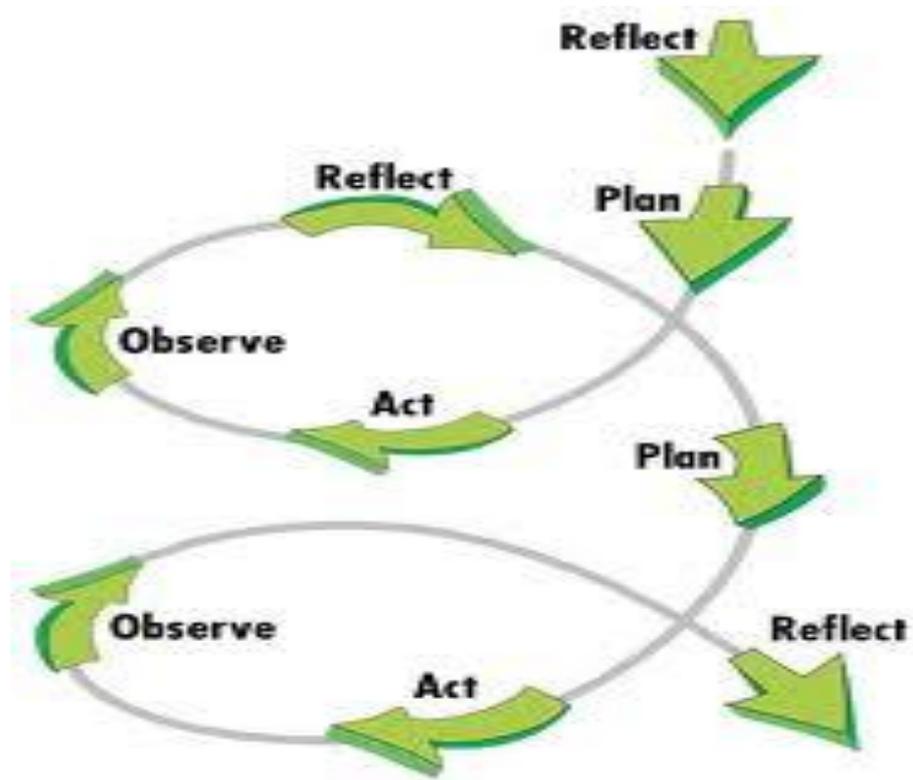
Further, Kemmis and McTaggart (1988 in Aswita and Thamrin 2005: 153) assert that CAR is portrayed as cyclical or spiral process involving steps of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. The procedures of cycle can be seen as in the following.

1. Planning means the reflection of the action will be done. It includes plan detail about data that are collected by the researcher.
2. Action means the activities that will be done. It is the implementation of project of the researcher. Action is guided by planning in the sense that it looked back to plan for its rationale. Action is thus fluid and dynamic, requiring instant decision about what is to be done and how the exercise of practical judgment is.
3. Observation is the research of action that is done. It foreshadows the achievement of reflection. It has the function of the documenting the effects off critically informed action – it looks forward, providing the basis for reflection. It is always guided by intention to provide a sound bas for critical self reflection. It must be done carefully.
4. Reflection as the evaluation of action that has been done. It recalls action as it has been recorded in observation. It is evaluate aspect, it asks CAR to weigh the experience to judge whether affects are desirable, and suggest ways of producing.

From all definitions above, the writer conclude that CAR is a research which emphasizes to action which is becoming increasingly significant in education by trying out the idea into practice or real situation in micro scale so that it is expected that the activity can improve the quality of learning and teaching learning process or to enhance the students' understanding of the lesson. The Action Research is collaborative. It will be done by asking the help of other

practitioners. There are four steps conducting this research this research; they are planning, acting, observing, and reflection.

Visually it could be seen as follow:



(From http://www.google.co.id/images/action_research) by Mr. Nicholas S Noakes

This study is used qualitative and quantitative data. As explained before, the qualitative was used to describe the situation during the teaching and learning process. The quantitative data were analyzed from the questionnaire sheet, observation sheet, and interview and diary notes to describe the improvement of the students' achievement in mastering vocabulary by Flash Card. Meanwhile, the quantitative data were collected and analyzed by computing the score of test. To collect the data, the writer observed these activities by using Flash Card that was given to the students as their concern to read the achievement of the students in mastering vocabulary.

To know the mean of the students' score in each meeting, the following formulas were applied:

$$\bar{X} = \frac{\sum X}{N} \times 100\%$$

Where: \bar{X} = the mean of the students' test

$\sum X$ = the total score

N = the number of the students

Next, to categorize the number of students who were competent on learning vocabulary, the following formula was applied:

$$P = \frac{R}{T} \times 100 \%$$

Where: P : The percentage of students who get the point up 70

R : The number of students who get point up to 70

T : the total number of students

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Data

This research was analyzed from two kinds of data. They were quantitative (writing test score) and qualitative data (diary notes, observation sheets, and interview). This research accomplished in two cycles. Every cycle consists of four step of action research (plan, action, observation and reflection). The first cycle was conducted in four meetings and the second cycle was conducted in two meetings. So, there were six meetings.

The data were taken only from one class. The class was V SD Negeri 174559. The class consists of 34 students.

The Quantitative Data

The quantitative data were taken from the results which carried out in two cycles and seven meetings. The research was conducted by applying action research cycle. The test was given to the students at the end of each cycle. It means that there were two vocabulary tests within two cycles and also one pre-test score which were taken in the first meeting. The result of students 'vocabulary scores can be seen in following table

Table 1 : The students' Score During Two Cycle

No	Name of students	Pre Test	Post-test of cycle 1	Post-test of cycle 2
1	Ando Sigalingging	60	75	90
2	Andreas Sinaga	70	80	95
3	Aprilia Simbolon	55	70	85
4	Benny Ambarita	60	75	90

5	Christina Sitorus	30	60	75
6	Dameria Sirait	40	70	80
7	Delita Nainggolan	60	75	90
8	Ebenezer Silalahi	40	70	85
9	Ezra Purba	30	40	75
10	Frengky Sitanggang	40	75	80
11	Gloria Hutahaean	45	80	85
12	Hasiholan Naibaho	45	70	80
13	Jeremia Sitorus	55	80	85
14	Jonathan Sitorus	40	50	75
15	Mario Sirait	40	60	75
16	Maston Sitorus	50	75	80
17	Mastiur Pardede	40	55	70
18	Margaret Manurung	40	50	60
19	Marlina Pardosi	20	70	80
20	Naomi Butarbutar	30	70	85
21	Nehemia Tampubolon	20	30	65
22	Othorio Simbolon	40	70	90
23	Parsaoran Panjaitan	40	60	80
24	Parulian Sirait	70	75	85
25	Radot Tambunan	45	70	80
26	Renata Sitorus	75	80	90
27	Samuel Manurung	50	75	80
28	Surung Manullang	60	80	95
29	Tetty Nadapdap	30	45	70

30	Thomas Sihite	40	45	70
31	Tiur Sitompul	20	30	65
32	Veronika Sirait	40	70	85
33	Yohanna Situmeang	55	75	90
34	Yohannes Saragi	40	50	70
		$\Sigma X=1510$	$\Sigma X=2205$	$\Sigma X=2735$
		$\bar{X}=44, 41$	$\bar{X}=64, 85$	$\bar{X}=80, 44$

The Qualitative Data

The qualitative data were taken from diary notes, interview sheet and observation sheet. The interview was conducted in two sessions. The first interview was done before conducting the research and the second one was done in the end of second cycle. The researcher just interviewed the English Teacher. In the first session, the researcher interviewed about the teacher problem in teaching vocabulary. While in the second session, the researcher interviewed about the teacher comments or responds about the use of flash cards in teaching vocabulary.

The researcher observed and investigated the students, the situation and the problems or obstacles found during teaching and their achievement. The observation was done in the classroom while the teaching learning process done. Is about the attitude and all activities while giving the action.

Diary notes were written up by the researcher in every meeting during conducting the research. Diary notes were used to described researcher's feeling and though about the teaching and learning process including reflections and evaluation of the implementation in teaching learning vocabulary.

Table 2: The Percentage of Students' Vocabulary Achievement

Meeting		Students got up to 70	Percentage
Pre – Test	I	3	8, 82%
Cycle I	II	22	64, 70%
Cycle II	III	31	91, 17%

In the pre-test, there were 3 students who got scores up to 70. But the percentage of students' vocabulary achievement kept increasing when media was used. In the end of the first cycle, 64, 70% students got points up 70. Where as in the end of second cycle 91, 17% students got scores up to 70. The range of the first meeting (8, 82%) and the last meeting (91, 17%) was 76, 4. It had been proved that 76, 4% students got the good scores on their vocabulary. It can be concluded that teaching vocabulary by using flash cards effectively and efficiently in helping students to improve their vocabulary achievement.

The number of students who were competent in vocabulary was calculated by applying the following formula:

$$P = \frac{R}{T} \times 100 \%$$

Where: P : The percentage of students who get the point up 70

R : The number of students who get point up to70

T : the total number of students

Research Finding and Discussion

Based on the data analysis, it could be concluded that all the students got improvement of their score. There were high improvement and also low improvement.

The result showed the improvement of the students' score from the cycle I to cycle II. In cycle I, the score was still low and it needed to do the cycle II. Then after giving action in cycle II, the result of the score was increased significantly from the cycle I. It means the action which done successfully increased students' vocabulary achievement through flashcards. It was supported by the fact that the mean of the score has increased in the cycle II, the mean of cycle I was 64, 85 and the mean of cycle II was 80, 44.

In the first meeting (Pre-test), only 3 students got the score 70 up (8, 82%), in the last meeting of the first cycle, there were 22 students go 70 up (64, 70%), and in the second cycle, there were 31 students got up (91, 17%). It implied that the use of flash cards could improve students' vocabulary achievement, they could be used by the teacher to teach vocabulary to the students.

The qualitative data taken from observation sheet during teaching learning process was running. It was found that the class was effectively run. The students paid attention to the teacher's explanation and some of them always asked when they were given the chance to deliver the questions.

In this research, the students' score improved. It happened after the teacher taught vocabulary to the students by using flash cards. With this media, the

students were serious to learn and enjoyed the vocabulary study. Besides that, their attitudes also improved from the first cycle to the second cycle.

In the first cycle, the students did not care with the materials which were given by the teacher. This happened due to less understanding about what the teacher has explained and they did not raise their hand to ask what words they did not understand yet.

In the second cycle, the students were given motivation about the important of vocabulary. Gave the chance to the students to ask some questions which they did not understand. After doing this thing, their score improved gradually from test I to test III in the second cycle. It means that they were active in the process of teaching and learning vocabulary.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Conclusion

After analyzing the data, it was found out that the score of the students' vocabulary score increased from the first meeting namely first cycle until the last meeting second cycle. Flash cards were effectively used in the teaching vocabulary, it can be seen from the student's score. It also proved by the observation sheet, interview sheet and diary notes result which indicated improvement in teaching learning process from cycle I and cycle II. Based on the result of the data, the conclusion is that teaching vocabulary by using flash cards improved students' vocabulary achievement.

Suggestions

The result of this study shows that the use of flash cards significantly improves the students' vocabulary achievement. Therefore in order to improve the number of students' vocabulary, the following suggestion is offered.

1. To the English teacher, it is better to use flashcards as media to make teaching learning process become interesting and enjoyable.
2. To the students, it is suggested to conduct further research by using media not only in vocabulary but also in other language skill such as reading, writing, speaking and listening.
3. To the students, this research result can help them to improve their achievement on vocabulary by using flash cards.

REFERENCES

- Aqib, Zainal. 2006. *Penelitian Tindakan Kelas*. Bandung: Yrama Widya.
- Brumfit. 1997. *Young Learners Characteristics (TEYL/TMYL)*. (online) (<http://peni.staff.uns.ac.id/2008/10/10/young-learner-characteristics/> accessed on April 3, 2010).
- Elliot, John. *Classroom Action Research. Madison Metropolitan school District*. (online), (<http://www.madison.k12.wi.us/sod/car/carphases.html>staff & Organization development, accessed on April 3,2010).
- Harmer, J. 2003. *The Practice of English Language Teaching*. Longman:Pearson Education limited.
- Haycraft, John.1993. *An Introduction to English language Teaching*. Singapore:Longman Group.
- Hopkins, D. (1985). *A teacher's guide to classroom research*. Philadelphia: Open University Press.
- Hornby. 1989. *Oxford Advance Learner's Dictionary*. London:Oxford University.
- Kemmis, S., & McTaggart, R. (Eds). (1990b). *The action research reader*. Victoria: Deakin University.
- Lewin, Kurt. 1990 in Aqib, zainal. 2006. *Penelitian Tindakan Kelas*. Bandung:Yrama Widya.
- Maclac, D 1995. *An Introduction to action research*. (online), (<http://www.phy.nau.edu/dsnmsc/actionsch.html>, accessed on March 28,2010).
- Suyanto, Kasihani K.E. *English for young Learners*. Jakarta: Bumi Aksara.
- Thornbury, Scott, 2002. *How to teach Vocabulary*. Longman:Pearson Education Limited.
- [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/the advantages of using flash cards](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/the_advantages_of_using_flash_cards))Accessed on April. 10, 2010

