

**MENINGKATKAN KOSAKATA SISWA KELAS VII B DI UPT SMPN 4
MANGARABOMBANG MELALUI KARTU FLASH**

***IMPROVING THE VOCABULARY OF CLASS VII B STUDENTS AT UPT SMPN 4
MANGARABOMBANG THROUGH FLASH CARDS***

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ABSTRACT

Vocabulary mastery is an essential component in learning English. However, preliminary observations in class VII B of UPT SMPN 4 Mangarabombang revealed that students experienced difficulties in understanding and memorizing English vocabulary. This study aimed to improve students' vocabulary mastery through the use of flash card media. The research employed Classroom Action Research (CAR) involving 21 seventh-grade students and was conducted in two cycles. Each cycle consisted of planning, action, observation, and reflection stages. The learning material focused on *Things in the Classroom*, and flash cards with colorful images were used as instructional media. Data were collected through vocabulary tests, classroom observations, and field notes. The results showed a significant improvement in students' vocabulary mastery, as indicated by the increase in mean scores from the pre-test to the post-test in each cycle. Furthermore, students demonstrated higher enthusiasm and more active participation during the learning process. These findings indicate that flash cards are effective media for enhancing students' vocabulary mastery and improving their engagement in English learning.

Keywords: *Vocabulary mastery; flash cards; classroom action research; junior high school.*

ABSTRAK

Penguasaan kosakata merupakan komponen penting dalam pembelajaran bahasa Inggris. Namun, berdasarkan observasi awal di kelas VII B UPT SMPN 4 Mangarabombang, ditemukan bahwa siswa mengalami kesulitan dalam memahami dan mengingat kosakata bahasa Inggris. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk meningkatkan penguasaan kosakata siswa melalui penggunaan media flash card. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode Penelitian Tindakan Kelas (PTK) yang melibatkan 21 siswa kelas VII dan dilaksanakan dalam dua siklus. Setiap siklus terdiri atas tahap perencanaan, pelaksanaan tindakan, observasi, dan refleksi. Materi pembelajaran difokuskan pada topik *Things in the Classroom* dengan memanfaatkan flash card bergambar sebagai media pembelajaran. Teknik pengumpulan data meliputi tes kosakata, observasi kelas, dan catatan lapangan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan adanya peningkatan yang signifikan pada penguasaan kosakata siswa, yang ditunjukkan oleh peningkatan nilai rata-rata dari pre-test ke post-test pada setiap siklus. Selain itu, siswa menunjukkan antusiasme dan partisipasi aktif yang lebih tinggi selama proses pembelajaran. Dengan demikian, penggunaan media flash card terbukti efektif dalam meningkatkan penguasaan kosakata siswa serta menciptakan suasana pembelajaran bahasa Inggris yang lebih menarik dan interaktif.

Kata Kunci: *Penguasaan kosakata; kartu flash; penelitian tindakan di kelas; sekolah menengah pertama.*

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BACKGROUND

Vocabulary mastery is a fundamental component of learning English as a foreign language (EFL), especially for junior high school students who are at an early stage of formal English instruction. Vocabulary plays a crucial role in supporting the development of the four language skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—because learners cannot understand or produce

language effectively without adequate vocabulary knowledge. According to Nation (2013), vocabulary is the core element of language proficiency, and insufficient vocabulary often becomes the main obstacle for EFL learners in achieving communicative competence. In the Indonesian EFL context, vocabulary mastery among junior high school students remains a major challenge. English is taught as a foreign language with limited exposure outside the classroom, which makes vocabulary acquisition more difficult for students. Many students rely heavily on memorization without meaningful context, resulting in low vocabulary retention and limited ability to use words in real communication. This condition often leads to low learning motivation and unsatisfactory learning outcomes in English subjects.

Based on preliminary observations conducted at UPT SMPN 4 Mangarabombang, it was found that seventh-grade students of class VII B experienced various difficulties related to vocabulary learning. Students had problems remembering new vocabulary, understanding word meanings, and using vocabulary appropriately in sentences. During the teaching and learning process, students tended to be passive and reluctant to participate in classroom activities. Vocabulary instruction was mainly teacher-centered and focused on drilling and memorization, which limited students' opportunities to actively engage with the learning materials. As a result, students' vocabulary mastery was relatively low, as reflected in their learning performance.

To overcome these problems, the use of appropriate instructional media is considered essential. Instructional media can help teachers present learning materials more effectively and create a more engaging learning atmosphere. Visual learning media, such as flash cards, are particularly suitable for vocabulary instruction because they present words together with visual representations. Flash cards help students associate vocabulary items with images, making abstract words more concrete and easier to remember. Harmer (2015) states that visual media can reduce students' cognitive load and support vocabulary retention, especially for beginner learners.

Several previous studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of flash card media in improving students' vocabulary mastery and learning motivation. Rahmawati (2020) found that flash cards significantly enhanced students' vocabulary achievement, while Sari and Pratiwi (2021) reported that the use of flash cards increased students' participation and enthusiasm in EFL classrooms. However, most of these studies were conducted in urban schools or experimental research settings. Research focusing on the implementation of flash cards through Classroom Action Research (CAR) in rural or semi-rural junior high school contexts remains limited.

Therefore, this study aims to improve the vocabulary mastery of seventh-grade students of class VII B at UPT SMPN 4 Mangarabombang through the use of flash card media. This study employs Classroom Action Research to improve both the teaching–learning process and students' vocabulary achievement through systematic planning, action, observation, and reflection. The findings of this study are expected to provide practical insights for English teachers in selecting effective instructional media and contribute to the improvement of vocabulary teaching practices at the junior high school level.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a Classroom Action Research (CAR) design with a quantitative orientation. Classroom Action Research was chosen because it enables teachers to improve instructional practices systematically through cyclical stages of planning, action, observation, and reflection (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2014).

The research was conducted at UPT SMPN 4 Mangarabombang during the 2025/2026 academic year. The participants of this study were 21 students of class VII B. The selection of the participants was based on preliminary observations indicating that students had low vocabulary mastery, particularly in recognizing and using basic English vocabulary. The research was implemented in two cycles, each consisting of four stages: planning, action, observation, and reflection. In the planning stage, the researcher prepared lesson plans, designed learning activities, developed flash card media with visual illustrations, and prepared research instruments such as vocabulary tests and observation sheets. The learning material focused on *Things in the Classroom*, which was suitable for the seventh-grade curriculum. During the action stage, flash cards were used as the main instructional media to teach vocabulary. Learning activities included introducing new vocabulary through flash cards, modeling correct pronunciation, choral and individual repetition, and identifying classroom objects related to the vocabulary items. These activities were intended to enhance students' engagement and vocabulary understanding.

The observation stage aimed to record students' learning behaviors during the implementation of flash card-based instruction. Observed aspects included students' attention, participation, and enthusiasm. The data were collected using observation checklists and field notes. The reflection stage was conducted at the end of each cycle to evaluate the effectiveness of the instructional process and students' learning outcomes. The results of reflection were used to improve the implementation of the next cycle. Data were collected through vocabulary tests, classroom observations, and documentation. Vocabulary tests were administered as a pre-test and post-test to measure students' vocabulary mastery. Quantitative data were analyzed by comparing students' mean scores, while qualitative data from observations were analyzed descriptively to describe changes in students' learning behavior.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This section presents a detailed discussion of the results of the study on the use of flash card media to improve students' vocabulary mastery. The discussion is based on quantitative data obtained from vocabulary tests and qualitative data collected through classroom observations conducted during the teaching and learning process. The quantitative results indicate a clear improvement in students' vocabulary mastery after the implementation of flash card media. The pre-test mean score was 5.82, which shows that students initially had a low level of vocabulary mastery, particularly in recognizing and recalling English vocabulary related to *Things in the Classroom*. Many students experienced difficulties in identifying word meanings and pronouncing the vocabulary correctly. This condition reflects the common challenges faced by beginner EFL learners who have limited exposure to English vocabulary.

After the implementation of flash card media, the post-test mean score increased significantly to 7.65. This improvement suggests that students were better able to recognize, understand, and use English vocabulary after the learning intervention. The increase in scores demonstrates that flash cards helped students associate words with visual representations, making vocabulary learning more concrete and meaningful. The detailed comparison of students' pre-test

and post-test scores is presented in Table 1, which shows that most students experienced improvement in their individual scores. The statistical analysis further supports these findings.

The result of the hypothesis testing showed a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores ($p < 0.05$). This indicates that the improvement in students' vocabulary mastery was not caused by chance but was significantly influenced by the use of flash card media. Therefore, it can be concluded that flash card media had a positive and significant effect on students' vocabulary mastery.

In addition to the quantitative data, the classroom observation results provide important qualitative evidence of students' learning progress. During the first cycle, some students were still passive and hesitant to participate in classroom activities. However, as the flash card media were used more intensively in the second cycle, students showed noticeable improvements in their learning behavior. They became more attentive, actively participated in vocabulary drills, and showed greater enthusiasm during the learning process. Students were also more confident in answering questions and responding to the teacher's instructions. The improvement in students' learning activeness is presented in Table 2. The improvement in students' vocabulary mastery can be attributed to the visual and interactive nature of flash card media. Visual representations play a crucial role in vocabulary learning, as they help students create mental connections between words and their meanings. This finding is consistent with Nation (2013), who states that vocabulary retention is enhanced when learners are exposed to visual support. Moreover, flash cards help reduce students' cognitive load by providing clear visual cues, which is particularly beneficial for beginner learners, as suggested by Harmer (2015).

Furthermore, the increased motivation and active participation observed in this study support previous research findings. Studies by Rahmawati (2020) and Sari and Pratiwi (2021) indicate that the use of interactive visual media can significantly enhance students' engagement and motivation in EFL classrooms. When students are motivated and actively involved in the learning process, they are more likely to retain new vocabulary and use it effectively.

Overall, the findings of this study indicate that flash card media are effective not only in improving students' vocabulary mastery but also in enhancing classroom engagement and learning motivation. These results also support the principles of reflective teaching practices in Classroom Action Research, as proposed by Kemmis and McTaggart (2014), where continuous reflection and improvement of teaching strategies lead to better learning outcomes.

Table 1. Students' Vocabulary Mastery Pre-test and Post-test Results

No	Type of Test	Number of Students	Minimum Score	Maximum Score	Mean Score
1	Pre-test	21	4.00	7.00	5.82
2	Post-test	21	6.00	9.00	7.65

Source: Research data (2025)

Table 2. Students' Learning Activeness Observation Results

No	Observation Indicators	Cycle I (%)	Cycle II (%)
1	Students' attention during the lesson	50%	75%
2	Students' participation in answering questions	50%	75%
3	Students' activeness in repeating vocabulary	50%	100%
4	Students' enthusiasm in learning activities	75%	100%
5	Students' confidence in using vocabulary	50%	75%
	Average	55%	85%

Source: Observation results (2025)

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

This study concludes that the use of flash card media effectively improves the vocabulary mastery of class VII B students at UPT SMPN 4 Mangarabombang. This conclusion answers the research question by showing that students' vocabulary achievement increased significantly after the implementation of flash card-based instruction. Flash cards helped students recognize, recall, and understand English vocabulary more easily through visual support, particularly for students with low initial vocabulary mastery.

In addition, the use of flash cards positively influenced students' learning behavior. Students became more attentive, enthusiastic, and actively involved in classroom activities. The classroom action research design also proved effective, as the reflective cycles of planning, action, observation, and reflection contributed to continuous improvement in the teaching-learning process.

Based on the findings, it is suggested that English teachers use flash card media as an alternative instructional tool to improve vocabulary learning, especially at the junior high school level. Future studies are recommended to involve larger samples, apply flash cards to different vocabulary topics, or examine their effectiveness in developing other language skills.

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