
Enriching English vocabulary of young learners by using the “Word Guess” game and flashcard media

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ABSTRACT

Keywords:

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This research aims to introduce English to young learners by enriching their vocabulary through the "Word Guess" game with flashcard media. The study used the Classroom Action Research method, involving planning, action, observation, and reflection cycles. The participants were 30 class B children from a private kindergarten in Magelang Regency, comprising 17 boys and 13 girls. The test results revealed that using the "Word Guess" game and flashcard media significantly improved the children's English vocabulary and learning motivation. Students' comprehension achievements reached 80%, while their learning motivation increased by 83.33%. Furthermore, the implementation of this method led to a 40% improvement in students' knowledge, demonstrating the effectiveness of combining the "Word Guess" game with flashcards. The "Word Guess" game, enhanced by the use of colorful flashcards, made learning English enjoyable and interactive for the young learners. The activities encouraged active participation, improved focus, and helped build a positive attitude toward learning English. In conclusion, the findings indicate that the "Word Guess" game using flashcard media is an effective and engaging strategy for enriching English vocabulary among young learners. It not only boosts comprehension and motivation but also supports the development of foundational language skills.

1. INTRODUCTION

English is an international language that effectively communicates in various global contexts, including business, politics, science, education, etc. According to Istifadah et al. (2024), in the current age, there is an indisputable need for fluency in English, a skill that has become an essential component of academic and professional success. In Indonesia, English is utilized as the second language after the Indonesian language (Rohmana & Amalia, 2022). Additionally, Bolton (2004) stated that English has become an international language, using terms such as English as a global language and varieties that develop, such as localized varieties of English, World English, etc. English is also proper for developing science internationally because many international books use English (Izzan & Mahfuddin, 2007). English is a global language because speaking English can open opportunities in many aspects of life, whether from education, career, or experience (Crystal, 2000).

Therefore, education in Indonesia also adapts and teaches English to children at school (Syafrizal & Haerudin, 2018). Students who study English must master four skills: listening skills, speaking skills, reading skills, and writing skills (Zaim, 2016). Of the English language skills

that must be learned, students also need to understand the important components of English, namely vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar. By understanding this, they can improve their understanding of English. Introducing English early can be a bridge for them to learn a second language flexibly. According to Medikawati (2012), language is learned in the brains of children under 6. He further stated that foreign language vocabulary and everyday expressions can be introduced through playing methods by choosing a unique theme.

An essential component in English is vocabulary because using language politely and correctly requires various vocabulary skills (Hilaliyah, 2018); (Zahro et al., 2020). In addition, according to Soedjito and Saryono (2011), knowing vocabulary means knowing the language components that contain meaning in the use of language. Vocabulary comprehension can be taught because children aged three to six years have rapid vocabulary skills due to curiosity (Zahro et al., 2020). In the development of children's vocabulary, word knowledge dramatically impacts children's language skills in communicating accurately (Viora, 2017). So, vocabulary plays a vital role in children learning foreign languages. According to Purtanto et al. (2023), the provision of education in an institution that has historically not incorporated English as a medium of instruction may present certain challenges. Therefore, a teacher needs to motivate or stimulate students to learn when teaching young children, a foreign language (Liyana & Kurniawan, 2019).

The essence of early childhood learning activities, in general, is the development of a specific curriculum in the form of a set of plans that contain learning experiences through play based on the desired growth and potential to achieve children's competency needs (Fadlan & Nopriansyah, 2021). When English is introduced to children early, learning must be adjusted to the child's developmental stage. As referred to in paragraph (1), Child Development Achievement Level Standards, child development is a synthesis of religious, physical, moral, language, motoric, cognitive, social, emotional, and artistic values. This relates to learning English in the kindergarten curriculum, which must be engaging, simple, and easy to understand while still paying attention to children's learning principles (Uzer, 2019). Children need to develop language proficiency (Wihartini & Anggraeni, 2005).

Teachers must give lessons to excite students and make children enjoy the teaching and learning process (Pertiwi et al., 2021). In the Merdeka curriculum, English language learning must still consider children's needs. In creating a conducive learning environment, teachers must teach appropriately so children can quickly receive and absorb the material optimally (Garton & Copland, 2018). A good time to start learning a language is between the ages of two and seven; it is good to use it to introduce the language to children (Susfenti, 2021). Kindergarten-age children spend two to three hours daily learning literacy and mathematics, with only thirty minutes per day or less to play (Miller et al., 2009). Even though they should spend more time playing, children can still learn by playing so that they still feel happy with learning activities.

Therefore, the activities carried out in kindergartens are designed like games, even though they serve specific learning purposes (A. Siregar, 2018). A pleasant learning atmosphere for young children will be significant in their learning process. This happens because they are entering the golden age, at 0-6 years (Luh et al., 2021). According to growth and development, children must be given good stimulation early to develop their personality and potential (Philips et al., 1999). Children cannot think operationally. Therefore, it needs to be fostered to prepare children to be able to communicate well in the future. English is essential to learn because it is an international language (Hasanah & Ulya, 2020).

When studying, paying attention to a student's motivation to learn or interest in the lesson is also necessary. Therefore, teachers must understand innovative steps to foster children's

learning motivation. Media and motivation greatly influence student learning outcomes. Children who are also motivated in lessons will find it easier to understand learning (Novianti & Watini, 2022). For this reason, it is necessary to take an approach to teaching English at an early age to continue to provide meaning to learning, and it requires the skills of a teacher to teach English (Rich, 2014). One way to introduce children to English vocabulary is by playing “Word Guess” games using flashcard media. The “Word Guess” game also involves songs because using songs can teach early childhood English (Miranti et al., 2015).

In addition, according to Manikam (2021), children can easily interpret songs and remember lyrics through training and songs. It also aligns with Mutiah's (2012) belief that learning using songs makes students learn while playing, which can attract children's attention to learning English. Introducing English with simple vocabulary will have many benefits; children who understand a foreign language have academic advantages, social flexibility, intellectual abilities, and language skills (Susanti et al., 2019). Children's mastery of English vocabulary has to be taught at an early stage so they can have English skills that are accurate and fluent in the future (Lestari & Adelina, 2022).

Next, researchers need learning media to implement the “Word Guess” game. According to Chotimah (2021), media helps in the teaching and learning process, which can help students be motivated in class. Learning media is media used to convey messages or information. Media is used taking into consideration students' interests and the facilities provided. Good media has the characteristics of being attractive, full of color, and can use images to stimulate students (Aba & Sultan Amai Gorontalo, 2019). One is flashcard media, which can make it easier for students to connect meanings with new words using pictures (Chen et al., 2020). According to Oxford & Crookall (1990), traditional flashcards are made from paper with little information, such as words related to images. In this research, the researchers used flashcards as media to improve English vocabulary in the “Word Guess” game.

Several previous studies have examined the effect of games on early childhood English vocabulary. Research conducted by Adi and Wijaya (2018) entitled “Teaching English Vocabulary using Spelling Games for Indonesian Kindergarten Students: A Case Study” concluded that almost half of the respondents were classified as perfect, 39.28%. Therefore, playing games to increase vocabulary in English can be categorized as very good at the Brawijaya Smart School Children Center. A study by Siregar et al. (2023) entitled “Improving The Students’ Vocabulary Achievement by Using Guessing Games Technique.” The word-guessing game improves vocabulary. The novelty of this research is based on previous research; in this research, the researchers used flashcard media to mention the game "Guess the Word." However, previous research only used songs, spelling, and guessing games. This is what is novel in the research that the researchers conducted.

This research aims to determine young learners' understanding of English vocabulary by approaching it through the “Word Guess” game and flashcards media. Flashcards are used as a learning medium that can increase students' vocabulary. So, the researchers use flashcards to direct students to a guessing game. In this research, the researcher will introduce English learning for young learners with a warm, fun learning process and a good atmosphere for children in kindergarten at the time of development (Purwanti & Suhaimi, 2020). Vocabulary is the primary key before speaking, writing, reading, and listening. Hence, communication can be easily understood through good vocabulary selection (Adi & Wijaya, 2018). The problem faced is that introducing English in early childhood requires an explanation of each word so that early childhood can remember the vocabulary and meaning of the word (Jeti et al., 2018). Therefore,

the right strategy is needed to motivate students to learn English in a pleasant atmosphere. For this reason, researchers used the “Word Guess” game using flashcards to introduce English vocabulary in early childhood. The “Word Guess” game introduces vocabulary through flashcards, interspersed with guessing images through motion to guess.

2. METHOD

This study uses classroom action research carried out by teachers to improve the quality of learning practices in the classroom (Arikunto, 2015). This method is divided into four stages, namely (1) the planning stage, (2) the action stage, (3) the observation stage, and (4) the reflection stage. Kemmis and Mc Taggart (1988), referring to Arikunto (2015), said that action research is a spiral cycle consisting of planning, implementing actions, observation, and reflection, which may be followed by the next spiral cycle. Apart from that, there is also a test-to-test for children to understand vocabulary learning procedures in this process.

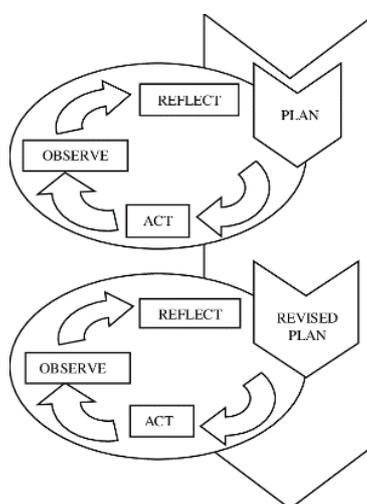


Figure 1. Research Procedure

The data collection technique in this research is observation, which refers to the observation guidelines based on Juanda (2016) in the instrument for implementing the “Word Guess” game to increase vocabulary in kindergarten children. The meeting conducted two meetings. The analyzed data is qualitative. The subjects in this study were Class B children at a private kindergarten in Magelang Regency, 17 boys and 13 girls. The method of data collection uses tests and observation.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the study's findings and discusses the implications concerning the research objectives and previous studies. The results are analyzed to highlight their significance and draw meaningful insights that contribute to understanding the research topic.

Pre-Cycle

The Pre-Cycle was held on November 3, 2023. In this stage, the researcher made early observations at a private kindergarten in Magelang Regency. In the statement, it was found that grade B children had little knowledge of English vocabulary. Only 40% of students mastered

animal terms in English. Researchers took this percentage through question-and-answer tests and interviews regarding several animal vocabulary words in English. The results of pre-cycle observations conducted by the researcher show that the ability of B-grade students to understand animal vocabulary in English still needs to improve. It is only 40% of the results of the questions and answers that researchers conducted in the pre-cycle. It can be seen that class B children need to understand more about animal vocabulary in English. Therefore, to enhance students' understanding of teaching English to students. Researchers need to do exciting and fun learning for class B students by playing the "Word Guess" game using flashcard media.

Cycle 1

The implementation of the first cycle was carried out on Monday, November 6, 2023. The researcher used an animal theme to introduce class B students to English vocabulary. The first cycle of classes starts at 08.00 and goes to 09.30 WIB. There are four stages that researchers carry out in the first cycle, namely:

Planning

In the first stage, they plan and prepare tools for the implementation of research, such as researchers preparing media in the form of animal image flashcards.

Acting

1. Prepare the learning place by arranging the class and preparing the learning media for the "Word Guess" game activity while singing.
2. Before starting the activity, the researcher introduces herself and conveys the purpose and purpose to the children, and then the children introduce themselves. Next, the researchers brainstormed with the children by mentioning animals in Indonesian.
3. The researcher prepared flashcards with animal images and English vocabulary. The researchers helped the children understand the animal English on the flashcards.
4. Then, the researcher asked the children to guess the picture by mentioning the English language.

Observing

Researchers observed that the learning process occurred while implementing the "Word Guess" game and flashcards to make it easier for children.

1. Based on the data results, some children first needed clarification about saying words in English. This was because guessing English vocabulary was still new for children. Furthermore, slowly, the children could speak English vocabulary well and enthusiastically.
2. Simultaneously, with the vocabulary being mentioned individually, the children were given flashcards containing the language of the animal names. Eight vocabulary words are sung according to the animal's name used in guessing. Singing makes it easier to memorize and more enjoyable for children.

Reflecting

Several shortcomings occur in the first cycle, including:

1. Students still need to understand what the researcher has taught.
2. Students still need clarification when mentioning vocabulary words in English.

3. Some students still need to pay more attention to the researcher when delivering the material.
4. The “Word Guess” game the researcher gave is still too difficult for students to follow.

The research results show that many things still needed to be improved in the first cycle carried out by researchers. The results from cycle 1 showed that only 63.33% of students could understand animal vocabulary in English. Students’ motivation is still 60% at present. Researchers obtained these percentage results through a question-and-answer test on all class B students. The test results showed that students still needed to meet the target of success in mastering English vocabulary, and there was a need to increase their understanding of vocabulary. Therefore, the researcher carried out the second cycle to improve students' knowledge of the material by implementing a guess with an animal theme and the “Word Guess” game using flash cards. Before carrying out learning activities, researchers should explain the material in-depth and provide ice-breaking breaks to increase students' enthusiasm for learning.

Cycle 2

The second cycle was held on Monday, November 6, 2023. The researcher used an animal theme to introduce class B students to English vocabulary. In the second cycle, the class starts at 09:45 to 11:00 WIB. There are four stages that researchers carry out in the first cycle, namely:

Planning

At the planning stage, researchers prepared to learn media through flashcards with animal images.

Acting

1. Preparing learning media in the form of flashcards.
2. The researcher invited the children to sit in a circle and guess flashcards of animal images, mentioning English and explaining the material in depth.
3. Furthermore, the researchers asked the children to sing songs to guess with animal themes conducted with the researchers. The researchers also conducted ice-breaking to foster students' enthusiasm for learning.
4. Then, the researcher concluded the learning on that day and asked how the students felt during the learning process.

Observing

In the results of cycle two observations, researchers pay attention to reflections on cycle one and implement learning more optimally. The following are the results of comments during the “Word Guess” game, flashcard performance, and a little bit of guessing with singing.

1. Implementing the “Word Guess” game and using flashcard guesses with songs was done well. In this second cycle, the children looked excited and enthusiastic about guessing the words in the picture.
2. In this second cycle, children can understand and answer well. Based on the researcher's explanation, students can also mention English vocabulary correctly.

Based on research, Class B of Kindergarten in Magelang Regency has increased the achievement standards in terms of results, namely that children can mention English vocabulary and guess images with English, reaching 80%. Researchers obtained these percentage results through a question-and-answer test on all class B students.

Reflecting

Indicators could have been implemented better in cycle one and can be implemented very well in cycle 2. The researchers know this from the percentage of students who reached 80% in mastering animal vocabulary in English. The successful implementation of cycle 2 was that the researcher explained the material to be taught in a way that was easy for students to understand; the researcher also provided examples of the pronunciation of animals in English that students could follow. Apart from that, researchers taught students to sing together gradually and repeatedly using flashcard media to help stimulate students' brains so they can understand animal vocabulary well, keep it fun, and keep the class running conductively. Learning activities using flashcard media by introducing the "Word Guess" game can raise children's enthusiasm for learning and also make children focus on learning activities. So, it can improve students' English skills. At the end of the lesson, the researcher conducted a test on class B students to measure how much they understood. The test contains questions and answers and interviews conducted by the researcher regarding the vocabulary the researcher has explained. From the test results, researchers can conclude that 80% of students understand, based on question-and-answer tests, the animal vocabulary that researchers provide in English. From these results, students experienced increased understanding from pre-cycle to cycle one and ending in cycle 2.

The research results show that children's English vocabulary skills can be improved by introducing the flashcard media for the "Word Guess" game. In finding, it was explained that the students enthusiastically participated in English learning activities with animal flashcards and "Word Guess" games. Using image media during activities can attract children to be interested in asking further questions about the images shown by researchers, and children become more focused on activities to recognize language aspects (English) using image media. This is in line with the opinion of Kurniawan (2021), who states that image media has advantages that can be the main factor in achieving development indicators because images are vital to clarify understanding; through images, children can find out about things they have never seen.

Apart from that, children have the characteristic of being passionate about learning through singing; children can freely express all their expressions. So, children will be more enthusiastic and motivated to participate in English learning activities. Using flashcards can make exercises more concrete, make children interested when the action occurs, and create a pleasant atmosphere for children, which can be called joyful learning. This aligns with the understanding of Mulyasa (2006), who stated that positive learning can establish strong relationships between students and teachers without any pressure in learning.

The increased results are based on the pre-cycle, where previously, children's understanding of English vocabulary about animals was only 40%. Then, they continued in cycle 1 using the "Word Guess" game with flashcard media. Children's understanding increased to around 63.33% but needed to meet the students' comprehension target. It still needs to be considered for student learning motivation in cycle 1. Namely, there are still 30% who are not interested in participating in learning well. Next, to increase students' understanding and motivation to learn, the researchers implemented a guessing word game using flashcards and a few songs to encourage students to answer guessing words correctly. In Cycle 2, there was an increase in children's ability to answer questions correctly or master understanding by around 24 children, or 80%. The percentage of student learning motivation in cycle 2 was about 83.33%; this shows that the children felt enthusiastic and motivated. Therefore, word-guessing games using flashcard media improve students' understanding of English.

Furthermore, 80% of children who can respond and guess correctly, or about 24, can answer correctly. Children can speak English vocabulary precisely after cycle two is carried out. Students felt motivated by Experiencing an increase of only 60% in cycle 1. An increase of 80% achieves the target expected by the researcher. This research contributes to helping improve English vocabulary for kindergarten children through “Word Guess” games using flashcards. In this learning activity, students can learn new words in a fun, easy, and interactive way. In this game, children also engage in activities that strengthen their ability to listen, speak, and understand words in English. This game can also improve children's concentration because they must focus on what picture to see and try to guess by answering in English. In addition, mastery of English with “Word Guess” games can also train students' confidence to dare to speak and motivate children not to be shy in answering teacher questions. Apart from that, mastering English with the “Word Guess” game can also train students' self-confidence to dare to speak and motivate children not to be embarrassed when answering questions from the teacher. The presence of motivation, attention, and affection from teachers makes children not hesitate to do something (Purwanti & Suhaimi, 2020).

4. CONCLUSION

Teaching comprehension in English using the “Word Guess” game and flashcard media has many benefits for young children. Using “Word Guess” and flashcard games makes children interested in learning to understand English gradually, even if little by little. So, this research was conducted to understand English in young learners by approaching it through games. Implementing the “Word Guess” game using flashcard media can improve students' understanding of memorizing English vocabulary. So, using games makes it easier for students to understand English learning. The “Word Guess” game can also motivate students to participate in learning English by using a few songs to guess words in the “Word Guess” game. Students' understanding increased after implementing the “Word Guess” game by 40%; initially, in the pre-cycle, students' understanding of English vocabulary was 40%, but after-action research in cycles 1 to 2, students' understanding increased by 80%. Students' motivation to use the "Guess the Word" game with flashcard media increased by 83.33%. The research conducted by researchers is not perfect, so there is a need to improve the media used to ensure the effectiveness of word guessing games and flashcard media in increasing the vocabulary of young learners. For this reason, future researchers can use other learning media or improve learning media that can interest children in learning English.

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