IMPROVING STUDENTS’ VOCABULARY USING FLASHCARD

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Abstract
The students were lacking of vocabulary. One of the factors was teaching media. In order to enrich the students’ vocabulary, the writer used flashcards as teaching media. The purpose of this research is to improve the students’ vocabulary using flashcards to The Eighth Grade Students Class C of SMPN 10 Pontianak. Based on the writer’s experiences during teaching, the students were lack of vocabulary. Therefore, this research is expected to find a solution to the students’ problem in mastering vocabulary. The method used in this research is a Classroom Action Research which consists of Planning, Acting, Observing, and Reflecting. This method was done in two cycles in order to get better result of the research. The subject of the study is Eighth Grade Students Class C of SMPN 10 Pontianak. The number if research participant is 38 students. The technique used for collecting data is by observation. The findings of this research were that the students’ progress during teaching and learning activity in classroom that the students did the discussion group and presented the result of the group discussion in front of the class. The students did the assessment in the form of multiple choices after the discussion.

Key Words: Vocabulary, Flashcard

BACKGROUND
Vocabulary is the key of the language. In mastering the four language skills, the students should develop their vocabulary first. Most of the students were lack of vocabulary and made them unable to speak or to write. It is impossible to use language skillfully when the students have limited numbers of vocabulary stock in their minds. Without vocabulary, the students are unable to speak and express their ideas to others. Based on the observation that the researcher did, the students have limited vocabulary to express their language, in other word, they lack of vocabulary.

When the researcher asked them to speak or to write something in English they remained silently. Based on the teacher’s statement refer to teaching vocabulary, it is not easy to teach vocabulary in Junior high school, students are not really interest in learning process. To make the students interested in teaching learning process, the teacher needs to know how to get the students’ attention. To make them understand the material easily the teacher need to use media to support the learning process. Teacher should make various activities and attractive materials.

Moreover, in the teaching learning process, it is important to improve the students’ participation in the classroom, to build the students’ attention on the problem faced by them. The eighth grade students class C always found difficulty at mastering vocabulary because teaching media were limited. Therefore, in order to help them, the researcher needed to use an appropriate teaching media to enable them to master vocabulary.

One of media is Flashcards. Flashcards are considered as interesting media that can be used to teach vocabulary to the students especially to the junior high school students. It will make the students easy to learn, enjoy the activity and be active in learning process.
Flashcards are media for teaching that can help the English teachers, especially in teaching vocabulary. The junior high school students tend to be interested in flashcards. They learn and know something that is available in vocabulary using flashcards in order to enable students in enriching the students' vocabulary.

It is also easy to create, to bring, and can also become a media for playing game. In this research, the researcher used flashcards as media to improve students' vocabulary. The researcher believed that the using of flashcards could help the students improve their vocabulary. This research conducted on the eighth grade students class C SMPN 10 Pontianak. Brown (2000:7) says, “Teaching is guiding and facilitating learning, enabling the learner to learn, setting the condition for learning”. While Harmer (2001:114) argues that teaching means the interaction between the teacher and the students in many cultures.

Besides teaching in the classroom, the teacher must consider the teaching model itself. Both teachers and students agree that acquisition of the vocabulary is a central factor in teaching a language (Walters, 2004). When the teaching and learning process take place, problems would appear to the teachers. They have problems of how to teach students in order to gain satisfying results. The teacher should prepare and find out the appropriate techniques, which will be implemented to the students.

Vocabulary should be taught especially for foreign language teaching learning activity; because even the students have mastered grammatical form they could not the communication in the foreign language without mastering a vocabulary. To master a language is not easy because some aspects of language are not easy to learn, it is impossible to learn a language without mastering vocabulary.

Hatch and Brown in Ghazal (1995:84) vocabulary is central to language and is great significance to language learners. The prominent role of vocabulary knowledge in second or foreign language learning has been recognized by theorist and researchers in the field. Accordingly, numerous types of approaches, techniques, exercises and practice have been introduced into the field to teach vocabulary.

Gains and Redman (1986) add the following types of vocabulary presentation techniques: (a) Visual technique. These pertain to visual memory, which is considered especially helpful with vocabulary retention. Learners remember better the material that has been presented themselves well to presenting concrete items of vocabulary nouns; many are also helpful in conveying meanings of verbs and adjectives. They help students associate presented material in a meaningful way and incorporate it into their system of language values. (b) Verbal explanation. This pertain to the use of illustrative situation, synonym, opposite, scales, (Gairns and Redman: 1986:74) definition (Natin,1990:58) and categories (Allen and Valette, 1972:116).

Teaching vocabulary is one of the most discussed parts of teaching English as a foreign language. Recent research indicates that teaching vocabulary may be problematic because many teachers are not confident about the best practice in vocabulary teaching and at times do not know where to begin to form an instructional emphasis on word learning (Berne & Blachowicz, 2008). Vocabulary can be defining as sound that expresses a meaning and forms an independent unit in a language. It can be say that vocabulary is smallest unit of speech that processes individual meaning to speak and can be used to interact one another and vocabulary can be say as a group of words on certain language as a part in teaching-learning in a foreign language.

According to Richard (2001:4), vocabulary is one of the most obvious components of language and one of first things applied linguistic turned their attention to. According to Rivers (1981), vocabulary cannot be taught. It can be presented, explained, included in all kinds of activities, but it must be learned by the individual.

One of the kinds of picture media used in teaching vocabulary is flash card. Flashcards are easy to use and founds media to help teaching and learning process especially in
English vocabulary. Flashcard is one of media material to teach English especially in vocabulary. There is no single definition about flash card. There some relevant explanation by some experts about meaning of flash card.

According John Haycraft (1978: 102) flashcards are cards on which words and/or pictures are printed or drawn. Flash card drills provide students with a means to memorize key information. Information that can be acquired through flash card drills is varied and may include math facts, sight words, state capitols, foreign language vocabulary, and so on. Because of the broad potential utility of flash card instruction, teachers can benefit from knowing research-based guide- lines for obtaining the optimal effectiveness of this strategy. With flashcard, learners visual sense can be helped, so, the information given can be adsorbed maximally because flashcards usually show pictures which are attracted for the learners.

In addition, Haycraft (1978: 102-106) states two types of flashcards. They are word flashcards and picture flashcards: (1) Word flashcards are cards on which words have been printed. When practicing word order, the teacher can use a number of cards representing all the words in a sentence, (2) Picture flashcards are useful for presenting, practicing and revising vocabulary or as prompts for other activities. For example, to illustrate the characters in a dialogue, to help students improvise.

Chesla (2002:12) says that flashcards are a simple but very effective study tool. They are teaching aids that are composed small pieces of paper. Flashcards refers to the cuts of pictures that are used by teacher to teach. The term picture refers to any two-dimensional representation.

Flashcard is considered as helpful strategy because its benefits. Moreover, teachers can also use flashcards for drilling and presenting new words. It is classified based on kind and the class such as the flashcards of food, fruits, vegetables, household, transportation and clothes. To avoid misunderstanding on the picture of flashcards, the teacher should try or show the flashcards to other before it uses to teach the students. For describing activities, for describing things, the flashcards can be stocked in board by using blutack in order to not damage the picture. Picture’s color is more interesting because student like to colorful picture.

Flashcards is card bearing picture and word given by the teacher to handle and teach the material to student easily. Flashcards have various sized based on student’s specific need. They are colorful which can used to memorize and understand new vocabulary. Beside it, flashcard is one of visual aids which are used to make the students more interest and enjoy in teaching learning process and to improve student’s understanding on the material given by the teacher.

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The research method used in this study is classroom action research in which the researcher pays more attention in teaching learning process. The role of the methodology is to carry on the research work in a scientific and valid manner. The method of research provides the tools and techniques by which the research problem in encountered. The methodology consists of procedures and techniques for conducting a study.

Classroom action research can be defined as a research that finds the answer to solve the problems found in the classroom and make improvement on any plausible settings. According to Ferrance (2000:1) “Classroom action research is a process in which participants examine their own educational practice systematically and carefully, using technique of research. Classroom action research focused on the immediate application, not on the development on theory.

This research will be conducted in the classroom. The researcher plans to do his treatment according to the cycle of classroom action to ensure the students’ improvement in vocabulary. An action research is conducted in certain cycles. The procedures can be seen as bellows: (1) planning, (2) Action, (3) Observation, (4) Reflection.
The subject of research takes 38 students of VIII C students of SMP Negeri 10 Pontianak as the subject of the research because the researcher found that this class faced problems the lack of vocabulary.

The appropriate technique of data collecting is very important to gain the objective of this research. Many techniques can be used in a research. The researcher used observation and measurement technique. Measurement to measured students’ achievement during the implementation in each cycle by using written multiple choices which students are asked to write the name of flashcards.

Tools of data collecting used in this research are: (1) Multiple choices test were asked to write name of flashcards in each cycle which would be graded and the result of each cycle was compared in order to know students’ achievements after teaching vocabulary with the use of flashcards. (2) Observation checklist used to observe the students and teacher action using flashcards as media in the classroom activity in the form of checklist table. (3) Field note is the note which made by the collaborator when the teacher on duty applies the technique. The field note contained the thing which being an obstacle in the process of research and the thing which indicated the improvement made, include students’ interaction and activity during the students learn vocabulary using flashcards to support the data from the observation checklist.

The researcher analyzed the data from field note and the scoring table. The students’ achievements in every cycle could be recognized from the improvement of score range taken from the result of scoring. The average of student’s individual score is:

\[
S = \frac{A}{N} \times 100 \quad \ldots \ldots \ldots \ldots (1)
\]

Where:  
S = students individual score 
R = the right answer 
N = total of test item

The average score here is used to classify the qualification of the students’ action in conducting the teaching vocabulary using flashcards. The formula was as follows.

\[
M = \frac{\sum x}{N} \quad \ldots \ldots \ldots \ldots (2)
\]

M = the average of students’ score 
\(\sum x\) = the sum of total score 
N = the number of student being observed

Data Analysis was to know whether teaching vocabulary using flashcards could make students understand the topic that the researcher taught them, the researcher conducted an observation in every cycle in which the criteria of the students’ achievement could be seen in table. The process of teaching and learning in every cycle can be obtained from observation checklist table and field notes. While the data taken from the recording and the scoring table will be analyzed in order to know the progress of students’ performance from one cycle to the other.

**RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

**Research Findings**

To conduct this research, the researcher applied Classroom Action Research. This method of research was intend to solve the problem faced by the students while learning process using certain technique of teaching in classroom. The researcher discusses the findings of the research on the title “Improving Students’ Vocabulary Using Flashcards (A Classroom Action Research to the 8th Grade Students in Class C of SMPN 10 Pontianak)”. The findings of Classroom Action research are gained by the result of
Cycle 1 and Cycle 2, also the observation checklist from the collaborator.

**First cycle (October 24th, 2017)**

In this planning stage, the researcher was helped by the English teacher to prepare and determine some important things to support the research. There was collaboration between the researcher and the English teacher. The researcher acted as the teacher who taught the students using flashcard in classroom and the English teacher acted as the collaborator. The researcher prepared the lesson plan which represented all the activities in teaching vocabulary and learning process.

In action stage, researcher conducted the research of the teaching of vocabulary using flashcards. The researcher explained the definition of concrete nouns. Then, the teacher showed the flashcards of concrete nouns and the meaning. The researcher also asked some questions to students about materials, so the researcher know whether the students understand or not.

After explained all of the material, the researcher explained about flashcards that will be applied in group activity and showed the example of it to the students. The researcher divided the students into six groups consisting of five to six students in a group and one of the students will be a leader of the group. Then, the researcher gave the things around the classroom flashcards to each group. The researcher gave the clear instruction to each group in applying flashcards technique and the groups started doing the exercise using flashcards lead by the leader. The leader of each group will describe of the thing around the classroom and the group member took a flashcard related to the description. The leader also can used the flash method were the leader showed the flashcard quickly and the members guess the flashcard.

After the students their group task and the researcher confirmed that all of the students already understand it, then the researcher measured the students’ vocabulary using task. The researcher gave an individual task to each student. The task was a multiple choices. The task consist of 20 items with 4 choice of answers related to concrete nouns. After, the students finished their task, the researcher ended the class by concluding the material together with the students.

The tools were an observation checklist table and field note. It was aimed to make the observer easier to see the improvement of the teacher and the students in classroom.

Based on the observation in cycle 1, the overall activity in the classroom did not run well. While the students performed the group activity, there were some problems happened during the implementation of flashcards. The group consists of five to six students boisterous with their group and other groups and the activity did not run effectively. The students confused with the instruction given by the researcher, so it took times for them to understand what they are going to do in group. Some of the students remain silent while the researcher asked to do the task. They did not know what they need to do or where they should started from. So the researcher explained the instruction once again to the students in each group which was not understand.

While the students did the individual task, some of the students did not understand the test items. The atmosphere of the class in that day so noisy. It made some student could not concentrate with their task. After measured students’ vocabulary mastery with flashcards, the researcher analyzed the score. By calculating the students individual score, both researcher and the teacher got the mean score of students. The result of the first meeting was 59,210 and categorized “average”.

The researcher reflected what had been done in this cycle. The researcher found the solution of the problems and weaknesses which have been found in the first cycle. The researcher made a summary of the problems. Then, the researcher found the better solution in order to correct the mistakes, so that the teaching learning process, as well as students’ achievement can be improved.

Therefore, the researcher made correction and reflection to the second cycle.
The teacher should give more enrichment to the students, so their lack of vocabulary and other expression during the discussion and teaching learning process can be covered.

**Second cycle (October 31st, 2017)**

The teacher and the researcher managed the students’ seat position in order to the highest students can help the lowest students based on the result of cycle 1. The students who kept silent mixed with the active students. After all the students sitting in their group. The researcher distributed the discussion materials. The students are given the exercise and worked in groups. The students discussed concrete noun with their groups.

Then, the result of the group discussion were presented in front of the classroom and discussed by the teacher and the students. After the discussion, the students did the assessment in the form of multiple choices. The researcher went around the class to monitor the students to help the students focus a discussion and guide them. They did the discussion pretty well, all the members got involved to the discussion. They built a good teamwork in this cycle. Compared to the previous cycle, students had shown their improvement.

In this second meeting, the students’ vocabulary about concrete noun were improved. The students also learn to know more about concrete noun using flashcards by the researcher and their own made.

By calculating the students individual score, both researcher and the teacher got the mean score of students. The result of the second meeting was 74, 210 and categorized “good”. It was increased from meeting 1 that 59,210. The students looked enthusiastic with the material more than before. It was shown from the students that discuss the material together with their group. The students that remain silent in first meeting began to active a bit and give their ideas. The last, in the second cycle, both teacher and the students have done better than the previous cycle. Based on discussion between the researcher and his collaborator, the researcher and his collaborator decide that the second cycle could be the last cycle of the research.

The teacher and collaborator evaluated the students’ achievement in vocabulary by using flashcards. Based on the score that the students had achieved, it could be concluded that the student were able to get good score in using concrete noun. The last cycle was considered successful because the students’ achievement increased.

**Discussion**

From the research finding, it can be seen that the students’ vocabulary increased from the first cycle to second cycle. There are some improvement on the students’ vocabulary in teaching learning process itself. After the researcher achieved the indicator which had to be achieved by the students, the researcher finished the research. In this part, the researcher tried to answer the research problem. The purpose of this research is to find out whether the use of flashcards improve the students’ vocabulary mastery.

There was students’ score improvement that refers to the comparison in two cycles. The improvement can be seen from the mean score of the test. In the first cycle, the students’ activity using flashcard was unsatisfactory. This unsatisfactory result happened because the atmosphere in the class was not conducive. Students kept talking with others. There were 10 students from 38 students which kept silence when the activity began. They did not active in the class activity. The students mean score in individual test was not satisfying. From this condition, both researcher and collaborator decided to do the next cycle.

In cycle 2 after learnt from deficiency from cycle 1, the students made a lot of progress in their activity. The students that remain silence in first meeting began to active a bit and give their ideas. There was no more students who were busy with their own business; all of them were focused on the activity.

The teacher monitoring the students to help the students focus to the discussion and guide them. They did the discussion pretty well, all the members got involved to the
discussion. They built a good teamwork in this cycle. There were 10 students were passive on the first cycle, after the researcher applied the teaching media, unfortunately there were 2 students still passive in teaching learning process.

From the result in cycle 2, the students who had limited vocabulary in cycle 1 about things around the classroom become improved. The students knew about things around the classroom more than before. They also given the task to make their own flashcards using things around them. From this activity, the students’ vocabulary improved not only things around the classroom but also things around their house. This proven by their individual test which is improved by their score.

Flashcard is one of teaching media to teach English especially in vocabulary. Flashcards are cards with a word, number, or a picture on it to use in the classroom by teacher and students that help to learn and memorize new words. Flashcards are easy media to help students and teacher in teaching learning process.

Flashcards is one of visual aids which are used to make the students more interest and enjoy in teaching learning process and to improve students’ understanding on the material given by teacher. It is supported by the theory from Haycraft (1978:102) and Cross (1991:120) about some advantages of using flashcards in language teaching. Flashcards are usually designed to be about the size of a playing card so they can be easily handled in a deck.

Flashcards can be used for consolidating vocabulary. Flashcards can also effective that can be used for any level students. Flashcards can be taken almost everywhere and studied when area has free moment. Flashcards are cost effective/inexpensive that can created by themselves.

In addition, the previous study research that was conducted by Yosephus Setyo Nugroho (2011) has found that improving students’ vocabulary mastery using flashcards. The finding shows that flashcards can improved students’ motivation in teaching learning process. The students’ problem in words-spelling and pronunciation solved in group discussion. Students were also active as group members when they did the group task using flashcards. The students’ word-spelling and pronunciation increased in using this method.

In conclusion, from the result of analysis, the research finding of the classroom action research was satisfactory. Flashcards as the media helped the students in improve their vocabulary. The activity itself helped the students communicative with their friends. The group discussion also helped them to improve their vocabulary, they involved with their group to do group work in improving vocabulary using flashcards.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Conclusion

Based on the analysis of the students’ learning, the researcher described the conclusion as follows: The students’ vocabulary improved. It was indicated by the result of the test. In the group discussion the students can involve each other to work together. The existence of flashcards makes the students familiar with certain words. The students can memorize the words easily. The increasing attention, motivation, and existence of flashcards improve the students’ achievement in mastering vocabulary.

It can be shown by increasing score of the students in individual test. The students’ motivation in teaching learning process was improved. Through the use of flashcards in each activity, there was an improvement of the students’ motivation in learning. The students’ motivation in learning English influenced their participation in the class. The class situation became active and interactive because they enjoyed and they were motivated in teaching learning process.

The students showed better result in the process of the students’ group discussion and individual test. This was proved by the result of the mean score 59, 210 (1st Cycle) to 74, 210 (2nd Cycle). Teaching vocabulary using flashcard also could positively involve the
students in the process of teaching learning activity and enrich their vocabularies.

**Suggestion**

In reference to the research findings, the researcher puts forward suggestion in Improving Students’ Vocabulary using Flashcards to the Eighth Grade Students in Class C of SMPN 10 Pontianak. (1) It is suggested that the English teacher use flashcards to help the students increase their vocabulary achievement in teaching vocabulary. (2) The English teachers are expected to use flashcards in the classroom to teach other kinds of nouns in English language as well, such as abstract noun. (3) The English teacher should be creative in using flashcards and other techniques, instead of picture which is also interesting and effective to help the students to increase their vocabulary achievement.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**


