

Using Cue Card Media To Improve Students' Vocabulary Mastery

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Abstract

This study aims to improve students' vocabulary mastery by using cue cards media. This study was conducted through Classroom Action Research (CAR) in three cycles involving 23 tenth-grade TKJ students consisting of 10 female students and 13 male students. Each cycle consisted of four stages: planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. The results of the study showed that students' vocabulary mastery increased significantly in each cycle. In the first cycle, the average score was 63.04 with a success rate of 17%. In the second cycle, the average score was 72.83 with a success rate of 52%. In the third cycle, the average score was 82.61 with a success rate of 100%, which successfully achieved the KKM of 75 with a success rate of 80%. This was also accompanied by higher motivation and participation. It can be concluded that cue cards are effective and practical in improving students' vocabulary mastery.

Keywords: Classroom Action Research, Cue Card, Vocabulary.

1 INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary is an essential linguistic ability. The construction of proper sentences is an essential component of learning to write, facilitating comprehension of both written and auditory texts during the process of learning to read and listen. The ability to articulate thoughts and ideas in language while speaking is a further crucial aspect. Moreover, mastering vocabulary is an important part of learning English. Lack of vocabulary will make it difficult students' ability to communicate in English. Without vocabulary, nothing can be conveyed.

According to J. C, Richards Willy and A. Renandya (2002) the context of foreign language learning was noted by Richards and Renandya, who argued that vocabulary plays a crucial part in language proficiency, affecting how well learners speak, listen, read and write. This underscores the notion that a robust vocabulary enables students to utilise language correctly in a range of contexts. Typically, students begin their language learning by acquiring basic vocabulary and phrases, progressing to more complex words and expressions as they develop the ability to articulate their thoughts with greater precision.

The employment of vocabulary in both written and spoken language serves to strengthen its usage, thereby rendering communication more natural and fluent. Furthermore, the mastery of the English vocabulary as a second language is more challenging than the mastery of the Indonesian vocabulary. As Nosirova (2003) stated, English is widely considered to be an inconsistent language due to the marked difference between its spelling and pronunciation. Secondly, the process of memorizing English vocabulary is often perceived as boring and difficult. Indeed, learning English as a second language presents different challenges depending on the learner's background. In order to address these issues, it is essential that teachers adopt a creativity and adaptive approach

in their pedagogy. Nonetheless, it is to be hoped that teachers will be able to assist students in addressing challenges and developing more rich and varied vocabulary.

At present, the process of English teaching and learning is confronted with a number of challenges. It is not uncommon for students to experience feelings of overwhelm and boredom in relation to the numerous aspects of English that must be mastered, including vocabulary, pronunciation, and sentence construction. A survey conducted at SMK Cipta Karya Bekasi revealed that students in the tenth grade of the TKJ programme continue to encounter difficulties in mastering English vocabulary. The survey indicated that only one to three students demonstrated an understanding of the subject.

In order to improve students' vocabularies, teachers must consider students' motivation and interest. The integration of media in educational settings has been demonstrated to be a highly effective tool. It helps students to understand the knowledge their teachers are trying to give them. It also helps teachers to achieve their teaching goals and helps students to understand and learn a particular lesson. There are different ways to teach vocabulary. One way is to present new words to students to help them remember them. When teaching vocabulary, using media has been shown to help students understand and remember new words. For example, using things like dolls, realia (real objects), and pictures can help students to see what the animals look like, and this can help them to remember what they looked like better. What's more, the use of cue cards is one of the media.

Media in education can be defined as the array of tools, resources, and technologies employed to enhance and facilitate the educational process. The utilization of media in educational settings is predicated on the principles of multimedia learning, as delineated by Mayer (2009). This assertion posits that the integration of verbal and visual elements in educational content enhances knowledge retention by stimulating both verbal and visual pathways within the brain. The efficacy of vocabulary training is contingent upon the implementation of interactive and contextualized techniques. As Lesnussa et al (2024) asserts, the use of media such as photographs, posters, and analogous materials is particularly conducive to vocabulary instruction for students who are deficient in vocabulary. The implementation of cue cards as a learning media in the classroom environment is particularly advantageous in facilitating the composition of vocabulary by students.

Cue cards are defined as visual aids that can be used to assist students in identifying or describing individuals or objects during the learning process. Harmer (2007) states that cue cards are cards containing words and pictures, which students use in pair or group work. It makes introducing new information easier by allowing for the preparation of new cards and the management of confusion. Cue Cards are a great way to help students learn new words in English. One of the good things about cue cards is that they are interactive and visual, which helps students to remember and understand new words more easily. With a more contextual and fun approach, Cue Cards have been shown to increase students' vocabulary mastery and learning significantly. Consequently, there are several issues and solutions related to the use of cue cards in the learning process. For example, a study conducted by Parmi (2019), entitled "The Use of Cue Cards in Cooperative Learning for Teaching Vocabulary," examined the effectiveness of cue cards as a learning media, in the context of cooperative learning as a teaching method. The study's findings showed that using cue cards along with cooperative learning methods helped students improve vocabulary easier to understand and remember. Furthermore, the use of cooperative learning resulted in a significant increase in students' confidence levels.

The use of cue cards has been demonstrated to be an effective pedagogical tool, facilitating student learning in a visually engaging manner. This pedagogical media encompasses activities that are visible to students, thereby facilitating opportunities for them to engage in speaking and writing exercises. Therefore, based on the results of the observation, the researcher employed cue cards to enhance the vocabulary mastery of 10th grade TKJ students at SMK Cipta Karya Bekasi.

2 RESEARCH METHODS

The researcher conducts classroom action research with a qualitative technique. Anne (2010) defines action research as an intentional intervention in a deliberate way in the problematic situation in order to bring about adjustments and, even better, improvements in practice. It can be interpreted that the teacher assumed responsibility for the direction of the action research. The responsibility was passed to the students, who completed the project. According to Kemmis, McTaggart and Nixon (2014), there are four essential processes in action research. These are planning, acting, observing and reflecting. A strategy that is clearly defined and conducive to the efficient and interesting conduct of research. The following steps are involved in conducting classroom action research (CAR): The problem or research question must first be identified. Next, data must be collected, organized, and analyzed. A reflective process is imperative, and it is crucial to acknowledge that classroom action research consists of four distinct steps. The duration of each cycle is subject to variation, ranging from a single class to multiple classes, thus allowing for the execution of numerous cycles of the aforementioned process.

Nevertheless, this study was conducted over three cycles with 23 tenth-grade TKJ students at SMK Cipta Karya Bekasi in the even semester of the 2024/2025 academic year. The instruments used included pre-test & post-test, observation sheets, and interview guidelines. Pre-tests were administered to determine the students' preliminary abilities, and post-tests were administered at the end of each cycle to measure improvement. Qualitative data related to student engagement and learning attitudes were collected through observation and interviews.

3 RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Pre Action

The research was conducted at SMK CIPTA KARYA BEKASI which is located in Jl. Kaliabang Bungur No.2, Kecamatan Medan Satria, Kota Bekasi, Jawa Barat, consisting of four meetings over a month with a total of 23 students. There were 10 female students and 13 male students in the tenth grade TKJ class.

The observation results show that there are several weaknesses in teaching students' vocabulary mastery in the classroom. Most students have difficulty understanding English words, remembering their meanings, and using them in oral and written communication. Another weakness found during the pre-action stage was the students' limited vocabulary. The students didn't know many words, which made it hard for them to understand texts, follow instructions in English, and complete classroom exercises.

In order to verify the observation, the researcher administered a pre-test to measure the students' vocabulary mastery. The findings showed that students' vocabulary mastery was still low. The average score of the preliminary test was 53.48, with 0% of students achieving *Kriteria Ketuntasan Minimum (KKM)*, which was set at 75 with a minimum success rate of 80%. Based on these conditions, it can be concluded that the main problems faced by the students were low motivation, lack of vocabulary mastery, and limited confidence in using English. Therefore, an alternative learning media is needed to improve students' vocabulary learning.

3.2 Action

3.2.1 *Cycle I*

a. Planning

In this phase, researchers created lesson plans to be used in teaching practice. These lesson plans were designed to suit the needs of students and used cue cards

as media. The main goal of this cycle was to help students learn more vocabulary, especially words related to the language features of narrative texts, such as adjectives, adverbs of time, and past tense verbs.

The subjects to be addressed encompassed the analysis of short narrative texts featuring animal stories or fables, titled "The Lion and The Mouse". The text was analyzed together with the students to identify its language features. After that, cue cards containing examples of adjectives (e.g. big, small, brave), adverbs of time (e.g. once upon a time, then, finally), and past tense verbs (e.g. lived, ran, said) were prepared to support learning.

b. Acting

The researcher began teaching activities for 60 minutes x 1JP based on a lesson plan that had been prepared beforehand. In the main activity, the researcher presented what a narrative text is, followed by a short narrative text titled "The Lion and The Mouse" and read it together with the students. The researcher explained the structure of the text and highlighted some examples of adjectives, adverbs of time, and verbs in the past tense. At this stage, the researcher first explains what cue cards are and how they are used. In addition, cue cards are used to present vocabulary items more clearly.

c. Observing

Based on observation, students still found the new words difficult and needed more help from the researchers as they were learning. But they also started to get interested in this learning activity, especially with the new media they had just learned about.

As for the results of the first cycle post-test, they show an improvement from the pre-activity. The mean score obtained was 63.04, with a success rate of 17% among the 4 students who reached the KKM and a failure rate of 83%.

d. Reflecting

Based on what the researcher learned from this reflection, it was decided that improvements were needed for the next cycle. To make sure all students are paying attention and understanding what they're learning, it's important to include activities that provide structure and repetition. What's more, researchers need to make their explanations clearer and more precise so that students can understand them.

3.2.2 Cycle II

a. Planning

In the second cycle, researchers redesigned the lesson plan based on reflections from the first cycle, with a duration of 120 minutes x 2JP. The material remained consistent, consisting of narrative texts entitled "Toba Lake". Additionally, language features focused on improving students' vocabulary in narrative texts were added, including adjectives, past tense, and adverbs of time. What's more, this session used collaborative learning to work out language features using cue cards.

b. Acting

In the first cycle, researchers only focused on the past tense and verb 2. But in this second cycle, researchers also started to talk about time expressions. This time, the researcher gave the students clear, detailed explanations and asked them if they understood. Students are given dictionaries to help them learn new words. They also use cue cards during this cycle. These are cards with words on them, and the students take notes from these. The researcher provides the cards, and uses different colours for each one. After each group has completed their cue cards, a representative from each group goes to the front of the class and gives clues to the other groups to help them guess the content on the card. These clues can be similar words or actions. After that, the researcher randomly chooses some students and asks them to make simple sentences using the words they have learned.

c. Observing

The data shows an average score of 72.83, which means that 52% of the students, or 12 people, had met the target. On the other hand, 48% of the students, which is 11, did not achieve the target. The data shows that this cycle has not yet reached the minimum passing grade target of 75% and the target percentage of 80%.

d. Reflecting

The researcher pointed out that some students did not meet the necessary requirements. The results showed that students found new vocabulary difficult because they were unfamiliar with some of the words.

3.2.3 Cycle III

a. Planning

The narrative texts with fairy tale themes entitled 'The Brave Tailor' in this cycle were consistent with those of the preceding cycle. Furthermore, during this cycle, the researcher expanded the scope of the discussion to include synonyms and antonyms. Two games were implemented: Guess the Word and Match, both of which were based on cue cards.

b. Acting

Students were split into groups of five or six people, but with different members from the previous cycle. The students were given a new story called "The Brave Tailor".

The next activity is the Guess the Word game. Students are given a set of ten cue cards. Their task is to identify the classification, antonym or synonym and provide the translation. This activity helps to make the classroom an enjoyable place to be and teaches students to be brave and speak up, because they had to answer quickly.

Next, a matching game. The researcher prepared cards with information on them and gave them to each group, with each group having 15 pairs of cards. The first pair of each group had the vocabulary from the cue card, and the second pair had the clues. Students work together in groups to match the clues with the vocabulary and write the translation on the card.

c. Observing

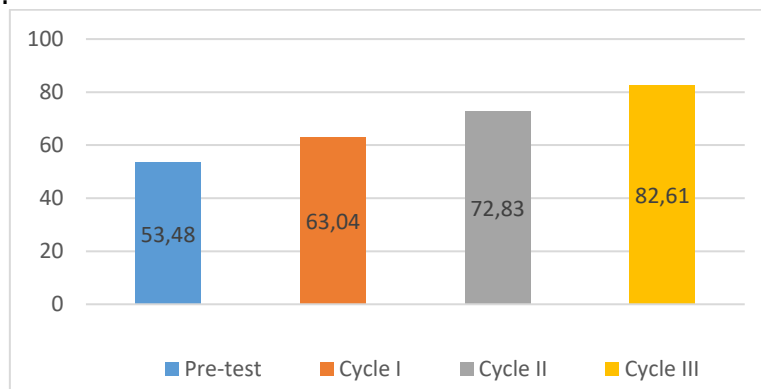
An observation of Cycle III revealed that students participated with high levels of enthusiasm. Students felt more confident using the vocabulary than they did in previous cycles. The results indicate that all students achieved the KKM target of 75, with an average student score of 82.61, indicating a 100% success rate in reaching the target.

d. Reflecting

The reflection results in the third cycle showed a significant improvement in students' vocabulary mastery. Students have been shown to improve not only in their ability to identify and write down the vocabulary on the cue cards, but also in their confidence to use the vocabulary in the context of oral communication.

3.3 Discussion

Here's the table:



Gambar 1. Results of Vocabulary Mastery Test

The results of the preliminary test indicated that all students were below the KKM. In the first cycle, most students achieved the target score, with an average of 63.04 and a percentage of 17%. On the other hand, a significant percentage of students, especially those who did not achieve the minimum passing grade, reached 83% of the total. In the second cycle, the average score went up to 72.83, with 52% of students achieving the target and 48% not yet reaching the KKM. The third cycle showed a lot of improvement in the test results. The average score of the students was higher than the minimum passing score, which was 82.61, and most of the students showed that they could use new words in simple sentences..

The findings of the observations indicated that students frequently acquiesce to learning activities. The students' self-reported lack of confidence in their English language skills has a direct impact on their ability to communicate effectively. The responsibilities appear to differ. The students commenced collaborative work in groups, with tasks such as vocabulary research and transcription being distributed among team members. The groups were also tasked with ensuring the timely completion of their assignments. Additionally, the researchers employed a more clear and precise explanation of the concepts to the students. In the third cycle, the Guess the Word and Matching games promoted students' engagement in conversation, collaboration, and self-direction. The students exhibited a heightened level of enthusiasm for the learning process, with the vast majority of them actively participating. The results of the observation demonstrated that students' behavioral patterns during learning exhibited an enhancement as the activity persisted.

4 CONCLUSION

This classroom action research was conducted in three cycles to improve students' vocabulary mastery using cue cards. In consideration of the findings and discussion in the previous chapter, it can be concluded that the utilization of cue cards is an effective strategy for enhancing the vocabulary mastery of tenth-grade TKJ students in terms of memorization, comprehension, and application. This improvement can be seen from the increase in student scores from the pre-test cycle with an average of 53.48 and a failure rate of 100%, the post-test cycle I with an average of 63.04 and a percentage reaching the target of 17% for 4 students, the post-test cycle II with an average of 72.83 and a percentage reaching the target of 52% for 12 students, to the post-test cycle III with an average score of 82.61 and a success rate of 100%. Upon the culmination of the third cycle, the entirety of the student population exhibited achievements that exceeded the stipulated *Kriteria Ketuntasan Minimum* (KKM) benchmark set at 75, while concurrently attaining a 100% success rate.

In addition, using cue cards has been shown to make students more motivated and involved in the learning process. Activities like word games and matching games made the classroom more fun and interesting for the students. Studies have shown that students become more confident when using words, building sentences, and using vocabulary in real-life conversations. Therefore, using cue cards is an effective way to improve vocabulary and create an active and motivating learning environment. To sum it up, using cue cards has been shown to help students learn more vocabulary and be more interested in the tenth grade of the SMK Cipta Karya Bekasi TKJ program in the 2024/2025 school year.

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