The Effectiveness of Flashcards Media Strategy in Improving Young Learners' Vocabulary

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Abstract

This study aimed to identify the effectiveness of flashcards media strategy in improving young learners' vocabulary in the 7.2 class of SMPN 30 Makassar as a sample of this study. The method of this study used a quantitative method and a pre-experimental research design. The instrument of this study was a vocabulary test. The given tests to the students were pre-test-post-test vocabulary tests. The tests contained 50 items of each digital and non-digital flashcards, those included 3 association flashcards which were Animal, Fruit, and Transportation. It was formulated in multiple-choice and matching items to find the words or picture meaning, true or false to identify the use of words in a sentence, and essay to write the words correctly. As the result of this study, the first null hypothesis (H01) was rejected and the first alternative hypothesis (Ha1) was accepted, the value of Sig. (2-tailed) P = 0.000 less than α = 0.05 was obtained for both pre-test-post-test of digital and paper flashcards media strategy. Otherwise, the second null hypothesis (H02) was accepted and the second alternative hypothesis (Ha2) was rejected, the value of Sig. (2-tailed) P = 1.000 higher than α = 0.05 was obtained for both post-test-post-test of digital and paper flashcards media strategy. To be concluded, the flashcards media strategy was effective to improve young learners' vocabulary for both digital and paper flashcards media strategy. Both of them were equally effective to improve young learners' vocabulary in the 7.2 class of SMPN 30 Makassar.

Keywords: *vocabulary, flashcards media strategy, digital flashcards, paper flashcards.*

1. Introduction

Teaching vocabulary should be started with young learners since it is the primary role of the next level of learning English. Considering that young learners in the class can easily be distracted and easily get bored, teachers should discover suitable techniques and media for teaching English vocabulary to make the class livelier, more fun, enjoyable, and enthusiastic to learn English.

The researchers did an observation in SMP Negeri 30 Makassar and found out that there were many students facing problems in learning English such as a lack of vocabulary or even easily getting bored and losing motivation to study English in the classroom. These are caused by methods and strategies applied by the teacher in teaching which still used simple teaching methods such as giving explanations and then asking the students to answer the questions based on the textbooks.

Depending on one source -textbooks- in teaching English to young learners that follows with answering the questions in the textbooks make the students bored. Teachers should use any media reference in teaching vocabulary for young learners, as long as it is interesting to be taught in the classroom. Since young learner students have a short concentration span, the media that can be recommended are songs, videos, pictures, and cards. Commonly, teachers become familiar with cards known as flashcards in teaching vocabulary. It contains words, pictures, pronunciations, etc. It is

suitable for young learners who are easily fascinated by interesting colors and shapes.

The first research that the researchers chose was similar to her research with two media strategies from Guido (2020), his research used a quantitative method and a quasi-experimental design and took samples from second-year university students, found that both techniques, namely paper flashcards and flashcards software, are equally effective in improving students' receptive and productive knowledge of English vocabulary.

Furthermore, another research chosen by the researchers was the use of digital flashcards in improving young learners' vocabulary in Esra (2021), his research also used a quantitative method with an experimental design that employed pre-test-post-test, took samples from 9-11 years-old 5th-grade of young learner students in a public secondary school in Turkey. The analysis results revealed significant differences between each group test before and after the treatment. However, the post-test results between groups did not signal a significant difference. In summary, the result proved the effectiveness of the web tool; however, the web tool did not prove to be more effective than the traditional techniques used for vocabulary teaching.

Related to the previous observations and explanations, the researchers conducted research called, "The Effectiveness of Flashcard Media Strategy in Improving Young Learners' Vocabulary". Compared to the previous researchers, this study used two flashcard media strategies, Quizlet as the digital flashcard media strategy and paper flashcard as the non-digital flashcard media strategy. Furthermore, this study used a quantitative method with a pre-experimental research design where the experimental group was given a treatment twice, both digital and non-digital flashcards media strategy. The sample of this research was the young learners in 7th-grade students of SMPN 30 Makassar.

This research focused not only on identifying the effectiveness of flashcards media strategy in improving the young learners' vocabulary but also on comparing the effectiveness of digital and non-digital flashcards media strategies for young learners' vocabulary improvement at 7th-grade students at SMPN 30 Makassar. It focused on the components of vocabulary: words writing, meaning, and use of words in a sentence, where the part of vocabulary included animals, fruits, and transportation.

2. Literature Review

Providing fun and interesting media strategies that will be suitable for young learners is needed in vocabulary teaching. "Vocabulary learners have self-confidence in understanding the written or spoken words recognized, however, they probably cannot use or pronounce the words properly." (Huyen & Nga, 2003:2).

2. 1. Young Learners

As stated by Suyanto (2007), the definition of young learners is students between 6 and 12 years old. They are classified into two groups, the younger groups from sixth to eighth years old and the elder groups from ninth until twelfth years old. Furthermore, Smith (1982) in Juliani (2010), categorizes young learners into two different levels, three years earlier is the primary grade, while the next three years is the intermediate grade.

Scott & Ytreberg's (1990) statements about what has to be done by English teachers in their teachings to young learners are as follows:
a. Word usage is not enough;
b. Play along with the language;
c. Various activities in the classroom;
d. Routine;
e. Cooperation.

2. 2. Vocabulary

According to Meriam Websters Dictionary (1828), the definition of vocabulary is a

structure of words and some phrases usually composed in alphabetical order and it is explained and defined in a dictionary. In short, a vocabulary is a word or phrase that has a meaning used for communication. Thus, having sufficient vocabulary is needed to master and communicate using the English language.

Oxford and Scarcella (1994) stated that three categories in vocabulary usually be learned are first, decontextualized vocabulary items (often having no context to guide the learner to learn the meanings and functions of the new words, e.g. flashcards, wordlist), second, partially-contextualized vocabulary item (technically called planned or intentional vocabulary item e.g., words associations, words groupings, physical responses) and third, fully-contextualized vocabulary activity (providing learners with the authentic practice for the newly-learned vocabulary items, e.g. active in conversations, writing messages with the purposes of the real world or authentic communications, listening to the radio or MP3 files).

2. 3. Flashcards

Flashcards is a media that uses pictures to show the students the meaning of the picture in English. Flashcards are very cheap because we can make them on our own by printing the picture on a piece of paper, and we can make them whenever we need the flashcard.

2. 3. 1. Paper Flashcards

Paper flashcards are printed or drawn cards with words or pictures. They have the ideal size to be seen by the whole students in the classroom and can be easy to handle. Flashcards are used to teach the new words. They help the learners to know the meaning, pronunciation, and spelling and memorize the new words by practicing the structure and word order.

2. 3. 2. Digital Flashcards

Besides using paper flashcards for vocabulary improvement, some digital vocabulary learnings are available both on smartphones and PCs that provide learners to establish and play digital flashcards, such as Memrise (memrise.com), FlipQuiz (flipquiz.com), World Wall (worldwall.net), and Quizlet (quizlet.com). Quizlet is the digital media of this research because the researchers find that it is easy to be accessed both on smartphones and PCs, convenient to use, and most importantly interesting to attract young learners' attention.

2. 4. Teaching Vocabulary using Flashcards

Teaching vocabulary using flashcards can make it easy for the students to learn new vocabulary because they can see the object's visualization and guess the object's meaning in English. Depending on the young learners' characteristics, young learners can be very hyperactive and love to study using pictures because they can understand them easily.

Furthermore, Schmitt (1997:212) stated that pictures can be used to learn new words and the meaning can be learned by the definition. Thus, flashcards are a good medium to teach vocabulary, because they are easy to memorize.

2. 5. Conceptual Framework

Vocabulary is the basic words that are used to name something or someone in the English language and to make a complete sentence since it is used to communicate and cannot be done without it. Furthermore, teaching vocabulary can be taught in the early years called young learners. They are students from 6th to 12th years old. The teachers need interesting media to attract their attention in teaching English vocabulary since children like fun, enjoyable, and playful things.

In this research, the researchers studied young learners' vocabulary improvement using a pre-experimental pre-test-post-test one-group with two sample designs. Furthermore, the

researchers used flashcards as learning media in vocabulary learning for young learners; digital and non-digital flashcards were used after the pre-test and before the post-test. In the final stage, the findings of the research were analyzed and compared.

2. 6. Hypothesis

The hypothesizes of this study are as follows:
a. H01: $\mu1 = \mu2$ (There is not any different significance in flashcards media strategy to young learners' vocabulary improvement;
b. H02: $\mu1 = \mu2$ (There is not any different significance in young learners' vocabulary improvement between digital and paper flashcards media strategy;
c. Ha1: $\mu1 \neq \mu2$ (There is any different significance in flashcards media strategy to young learners' vocabulary improvement Play along with the language;
d. Ha2: $\mu1 \neq \mu2$ (There is any different significance in young learners' vocabulary improvement between digital and paper flashcards media strategy Various activities in the classroom.

3. Research Methodology

3. 1. Research Design

This research used a quantitative method using a pre-experimental research design, where the experimental group used one group pre-test and post-test research design. It aimed to find the effectiveness of flashcards media strategy on young learners' vocabulary improvement, and applied for both digital flashcards and non-digital flashcards media strategy, as follows:

$$O1 - X - O2$$

Where:
O1: Pre-test before the treatment
X: Treatment for the experimental group
O2: Post-test after the treatment

3. 2. Time and Place

The researchers conducted this research in the same with the PPL program at the university. It started on 14 March until 30 May 2022 from observation in the background until the research itself.

The place took place at SMPN 30 Makassar in Kompleks Bumi Tamalanrea Permai (BTP), Tamalanrea, Makassar, Sulawesi Selatan.

3. 3. Population and Sample

The population of this research was 7th -grade students at SMPN 30 Makassar, since the researchers have been given the class to teach as a PPL program from the university. Furthermore, the 7th -grade students at SMPN 30 Makassar were young learners at the age of 12th years old. The total population was approximately 343 students from 7.1 to 7.11.

The researchers have been chosen to teach in the 7.2 class as a PPL program student. Furthermore, the researchers chose this class as the target population. The number of samples was 32 students both for the Digital Flashcards and Paper Flashcards experimental group. Furthermore, young learners in 7.2 could experience how effective the use of flashcard media strategy was to improve their vocabulary, so in the next grade, they could use this strategy if the teacher still uses the simple technique of teaching vocabulary whether used in their home or recommended the teacher to use it.

3. 4. Instrument of the Research

To get data as complete and valid as possible, the researchers used a vocabulary test to help her. The given tests to the students are pre-test-post-test vocabulary tests. The tests contained 50 questions on each digital and non-digital flashcard, those included 3 association flashcards which were Animal, Fruit, and Transportation. It was formulated in multiple-choice and matching items to find the words or picture meaning, true or false to identify the

use of words in a sentence, and essay to write the words correctly.

3. 5. Procedure of Collecting Data

For the data collection, the researchers had several procedures as below:

a. Pre-test
The pre-test for the experimental students in the 7.2 class was given for the digital flashcards ahead of the pre-test for the non-digital flashcards. It focused on Association Flashcards, such as Animal, Fruit, and Transportation.

b. Treatment
The researchers conducted treatment for 6 meetings, the first 3 meetings conducted for the experimental group of the digital flashcards and the second 3 meetings conducted for the experimental group of the non-digital flashcards. One association flashcard was applied in each meeting.

c. Post-test
The researchers gave a vocabulary test again after the treatment was done by the experimental group. It had the same test as the pre-test in which the researchers analyzed the findings to find the effectiveness of both media strategies.

3. 6. Technique of Data Analysis

All of the research findings data in this research were analyzed by the researchers using a quantitative method with paired-sample t-test statistics by following these steps:
a. Scoring the students' answer
b. Classifying the students' answer score
c. Calculating the frequency and the percentage
d. Calculating the mean score
e. Calculating the standard deviation
f. Find out the different significance among the scores of the tests by calculating the value of the t-test

4. Findings and Discussions

The findings were collected to identify the effectiveness of flashcards media strategy in improving young learners' vocabulary and to compare the effectiveness of digital flashcards and non-digital flashcards media strategy at SMP Negeri 30 Makassar among the students in the 7.2 class using the SPSS software.

The data in this chapter was from the same students' experimental group and they were given multiple pre-test and post-test, both for the digital flashcards and non-digital flashcards media strategy. Furthermore, these data were analyzed according to the steps of the Technique of Data Analysis, as follows:

4. 1. The Classification of Students' Answer Score

The frequency and percentages of the students' answer scores were analyzed for both digital and non-digital flashcards according to their classification.

The classifications for the digital flashcard's media strategy were 13 students total on the very high (6.25%) and high (34.375%) classification on the pre-test, but then on the post-test, there was an increase of 26 students total on very high (43.75%) and high (37.5%) classification. The experimental group had 13 students on medium (40.625%) classification on the pre-test but then there was a reduction to 4 students (12.5%) on the post-test. The rest 6 students on the pre-test of digital flashcards media strategy of the experimental group got a lower score than others, with low (3.125%) and very low (15.625%) classifications but on the post-test, it went down to 2 students only on low (3.125%) and very low (3.125%) classification.

Different from the digital flashcards students' score results, the paper flashcards media strategy only had 9 students in very high (3.125%) and high (25%) on the pretest but there was an increase on very high (46.875%) and high (31.25%) classification on the post-test for total 25 students. For the medium

(28.125%) classification on the pre-test, 9 students total were reduced to 4 students only (12.5%) on the post-test. The students on low (18.75%) and very low (25%) classifications were 14 students on the pretest but then there was a reduction on the post-test for only 3 students left on the low (9.375%) and no students on very low (0%) classification.

It can be described that both digital flashcards and paper flashcards had the students' scores on the post-test increase from the pre-test for the very high classification 14 students (43.75%) for the digital flashcards and 15 students (46.875%) for the paper flashcards. Besides, the students' scores on the pre-test for both digital and paper flashcards had a reduction for the very low classification to only 1 student (3.125%) for the digital flashcard and no students on the paper flashcards.

4. 2. Students' Mean Score and Standard Deviation

The mean score for Digital Flashcards had increased from medium (76.00) to high (87.00)

from 32 data. Not only the digital flashcards increased but also the Paper Flashcards, from low (70.75) to high (87.00). The standard deviation had a reduction for both the digital and paper flashcards, from 12.043 to 9.864 for the digital flashcard and from 14.185 to 10.236 for the paper flashcards.

4. 3. Results of The Students' Answer Scores of Paired Sample T-Test Analysis

Three pairs of sample t-tests were analyzed, which are the pre-test and post-test of digital flashcards media strategy, the pre-test and post-test of non-digital flashcards media strategy, and both post-test digital and non-digital flashcards media strategy.

According to the degree of relationship, Pair 1 (0.650), Pair 2 (0.659), and Pair 3 (0.406) have a moderate correlation. It means that all pairs do not have a weak or strong correlation with each other, but they are significantly correlated.

Table 1. Paired Sample T-Test Analysis using SPSS Software

Paired Samples Test

		Paired Differences							
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Pre Test Digital Flashcards - Post Test Digital Flashcards	-11.000	9.381	1.658	-14.382	-7.618	-6.633	31	.000
Pair 2	Pre Test Paper Flashcards - Post Test Paper Flashcards	-16.250	10.845	1.917	-20.160	-12.340	-8.476	31	.000
Pair 3	Post Test Digital Flashcards - Post Test Paper Flashcards	.000	10.954	1.936	-3.950	3.950	.000	31	1.000

Based on the table 1 parametric test, it can be described that Pair 1 is accepted because the value of Sig. (2-tailed) (0.000 < 0.05) and it means that there is a different significance between the Pre-test and Post-test of the Digital Flashcards media strategy. Just the same with Pair 1, Pair 2 in the table also shows the same result. The result of the Pre-test and Post-test of the Paper Flashcards is accepted and shows a different significance. The last pair, different from the other 2 pairs, Pair 3 is rejected because of the value of Sig. (2-tailed) (1.000 > 0.05) and it means that there is no

difference in significance between the Post-test of both Digital and Paper Flashcards.

To be concluded, Flashcards as a media strategy is effective to improve young learners' vocabulary with both Digital and Paper Flashcards, but there is no difference significance -the same number of 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference- between the use of Digital and Paper Flashcards for the young learners' vocabulary improvement.

As for the findings, the data analysis revealed that there were significant differences between the students' answer scores on the pre-test and post-test both for the digital and paper flashcards. Otherwise, the results showed that there was no significant difference for the post-test of both the digital and paper flashcards.

Most of the students easily recognized the picture, words, and meaning because the vocabulary on the pre-test of digital flashcards can be seen or found in everyday lives, but the students still did not know the words when it was in the sentence, for example, in the True or False section the students gave False to the sentences "We usually eat date in Ramadhan", "Pedicab has three wheels", or "Birds can fly in the sky", etc. and the students gave True to the sentences "Snake has legs", "Tank is small", "Fish can walk", etc. and they could not write the words properly in the essay section, for example, "mongkey" instead of monkey, "cheri" instead of cherry, or "snack" instead of snake, etc.

In the treatment of digital flashcards, the students barely asked for the researcher's guidance because the digital flashcards have a lot of features that the students could learn by themselves, starting from the activity of writing the words online, flipping the cards, matching the cards, etc. which was very helpful for the students. Unlike digital flashcards, the use of paper flashcards needed a lot of guidance from the researchers because the students barely saw the picture and did not know the meaning of the words. In the paper flashcards, most students could not recognize the difference words "subway", "train", and "bullet train" in Transportation flashcards; the words "plum", "fig", and "peach" in Fruit flashcards; and the words "hedgehog", "squirrel", and "raccoon". Furthermore, both digital and paper flashcards still played the same game which was guessing the words in pairs in front of the class or groups.

All the vocabulary errors in the pre-test or during the treatment have been corrected and it showed in the students' post-test results. The students could improve their vocabulary; the meaning of the English words or the English words of the picture, the usage of the words in the sentences, and the proper words written. The students could define the meaning of the English words or the English words of the picture and the students could write them correctly. They also could find the True or False sentence according to the vocabulary defined. Besides, the students were more active and enthusiastic when it came to learning English using the flashcards media strategy in the classroom. It means that both of the flashcards were effective to improve young learners' vocabulary. In addition, both post-test of the digital and paper flashcards results showed insignificant differences that make these flashcards equally effective to improve young learners' vocabulary.

5. Conclusion

The researchers concluded the findings and analysis of the data from the previous chapter. The first null hypothesis (H01: $\mu1 = \mu2$) was rejected and the first alternative hypothesis (Ha1: $\mu1 \neq \mu2$) was accepted, since the value of Sig. (2-tailed) $(0.000 < 0.05)$ both for Pair 1 (Pre-test-Post-test Digital Flashcards) and Pair 2 (Pre-test-Post-test Paper Flashcards). It means that there was a different significance between the pre-test and post-test for both digital and paper flashcards. And can be concluded, the flashcards media strategy for young learners' vocabularies improvement at 7.2 class SMPN 30 Makassar was effective.

Furthermore, the second null hypothesis (H02: $\mu1 = \mu2$) was accepted and the second alternative hypothesis (Ha2: $\mu1 \neq \mu2$) was rejected, since the value of Sig. (2-tailed) $(1.000 > 0.05)$ for Pair 3 (Post-Test-Post-test Digital Flashcards and Paper Flashcards). It means that there was no difference significance between the use of digital and paper flashcards to improve young learners' vocabulary. And can be concluded, digital and paper flashcards media strategies for young learners' vocabularies improvement at 7.2 class SMPN 30 Makassar were both equally effective.

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