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Improve English Vocabulary Using Flashcards

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ABSTRAK

Kosakata memegang peranan yang sangat penting dalam penguasaan bahasa Inggris, namun pada kenyataannya banyak mahasiswa masih kesulitan menghafal dan menggunakan kata-kata baru karena media pembelajaran yang cenderung monoton. Penelitian ini dilakukan untuk mengeksplorasi bagaimana penggunaan media *Flashcards* melalui permainan *Flashcards Time Challenge* dapat meningkatkan kemampuan kosakata siswa. Dengan menggunakan metode kualitatif deskriptif, penelitian ini mengambil subjek mahasiswa dari Institut Prima Bangsa Cirebon. Data diperoleh langsung melalui teknik observasi dan wawancara. Temuan di lapangan menunjukkan bahwa pemanfaatan *Flashcards* terbukti efektif dalam memicu antusiasme, keaktifan, serta motivasi belajar mahasiswa. Kosakata dasar seperti kata benda (*noun*) menjadi jauh lebih mudah dipahami dan diingat karena adanya perpaduan antara visual yang menarik dengan aktivitas permainan yang seru. Kesimpulannya, metode *Flashcards Time Challenge* sangat layak dipertimbangkan sebagai strategi pembelajaran yang efektif sekaligus menyenangkan untuk memperkaya kosakata bahasa Inggris.

Kata Kunci: Kartu Flash, Kosa Kata, Pembelajaran Berbasis Permainan, Bahasa Inggris.

ABSTRACT
Vocabulary is a fundamental element in English language learning, yet students often struggle with retention and usage due to repetitive and dull teaching methods. This study aims to examine how Flashcards, specifically through the *Flashcards Time Challenge* game, can improve students' vocabulary skills. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, the research involved students at the Cirebon Prima Bangsa Institute as participants. Data were gathered through direct observation and interviews. The results show that using Flashcards significantly boosts students' enthusiasm, participation, and overall motivation. Basic words like nouns are more easily grasped and remembered because the visual media is paired with engaging game activities. Ultimately, the *Flashcards Time Challenge* proves to be a fun and effective strategy for teaching English vocabulary.
Keywords: Flashcards, Vocabulary, Game-Based Learning, English.

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INTRODUCTION

Language skills are very important, one of which is English. (Tosi et al., 2021) said that in today's era, language plays a very important role as the main key to opening the gates of science. English teaching is highly recommended to be given starting from elementary school students because it is very beneficial for future life (Hamidah et al., 2023). If a person is able to speak well, then it will be easy for us to communicate. This is in accordance with (Hamidah et al., 2023) that English language skills will make it easier for us to communicate and collaborate effectively in the world and be beneficial for various sectors of life. (Tosi et al., 2021) mentioned that if we want to master English well, we must apply English in our lives, for example in daily life. In learning English, vocabulary skills are one of the important aspects of learning English. Most lecturers at universities only teach English as a local content (Safitri et al., 2023). This causes students who graduate from college, especially from majors whose learning is not focused on learning English, most of their English skills are very low so that when they enter the world of work, especially in the international field, they are very minimal in English language skills (Safitri et al., 2023). A good and appropriate vocabulary mastery will make it easier for students to understand, express, and foster students' enthusiasm in learning English**.** Vocabulary also one of main components that can be seen how good a person is in language skills and provides an assessment of how good a person is in speaking, listening, reading, and writing (Dini et al., 2025). Therefore, the most important thing that lecturers must teach students who do not have English skills is vocabulary

(Safitri et al., 2023). However, many students still have difficulty in remembering and using new vocabulary because the learning method is still done by memorization and monotony, making it less interesting. There are some problems in English language proficiency and skills and they are based on external factors as well as internal factors. One of the problems is the error in the use of media used for learning English (Hamidah et al., 2023). Therefore, a more interesting and fun learning strategy is needed so that students are more enthusiastic for learning English.

One of media that can be used to improve students' vocabulary skills is Flashcards**.** Flashcards are picture cards or words written on them that are used as a tool to memorize and get to know new vocabulary. Flashcards are one of the learning media in the form of cards that contain pictures and words and are also very affordable in size (Hamidah et al., 2023). The picture on this card usually contains the image and its caption. Learning to use Flashcards media can improve vocabulary skills so that they can be used in oral contexts (Dewi & Hamsia, 2025). Therefore, it is hoped that the use of Flashcards in learning media can foster students desires and interests, foster learning motivation, and foster students enthusiasm in learning English. In addition, it can help lecturers in the learning process**.**

In English, there are generally types of vocabulary based on their functions. Good vocabulary mastery is needed in language mastery, without good vocabulary one cannot use any structure and function to communicate properly (Saddhonoa et al., 2023). According to (Nation, 2022), vocabulary does not stand alone but is combined with other aspects of language such as grammar and use in real contexts. Vocabulary is divided into several important dimensions that must be understood by someone who is learning language, including Form (word form), Meaning (meaning of words), and Use (use of words in context). A person who is learning a language must learn vocabulary gradually starting from the basics of high-frequency words that include many important nouns, to words that are lower in frequency. Nouns are included in Content Words, which are words that are used as the main meaning in communication. Content Words include verbs, adjectives, nouns, and adverbs. Noun is also a word that refers to a person, thing, place, or concept/idea. (Astika, 2024) stated that high mastery of nouns in a real context through exercises/games helps students to understand the vocabulary effectively so that they not only know their meanings but also understand how to use them appropriately in academic and professional situations. The most often explained in vocabulary include Content Words (meaning words) and Function Words. Content Words are words that contain main meanings such as verbs, adjectives, nouns, and adverbs. While Function is an important word in grammar but does not have a strong lexical word. In addition, there are also types of Vocabulary based on the topic/theme. Examples include Daily Activities, Food & Drinks, Family, Classroom Objects, Animals, Jobs, Colours/Numbers. In grammar, nouns are words that represent abstract things. A noun can serve as an object or subject in a sentence. In linguistics, nouns are a lexical category (word class) which is interpreted as belonging to a group of members of other lexical categories. The grammatical occurrence of nouns varies among other languages (*View of THE NOUN, GRAMMATICAL CATEGORIES OF NOUN (1)*, n.d.). In this study, the researcher focused on the discussion of Content Words and chose a type of Noun vocabulary (noun) which includes the names of fruits and animals such as cow, rabbit, cat, bird, and fish. The reason is because the vocabulary is easier to remember, understand, and effective to be taught through visual media in the form of Flashcards.

Flashcards are considered an effective tool to strengthen the mastery of the form, meaning, and use of data by easily understanding it, especially if done repeatedly so that the transfer in communicative activities is even better. Therefore, Flashcards help students to strengthen their memory (Nation, 2022). It is also mentioned in (Mutar, n.d.) that Flashcards are vocabulary learning strategies in various contexts of English Language Education. If using Flashcards media consistently in learning can improve vocabulary mastery, strengthen recognition and recall, it can also create a fun learning environment and help students respond to unfamiliar words faster because of their visual and easy to repeat. The use of flashcards as a learning media are considered very effective because they can increase students interest and enthusiasm in vocabulary learning activities (Akbar et al., 2025). Therefore, there are steps in using Flashcards to make learning more fun, one of which is the Time Challenge game. This game aims to increase students' motivation and enthusiasm for learning. Here are the steps for the Flashcards Time Challenge.

1. To prepare, the lecturer prepares the Flashcards and then prepares a timer, then divides the

students into several groups.
2. Explaining the Rules, Each group must answer as many Flashcards as possible in a certain time, the time is set for 1 minute and students must answer quickly and precisely.
3. Starting the Challenge, the lecturer shows the Flashcards one by one and the timer is immediately turned on.
4. Answering the Flashcards, students mentioned the meaning of the word that corresponds to the picture.
5. Replacing Flashcards, Flashcards are replaced if students can answer correctly, and then the lecturer moves on to the next question. If students cannot answer, then they can skip and proceed to the next card.
6. Stop time, If the time runs out the lecturer stops the game and the correct number of answers is calculated as a score.
7. Turning turns, other groups play the game at the same time.
8. Determining the winner, the group with the highest score will be the winner.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a descriptive qualitative method with data collection through interviews. The qualitative descriptive method is defined as a method of research with the aim of describing something that happens by paying attention to the relationship between activities carried out at IPB Cirebon (Hamidah et al., 2023). The qualitative research method is used to make it easier for the author to collect data, the author uses a qualitative method in the form of scientific research that aims to be able to understand a phenomenon scientifically by prioritizing the interaction process of students of Institut Prima Bangsa Cirebon (Darajatunnisaq et al., 2024). With this qualitative descriptive method, the researcher describes the existing phenomenon. This method can be in the forms of forms, activities and characteristic of change, cooperation, as well as similiarities and differences from one description to another. In essence this method describes something based on existing conditions or real time (Darajatunnisaq et al., 2024). This research was carried out at the Prima Bangsa Cirebon Institute on students as the subject. This research will be carried out in the first semester of 2025/2026.

The data collection methods used in this ongoing research are are question answer session and observations. The observation method is to observe something that aims to collect data that is carried out directly or indirectly (Nikmah, 2023). The purpose of this method is so that researchers can see and feel the atmosphere in the activity firsthand. What he observed was the application of Flashcards media in English learning media as an effort to improve students' abilities. The things he observed were in the form of:

This study uses structured interview techniques to collect data, where questions have been systematically arranged according to the desired information needs (2023, 2021). In line with the view of Belajar et al. (2022), an interview is understood as a meeting between two people to exchange information and ideas through questions and answers to conclude the meaning of a topic. The use of this technique gives the informant the advantage of giving an appropriate and in-depth response to the questions asked (INTERVIEW - Dr, n.d.). The main focus in this study includes five important aspects, namely: Student Activeness to measure the frequency with which students mention vocabulary when shown flashcards. Enthusiasm to observe students' interest during wording activities. The students needed in this study are 13 to 15 people. Vocabulary Development with a target of mastery of 8-10 words; and Interaction to see a discussion between students about the use of these words. Students will be asked to line up to come forward and guess what is on the flashcards. Finally, this study evaluates the use of Flashcards Media to ensure that the media is implemented properly and effectively in facilitating students' understanding during the learning process.

RESULTS

This study means to find out how students respond to use Flashcard media, especially in the Time Challenge game in improving English vocabulary mastery. The results of study show that the use of Flashcards media in learning English vocabulary is considered effective because it can show a positive impact. During the learning activities, students looked enthusiastic, active, and focused in participating in learning. Learning using visual and interactive media helps students to remember vocabulary faster. They mentioned that learning using Flashcards feels more interesting, fun, and less boring compared to the usual way of memorizing. Flashcards can also create a more lively classroom atmosphere because the learning is not monotonous.

Results of study also show that the use of Flashcards makes easier for students to understand and memorize English vocabulary. Students also mentioned that the Time Challenge game makes them feel happy, enthusiastic, and challenged during learning because of the time limit in this game. Most students agree that learning in the form of games is more interesting than ordinary memorization because it is considered more relaxed, not monotonous, so that students do not get bored quickly during learning. The results of the interview also mentioned that learning using Flashcards media can increase students' interest to be used continuously in the classroom.

DISCUSSION

The results of study show that learning English vocabulary using Flashcards media, especially in the Flashcards Time Challenge game, is proven to have a positive impact for learning process and outcomes of students. These findings show that learning using visual and interactive media is able to foster student involvement in the learning progres, its in line with theory of visual learning, namely (Rahman, A., & Hidayat, R., 2021) that pictorial media helps students to understand and remember vocabulary more effectively because of its fun way of learning. Flashcards media is also considered effective in helping students recognize and remember new vocabulary, especially nouns. Learning vocabulary is easier to learn if the learning is given in visual form because students can directly associate word forms with real objects, this opinion is corroborated by (setiawan, B., & Widodo, H.P., 2023) that the combination of text and images can make it easier for students to capture information in long-term memory.

In addition, the use of Flashcards media in the Flashcards Time Challenge game can motivated students to learn and active learning, this is in accordance with the opinion (Akbar et al., 2025) that the use of Flashcards media in learning is considered effective because students are more enthusiastic when learning is carried out. Game-based learning makes learning feel more relaxed so that students don't feel pressured, and this makes students more courageous to participate in answering questions. This finding shows that game-based learning is very helpful for students to learn according to the opinion (Simonnet, 2025) that the game method is not only for mastering vocabulary, but it can also cause social interaction between students which as a whole can have a positive impact on vocabulary understanding in depth. Activities of seeing, hearing, and pronouncing vocabulary simultaneously can strengthen students' memory so that it can help students remember the form of words and pronunciation of English vocabulary. However, some students feel nervous and panicked because of the limited time that is relatively short, thus affecting the ability to remember vocabulary optimally. This shows that although there is a time limit that can increase focus, it is necessary to have a balanced time management so that students do not feel excessive pressure.

Overall, vocabulary learning using Flashcards media can be combined with games because it is an effective strategy in learning English vocabulary. This media is not only used to help students' understanding and memory but also to increase students' motivation, confidence, and interest in learning in a sustainable manner. Therefore, flashcards can be effective learning medium in learning English vocabulary.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that the use of Flashcards media through the Flashcards Time Challenge game is able to have a good impact on learning English vocabulary in the classroom. Learning activities combined with game activities are able to increase students' enthusiasm, activeness, and motivation to learn in the learning process. With the direct relationship between pictures

and the meaning of words, it becomes easier for students to understand and remember vocabulary, especially basic vocabulary in the form of nouns. In addition, learning carried out by playing games can create a more fun and less monotonous classroom atmosphere so that students become more active and participate when mentioning vocabulary. However, the time limit in the Time Challenge game sometimes causes nervousness and panic in students. Therefore, it is necessary to arrange the time so that students do not feel pressured when learning is carried out.

Thus, learning English vocabulary using Flashcards media combined with games can be used as an effective learning strategy in improving English vocabulary mastery. The use of this media is recommended to be applied in a sustainable manner by adding variety in activities so that students' interest and motivation to learn are maintained.

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