

# IMPROVING THE EIGHTH GRADE STUDENTS' ACTIVE PARTICIPATION AND THEIR VOCABULARY ACHIEVEMENT BY FLASHCARDS AT SMPN 4 JEMBER

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## Abstract

*Nowadays, English as an international language becomes the second language in this country and is taught in every grade of school. However, most of the students still get difficulties in learning English, especially vocabulary which becomes the main problem for the student in learning English. Based on this problem, this research was intended to improve the students' active participation and vocabulary achievement by using flashcards at SMPN 4 Jember. The research was designed as Classroom Action Research (CAR) and the students of class VIII-B were as the subject. The data collection methods used were vocabulary test and observation which was analyzed quantitatively. As a result, there were 69.69% students who achieved the target score which was 75 in cycle 1 and it improved into 76.47% students in cycle 2. Besides, the result of the students' active participation was improved from 63.23% students in cycle 1 to 79.41% students in cycle 2. It means that the use of flashcards can improve the students' active participation and also their vocabulary achievement. Therefore, it can be suggested to the teachers to use flashcards as the media in teaching learning vocabulary.*

**Keywords:** *flashcards, students' active participation, vocabulary achievement.*

## INTRODUCTION

Language is very important for people's life. Without language, people cannot communicate with each other. English as an international language can be used to communicate with other people in the world and it becomes the first foreign language that the students have to learn in Indonesia. Nowadays, English is taught in every grade of schools. It is taught from kindergarten up to Senior High School. The Institutional Level Curriculum 2006 for SMP and MTS states that the main objective of teaching English is to develop the students' ability to communicate in the target language (English) in spoken and written forms.

In teaching English, there are language skills and language components that must be taught to the students. One of the most important language components is vocabulary which is needed to be mastered in learning English because without mastering vocabulary, it will be hard for the students to master English. Tarigan (1989:2) says that the quality of students' language skill depends on the quantity and the quality of their vocabulary. In addition, Wilkins (in Thornbury, 2002:13) says "Without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed". It becomes the reason why vocabulary is very important to be learned and to be mastered.

Yet, some students still think that mastering vocabulary is difficult, especially to know the meaning. The other problem that they face in learning vocabulary is the

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difficulty in memorizing the vocabulary. This problem can make the students not focused and not interested in learning English and in using English for their communication in English class.

Based on the interview which was conducted with the English teacher of SMPN 4 Jember on October 15<sup>th</sup> 2013, the English teacher said that the main problem is on students' vocabulary. The first students' problem is the difficulty in knowing the meaning of the words. The second problem is in memorizing the words, especially the unfamiliar words. Moreover, the English teacher usually uses the conventional technique, such as lecturing, that can make the students bored and becomes passive in vocabulary teaching learning process. 50% of the students in class VIII B (34 students) got under 65, while the passing grade for English subject is 75. Based on the problems above, it is important to select the appropriate media and technique to teach vocabulary to the students and flashcards are selected as the appropriate media to teach vocabulary.

The problems of the research in this study were: 1) "Can the use of flashcards improve the eighth grade students' active participation in the teaching learning vocabulary process at SMPN 4 Jember?", 2) "Can the use of flashcards improve the eighth grade students' vocabulary achievement at SMPN 4 Jember?". The main objective of this research were: 1) "To improve the eighth grade students' active participation in teaching learning vocabulary process by using flashcards at SMPN 4 Jember", 2) "To improve the eighth grade students' vocabulary achievement by using flashcards at SMPN 4 Jember".

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The design of this research is Classroom Action Research (CAR). According to Elliot (1991:4), an action research is the study of a social situation that is suitable in the educational field with a view to improve the quality of the action. This classroom action research was intended to improve the eighth grade students' vocabulary achievement at SMPN 4 Jember.

This classroom action research was conducted at SMPN 4 Jember and implemented in 2 cycles. Each cycle covered the activities of planning, implementation, observation, and reflection (Elliot, 1991:70).

The area of this research was determined by using purposive method. According to Fraenkel and Wallen (2006:100), a purposive method is a method in choosing a research area based on a certain purpose or reason. The subjects of this research were the students of class VIII-B in SMPN 4 Jember in the 2013/2014 academic year. The methods used in collecting the data were vocabulary test and observation.

In this research, achievement test was used to know the success of the students in achieving the goal of the vocabulary teaching learning process by using flashcards. Hughes (2003:13) states that achievement test is

conducted to measure how successful the individual students have achieved the goal of teaching and learning process. According to Harmer (2007:381), there are two characteristics of a good test. They are validity and reliability. Hughes (2003:34) states that if a test is not reliable, it cannot be valid. The test in this research applied content validity because the material of this test was constructed based on the indicators to be measured in the school curriculum. Further, Hughes (2003:26) states that a test is said to have content validity if its content constitutes a representative sample of the language skills, structures, etc. with which it is meant to be concerned. In this research, the test items were constructed based on the indicators to be measured, namely nouns, verbs, adverbs, and adjectives and were in the form of objective test. More specifically, multiple choices with four options and completing sentences. The number of multiple choice test items is 20 items which covers noun (5 items), verbs (5 items), adjectives (5 items), and adverbs (5 items) while completing sentence consisted of test is 8 numbers which covers noun (2 items), verbs (2 items), adjectives (2 items), and adverbs (2 items). Dealing with the scoring of this test, each correct answer in part 1 was scored 3 points, while the wrong answer was scored zero. Thus, the total score of this test was 60 points. In part 2, each correct answer was scored 5 points, while the wrong answer was scored zero. The total score of this part is 40 points. Then, the total score of those parts was summed, so that the total score of the test is 100. The time allocation is 70 minutes for 28 items. In this research, observation checklist was also used to know the students' active or passive participation in the teaching and learning process of vocabulary by using flashcards. Checklist which was used as the instrument contained some indicators of students' active participation namely: 1) The students pay attention to flashcards shown by the teacher. 2) The students answer the meaning of the word flashcards shown by the teacher. 3) The students classify the vocabularies into their part of speech. 4) The students do the teacher's instructions. 5) The students do the vocabulary exercises individually.

### RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This research had two findings. First, the result showed that the use of crossword puzzles could improve class VIII-B students' active participation in the teaching learning process of vocabulary at SMPN 4 Jember in the 2013/2014 academic year. Second, the result showed that the use of flashcards could improve class VIII-B students' vocabulary achievement at SMPN 4 Jember in the 2013/2014 academic year.

In this research, the actions were considered successful if 75% of the students achieved the standard score that was 75, and 75% of the students actively participated in the vocabulary teaching learning process by flashcards.

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In the first cycle, the result of the observation showed that there were 58.82 % students out of 34 students were active in the class. It means that there were 20 students actively participated in the first meeting. In the second meeting, the percentage of the students who actively participated improved to 67.64% out of 34 students in the class. It means that there were 23 students who actively participated in the second meeting. In average, there were 63.23% of the students who participated actively. The result of the product evaluation showed that there were 69.69% students who had achieved the target score in this cycle which means that there were 23 students out of 33 students (1 student were not present) who achieved the target score that was 75. The results of the observation and product evaluation showed that the target of the research was not achieved yet. Therefore, the researcher continued to the second cycle.

There are some aspects that influenced the results of the first cycle. The aspects are: 1) The researcher only flashed once for each card in five seconds. 2) In the test, the researcher only flashed three times for each cards. Then, the researcher revised these aspects in order to make the results of the research achieved the target. So, the researcher improved the frequency in flashing the cards into five times and improved the time for each card into seven seconds. In the test, the frequency in flashing the card improved into five times.

The result of the observation in the first meeting of the second cycle showed that there were 76.47% students (26 students) in the class who participated actively. In the second meeting, the result of the observation improved into 82.35% students out of 34 students in the class who actively participated. It means that there were 28 students who were active in the teaching learning process. Furthermore, the result of the product evaluation in this cycle also improved into 76.47% which means 26 students who achieved the target score. It can be concluded that the use of flashcards can improve the VIII-B students' active participation and their vocabulary achievement. Thus, the action of the research was stopped.

By considering the results of the observations of the students' active participation and their vocabulary achievement test in two cycles, it could be said that flashcards could improve the eighth grade students' active participation in the teaching learning process of vocabulary at SMPN 4 Jember in the 2013/2014 academic year, and flashcards could improve the eighth grade students' vocabulary achievement at SMPN 4 Jember in the 2013/2014 academic year.

#### CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on the results of data analysis, it could be concluded that the use of flashcards could improve class VIII-B students' active participation in the teaching learning process of vocabulary in the class at SMPN 4 Jember in the 2013/2014 academic year. In addition, the use of flashcards could improve the students' vocabulary

achievement of class VIII-B students of SMPN 4 Jember in the 2013/2014 academic year. Flashcards can be considered as a media to improve the teaching learning process of vocabulary. Therefore, some suggestions are proposed to the following people.

Based on the problems stated in the background and the result of data analysis, it is suggested to use the media to teach vocabulary to the students. One of the media that can be applied is flashcards which can motivate the students in learning vocabulary and make the class more alive so that the students will not get bored in learning English, especially vocabulary.

It is suggested to the English teacher of SMPN 4 Jember to also use flashcards in teaching vocabulary because flashcards are economical and can be downloaded free in the internet especially from <http://cresstock.com> or <http://123rf.com>. Therefore, it can help the students to learn new vocabularies and memorize the vocabulary easier. As a result, it can help the students improve their vocabulary achievement.

It is also suggested to the students of SMPN 4 Jember to use flashcards in order to make them easier in understanding and remembering the meaning of the words that they have learnt. Flashcards also can enrich their vocabulary so that it will not be difficult for them in learning English.

Moreover, it is suggested to the future researchers who have the same problems in teaching vocabulary to use flashcards, because based on the research result of this research, it can make the students' score in vocabulary achievement improve because they can remember the new vocabularies better and can understand the meaning well.

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