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## STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF USING FLASHCARD IN LEARNING ENGLISH VOCABULARY: A CASE STUDY AT AN ISLAMIC BOARDING SCHOOL

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### Abstract

Vocabulary is one of the most important aspects of learning English because it serves as the basis for speaking, reading and writing. Meanwhile, learning foreign languages is a challenge for learners and teachers as well. A teacher who teaches foreign languages needs to develop teaching methods which are not boring and one of the techniques is through games. It enables teachers to create a fun learning for the students. There are many types of games that can be applied in the teaching-learning process, one of them is a flashcard. Flashcard is a fun activity game in which students guess what they see in the picture, the students could also learn to concentrate and to think carefully. Thus, using games in vocabulary learning can create an enjoyable atmosphere. This research aims to investigate students' perception on using flashcard in learning English vocabulary. This study employs a qualitative approach as a research design and was conducted at an Islamic boarding school in Indonesia. The participants of this research were seven females and eight male students in one of the English class in the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade of junior high school. The data were collected from interviews and Focus Group Discussions. This research used thematic analysis from Braun and Clarke (2006) as the data analysis method. The findings showed that participants expressed some perspectives on the benefits of using flashcard in learning English vocabulary, flashcards improve students' interest in learning and enhance students' vocabulary skills.

## INTRODUCTION

Learning foreign languages is a challenge for learners and teachers as well. A teacher has to do kinds of teaching methods to help students to achieve learning goals. Huyen & Nga (2003) found that in the process of teaching and learning, learners were bored because they only listen to what the teacher said. A teacher who teaches foreign languages needs to develop teaching methods which are not boring and one of the techniques is through games. Game is one of the potential solutions to create meaningful learning. It enables teachers to create a fun learning for the students. By playing games while learning, students are having fun competing while they are playing a game (Mubaslat, 2012). By implementing the games, the learners will not forget the moments when they have some fun while learn at the same time. According to Hammer & Lee (2011), in education using games has widely been acknowledged to engage and motivate learners when used well in classrooms. There are many types of games that can be applied in the teaching-learning process, one of them is a flashcard. Flashcard is a fun activity game in which students guess what they see in the picture, the students could also learn to concentrate and to think carefully. Flashcard becomes one of the popular media to teach vocabulary. According to Cross, cited by Atmaja & Sonia (2020), a flashcard is a simple picture on a card or piece of paper, and usually, this media is usually used as a teaching tool.

Besides that, the basic teaching and learning of English concepts in junior high school are based on the curriculum 2013 revised in 2016. It is stated that one of the learning objectives in the English language is to achieve the goal of communication in a variety of contexts, whether oral or written which includes listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. In the same line, based on a lesson plan, the aim of the learning process in every material is that students understand carefully the goals, functions, benefits, text structure, and language elements. Then students are also expected to be able to respond to the meaning in oral and written texts and obtain information after reading a text properly and correctly. The basis for mastering those skills above is vocabulary.

Farida, Isrina and Apsari (2019) discussed one of the ways to improve students' vocabulary mastery. The researchers stated that to master English skills, students have to learn about vocabulary so they can understand what they read or write in English. The research mentioned earlier was chosen as relevant studies to this research because the researches mainly focus on using flashcard and involve students of EFL context as the research participant. In comparison to previous research, this study mainly focuses on using Flashcard in language learning in a particular context. This study appears to investigate students' perception of using flashcards in learning English vocabulary. In this research, The English class in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade at junior high school is chosen as the case to illustrate the issue of the study.

There are some reasons why the researcher decided to investigate students' perception of using flashcard in English vocabulary learning. Furthermore, Wright, Betteridge & Buckby (2006) investigated that games are an activity that is entertaining and engaging, often challenging and an activity in which learners play and usually interact with each other and it is a chance to help passive students to show their ability. Thus, games are not merely fun but also give a chance to face challenges and develop skills. Therefore, this study aims to investigate students' perception of using flashcard in learning English vocabulary.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Definition of Vocabulary

Vocabulary is more than a list of words, it implies a spoken or composed unit of language as an image of thought in a foreign language for the students. It assumes in significant part in the utilization of language because of this direct contribution and influence (Andalas, 2019). Learning vocabulary is considered as being of the initial steps of learning a second language. In other words, it can be said that vocabulary empowers us to utilize a language, the development of vocabulary is more meaningful than adding new words. Vocabulary is necessary in the learning process, it can help learners generate, express and develop ideas. It has the ability to help learners understand the meaning of words in their writing. Nurdiani (2016) stated the vocabulary is very large and also varied. It is difficult to learn a foreign language without mastering certain number of vocabularies. Without understanding the vocabulary, students can have difficulty in listening, reading, speaking and writing. Students can not communicate effectively due to their limited vocabulary.

Meanwhile, vocabulary is an important aspect of learning English and human interaction activities. Vocabulary also the central of language teaching and learning, it means by mastering vocabulary, will help learners create many sentences easily both spoken or written. The students can also communicate fluently with other people and express their opinions and thought conveniently. Based above definitions and explanations, vocabulary can be considered as a word and its meaning that is learned as well as known to a person, and can be used to facilitate the learning of a foreign language due to the fact that it can be easily translated from one language to another language. Besides, Vocabulary is one of the most important aspects of learning English because it serves as the basis for speaking, reading and writing.

### Learning English Vocabulary

Vocabulary is an important part in language learning and teaching because without having knowledge of vocabulary, we cannot express our ideas and use the appropriate words in listening, reading, speaking and writing. Jack (2002) expressed that vocabulary is a center part of dialect capability and gives much as the premise to how well students listen, speak, read and write. The vocabulary advancement is an essential component in language improvement. A few nations utilized the language as national language. Shoari and Elnaz (2017) emphasized that English language turns into the global language, such a large number of individuals learn English for some purpose, such about monetary reason, English instructor, tourism etc. In learning English, there are four skills that ought to be aced, they are: listening, speaking, reading and writing.

Other than that, Kabooha and Elyas (2018) stated one of the parts of language which assumes an incredible part in English capacity is vocabulary dominance. Along these lines, learn English vocabulary is essential to ace the language English aptitudes. In Indonesia, English is taught since elementary school until the level of senior high school. According to Ajisoko (2020), if the learner does not have enough vocabulary, it will be difficult to learn English. Thus, vocabulary turns into a vocal point of English language learning. The importance of English vocabulary learning is often forgotten in the process of teaching and learning in the classroom. According to Cameron (2001) learning vocabulary is a cyclical process of meeting new words and initial learning, followed by meeting those words, again and again, each time extending knowledge of what the words mean and how they are used in the foreign language. When learning new vocabulary, the learners are not only expected to know as many new words as possible, but also needs to know their form, usage and meaning in order to remember them.

Therefore, learners can remember the words that they have learned easily. Additionally, learning English vocabulary is important for language learners.

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### **The Concept of Flashcard**

Flashcard is one of the media that can be utilized by instructors to acquaint new vocabulary in foreign language students. Baleghizadeh & Ashoori (2011) expresses that a flashcard is a piece of cardboard comprising of a straightforward picture, word, or sentence, that can be utilized to educate and learn English vocabulary for some topics. The benefit of flashcard for use in the class by educator and pupils that assistance to learn and memorize new word. According to Cross (1991, p.119) flashcard is a straightforward picture on a piece of card or paper, which is presumably the most generally involved visual guides in language instructing. It implies that flashcard is one of media which can help the instructor to teaching English without any problem. Flashcard in teaching and learning vocabulary are exceptionally basic visual guides that the educator can use to create a more fun teaching learning process.

Furthermore, Cross (1991, p.120) proposed a few benefits of involving flashcard in language learning. They are; 1) flashcard can be utilized for uniting vocabulary; 2) flashcards are propelling and eye-getting; 3) flashcards are efficient that can be utilized for any level students; 4) flashcards are easy to carry, in case learning can take place anywhere; 5) flashcards can be set up to classify the objective words; 6) flashcards are affordable; 7) Flashcards give visual connection among L1 and the objective language; and 8) flashcards can be utilized for rehearsing design and word request or for different games. Based on the theoretical description of flashcards above, this study uses a picture flashcard type for second grade Junior High School students. Flashcard is used as a presentation to introducing new vocabulary.

### **Definition of Perception**

Perception is a familiar word for many people. Usually, perception is used to express opinions, due to perception is the process by which a person gives meaning to the environment. Perception is also defined as a reaction or judgment about an object based on human experience and knowledge. Perceptions can be described as a person's expectations of objects such as people, institutions, and others. Knowing a person's perception can be a support factor for quality improvement. According to Combs and Penn (2004), perception happens in one of five senses, sight can be facilitated by eyes, smelling with the nose, hearing with ears, touching with skin, tasting with tongue. Furthermore, Tania, Liando and Maru (2018) described perception as an impression from someone regarding people or things through stimulation, organization, and interpretation of an object that become integrated activities. It can be defined that perception comes from the senses organ so that people can give a perception about an object. From a little bit of explanation before, it can be concluded that basically perception is an observation by an

individual or a process of giving meaning as a result of observing an object, people, event, and so on through the five senses, which is obtained by concluding information and interpretation.

## 1. Types of perception

Based on the description of perception, Robbin (2003) classified perception into two types, that is positive and negative perception.

### a. Positive Perception

Positive perception occurs when a person evaluates something from a positive point of view, according to expectations about the object or certain rules. A person's good perception is caused by their own satisfaction with the objects on which that perspectives are based, as by their knowledge and experience of those objects.

### b. Negative perception

Negative perception is when a person has a negative opinion about something or some information, contravening the norm for that thing or the established rules. Individual dissatisfaction with objects as well as a lack of personal knowledge and experience serve as source of perception. All of these factors can lead to unfavorable opinions.

Meanwhile, it concluded that opinions, both positive and negative, always influence someone's action. The way a person describes all knowledge about the viewed thing also determines whether the perception comes out as positive or negative.

## 2. Stages of Perception

Based to Tania, Liando and Maru (2018) perception happens within some stages as follows:

- a. Physical stage, when a stimulus is received by senses.
- b. Physiological stage, when the stimulus is received by senses such as seeing, hearing, tasting, sensing, smelling, and then transferred to the brain. Then, the information received makes someone understand, realize, and do the evaluation on an object.
- c. Result stage, when an object has been going through the previous stages above, then a response or impression is formed.

Therefore, perception is subjective, even though students are facing the same object or event because they have different experiences with those objects or events. The research aims to investigate students' perception of using flashcard in vocabulary English learning, thus this research talks about perception through the sense of seeing using games in vocabulary learning. Students' perceptions will be greatly influenced by many factors such as students' experiences, feelings, imaginations, marks, memories, and beliefs. Every student could perceive the same object or event but they couldn't give the same perceptions. It means that the stimulus given will form choices and actions in response to it. Consequently, learners' perception depends on their experience towards an object or event. Then, every learner in language learning must have their own learning goals and expectation as well that affect their willingness to contribute to activities. It can be summarized that to know students' perceptions, the researcher must look at how learners experience using flashcard in vocabulary learning and what are learners' expectations in language learning. There are some points that a teacher must think about how the best way to teach a foreign language to language learners because each learner has different goals, interests, and expectations in language learning.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This research employs a qualitative design. Particularly using case study. According to Creswell (2012, p.16) qualitative research means exploring and developing a phenomenon more detailed in a natural setting. Qualitative research also seeks to understand the perspective of the participant through exploration. Sharma and Mahajan (2019) stated that a case study is defined as research that explores a program, an event, an activity, a process, or one or more individuals genuinely to get a depth-knowledge about the action that we want to explore.

This study focuses on investigating how students perceive their vocabulary learning using flashcards at an Islamic boarding school. The researcher needs a research methodology that is suitable for this research and it is a case study. Cohen, Manion, Morrison (2018) emphasize a case study seeks to understand the perception of events by individual actors or groups of actors. Furthermore, the researcher makes a study on the perceptions, experiences, and what students feel while using games in vocabulary learning. The researcher gathers the data to analyze the research question through interviews and focus group discussion based on a frame of reference. In this research, the techniques of data collection those are used by the researcher are Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and interviews.

### 1. Focus group discussion (FGD)

The questions that will be asked regarding the use of flashcards in learning English vocabulary will be discussed by students. This tool is used so that researchers know directly the students' perceptions in real. The questions that will be asked are questions related to their behaviors, reasons, advantages and challenges of using flashcards in learning English vocabulary. Before conducting the research, the researcher formed a team to assist in the FGD process and held a briefing so that they understood the things that had to be done during the FGD.

### 2. Interview

The researcher chose a semi-structured interview to collect students' responses and conducted a face-to-face interview with the respondents, the researcher had an interview session with the participants by asking their perceptions related to the use of learning English vocabulary by using flashcard. In this research, interview will conduct to ask 10 of 35 students as the interviewee at different times and different places. The author chose 10 people, consisting of 5 male students and 5 female students. Although in the learning process, it is ensured that all students can follow and understand in learning, but in data collection, the authors simply take data from students who demonstrate eagerness and engagement in the whole learning interactions. The data will be classified into some initial themes that emerged from the answer. The researcher will do the interview by asking 10 questions about their perceptions and experiences in learning English vocabulary through flashcard. The questions for the interview were already prepared before the interview and the questions were in Indonesian in order to help the students understand and answer the questions easily. The Analysis used in this research is inductive thematic analysis from Braun and Clarke (2006). This thematic analysis is also known as a flexible method and does not require much theoretical detail or prior knowledge about the topic to be studied (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Then, the researcher will analyze the data using the step guide from Braun and Clarke (2006).

1. Familiarize the data
2. Generating initial codes
3. Classifying different codes into potential themes

4. Organizing all the relevant coded data
5. Reviewing themes
6. Defining and naming themes
7. Naming the theme
8. Writing the report

Furthermore, the researcher also writes a note to write specific issues that participants said. After the researcher analyzed the data, the writer will present the data and make a conclusion based on the data findings.

## **FINDING AND DISCUSSION**

### **Findings**

In this research, the researcher recorded and transcribed the recordings into written transcription. There were 10 students selected as the interviewee and 5 students who were asked to do the focus group discussion to share their feeling and experience on using flashcard for learning English.

#### **1. The Results of Interviews and FGD**

The researcher classifies and arranges the answers from students' interview responses into several categories. The researcher gives a theme according to the experience that they had while using flashcard in vocabulary learning to each category derived from the analysis of participants' perceptions. Thus, the most prominent answer up to those that were mentioned the least the researcher classifies several themes.

From this research, researcher found that participants expressed many perspectives on the benefits of using flashcard in learning English vocabulary. Based on the results of the interviews, students indicated that flashcards had many benefits in vocabulary learning. Thus, in this research, the researcher found some problem that participants faced when learning English vocabulary by using flashcard. Meanwhile, the participants felt that there were many advantages to using flashcard in learning English vocabulary, it does not mean they had no challenges while using flashcard in learning English vocabulary. The findings of the interview and Focus group discussion are having three major themes and three sub-themes which will be elaborated below.

##### **1.2 Learning English Vocabulary is Important**

In language learning we also need to learn vocabulary. Without vocabulary, we cannot speak language well and meaningfully.

###### **a. Vocabulary Use for Real Life Communicative Purposes**

All participants who participated in this study agreed that having and mastering good vocabulary skill could help them in communicating with someone who speaks English. Researcher's led FGD confirmed that students found English vocabulary learning important as it could help them to communicate with people who speak English and could make them more confident in a conversation. The researcher could conclude that by having enough English vocabulary could lead someone to a better language skill and English vocabulary was very

important to learn. Having good English vocabulary was very useful in someone's life. Besides English language is a language that is used in many countries, learn vocabulary also could help people arrange English sentences in their verbal communication.

### **1.3. The Benefits of Using Flashcard in Learning English Vocabulary**

Using flashcard as authentic material in English vocabulary learning was pleasant to apply in the classroom. The ten interviewee and five participants of focus group discussion also agreed that using flashcard had many benefits in English vocabulary learning.

#### **a. Boosting student Interest in learning English vocabulary**

Basically, flashcards were genuinely loved by the students because flashcard were propelling and eye-catching. In reality, in daily activity, students frequently remember or imagine the vocabulary on flashcard, flashcard had become memorable in students' life that cannot be missed. Started from the students' preferences for remembering the vocabulary on flashcard, it could make students feel happy if flashcard was used in foreign language lessons, especially when learning English vocabulary. Although in general, flashcard helped to learn and memorize new words also flashcard could create a more fun teaching learning process, the participants still had their own perceptions about the use of flashcard which could make the students to be more interested. Researcher's led FGD confirmed that students found learning English vocabulary by using flashcards increased their English learning interest. In summary, using flashcards when learning English vocabulary could be fun and relaxing, motivated students to learn, created a more active class atmosphere, and increased their interest in learning English vocabulary. Flashcards could increase students' interest in learning English vocabulary based on their preferences. Curiosity and excitement also motivated students to learn English vocabulary. Students realized that English vocabulary could help them to speak English correctly, to communicate with the people who use English in many countries.

#### **b. Enhancing Students' Vocabulary Skill**

Using flashcard in learning English vocabulary was believed to be able to help students obtain English vocabulary. Researcher's led FGD confirmed that students found learning English vocabulary by using flashcards helped them to memorize vocabulary easier and excited them to learn due to flashcard's picture. Students' agreed that flashcard could affect their English vocabulary skills in a positive way. As a result, according to students' perception above, it showed that using flashcard in learning English vocabulary could help students in memorizing English words well. Besides, flashcards made students easier to memorize vocabulary, and it could give positive energy for student in engaging during the learning. In addition, to their increased vocabulary, the pictures on the flashcard were interesting so that students were more active and enthusiastic. Due to the fun environment during English vocabulary learning, students' memory can also be boosted at the same time.

### **1.4. The Challenges of Using Flashcards in Learning English Vocabulary**

There have been many benefits of learning English vocabulary using flashcard mentioned. In addition to the benefits of learning through flashcard, students also discovered several challenges such as difficulty in guessing the description of the picture on flashcard and challenges to mention the English word for the picture. It is quite understandable because they are multilingual learners. In fact, they actually know the Indonesian word for the particular picture. From the results that mentioned above, there is challenge in every learning, especially in learning English vocabulary by using flashcards. In this research not all the participants feel

challenged when learning English vocabulary by using flashcard. There are only two participants who reveal their difficulty. Moreover, the results of the discussion among students through FGD confirmed their perception that vocabulary learning using flashcards helped them obtaining English vocabulary in a fun and exciting way.

## **Discussion**

As has been mentioned on findings, results in interview and focus group discussion showed that students had positive perception on the use of flashcard in learning English vocabulary.

According to Ajisoko (2020), if the learner does not have enough vocabulary, it will be difficult to learn English. This study reveals English vocabulary learning through media flashcard in order to know students' response on how flashcard help them in to learn English by mastering vocabulary. The result of this research found that Learning English vocabulary through flashcards can boost students' interest in learning English vocabulary and affect the improvement of student's vocabulary skills.

Considering Tania, Liando and Maru (2018) that described perception as an impression from someone regarding people or things through stimulation, organization, and interpretation of an object that become integrated activities, which in this case learning through flashcard, through simulation, this study reveals that the existence of flashcards makes the students familiar with certain vocabulary, also increases their attention and motivation.

Farida, Isrina and Apsari (2019) stated that to master English skills, students have to learn about vocabulary so they can understand what they read or write in English. Results also showed that the implementation of flashcards can increase students' vocabulary mastery. The result confirmed Farid, Isrina, and Apsari (2019)'s finding as students found learning vocabulary using flashcard had a positive impact on their vocabulary learning experience.

This part the researcher would discuss with the answer of the problem formulation is; How do students perceive the use of flashcards in learning English vocabulary. Based on the data analysis collected through interview and focus group discussion, it was found that the majority of the students had positive perception on the use of flashcard in learning English vocabulary.

## **CONCLUSION**

The conclusions of this study are drawn based on student perception results and discussions regarding the use of flashcards in learning English vocabulary. Based on the findings, the researcher concluded that participants who learned English vocabulary with flashcards perceived some role of vocabulary mastery in their lives and benefits and challenge of learning English vocabulary with flashcards.

First, learning and having good English vocabulary can lead students to a better language skill, can increase students' confidence in speaking English, and take part to contribute with the global community. It is proved by students' opinions that today's English vocabulary is needed because English is widely used in social life, education, and also at the working place. Thus, the students realized that English vocabulary is very important.

Second, Learning English vocabulary through flashcards can boost students' interest in learning English vocabulary and affect the improvement of student's vocabulary skills. Students emphasized that using Flashcard make them easier to memorize and obtain vocabulary taught by the teacher. The existence of flashcards makes the students familiar with certain vocabulary, also increases their attention and motivation. Furthermore, using flashcards for English vocabulary learning is perceived as a positive thing to improve students' attainment of English

vocabulary. It helps students to be more attentive to the teacher's explanation and the classroom situation can be more engaging.

Furthermore, learning English vocabulary by using flashcards also presents its own challenges for students. The challenge only obtained from data interviews. The data displayed the students' difficulties in guessing the meaning and translating the vocabulary from English to Indonesian using flashcard. Based on students' response, it can be concluded that learning English vocabulary is important. By having good English vocabulary it can lead them to a better language skill. Moreover, the students' agreed that learning English vocabulary by using flashcard was very interesting and make students more enthusiastic in learning English and enhance their vocabulary skill.

Based on the findings, the researcher wants to convey some recommendations. For English teachers, using flashcards in teaching and learning English vocabulary can attract the students' interest, make the learning process more enjoyable, and help the students' mastery of the English vocabulary. Students can easily memorize the material and are motivated to learn. An English teacher should make the process of teaching and learning enjoyable. The use of flashcards for mediating the English vocabulary learning is thus beneficial to create a fun atmosphere. Therefore, English teachers need to classify the flashcards based on the students' grades to meet the students' needs for vocabulary mastery. Students must learn to master vocabulary because mastering vocabulary can help them succeed in communicating in real life.

In addition, as a research recommendation, the researcher argues that further investigation of the teacher's opinion and how teachers respond to problems that arise when teaching English vocabulary are needed. Finally, the author hopes that the results of this study can be used as additional reference. There will be further writers with different arguments that could fix the development of these flashcards.

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