

Enhancing Students' Vocabulary Mastery through Flashcards in Reading Descriptive Text at Seventh Grade Students of MTs Hidayatul Mubtadiin

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Abstract

This research attempts to enhance students' vocabulary mastery by using flashcards. Vocabulary is really need to be mastered in case to help students communicate easily. In this study, the researcher used some picture and word that consist of shape, number, thing, animal, and part of body which was related to the reading descriptive text. The data were gathered from the tests (pre-test and post-test) with the participants. The participants of this research were 26 students from MTs Hidayatul Mubtadiin at Seventh Grade. There were 10 males and 16 females students. The result of this research showed that flashcards can enhance students' vocabulary mastery. It was proven by the mean score of each test. Before implementing the flashcards, the pre-test score was low (55). Then, after conducting one cycle which the researcher implementing the flashcards, the researcher found that the result increased (93). Finally, the researcher expected that the result will help future researchers who will conduct this similar study to create more creative ways in using flashcards and the English teachers who consider flashcards as the media in teaching and learning process to solve their problem in enhancing students' vocabulary mastery. Regarding to the score in students' test at seventh grade of Hidayatul Mubtadiin, the use of flashcards in teaching reading descriptive text improved the students' vocabulary mastery. Therefore, flashcards can be a good recommendation to use as a learning media that will help students to enhance their vocabulary mastery.

Key Words: flashcards, vocabulary mastery

INTRODUCTION

Reading is one of the language skills that noted as an important activity in learning English. According to Richards and Schmidt (2010, as cited in Ferdila, 2014), Reading can be described as ways in written text to gain meaning. Sheeba

and Ahmad (2018) also stated that reading is a way to acquire, interact and share information in the language. So, reading comprehension is very important for students in junior high school. Varita (2017) also stated that students should have a good understanding of the ability to read, such as the main idea and conclusion in the text and the ability to master the vocabulary. This statement means that by reading comprehension, students expand a larger vocabulary, especially when the students learn about descriptive text.

In fact, it is not easy for students to master the reading skill. In reading activity in class, the students must comprehend the meaning in the text that they read. Khaki (2014) pointed out that the students will concentrate on language knowledge, vocabulary, and text structure when studying from the statement above, this is can be a problem for students who cannot comprehend the text if they do not master the vocabulary. However, it is difficult to comprehend the reading text without vocabulary because vocabulary is the basic component that must be reached by students. Most of the time, students do not know how to write or say some words because their vocabulary seems to be limited. The other cause of students' problems is about teaching and learning used by teachers in class.

In teaching and learning descriptive text, the teachers still need more exploration in their teaching technique. During teaching activity, the teacher just explains the material without involving interesting media. The researcher also found the causes of students' problem in their class, such as the students usually easy emotionally upset or bored when they are not motivated to learn. It is difficult for students to concentrate on the learning activity if they are bored especially when they learn English. It showed that most of them get low scores in their test of descriptive text.

Therefore, to reach the mean score in descriptive text, vocabulary is key to involve by the students. Abbasian & Ghourbanpour (2016) added that vocabulary learning and teaching have been recognized as the most important in program education since an early stage. So, in learning English language the students must develop their vocabulary before they learn in all language skills. According to Risnawati, Nuhung, & Thamrin (2014), vocabulary is one of the language components that must be mastered first by the students if they want to learn or

master English. By mastering vocabulary, the students become accustomed to teachers' speech or class discussion, the students become easy to deliver the message by speaking, the students become easy to understand and comprehend the text and the students become easy to convey their thought by write. Also, getting a lot of vocabulary will help students to learn more easily in reading skill and it will be easy for students to communicate with other people using English language. Therefore, it is important that the vocabulary should be taught to the students.

The present study was conducted to improve students' vocabulary mastery through flashcards. There are several gaps between this study and the previous studies. Some previous studies have done by Kosim (2013), Sutresno (2017), and Habibi (2017).

Kosim (2013) made his study entitled improving the Students' vocabulary mastery through Flashcards. His research was conducted in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah An-Nuriyah Kuala Mandor "B" in the academic year 2012/2013 and the subject in his research was fourth-grade students. The result of this article showed that the students' vocabulary mastery was reached a minimum score of achievement.

During the classroom activity, the use of flashcards as a media had affected the students' activity in learning the vocabulary. The students are familiar with the picture on the cards. Furthermore, this technique can guide the students to develop their vocabulary and easy to remember the words based on the pictures. Sutresno (2017) also conducted a study on SMP Maria Immaculata that the majority of students were Christian. The researcher took only 16 students in larger participants (26).

Habibi (2017) conducted the study on national school, especially at SMP Diponegoro Junrejo Batu. He was focused on the use of flashcards in improving vocabulary mastery of students with disability. The subject of this study was the second grade of SMP Diponegoro Junrejo Batu academic year 2017/2018. The method of this study was Classroom Action Research (CAR) and the researcher collects the data by observing, conducting the interview, and test for students with disability.

The finding showed the students with disability from the first meeting up to the fifth meeting was passed standard minimum criteria. The objective of using flashcards during the teaching and learning process at SMP Diponegoro, Junrejo, Batu was improving the students with disability' vocabulary.

Based on the problem formulated above, the objective of the study is to improve the seventh grade students' vocabulary mastery of MTs Hidayatul Muhtadiin in reading descriptive text using flashcards.

RESEARCH METHOD

In this study, the research design was Classroom Action Research (CAR) which is adopted from Kemmis & McTaggart (1988, as cited in Burns, 2010) that involved four phases in a cycle of research, such as planning, action, observation, and reflection. Classroom Action Research is research done by the teacher to solve the problem of the students that focus on enhancing students' abilities through the process of teaching and learning. Furthermore, the researcher acted as the main actor, in which the researcher taught the subject and studied them and the English teacher acted as the collaborator.

The classroom action research is a method that finding out what the best way in solving the students' problem at the class. So, the researcher and the English teacher can enhance students' abilities in the learning process. Surachmad (1991) stated that classroom action research is a method used by the researcher to collect, classify and then analyze data. Also, this research involved the action of the teaching and learning process. The aim of using classroom action research was to obtain the answer to the research question

This study was conducted in MTs Hidayatul Muhtadiin and located in Sampang, Madura. The subject of this research was seventh-grade students which is consisted of 26 students, 10 males, and 16 females. English is taught twice a week, each meeting needs 80 minutes. The researcher chose this school especially in seventh-grade students because of the accessibility and based on the observation, the English teacher was lack of reference in the teaching techniques, consequently, the students get bored easily when they learn English.

The CAR is conducted through five steps, namely preliminary study, planning, implementing, observing and reflecting. This procedure is conducted based on the problem faced by the students in vocabulary mastery.

In the preliminary study, the researcher observed the classroom activities three times a week in order to know the students' problems while learning reading descriptive text in the class and gave some tests to find out the level of understanding in their vocabulary mastery of seventh-grade students of MTs Hidayatul Mubtadiin.

In the planning, the researcher prepared everything needed to be applied in the teaching activity. First, the researcher designed the lesson plan and validated by the English teacher before conducting the action. The lesson plan was arranged and developed based on the second-semester program. Second, the researcher obtained the material based on the syllabus at curriculum 13 and sources from the internet which is related to the students' lesson of seventh-grade students of MTs Hidayatul Mubtadiin. Also, the researcher used flashcards as the media which is suitable for the material to improve students' vocabulary mastery. This media consisted of pictures and words on the cards that can be hold by the teacher. Third, criteria of success will be set in order to determine whether the media successful or not. In this study, the criteria of success used in this research was 70.

In the implementation, the researcher conducted the cycle in the class of seventh grade. The researcher implemented the action through eight meetings; two meetings to describe an animal, three meetings to describe people and three meetings to describe things.

In the observing, the researcher observed the students during the learning and teaching process. It means that while observing, the researcher should notice all of the activities and conditions in the class of the seventh-grade students of MTs Hidayatul Mubtadiin when the researcher applied flashcards as media. Also, the researcher used test (post-test) as the instrument at the end of eight meetings.

In the reflecting, the researcher collected the result of the test in observation of the action. The researcher used percentage in order to know the students' progress in vocabulary whether the implementation of media in this

research is successful or not. The aim of giving the test was to make the researcher easy to indicate the successful media applied.

Table 3.2 Formula of analyzing the data

$$\text{Percentage} = \frac{\hat{Z}}{N} \times 100$$

$\hat{Z}$ = The number of students who passed the minimum score

N = The total number of students

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

After treatment, the researcher found the significant different from the pre-test and post-test. Before the researcher applied flashcard in the classroom, the students' score was below the minimum standard. Their average score before treatment was 55. After being taught by using flashcards, students' main score enhance from 55 to 93. It means that the application of flashcards in teaching and learning process has big impact to improve students' vocabulary mastery.

Table 4.1 Percentage of students' success

Pre-test		Post-test	
Pass	6	Pass	26
Fail	20	Fail	0
Total percentage	23%	Total Percentage	100%

The researcher also found some differences before and after students taught by using flashcards. In the preliminary study, the researcher found some problems in the classroom that include of some factors. The first problem, the teacher still used the conventional techniques that caused students bored while teaching and learning processes. Second, the teacher

cannot handle the classroom so that students are busy talking with their friends. The third, the use of teaching staff was not optimal.

While the researcher adopts the media in the classroom, the implementation of flashcards in the teaching and learning process makes students enthusiasm in every meeting. Using flashcards also helped students learn English easily because of the interesting shape. Flashcard also made students interest in the learning and teaching process as it is consists of pictures and words. Another reason, flashcards were easy to make by the teacher.

Also, teaching vocabulary using flashcards was motivating due to students' enhancement in their involvement in the teaching and learning process. Moreover, students also able to master vocabulary with fun and in an attractive way. It was proven by the result of students' scores of a vocabulary test.

Based on the result of the post-test, it can be seen that 26 students out of 26 students could pass the minimum score. In another word, 100% of students were increased their score through this media. This research applied a good media to solve their problems in learning vocabulary and enhance their vocabulary mastery by using flashcards. Flashcard has been used for teaching with various objectives during language teaching (Komachali and Khodareza, 2012). This media allowed students to concern about the teaching and learning process so that makes them active and spirit in learning vocabulary.

Flashcards were suitable to be applied in the classroom as media to enhance student's vocabulary mastery. Cross (1992) pointed out that encourage students in learning vocabulary is one of the advantages of flashcards. It helps students memorized the vocabulary by words and pictures based on the flashcards. In teaching and learning vocabulary, flashcards become good media to solve some problems faced by students and the English teacher. It has advantages to help students easily to enhance vocabulary mastery.

This media was designed to help them in enhancing their understanding of vocabulary, yet it is also good media to help them master vocabulary with enjoy and fun ways. Furthermore, the result of the study was successful; proven from the progress on the students' improvement in their vocabulary mastery and the way of using flashcards was by drilling. Because by drilling while using

flashcards in the teaching process, the students felt that it helped them to memorize better the vocabularies which they need to know in descriptive text as the teacher drills them continuously.

When they have memorized the vocabularies, it is easy for them to describe. As the result, they get an improvement toward their score in descriptive text material. The result indicated that more than 100% of students reached the target score and the minimum standard (70). So, it could be stated that flashcards had improved students' vocabulary mastery because the study had met the criteria of success. According to the data collected during the research period, it was found that a flashcard was a good tool in enhancing students' vocabulary mastery.

Finally, applying flashcard to improve students' vocabulary mastery in the classroom was effective. It can be seen from the students' enthusiasm and the students' score.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

In this study, the ways of using flashcards in teaching vocabulary was by drilling because it was easy for students to memorize the vocabulary in learning reading descriptive text. So, the result of data analysis in the reflection, it was concluded that the use of flashcards in teaching reading descriptive text improved the students' vocabulary mastery.

Regarding to the students' achievement after the researcher conducted the post-test, there were 26 students (100%) who passed the minimum standard (70) with the improvement of students' mean score from preliminary research 55 to 93. It met the criteria of success of the study. Besides, the students are enthusiastic and motivated after being taught using flashcards. They were also actively involved in teaching and learning process; it could be seen from the students mean score after the researcher implemented this technique.

In conclusion, this study was successful due to the fact that the implementation of flashcards at seventh grade students of MTs Hidayatul Mubtadiin improved their vocabulary mastery that could be seen from their test. Therefore this method can be a good recommendation technique to use as a learning media that will help students to enhance vocabulary mastery.

The researcher would like to distribute some suggestion regarding to the use of flashcards as follows. In this research, it was proven that using flashcards helped students increase their vocabulary mastery. Therefore, the researcher suggests to English teacher to consider this technique as one of the media that can applied in the classroom especially in teaching vocabulary.

Some suggestion also distributed for the future researcher who will conduct this similar study related to implementing flashcards to improve students' vocabulary mastery. Furthermore, it is also possible that this research contributes information for future researcher to create more creative ways in using flashcards to improve the students' vocabulary mastery. Also, create more interesting activity on drilling the flashcards. So, it can help students to memorize the vocabulary and understand the meaning of reading descriptive text easily.

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