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## THE EFFECT OF DIGITAL FLASHCARD ON STUDENTS' VOCABULARY MASTERY AT SEVENTH GRADE OF SMP NEGERI 1 KRAMATWATU

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### ABSTRACT

This study explores the challenges and strategies involved in English vocabulary acquisition among seventh-grade students at SMP Negeri 1 Kramatwatu, Indonesia. Historically, English has been emphasized within the Indonesian education system, yet many students continue to struggle with vocabulary mastery, particularly due to traditional teaching methods and low motivation. The research identifies key issues such as reliance on rote memorization, lack of engaging instructional techniques, and insufficient use of media tools to aid learning. To address these challenges, the study introduces the use of digital flashcards as an innovative pedagogical tool aimed at enhancing vocabulary retention and student engagement. Digital flashcards, which combine visual imagery with spaced repetition techniques, offer an interactive and stimulating learning experience. The research highlights the potential of digital flashcards to significantly improve students' vocabulary acquisition, thereby supporting their overall English language proficiency. By integrating multimedia resources into the classroom, educators can foster a more engaging and effective learning environment that caters to the diverse needs of students. This approach not only aids in vocabulary retention but also boosts students' motivation and interest in learning English, ultimately contributing to better academic outcomes.

**Key words:** Digital Flashcards, Vocabulary Acquisition, English Language Proficiency

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### INTRODUCTION

Education in Indonesia has had a fascinating journey from ancient times to the present digital era. Historically, education in kingdoms like as Srivijaya and Majapahit was informal, with professors educating students directly, particularly those from the noble classes. Education in Indonesia, particularly at the Junior High School (SMP) level, has faced several problems and changes throughout the years. Junior high school students often pursue a curriculum that covers a range of disciplines aimed at improving their grasp of science, skills, and cultural values. Junior high school subjects include mathematics, Indonesian, English, natural sciences, social sciences, arts and culture, religious education, civics, and physical and

health education (Kemendikbud, 2018). One of the subjects that is the focus of education today is English.

English is widely acknowledged as the world's predominant language, serving as a lingua franca for individuals hailing from diverse linguistic backgrounds. Given the inherent linguistic diversity across nations, English serves as a crucial medium of communication, fostering positive international relations and facilitating global discourse. Consequently, a substantial proportion of the global populace adopts English as either a second or foreign language.

The importance of learning English has been emphasized by various experts in the field. English proficiency is not only a critical skill in

the age of globalization, but it also unlocks global communication and job opportunities.

According to Simon Young, Pearson Asia's BTEC Portfolio Manager, English has become a key skill for communicating in business in any role (Learning English Has Personal and Professional Benefits, Experts Say, 2021). Moreover, learning English stimulates cognitive growth and cultural understanding (Benefits of Learning English: An Overview, 2024). Experts have pointed out that multilingual learners score higher on standardized tests, which is likely due to learning different grammatical rules and vocabulary (Learning English Has Personal and Professional Benefits, Experts Say, 2021). Therefore, the mastery of English is not just about language acquisition, but it also opens doors to personal growth, career advancement, and global opportunities.

In Indonesia, English holds a pivotal position in the formal education system, being introduced as the primary foreign language curriculum from elementary school through university. Consequently, it becomes a compulsory subject for students at all levels of education. In addition, proficiency in English is often essential for higher education and professional advancement. Endang Sri Andayani, from Universitas Bina Sarana Informatika, Indonesia, emphasized that higher education must be able to produce students who, in addition to having expertise in their disciplines, can also communicate in English (Andayani, 2022). However, despite its widespread incorporation into the curriculum, many junior high school students encounter challenges in grasping English as a foreign language, particularly in aspects of vocabulary and grammar comprehension. Consequently, it becomes imperative for educators to devise comprehensive strategies aimed at enhancing students' mastery of English vocabulary.

In English, there are four important aspects that need to be mastered to achieve good English language skills, namely Reading Skills, Writing Skills, Listening Skills, and Speaking Skills (Ashri et al, 2024). Behind these four English skills, there is another equally crucial skill: vocabulary. This essential ability serves as the foundation for the four English language skills: reading, writing, listening, and speaking (Kaligis et al, 2022).

Recognizing the significance of vocabulary acquisition in English language proficiency, educators and curriculum developers are tasked with designing pedagogical approaches that prioritize vocabulary expansion. By implementing effective instructional methods and utilizing diverse learning resources, educators can facilitate a conducive learning environment wherein students are equipped with the requisite linguistic competencies. Hence, fostering a robust foundation in English vocabulary is essential to empower students with the communicative skills necessary for global engagement and cross-cultural communication.

Expanding vocabulary constitutes a fundamental aspect of foreign language acquisition. Moreover, the significance of imparting language terminology to children is underscored, implying the necessity for individuals to grasp the meaning, form, and application of language elements (Memon et al., 2023). For students, the development of vocabulary emerges as a pivotal component in the process of language learning (Alqahtani, 2015). This is particularly crucial for effective foreign language utilization, as articulated by (Alqahtani (2015), who asserts that without a substantial vocabulary, students may find themselves unable to employ acquired language structures and functions for coherent communication, even at the seventh-grade level.

Indeed, it is paramount to recognize the pivotal role of vocabulary development in fostering language proficiency among students. By prioritizing vocabulary acquisition, educators can equip students with the linguistic competencies necessary to comprehend and engage with basic English utilized in various everyday contexts. This underscores the symbiotic relationship between vocabulary mastery and language proficiency, wherein an expansive lexicon serves as a cornerstone for effective communication and comprehension.

The intrinsic link between vocabulary acquisition and language proficiency underscores the indispensable nature of a robust lexicon in facilitating effective communication and language usage among learners. Through the acquisition of an extensive vocabulary repertoire, students not only enhance their ability to understand and interpret linguistic input but also develop the capacity to express themselves articulately and

coherently in both oral and written communication.

Furthermore, the cultivation of vocabulary proficiency enables students to navigate diverse linguistic environments with confidence and competence, thereby empowering them to participate actively in academic, social, and professional settings. By fostering vocabulary development, educators play a pivotal role in equipping students with the requisite linguistic tools to navigate the complexities of language use and meaning construction.

Ultimately, by prioritizing vocabulary acquisition as a foundational component of language instruction, educators lay the groundwork for students' linguistic development and communicative competence. Through systematic vocabulary instruction and immersive language learning experiences, educators can nurture students' vocabulary growth, thereby facilitating their journey towards proficiency in the target language. Thus, the cultivation of vocabulary development emerges as a cornerstone of effective language instruction, underscoring its significance in fostering language proficiency and facilitating meaningful communication among learners.

Mastering vocabulary is a critical aspect of language acquisition, yet it remains a significant challenge for many students. According to a study by Nation (2022), students often struggle with vocabulary due to a lack of effective strategies for word learning and retention. This difficulty is further compounded by the sheer volume of words that students are expected to learn and use proficiently in the target language.

Moreover, research by Schmitt (2014) suggests that traditional methods of vocabulary instruction, such as rote memorization and translation exercises, may not be effective in promoting long-term vocabulary retention. These methods often fail to engage students in meaningful use of the words, limiting their ability to fully understand and apply the words in different contexts.

Furthermore, a study by Webb and Nation (2017) found that students' motivation to learn vocabulary can significantly impact their success. When students perceive vocabulary learning as tedious or irrelevant, their motivation decreases, leading to less engagement and poorer outcomes. This underscores the need for instructional

approaches that not only teach vocabulary effectively but also foster students' interest and motivation.

In light of these findings, it is clear that addressing students' difficulties in vocabulary learning requires a multifaceted approach. This includes implementing effective vocabulary instruction strategies, providing opportunities for meaningful use of words, and fostering students' motivation to learn vocabulary.

Students these days frequently struggle to learn vocabulary. The research is founded on the investigator's initial observations of seventh-grade students at SMP Negeri 1 Kramatwatu. It's possible that the issues arise from teachers teaching vocabulary in traditional methods. For example, teachers may assign students to read a text and identify any challenging terms; the students would then translate the words; alternatively teachers may assign vocabulary lists and require memorization of the words. Additionally, students are not very motivated to study vocabulary in English. It's because students become disinterested when relying solely on vocabulary lists to help them recall words. However, using the right instructional techniques, educators should assist students in learning vocabulary. Good resources and preparation are also essential for the teacher during the teaching process.

Teachers can provide visual aids to students in relation to these issues. Using media is one way to improve students' vocabulary mastery. Visual media, audio media, or listening media, audio visual media, or hearing and watching media are the three general categories into which media can be divided. Using English songs, English movie screenings, wordwalls, spinning wheels, and digital English applications are a few learning tools that are frequently used to help students expand their vocabulary (Ap, 2021). In actuality, images and actual objects—among them, digital flashcards—are the most often utilized teaching mediums in beginning lessons.

Indeed, the use of flashcards as a pedagogical tool has been extensively studied and advocated by various experts in the field of language education. According to a study by Nation (2013), flashcards can significantly enhance students' vocabulary mastery by providing a visual aid that facilitates word recall and understanding. According to Colbran et al. (2015), a digital flashcard is one that combines

multimedia, data analytics, and a spaced repetition method to optimize memory retention by timing repeat access to the cards. This suggests that using digital flashcards could aid students in expanding their vocabulary. Media also conveys concepts through words and images, numbers, and visual symbols (Herlina & Dewi, 2017). Flashcards are a visually appealing tool that can be utilized by student groups to compete in learning English vocabulary, which aids in memorization of the terms.

Students from SMP Negeri 1 Kramatwatu's seventh grade were selected by the researcher. Mrs. Maimunah, the 7C English teacher, reported that the students struggled with vocabulary. Although it was a widespread problem, students need access to media that can increase their motivation to learn English. There were a number of reasons the researcher decided to use digital flashcards as a medium with seventh grade students at SMP Negeri 1 Kramatwatu. The first, Many students find that learning English is a challenging and tedious subject, which makes them drowsy in class. The second one is that due to their limited vocabulary, the majority of seventh-grade students at SMP Negeri 1 Kramatwatu are less attentive when learning. The third is conventional methods are used by teachers to teach vocabulary. The last is students might not be very motivated to acquire vocabulary in English.

The integration of multimedia resources in educational settings has been noted to significantly enhance student engagement and learning outcomes. However, it is observed that the current English language learning process lacks the utilization of media to augment student proficiency. In response to this gap, the researcher undertook the present study, employing digital flashcards as a form of multimedia resource.

Digital flashcards, as a media tool, entail the creation of picture cards featuring descriptions on the reverse side, utilizing photographs or other visual imagery. The underlying purpose of employing digital flashcards is to facilitate the memorization and review of information, encompassing various aspects such as foreign language spelling, mathematical formulas, definitions of terminology, and the like (Tracy, 2019). By leveraging the interactive and visually stimulating nature of digital flashcards, the researcher endeavors to create an immersive

learning experience that promotes active engagement and retention of vocabulary knowledge among students.

## METHODOLOGY

The presence of a control variable led to the classification of this study as having a quasi-experimental design. Two classes the experimental class and the control class were used in this study. To view the test findings, the researcher employed pre- and post-tests.

To put it another way, the experimental class was instructed using digital flashcards, whereas the controlled class was instructed either without the use of digital flashcards or only from the textbook. Due to the fact that the quasi-experimental design was centered on treatment and outcome, the data was collected from both the pre-test and the post-test in order to comprehend the impact that the utilization of flashcards had on the vocabulary achievement of pupils. An example of the quasi-experimental design is presented below; it is intended to make the information more easily digestible.

**Table 1. Research Table of Quasi Experimental Design**

Group	Pre-test	Treatment	Post-test
Experimental	YE	X	YE
Control	YK	-	YE

Description:

YK = Data from the experimental class pre-test / post-test results

YE = Data from the control class pre-test / post-test results

X = Treatment using digital flashcards.

Pre-tests and post-tests were administered to the experimental and control groups, as indicated by the above table. Flash cards were used to treat the experimental group, while the control group received no treatment at all (white board).

Students are given a vocabulary test at the first try out meeting and pre-test (No Teaching). The treatment was given after the pre-test at the next meeting. Both were given treatment.meeting (Teaching). Treatment is delivered in 1 meeting.



Then at the 3rd final meeting the researcher gave a post-test.

Pre-test and post-test are given to measure if any significant difference in scores before and after students were located taught using flash cards. So, researchers see an increase when students get grades.

## Population and Sample

### 1. Population

According to Sugiyono, Metode Penelitian Pendidikan Pendekatan Kuantitatif, Kualitatif, dan R&D), Population is a group generalization consists of objects or subjects that has some qualities and characteristics chosen to be learned and to be concluded by the researcher.

Based on the statement above, the population of this study is a 7th grade A-I student at SMP Negeri 1 Kramatwatu consisting of 334 students. Number of students in each class The population is as follows:

**Table 2. Population of the Research**

Class	V II A	V II B	V II C	V II D	V II E	V II F	V II G	V II H	V II I
Amount /class	3 8	3 6	3 7	3 7	3 8	3 7	3 6	3 8	3 7
Amount	334								

### 2. Sample

A sample is a subset of the size and makeup of the population, according to Sugiyono (2017), which means that all populations will receive treatment because the sample is a subset of the population. According to Sugiyono (2017) random sampling is a sampling technique when all members of the population are used as samples, the sample in this study amounted to 75. VII E class totaling 38 students as an experimental class given treatment using digital flashcard media. While class VII F which amounted to 37 students was a control class that was not given treatment.

In this study, the author only chose two classes as research samples because the author wanted to focus on classes whose students had not reached the KKM score. Class VII E and VII F are classes that meet these criteria.

**Table 3. Sample of the Research**

Class	Information	Sample
VII E	Experimental Class	38
VII F	Control Class	37
Amount		75

## Data Collection Technique

The author conducted a test to obtain data on students' vocabulary achievement. Techniques for gathering data are employed by researchers to gather their findings.

This study collected data utilizing a variety of methods, such as the following:

- Remark : To ascertain the starting point of a study and a preliminary study, observation is conducted. In order to gather information and values about the problem to be studied at SMPN 1 Kramatwatu, observations were collected during learning activities.
- Interviews : Mawardi (2019) argues that using interviews as a data collection strategy aligns with qualitative research approaches, especially in pilot studies or when gaining detailed insights from a limited sample of participants.
- Test : The formative test of the hollow text used in this study was designed to measure vocabulary skills. To determine students' vocabulary level, a series of questions and text forms were administered during the pilot test phase. After the pilot test, the pre-test, materials, and post-test were administered.
- Recording : Photographs of learning activities and information on students' English scores were collected for documentation.

## Research Instruments

Language examination was used as a tool in this research. The author provides multiple choice questions for the pre and post-tests. There are 10 multiple choice questions in the pre-test and post-test. Before carrying out the pre and post-tests, the author conducted a research tryout on class VII students of SMP Negeri 1 Kramatwatu. Determining the validity of the test is the goal of the pilot study. The use of ANATES allows evaluation of the reliability and validity of the test. Based on the results of the validity and reliability tests, ten questions out of fifty questions were determined which constituted the



total questions. In other words, these forty questions lack validity and reliability.

#### 1. Dependent variable (Vocabulary Mastery)

##### a. Conceptual definition.

Within the context of this study, the student's level of vocabulary mastery serves as the dependent variable (Y). As a result of the beliefs that are discussed concerning the student's ability to master vocabulary, it is possible to draw the conclusion that vocabulary mastering is one of the aspects of learning English as a second language. This demonstrates that the pupils are not only familiar with the meaning of the word but also have the ability to put it into work. When it comes to language, students perform better when they have a more vocabulary. Students who have a limited vocabulary will have a tough time becoming adept in the English language through their studies. Acquiring a command of vocabulary requires not only memorizing but also extensive application. An individual's vocabulary is the collection of words that they are able to use in their daily life and interact with others.

##### b. Operational definition.

Students can receive a score based on how well they answered the following components of the test: (1) identifying items; (2) identifying public places; and (3) translating adjectives from objects and public places. There are four possible answers to each multiple-choice question on the test: A, B, C, or D. The multiple choice test consists of ten questions in total. Every right response earns ten points, while every wrong response receives zero points. The number of correct answers is multiplied by ten to give pupils a hundred marks.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study is to assess the impact of digital flashcards on vocabulary skills among grade VII E & VII F students at SMPN 1 Kramatwatu. The experimental group of 35 students used digital flashcards, whereas the control group of 35 students used flashcards with the modern chalkboard method.

The researcher administered a pre-test to students to assess their initial abilities. The data analysis with SPSS revealed significant differences between the experimental and control groups during the pre-test phase. This implies that the selected classes were homogeneous in

terms of population. Such conditions greatly help to understand student progress throughout the learning process.

##### a. Discussion of the pre-test data.

According to data from research conducted at SMPN 1 Kramatwatu, the pre-test value of the experiment before treatment was 84.29, but after treatment the post-test value of the experiment was 66.57. while the control group experiment was 84.29, but after treatment the post-test value, the average value increased to 83.57. In contrast, the pre-test score for the experimental class was 84.29, and the average score after treatment was 66.57.

The results of the normality test table using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test show that the data follows a normal distribution and meets the criteria with a Sig. > 0.05. The homogeneity test table displays a wide range of data distributions, indicating homogeneity.

To answer the pre-test hypothesis, which states that there is no significant effect on students' vocabulary skills between the control and experimental classes, a hypothesis test was performed using the t-test on the pre-test data for the experimental and control classes, yielding a t-value of 3.196 for the experimental class, with a significance level of 95% (0.05), and a critical t-value of 1.675. As  $3.196 < 1.675$  (t-value < critical t-value), we accept the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ).

At the start of the learning activities, there was no difference in listening skills between the control and experimental classes due to students' lack of learning readiness, as well as insufficient interest and motivation during the test process, resulting in a less conducive classroom environment. This condition had an effect on the average scores of students in the control and experimental classes, but the differences were not significant.

##### b. Discussion of post-test data

A test was performed to determine whether the proposed hypothesis was accepted or rejected based on the analysis of post-test results in the experimental and

control classes, as well as meeting the statistical requirements.

In order to respond to the post-test hypothesis, which states that there is an influence on students' vocabulary skills between the control and experimental classes after treatment, a hypothesis test was performed using the t-test on the post-test data of the experimental and control classes, with the calculated t value of 3.196 at the 95% significance level (0.05). The critical t-value is 1.675.  $3.196 > 1.675$  (t-value > critical t-value), so we reject the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) and accept the alternative hypothesis ( $H_1$ ).

## CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

### Conclusion

Based on research and discussion conducted in Class VII SMPN 1 Kramatwatu in 2024, the purpose of this study is to determine the impact of vocabulary with digital flashcards on students' English vocabulary.

Teacher-Centered Teaching Methods, which are still centered on the teacher, have proven to be less effective in improving students' English proficiency. This approach restricts students' active participation and creativity, impeding the development of language skills. The lack of use of digital media, such as digital flashcards in teaching, demonstrates that technology's potential in education has not been fully realized. However, when the researcher used digital flashcards, they proved to be an effective learning tool for increasing student engagement and facilitating interactive vocabulary learning. A less conducive classroom environment, one that does not support the teaching and learning process, has a negative impact on student motivation and academic performance. A less conducive environment reduces students' ability to concentrate and actively participate in learning. However, after the researchers used digital flashcards, the classroom environment improved and positively impacted the teaching and learning process. The dominant use of the lecture method limits the variety of learning experiences available to students. However, after using digital flashcards, students engage in interactive learning. The experimental class pretest results showed that the mean was 64.57, the mode was 65, and the median was 65.00. The pretest results for the control class were mean 53.57, mode 45, and median 55.00. The experimental class posttest results yielded a mean value of 83.71, mode 80,

and median 85.00. The mean posttest score for the control class was 73.14, with a mode of 65 and a median of 75.00. The pretest t-test results for the experimental and control classes were  $3.196 > t$  table 1.689, with a Sig. (2-tailed) value of 0.002 < 0.05. Then  $H_0$  is rejected because there is no effect on students' English vocabulary, and  $H_1$  is accepted between the control and experimental groups.

Meanwhile, the t test calculation on the posttest results of the experimental and control classes yields a t value of 3.522, which is greater than the t table of 1.689 and the sig value. If  $0.001 < 0.05$ ,  $H_0$  is rejected and  $H_1$  is accepted, indicating an impact on students' English vocabulary between the control and experimental classes. As a result, it can be concluded that using digital flashcards improves vocabulary skills in seventh-grade students at SMPN 1 Kramatwatu.

### Suggestion

Based on the results of this study, there are the following suggestions:

1. Students are expected to master vocabulary because it will make it easier to learn all of the English skills. Using engaging media, such as flash cards, can help students expand their vocabulary and remain motivated during the learning process.
2. English teachers are expected to make the teaching and learning process fun, because students prefer to play and learn when they are happy. Flash cards are a type of teaching media that allows students to interact with words while learning vocabulary. to interact with words and quickly acquire new vocabulary.
3. Readers and researchers are expected to use flashcards to teach vocabulary. Additionally, future researchers Future researchers can use the study's findings as a references.

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