Utilizing Flashcards to Enhance Students' Writing Skill of Descriptive Text in SMA Negeri 2 Semarang

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to improve the writing skills of grade X-6 students of SMA N 2 Semarang as a result of English learning achievements using flashcards media on describing people material. This study is a classroom action research. The research is conducted in two cycles and each cycle consists of planning, execution, observation, and reflection. Data collection techniques in this study are written tests and observations. The results of this study showed that in the first cycle 91.7% of students had reached the Minimum Completeness Criteria (KKM) with an average score of 82.2. In the second cycle, 100% of students have reached the Minimum Completeness Criteria (KKM) with an average score of 87.8. Based on these results, it can be concluded that the application of media flashcards in English learning can improve the writing skills of grade X-6 students of SMA N 2 Semarang.

Keywords: English Learning Outcomes, Flashcards, Vocabulary, Writing Skill, Descriptive Text

1. INTRODUCTION

In learning a language, vocabulary mastery becomes the basis for helping to learn the language. When students have little vocabulary mastery, this will cause them difficulty in learning English at school. Mastery of vocabulary becomes the most basic stage for students as their first step in learning English.

In English language learning there are four skills that need to be mastered by students, namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. To master the four elements of these skills, mastery of vocabulary is needed by students. If the mastery of vocabulary is still low, the mastery of English skills that students have is also low.

This problem still often occurs at schools in Indonesia and is even still often found in high schools, including at SMAN 2 Semarang. This is evidenced when

researchers were doing observations during the learning process in the classroom and found problems with many cases that occur, especially in 10th grades, when they are reading material or doing assignments in class, they often ask the meaning of English vocabulary presented to the teacher.

This proves that the mastery of vocabulary possessed by grade X students at SMAN 2 Semarang for the 2023/2024 learning year is still at a low level. By considering the problems that occur in the classroom, researchers try to find solutions to improve students' vocabulary mastery, especially for vocabulary about human character and nature as their reference in understanding descriptive text about people both in terms of knowledge and skills. For this reason, researchers applying learning using flashcards to help students remember and understand

vocabulary about human's characters. Through flashcards equipped with interesting images, it is expected that students will be able to remember and understand the vocabulary more easily.

This research focuses on how flashcards can help students to master more vocabularies in order to improve their writing skill. Miller et al. (2014), stated that writing is a complex language skill and has many aspects to master. In compiling a writing, writers need good skills, especially in organizational aspects (paragraphs, sentences, and words). Writing can also be interpreted as a process in communicating where someone conveys their ideas, ideas, or thoughts which are poured into a writing in the form of a series of sentences or paragraphs (Faridah &; Sa'diyah, 2023). Writing can be said to be good if it can provide information or messages clearly and create effective interaction for readers. It aims to provide a point of view of ideas in the text where it organizes in various ways of writing such as narrative, description, exposition, and argumentation (Kusumawardhani, 2019)

According to Barcroft (2016) the goal of learning vocabulary is to acquire a wide network of knowledge and skills in language, and to do so, nothing else can be done but to use and implement large amounts of vocabulary over a long period of time when trying to communicate in the target language being learned. To teach English as a foreign language to students in schools, fun media and teaching materials are indispensable. It aims to attract students and increase their motivation in learning English at school. One of the interesting media that can be applied is Flashcard.

A flashcard is a series of cards that contain certain images and vocabulary. (Kusumawardhani, 2019), flashcards were first introduced by a brain surgeon from Pennsylvania, United States, named Glenn Doman. Flashcards are usually grouped into certain vocabulary categories which can help users remember vocabulary in certain categories with the help of images on the card. The use of flashcards as media is considered suitable for improving

writing skills because one of the advantages of flashcard media is that the images on the card can overcome space and time limitations so that it can help students learn quickly the words in the card and increase vocabulary in their writing (Anriani et al., 2023)

This research was conducted with the aim of improving the writing skills of students in grade X-6 SMAN 2 Semarang in writing descriptive text with the help of flashcards media as a medium to facilitate students in remembering and mastering new vocabulary about people's characters and personalities. The use of flashcards as a learning medium can be used to improve the writing skills of students. In other words, students can increase vocabulary mastery through flashcards so that the quality of their writing can be better where they can explore more ideas and ideas and enrich the choice of words used in their writing.

2. METHODOLOGY

The research method used in this study is Classroom Action Research. Classroom Action Research is research conducted by teachers or researchers as an action to improve and improve educational services in handling the teaching and learning process that has a target or research subject, which are the students. Through the use of PTK, teachers can continue to improve their performance, by doing self-reflection, which is an effort to identify weaknesses in the learning process they do, then plan for the improvement process and implement the improvement process in the learning process in accordance with the learning program they have prepared and end with reflection (Sanjaya, 2016).

This research was conducted at SMAN 2 Semarang in which the researcher observed and gave treatments for students in grade X-6 to help them improve their writing skill through the implementation of flashcards. The material taught in this class is descriptive text in which it focused on describing people. There were two cycles of this research and the timetable is shown in the following table.

Table 1. Research Schedule

Date	Time Allocation	Activity
Tuesday, 5 September 2023	2 JP	Pre-test, Giving Material, Observation.
Tuesday, 12 September 2023	2 JP	Treatment and Observation for Cycle I, Post-Test Cycle I, Reflection.
Tuesday, 26 September 2023	2 JP	Treatment and Observation Cycle 2, Post-test Cycle II, Reflection.

The data in this study are quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data is obtained from students' grades consisting of pre-test and post-test, while qualitative data is a description of the learning process during the application of actions. This class action research uses the Kemmis & Mc Taggart model. Kemmis & Mc Taggart's action research model consists of four components, namely planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. The four components are seen as a cycle. The acting component with observing is made as a unity where both activities must be carried out in one unit of time, once an action takes place so must observation also be carried out.

This study uses the rubric by Brown (2007) to assess students' writings and then the researcher gave score for each writing based on the rubric and calculated the improvement of students' writings in each cycle to see whether the flashcard could help the students enhance their writing skill.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Pre-Test

To measure the writing ability of X-6 grade students before the action, researchers used a pre-test. The pretest was held on September 5, 2023. students are instructed to write a brief description of themselves in paragraph form. During the pre-test, students are not allowed to use dictionaries and search for information on the internet. The purpose of the pre-test is to find out the student's initial ability to write description text before being given action. The results of the student pre-test can be seen in the following table.

Table 2. Result of Pre-Test

Predicate	Score Range	Total Number of Students	Percentage (%)	Average
Excellent	100 – 87	0	0	76,1 (Very Good)
Very Good	86 – 74	24	66,7	
Good	73 – 61	12	33,3	
Average	60 – 47	0	0	
Low	46 – 34	0	0	
Poor	< 34	0	0	

From the pre-test results, there were 24 students in grades X-6 who already had very good writing skills with a percentage of 66.67% and students who still did not complete KKM with scores below 75 as many as 12 students with a percentage of

33.33%. By considering these results, researchers strive to be able to improve the writing skills of X-6 grade students by applying media flashcards in the hope that students can improve writing skills on describing people material by describing human characters with the help of flashcards containing personality adjectives.

Cycle I

In the implementation of actions in cycle I, students will remember every vocabulary listed on flashcards and understand the meaning of each vocabulary so that students can apply the word in the right context.

In the implementation of actions in cycle I, students would remember every vocabulary listed on flashcards and understand the meaning of each vocabulary so that students can apply the word in the right context. In the implementation of actions in cycle I, students will remember every vocabulary listed on flashcards and understand the meaning of each vocabulary so that students can apply the word in the right context.

After conducting the mini quiz, students were asked to write descriptive text to describe one of the friends in their respective groups. From this writing, you will see the results for the post-test in cycle I. Then the researcher gave another explanation related to the material as reinforcement and provided an explanation related to how to describe people. At the conclusion stage, each meeting ends with a question and answer between students and teachers to summarize learning about the conclusion of the material that has been learned. After making conclusions about the material, students are asked to reflect on learning to find out students' understanding of the material that has been given.

After going through cycle 1 learning, at the end of the cycle a post-test has been carried out, namely writing a description text in which students describe one of their group members to measure student learning outcomes in writing skills. The grades obtained by students can be seen in the following table.

Table 3. Result of Post-Test Cycle I

Predicate	Score Range	Total Number of Students	Percentage (%)	Average
Excellent	100 – 87	10	27,8	82,2
Very Good	86 – 74	23	63,9	(Very Good)
Good	73 – 61	3	8,3	
Average	60 – 47	0	0	
Low	46 – 34	0	0	
Poor	< 34	0	0	

The table shows that there are 33 students who have completed KKM 75 in the first cycle or 91.7% of students who have completed. While the incomplete has been reduced to 8.3% or only 3 students. There were 10 students who got grades in the very good category, while there were 23 students who got grades in the very good category. On the other hand, the average score rose to 82.2 which is categorized as very good. Based on these results, it can be concluded that flashcards media can be an effective medium in increasing the value of students' skills in writing, where initially the average value of students' cutting skills was 76.1 to 82.2

so that there was an increase in writing skills.

Based on the results of observations during the implementation of cycle I, students still experience problems in writing, especially in word selection and the use of vocabulary or related terms in describing someone. Therefore, to solve this problem, researchers consider that the ability of students still needs to be improved so that cycle II needs to be implemented.

Cycle II

From the results obtained in cycle I, researchers feel that they have not achieved the overall goal as evidenced by the fact that there are still some students who have not completed KKM for the value of writing skills and there are still many students who still cannot use vocabulary regarding personality adjectives according to their meaning and context. Then researchers carry out the second cycle with additional treatment, namely the use of learning media in the form of videos and images related to personality adjectives and people's characters. In cycle II, it is not much different from the activities in cycle I. Preparation in cycle II includes compiling teaching modules, preparing teaching materials, compiling tests, and looking for some videos about description texts which are then used as media in providing additional treatment.

Preparation in cycle II includes compiling teaching modules, preparing teaching materials, compiling tests, and looking for several videos about description texts which are then used as media in providing additional treatment. The implementation of learning in cycle II will be carried out on September 26, 2023 with an allocation of 2x45 minutes (2JP).

The procedure for implementing learning in cycle II is almost the same as cycle I. However, in cycle II students are given additional media such as videos and pictures containing vocabularies and idioms to describe people's characters. students are also presented with some digital flashcards with new vocabulary that still refers to people's characters and personalities.

After learning the material through additional media and flashcards given in cycle II, students were asked to describe one of their family members. Researchers use the same writing assessment rubric used during pre-cycle and cycle I. The researcher also explained the steps in describing someone that can be used as a reference by students so that the writing that students produce can be coherent.

Researchers monitored students taking the test to write description texts to describe one of the students' family members which was used as a result of the post-test cycle II. After making conclusions about the description text material, the researcher closes the learning and notifies the next learning. In the end of learning activities, students were asked to reflect on the learning carried out both in cycle I and II. From the overall implementation of cycle II actions, researchers have carried out learning by following steps according to the learning design that has been prepared to apply media flashcards in helping students write description texts about someone.

The results of scores for student writing after using flashcards assisted by additional media in the form of videos and images about people's characters in cycle II can be seen in the following table.

Table 4. Result of Post-Test Cycle II

Predicate	Score Range	Total Number of Students	Percentage (%)	Average

Excellent	100 – 87	15	41,7	87,8
Very Good	86 – 74	21	58,3	(Excellent)
Good	73 – 61	0	0	
Average	60 – 47	0	0	
Low	46 – 34	0	0	
Poor	< 34	0	0	

The table above shows that in the post-test cycle II all students in grade X-6 have received complete scores above KKM 75 in cycle II. This shows that the use of flashcards has greatly helped students in improving their writing skills on describing people material as evidenced by the results of their writing scores that have been completed KKM with a percentage of 100%. In this cycle, the average score also rose to 87.8 in the very good category. Based on these results, it can be seen that there is an increase in writing skills in grade X-6 students from cycle I where the average score of students in cycle I, which is 82.2, has increased to 87.8 in cycle II.

Overall, the process of implementing actions in cycle I and cycle II learning went well. Researchers apply media flashcards in learning for describing people's material in accordance with the planned steps. In the cycle I students begin to get to know new vocabulary about people's characters and personalities through flashcard games together with groups led by 1 students with better learning readiness than other members. This method is used in the core activity, namely student discussion activities which then students do mini quizzes and write descriptions about one of their group members. The implementation of actions in cycle II is carried out using flashcards assisted by additional relevant media such as videos and images about people's characters and personalities to strengthen students' understanding. From the overall implementation of cycle II actions, researchers have carried out learning by following the steps that have been planned in applying flashcards media.

A more detailed discussion of the findings of this study is presented by comparing the results obtained during the pre-cycle, cycle I, and cycle II. The improvement of students' abilities can be seen in the following table.

Table 5. Comparison of The Results in Each Cycle

Indicators	Average Score			Improvement	
	Pre-test	Cycle I	Cycle II	Pre-test – Cycle I	Cycle I – Cycle II
Writing Skill	76,1	82,2	87,8	6,1	5,7
Students who achieve above KKM (%)	66,7%	91,7%	100%	25%	8,3%

From these results, it can be concluded that the improvement obtained during the study, namely media flashcards, can provide a significant improvement in writing skills especially in helping students determine the right choice of words or diction in their writing and enrich the vocabulary used in their writing. So that the use of this media can help students in developing their writing and can be an alternative for teachers in teaching aspects of writing.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on data analysis at the pre-cycle, cycle I, and cycle II stages, it can be concluded that the writing skills of grade X-6 students of SMA N 2 Semarang for the 2023/2024 school year can be improved through the application of flashcards as learning media in describing people material. This can be seen from the average value obtained by students during the implementation of precycle, cycle I, and cycle II. The average score of students in the pre-test was 76.1, then increased in cycle I to 82.2, and finally in cycle II the average score of students increased to 87.8. So from the learning results obtained by these students, it can be concluded that flashcards can significantly improve students' writing skills.

Research on the application of flashcards as a medium for learning English description text material also has several limitations that need to be considered such as limited time and limited learning. Therefore, the results of such studies may not be directly generalizable to the wider population, such as students of different levels of education or different backgrounds.

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