

The Effect of Using Flashcards as a Media on Students' Speaking Ability in Recount Texts at the Tenth Grade of Vocational High School [Pengaruh Penggunaan Flashcard sebagai Media terhadap Kemampuan Berbicara Siswa dalam Teks Recount di Kelas X SMK]

Riris Putri Sari¹⁾, Dian Rahma Santoso ^{*,2)}

¹⁾Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris, Universitas Muhammadiyah Sidoarjo, Indonesia

²⁾Dosen Pembimbing, Universitas Muhammadiyah Sidoarjo, Indonesia

*Email Penulis Korespondensi: dianrahma24@umsida.ac.id

Abstract. *This study investigated the effect of using flashcards as a speaking media on students' speaking ability in recount texts at a vocational high school. The research used a quantitative pre-experimental design with a one-group pre-test and post-test model. The participants were 21 tenth-grade students of class X MP2 at SMK Muhammadiyah 1 Taman. Students' speaking ability was measured through oral recount tasks before and after the treatment. Flashcards structured according to orientation, events, and reorientation were used to help students organize ideas and speak more confidently. The data were analyzed using a Paired Samples T-test. The findings showed a significant improvement in students' speaking ability after the use of flashcards, indicating that flashcards are effective for teaching speaking in recount texts.*

Keywords - flashcards, speaking ability, recount text, vocational high school

Abstrak. *Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji pengaruh penggunaan flashcard sebagai media berbicara terhadap kemampuan berbicara siswa dalam teks narasi di sekolah menengah kejuruan. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain kuantitatif pra-eksperimental dengan model satu kelompok pra-tes dan pasca-tes. Peserta penelitian terdiri dari 21 siswa kelas X MP2 di SMK Muhammadiyah 1 Taman. Kemampuan berbicara siswa diukur melalui tugas narasi lisan sebelum dan setelah intervensi. Kartu flash yang disusun berdasarkan orientasi, peristiwa, dan reorientasi digunakan untuk membantu siswa mengorganisir ide dan berbicara dengan lebih percaya diri. Data dianalisis menggunakan uji t sampel berpasangan. Temuan menunjukkan peningkatan yang signifikan dalam kemampuan berbicara siswa setelah penggunaan kartu flash, menunjukkan bahwa kartu flash efektif untuk mengajar berbicara dalam teks recount.*

Kata Kunci - flashcard, kemampuan berbicara, teks recount, sekolah menengah kejuruan

I. INTRODUCTION

Speaking ability is one of the most essential productive skills in English language learning because it enables learners to communicate ideas effectively in academic and professional contexts. As English function as an international language, vocational high school students are expected to develop communicative competence that prepares them for future workplaces requiring interaction in English [1]. However, speaking remains one of the most challenging skills for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners, particularly in vocational education, due to limited vocabulary, low self-confidence, speaking anxiety, and insufficient instructional support [2],[3].

In the Indonesian vocational high school curriculum, students are expected to communicate orally through various text types, including recount texts. A recount text enables learners to retell past experiences in a logical sequence consisting of orientation, events, and reorientation. Although students are generally familiar with this generic structure, many still encounter difficulties in organizing ideas and delivering coherent oral presentations. As a result, they often hesitate while speaking and struggle to produce fluent and meaningful utterances.

One instructional medium that can support students during speaking activities is the use of flashcards. As visual learning media, flashcards provide cues that help learners recall vocabulary, organize ideas, and present information more systematically. Previous studies have reported that flashcards positively contribute to vocabulary acquisition, learning motivation, and speaking performance by providing meaningful visual support during language learning [4],[5],[6]. Therefore, flashcards have the potential to function not only as vocabulary-learning tools but also as structured speaking medias that assist learners in developing oral communication.

The learning conditions at SMK Muhammadiyah 1 Taman further emphasize the need for practical instructional media. Based on an interview with the English teacher, classroom instruction preliminary relies on videos and pictures. However, limited technological facilities, including unstable projector availability, inadequate internet access, and the absence of a language laboratory, frequently restrict the implementation of digital learning media. Consequently,

teaching and learning activities are commonly conducted using conventional classroom resources. Under these circumstances, manual flashcards become a practical alternative because they can be implemented without depending on technological facilities while still encouraging students' active participation during speaking activities.

In addition to technological limitations, affective factors also influence students' speaking performance. Many students experience anxiety, fear of making mistakes, and low self-confidence when speaking English, which reduces their willingness to participate in classroom interaction. Previous studies have demonstrated that learning activities supported by visual media and interactive tasks can reduce speaking anxiety while increasing students' confidence and classroom engagement [7],[8]. Therefore, providing structured visual guidance through flashcards may help students organize their ideas more effectively and speak with greater confidence.

To address these challenges, this study employed manual flashcards as structured speaking medias. Unlike conventional flashcards that mainly emphasize vocabulary memorization, the flashcards used in this study were designed according to the generic structure of recount texts, namely orientation, events, and reorientation. This design allows students to organize ideas before speaking, thereby reducing cognitive load and enabling them to deliver recount texts more systematically. The use of visual prompts as instructional scaffolding is supported by the Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning and the Dual Coding Theory, which explain that combining visual and verbal information facilitates meaningful learning, improves knowledge retention, and supports language production [9],[10]. Likewise, visual scaffolding has been shown to enhance learners' ability to organize ideas and communicate more effectively during speaking activities [11].

Recount text was selected because it is included in the tenth-grade English curriculum and requires students to communicate past experiences in a chronological and meaningful manner. Compared with spontaneous daily conversation, recount texts provide a clear organizational framework that helps learners develop coherence while speaking. Nevertheless, many students still experience difficulty transforming their ideas into organized oral narratives despite having learned the generic structure of recount texts. This indicates that students need instructional support that assists not only vocabulary development but also idea organization and speaking fluency [12].

Previous studies have consistently demonstrated the effectiveness of flashcards in improving vocabulary mastery and language learning motivation [13],[8],[14]. Other researchers have also reported that flashcards contribute positively to students' speaking achievement by providing visual cues that facilitate language production [5]. However, these studies primarily employed flashcards as vocabulary-learning media rather than as structured speaking medias. Consequently, limited attention has been given to the potential of flashcards to assist students in organizing ideas based on the rhetorical structure of a specific text type before speaking.

Furthermore, existing studies have mainly focused on elementary and junior high school students, while empirical evidence involving vocational high school learners remains limited [15]. This is important because vocational students have different communicative needs, particularly in developing practical speaking skills that prepare them for future workplaces. In addition, previous research has rarely integrated flashcards with genre-based speaking instruction, especially in recount texts. Therefore, further investigation is needed to determine whether flashcards can function as structured speaking medias that facilitate students' oral performance in vocational school contexts [16].

Based on the identified research gap, this study aims to investigate the effect of using flashcards as speaking medias on students' speaking ability in recount texts at the tenth grade of a vocational high school. Unlike previous studies, the flashcards developed in this research are designed according to the generic structure of recount texts (orientation, events, and reorientation) and function as structured visual guidance rather than merely vocabulary-learning media. Therefore, this study is expected to contribute to English language teaching by providing empirical evidence regarding the effectiveness of flashcards as structured visual scaffolding for improving students' speaking ability in vocational high school classrooms. Accordingly, this study addresses the following research question: Does the use of flashcards as speaking medias in recount texts significantly affect the speaking ability of tenth-grade vocational high school students?

II. METHOD

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative approach using a pre-experimental research design with a one-group pre-test and post-test design [17]. This design was selected to examine the effect of using flashcards as speaking medias on students' speaking ability by comparing their performance before and after the treatment. According to Sugiyono, the one-group pre-test and post-test design enables researchers to measure changes in participants' achievement after an instructional intervention without involving a control group [18].

Table 1. One Group Test

Class	Pre-Test	Treatment	Post Test
A	01	X	01

Information:

A: The class that is treated X: Research treatment

01: Describe the pre-test 02: Describe the post-test

The study was conducted in one experimental class. Students completed a pre-test to measure their initial speaking ability before receiving the treatment. The treatment consisted of speaking activities using flashcards designed according to the generic structure of recount texts (orientation, events, and reorientation). After the treatment, students completed a post-test to examine whether there was any improvement in their speaking ability.

Participants

The participants of this study were 21 tenth-grade students from class X MP2 at SMK Muhammadiyah 1 Taman, Sidoarjo. A purposive sampling technique was employed because the class was selected based on the English teacher's recommendation. According to the teacher, class X MP2 demonstrated relatively lower speaking achievement than the other tenth-grade class taught by the same teacher. Therefore, this class was considered appropriate for investigating the effectiveness of flashcards as speaking medias in improving students' speaking ability.

Data Collection

The data collection procedures in this study were based on the principles of performance-based speaking assessment as proposed by Brown [19]. According to Brown, speaking ability should be assessed through meaningful oral performance tasks that require learners to produce language in a communicative context. In this study, students' speaking ability was measured through oral recount tasks administered as pre- and post-tests. During the pre-test, students were asked to recount their personal experiences related to Independence Day orally. Afterward, students received treatment using flashcards as speaking medias to help them organize ideas according to the structure of a recount text. Finally, the post-test required students to deliver an oral recount of school activities.

A. Pre-test

The pre-test was conducted to identify students' initial speaking ability in delivering recount texts before the treatment was implemented. The steps are as follows:

1. Procedure:
 - a. The researchers asked students to deliver a recount text orally with the topic "Independence Day Experience."
 - b. The researchers gave students 2-3 minutes to tell the story in sequence.

2. Test Instructions :

The test instructions were designed as guided prompts to help students organize their ideas and produce structured oral responses, as guided speaking tasks can elicit more communicative and representative oral performance [19].

Pre-test questions:

"Tell three activities that you did on Independence Day. Present your story in order, starting from orientation, events, and reorientation."

B. Post-test

The post-test was administered to measure students' speaking improvement after the treatment using flashcards. The steps are as follows:

1. Procedure:
 - a. The researchers asked students to deliver a recount test orally with the topic "My Activities at School Yesterday."
 - b. Students are given 2-3 minutes to tell the story chronologically.

2. Test Instructions :

Communicative speaking tasks based on learners' real experiences provide more valid evidence of their speaking ability [19].

Post-test questions:

"Tell three activities that you did at school yesterday. Present your story in order based on orientation, events, and reorientation."

C. Assessment Rubric

Students' speaking performances were assessed using an analytic scoring rubric adapted from Brown [19]. The assessment was conducted by two raters to ensure the reliability and objectivity of the speaking scores.

Table 2. Assessment Criteria

Aspect	Score 4 (Excellent)	Score 3 (Good)	Score 2 (Fair)	Score 1 (Poor)
Fluency	Speaks smoothly with minimal pauses; ideas flow naturally	Minor pauses, but the meaning is clear	Frequent pauses that affect flow	Very hesitant; speech is halting
Pronunciation	Pronunciation is clear and easily understood	Minor pronunciation errors	Frequent errors cause some misunderstanding	Difficult to understand due to serious errors
Vocabulary	Uses varied and appropriate vocabulary related to the topic	Adequate vocabulary with occasional repetition	Limited vocabulary; meaning sometimes unclear	Very limited vocabulary; meaning often unclear
Grammar	Accurate use of past tense and sentence structure	Some grammatical errors but the meaning is clear	Frequent errors in tense and structure	Dominant errors that obscure meaning
Comprehensibility	The message is fully understood without effort	Generally understandable with little effort	Requires listener effort to understand	Mostly incomprehensible

Scoring Procedure

Students' speaking performances were assessed using five aspects: Fluency (FL), Pronunciation (PR), Vocabulary (VC), Grammar (GM), and Comprehensibility (CP). Each aspect was scored on a scale ranging from 1 to 4, where 4 represented the highest level of performance and 1 represented the lowest. Therefore, the maximum score that a student could obtain was 20 points. To convert the raw score into a standard score on a 100-point scale, the total score was divided by 20 and multiplied by 100. The formula used was as follows:

$$\text{Final Score} = (\text{Total Score} \div 20) \times 100$$

This scoring procedure ensured that all students' speaking performances were evaluated consistently and could be easily interpreted using a percentage-based grading scale.

Treatment

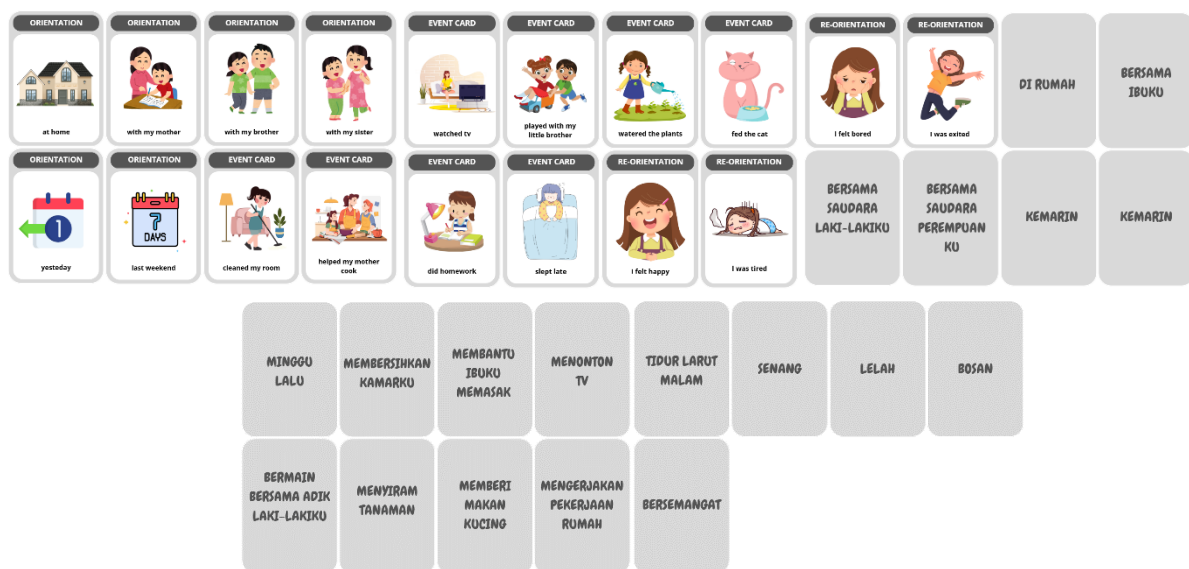
Treatment is a series of procedures used by researchers to provide controlled learning interventions to improve students' speaking skills in recount texts. At this stage, the researchers use flashcards as the primary learning medium. The treatment was administered in a single meeting, according to the research schedule.

- a. Topic: Holiday Activities at Home
- b. Learning Activities

- a) The researchers explained to students what a recount text is, the general structure (orientation-events-reorientation), language characteristics, and the purpose of a recount text. This material is adapted from [20],[12].
 - b) The researchers introduced flashcards as a learning medium, explaining their functions and use, and providing examples of words and actions on flashcards related to daily activities.
 - c) The researchers gave an example by composing a simple recount sentence based on the keywords on the flashcard, while students listened and understood.
 - d) The researchers asked several students to come forward and try to write a verbal recount paragraph using a series of flashcards they had chosen at random.
 - e) The researchers examined and provided corrections to the sentences or paragraphs produced by students, and provides examples of correct structures if mistakes are found, according to the principles of genre-based speaking assessment [10]
 - f) The researchers asked students to re-identify the recount structure on the sample paragraphs they generated on the board
- c. Flashcard

The flashcards used in this study were developed by the researchers and specifically designed to support students' speaking performance in recount texts. Unlike conventional flashcards, which generally focus on introducing vocabulary or matching words with pictures, these flashcards were created as structured speaking medias. Each flashcard was organized according to the generic structure of recount texts, namely orientation, events, and reorientation, to help students generate and organize ideas before speaking.

Picture 1. Flashcards Develop by the Researchers



Each flashcard consisted of two sides. The front side presented a contextual illustration accompanied by English keywords or prompts related to the speaking topic. These visual and verbal cues were intended to stimulate students' ideas and guide them during oral production. The back side contained guiding questions and instructions written in Indonesian to help students understand the context, organize their responses, and prepare their oral recount before delivering it in English. This bilingual design was intended to reduce students' cognitive load while maintaining English as the target language during the speaking performance.

Data Analysis

The data from the students' pre-test and post-test speaking scores were analyzed using a *Paired-Samples T-test* in SPSS version 24.0. The analysis began by calculating the mean and standard deviation, followed by a Shapiro–Wilk normality test. Afterward, a *Paired Samples T-test* was conducted to determine whether there was a significant difference in students' speaking ability before and after using flashcard media. The decision was based on the Sig. (p-value). If $p < 0.05$, the treatment had a significant effect; if $p > 0.05$, it indicated no significant improvement in students' speaking performance.

Result

Before conducting the paired sample t-test, the researchers tested the normality of the data using the Shapiro–Wilk test because the number of participants was less than 50 students.

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Pretest	,178	21	,079	,928	21	,128
Posttest	,197	21	,033	,953	21	,381

Table 5. Paired Sample Statistics of Pre-test and Post-test

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Pretest	69,4286	21	6,35273	1,38628
	Posttest	82,2857	21	5,26444	1,14879

Based on the pre-test results, the students' speaking ability before receiving the treatment through flashcards was still relatively low. The data showed that the total number of participants was 21 students. The mean score of the pre-test was 69.4286. The standard deviation was 6.35273. These findings indicate that many students still experienced difficulties in speaking recount texts, especially in organizing ideas, using appropriate vocabulary, applying correct grammar, and speaking fluently. Some students were also hesitant and lacked confidence when delivering their recount stories orally. Therefore, the students' speaking ability in the pre-test still needed improvement.

Based on the post-test results, the students' speaking ability improved after the implementation of flashcards as a speaking media. The data showed that the total number of participants remained 21 students. The mean score increased to 82.2857, which indicates better speaking achievement after the treatment. The standard deviation was 5.26444. These results indicate that students showed improvement in delivering recount texts orally. They became more confident, more fluent, and better able to organize their ideas according to the generic structure of recount text. Thus, the use of flashcards gave a positive contribution to students' speaking ability.

After the data were confirmed to be normally distributed, the researchers conducted a paired samples t-test to determine whether there was a significant difference between students' speaking ability before and after the treatment.

Paired Samples Test									
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Pretest - Posttest	-12,85714	6,01070	1,31164	-15,59318	-10,12110	-9,802	20	,000

The table showed that the mean difference between the pre-test and post-test scores was -12.85714, indicating that the post-test scores were higher than the pre-test scores. The result of the paired sample t-test showed that $t = -9.802$ with $df = 20$ and the significance value was 0.000. Since the value of Sig. (2-tailed) was lower than 0.05, it can be concluded that there was a significant difference between students' speaking ability before and after the use of flashcards. Therefore, the use of flashcards as a media in recount text was effective in improving students' speaking ability at the tenth grade of vocational high school.

Discussion

This study aimed to investigate whether the use of flashcards as speaking medias significantly affected the speaking ability of tenth-grade vocational high school students in recount texts. Based on the results of the paired-samples t-test, the research question can be answered affirmatively. The findings demonstrated a statistically significant improvement in students' speaking ability after the implementation of flashcards as speaking medias (Sig. = 0.000 < 0.05). Therefore, it can be concluded that the use of flashcards had a significant positive effect on students' speaking ability in recount texts.

The improvement in students' speaking ability indicates that the flashcards successfully functioned as structured speaking medias rather than merely as vocabulary-learning media. By organizing ideas into the orientation, events, and reorientation stages of recount texts, students were able to deliver their stories more systematically and confidently. During the post-test, students produced more coherent oral narratives, demonstrated better fluency, and showed greater confidence when presenting their personal experiences. These findings suggest that providing structured visual guidance before speaking helped students organize their ideas more effectively and reduced hesitation during oral performance.

These findings support Mayer's Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning [10], which proposes that learning becomes more effective when verbal information is accompanied by meaningful visual support. In this study, the flashcards functioned as visual scaffolding that helped students connect ideas with visual prompts, making it easier for them to recall information and organize recount texts before speaking. As a result, students were able to communicate their ideas more fluently and systematically during the speaking task.

The findings are also consistent with previous studies reporting that flashcards contribute positively to English language learning. Earlier research found that flashcards effectively improved vocabulary mastery and speaking achievement by providing visual support during learning activities [5],[8]. However, the present study extends these findings by demonstrating that flashcards can also function as structured speaking medias based on the generic structure of recount texts. Rather than using flashcards solely to memorize vocabulary, this study employed them to help students organize ideas before speaking, thereby improving the quality of their oral performance.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that the use of flashcards as speaking medias effectively improved students' speaking ability in recount texts. The improvement was reflected not only in the statistical results but also in students' ability to organize ideas, deliver recount texts more coherently, and speak with greater confidence. These findings indicate that structured visual guidance can facilitate oral language production, particularly for vocational high school students who require practical support in developing communicative competence.

IV. CONCLUSION

This study investigated the effect of using flashcards as speaking media on students' speaking ability in recount texts at the tenth grade of a vocational high school. Based on the findings of the paired-samples t-test, the research question was answered affirmatively. The results demonstrated that the use of flashcards as speaking media significantly improved students' speaking ability after the treatment. The flashcards enabled students to organize their ideas according to the generic structure of recount texts, resulting in more coherent, fluent, and confident oral performances.

These findings suggest that flashcards can serve as an effective and practical instructional medium for teaching speaking, particularly in vocational high school classrooms with limited technological resources. The study also contributes to English language teaching by demonstrating that flashcards function not only as vocabulary-learning media but also as structured visual guidance for speaking activities. Future studies are recommended to involve larger samples, include a control group, and examine the effectiveness of flashcards in different speaking genres and educational contexts.

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Conflict of Interest Statement:

The author declares that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.