

The Role of Flashcards for Vocabulary Mastery: The Perceptions of 5th Grade Students in Sidoarjo

Oleh:

Yuni Lusiana Dewi

Sheila Agustina, M.Pd

Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris

Universitas Muhammadiyah Sidoarjo

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Research Background

- Vocabulary is a basic and essential component of foreign language learning
- Many students still face significant challenges in acquiring new vocabulary
- A fun and engaging strategy is needed

RQ: How do 5th-grade students perceive the role of flashcards for mastering vocabulary?

Research Purpose

- Provide in-depth insight into the **effectiveness of flashcards** in helping students understand and use new vocabulary in meaningful contexts .
- Broaden the understanding of how flashcards can contribute to **more active and engaging vocabulary learning** for students .
- Investigate students' **perception** of the role of flashcards for mastering vocabulary

Research Methodology

- **Method Type:** Qualitative .
- **Participants:** 28 fifth-grade students
- **Data Collection:** Semi-structured interviews
- **Learning Tool:** Flashcards with visual designs (related to diseases)
- **Theoretical Basis:** Jean Piaget's Constructivist Learning Theory
- **Data Analysis:** Interview data was recorded, transcribed, and manually coded to identify recurring patterns and themes

Research Result

- Of the 28 students, found that 26 students reported significant improvements in motivation and understanding during vocabulary learning using flashcards
- Students' opinions and perceptions about flashcards as a vocabulary learning method

Research Discussion

1. Students' Perception of the Use of Flashcards

- **Active Learning Shift:** Flashcards transformed passive learning methods, like rote memorization, into interactive, game-like experiences
- **Engagement and Motivation:** The positive perceptions support literature emphasizing vocabulary as a foundation for engagement and the need for active learning methods
- **Theoretical Alignment:** This shift aligns with Jean Piaget's Constructivist Learning Theory, which emphasizes active knowledge construction through experiences

Research Discussion

2. Students' Perceived Benefits of Using Flashcards

- **Enhanced Retention:** Flashcards helped students remember vocabulary more easily due to their visual aids, consistent with studies on flashcard efficacy
- **Reduction of Confusion:** Visual images on flashcards reduced confusion and made vocabulary clearer compared to traditional methods
- **Support for Deeper Language Skills:** Flashcards facilitated greater language skills development beyond memorization, supporting vocabulary proficiency needs and active engagement
- **Visual Attractiveness:** Students appreciated the colorful and attractive nature of flashcards, which held their attention better than textbooks.
- **Ease of Understanding:** Many students found flashcards easier and more fun to understand compared to other vocabulary teaching methods
- **Practical Application:** The interactive and playful use of flashcards supported natural and active participation in vocabulary learning

Research Discussion

3. Motivation and Confidence to Learn

- **Heightened Motivation and Confidence:** The majority of students reported increased motivation and confidence. The playful format made learning enjoyable and non-stressful
- **Emotional Engagement:** The fun and game-like atmosphere of using flashcards led to emotional engagement, which supports studies on emotional retention and memory
- **Overcoming Aversion to English:** Some students who previously disliked English reported enjoying the subject after learning with flashcards
- **Individual Differences:** While most students showed heightened engagement, some students remained neutral, reporting that flashcards were "fine" but did not make them "super excited or bored," indicating individual differences in response

Research Discussion

4. Challenges and Difficulties Encountered

- **Minor Issues Reported by the Majority:** Most students reported minimal issues, viewing flashcards as intuitive and supportive tools for vocabulary acquisition
- **Difficulty with Complex or Abstract Words:** Some students highlighted persistent difficulties in memorizing and applying more complex or similar words

Conclusion

The research concluded that students hold a highly favorable view of flashcards as a creative method for enhancing English vocabulary, with 26 out of 28 students reporting significant improvements in motivation and understanding. Students appreciated how the visually attractive, game-like format transformed passive learning into active, engaging participation, fostering natural retention and contextual vocabulary practice. However, minor challenges were noted, including difficulty with complex or abstract words and the need for greater image variety, suggesting that future applications require teacher-guided modifications to maintain high engagement and accommodate diverse cognitive needs.