

## The Effectiveness of Guessing Games Using Flashcards in Improving Vocabulary Mastery of Elementary School Students

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### Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menguji efektivitas penggunaan permainan tebak-tebakan dengan kartu *flash* dalam meningkatkan penguasaan kosakata siswa sekolah dasar. Kosakata merupakan komponen penting dalam pembelajaran bahasa Inggris; namun, banyak siswa masih mengalami kesulitan karena motivasi yang rendah dan metode pengajaran yang monoton. Oleh karena itu, media pembelajaran interaktif seperti permainan dan alat bantu visual diperlukan untuk meningkatkan keterlibatan siswa dan hasil belajar. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif dengan desain kuasi-eksperimental. Partisipan adalah siswa kelas lima sekolah dasar negeri di Surabaya, Jawa Timur, yang dibagi menjadi kelas eksperimen dan kelas kontrol. Kelas eksperimen diajarkan menggunakan permainan tebak-tebakan yang dikombinasikan dengan kartu flash buatan guru, sedangkan kelas kontrol diajarkan menggunakan *PowerPoint* sebagai media pembelajaran. Jumlah sample dalam penelitian ini menggunakan 50 siswa yang terbagi menjadi 2 kelas. Data dikumpulkan melalui *pre-test* dan *post-test* dan dianalisis menggunakan uji normalitas, uji t sampel berpasangan, dan uji t sampel independen dengan SPSS 26. Hasil dari perhitungan dari perlakuan yang diberikan menunjukkan peningkatan yang signifikan dalam penguasaan kosakata di kelas eksperimen dan perbedaan yang signifikan antara skor *post-test* kelas eksperimen dan kelas kontrol. Kesimpulannya, permainan tebak-tebakan menggunakan *flashcard* efektif dalam meningkatkan penguasaan kosakata bagi anak-anak usia dini.

**Kata Kunci:** permainan tebak-tebakan, kartu *flash*, penguasaan kosakata, sekolah dasar, pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris

### Abstract

This study aims to test the effectiveness of using guessing games with flashcards in improving vocabulary mastery of elementary school students. Vocabulary is an important component in learning English; however, many students still experience difficulties due to low motivation and monotonous teaching methods. Therefore, interactive learning media such as games and visual aids are needed to improve student engagement and learning outcomes. This study used a quantitative approach with a quasi-experimental design. Participants were fifth-grade students of a public elementary school in Surabaya, East Java, who were divided into an experimental class and a control class. The experimental class was taught using guessing games combined with teacher-made flashcards, while the control class was taught using *PowerPoint* as a learning medium. The sample size in this study was 50 students divided into two classes. Data were collected through a pre-test and post-test and analyzed using a normality test, paired sample t-test, and independent sample t-test with SPSS 26. The results of the calculations from the treatments given showed a significant increase in vocabulary mastery in the experimental class and a significant difference between the post-test scores of the experimental and control classes. In conclusion, guessing games using flashcards are effective in improving vocabulary mastery for early childhood children.

**Keywords:** Guessing games, flashcards, vocabulary mastery, elementary school, English learning

### INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary is a key component in language learning. Vocabulary is a key factor in language learning, especially in English (Alshumrani, 2024). The importance of vocabulary is emphasized in second language (L2) learning, suggesting that vocabulary is the foundation of learning. Vocabulary is the most essential thing for

students learning a language, especially English (Rashid et al., 2022). Furthermore, the role of vocabulary in English language learning is something that matters. The role of vocabulary in learning English is very significant and closely related (Karakoç & Köse, 2017). The relationship between vocabulary and English proficiency is a relationship that cannot be separated. On the other hand, students have difficulty learning English vocabulary.

According to Ryan et al. (2024), a lack of vocabulary is one of the reasons why students find it difficult to understand English.

In fact, learning English vocabulary presents several challenges. Students often experience frustration with the patterns of the English language. Many students feel frustrated because learning English is complex. They often have difficulty understanding English vocabulary because many words have multiple meanings, which can leave them confused when translating and using the vocabulary (Ryan et al., 2024). Lack of motivation and use of conventional methods can reduce students' interest in learning English. The use of conventional approaches in teaching can have a negative impact on students' understanding, making it difficult for students to understand the vocabulary being studied (As & Raya, 2024). Therefore, students need more interactive learning media and strategies to attract student engagement.

The use of learning media is important to solve some of the challenges in learning. Learning media can be a way for students to understand the material, especially if they can be adjusted to the ongoing material and the characteristics of students' learning. As time goes by, learning media need interesting development and innovation, such as being more interactive, visual, and simpler, so that students can quickly understand the material being studied. Learning will be more meaningful and interesting if the teacher uses innovative learning media that are relevant to students' learning styles (Sintania, 2024).

As a result, the use of more developed and creative media can attract students' attention and can make students understand the material faster. The use of learning media can help students understand the material being studied (Andriani, 2022). Games are one of the media that can be used in learning. Games are activities that aim to entertain and attract students' attention in learning. Games are activities that aim to be enjoyable and involve teamwork to make students interested in learning (Mohanlal et al., 2019). Besides that, the implementation of games in learning gives some benefits. Games provide benefits in education, including developing students' creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills, as well as motivating them (Mee Mee et al., 2020).

In addition, games as learning media can create a more enjoyable learning environment and can reduce students' anxiety and fear in learning. This method is very suitable for young learners because it provides an interactive and fun learning experience. Furthermore, games can be combined with flashcards to optimize fun learning. Flashcards are cards that contain related material being studied. Research explains this concept further. Flashcards contain images, which are usually simple, and words or

sentences whose letters must be a certain (Komachali & Khodareza, 2012). Flashcards in the form of visuals containing vocabulary along with pictures can help students remember vocabulary in English and facilitate their improvement easily. Flashcards, which are a visual medium of powerful communication symbols or images, can make it easier for students to learn the vocabulary in the material (Rahmi Dewi, 2017). This shows that using flashcards as a learning medium can improve students' abilities (Ramdhani, 2022). In addition, flashcards as a form of interactive learning media can improve vocabulary mastery. In other words, flashcards can stand alone as a learning medium or rather as a teaching tool in learning, but it would be better if they are used in collaboration with learning that uses guessing games. Using guessing games in English language learning is an approach that provides a sense of fun and comfort during learning. According to (Van Duc et al., 2024) the use of guessing games is a contemporary approach that benefits students, such as providing a sense of comfort and happiness. This is because learning based on guessing games is student-centered learning.

The use of guessing games with flashcards as a medium is a development that can attract students' interest in learning. This statement is supported by a researcher who said that using guessing games with flashcards can arouse students' curiosity, encouraging them to continue asking questions to the teacher (Putri et al., 2022). Furthermore, the use of guessing games with flashcards helps students to memorize the vocabulary easily. The implementation of flashcards combined with a guessing game is the most effective way to gain the students' interest in the learning activity. A researcher states that the use of flashcards with games can lead to improvement in students' learning activity (Matuate, 2022).

Many studies show the use of flashcards as a medium for learning English that focuses on several skills, Khan (2022); Kusumawardhani (2019); Made et al., (2022). According to research conducted by Khan (2022), Flashcards were used as a teaching medium in online meetings during the pandemic.

Based on research conducted by Kusumawardhani (2019), flashcards were determined to be one of the learning tools that can be used efficiently in the classroom to improve English writing skills among young students. The study particularly focused on improving students' story-writing skills through the use of flashcards. The results of the study showed that the use of flashcards significantly improved students' writing skills, particularly in writing stories. Based on these findings, this research used flashcards as a teaching tool to support language learning. The results of this study also showed a

significant improvement, proving the effectiveness of flashcards in improving students' learning outcomes. Based on research conducted by Made et al. (2022), the researchers found that flashcards are a learning medium for remembering vocabulary in English. In this study, it was stated that flashcard strategies were used to analyze students' memories. The data in this study were taken from children who were still in the playground. In the learning syllabus, it is stated that he interviews students with 20 questions, which are divided into several parts, namely questions related to limbs, questions related to work, and questions related to food.

Previous research has extensively examined the use of flashcards in education; however, these studies tend to emphasize their function as a static learning medium and often overlook their potential as part of a media tool to create more interactive and student-centered learning activities. Furthermore, there is a lack of research combining flashcards with game-based learning, particularly guessing games, to improve oral vocabulary mastery. This study aims to address this gap by developing a more engaging and interactive approach for students through the integration of flashcards and guessing games.

To investigate the effect of using teacher-made flashcard guessing games on students' vocabulary mastery, this study poses the research question: Does the implementation of these games significantly improve elementary school students' vocabulary mastery?

## **METHODS**

This present research was conducted using a quantitative research method. Quantitative methods are research methods that focus on measurable phenomena, characteristics, and behaviors. They are used to analyze research types that employ numerical forms. These methods are used to test hypotheses and make predictions about what happens. Quantitative methods are research methods that use data collection and analysis as tools to understand relationships and phenomena. Creswell emphasizes that quantitative research methods involve hypotheses that are tested using statistical data (Creswell & David Creswell, 2018).

This present research used a quasi-experimental research design to identify how significantly the use of flashcards combined with guessing games improves vocabulary mastery of elementary school students. A quasi-experimental research design explores structured cause-and-effect relationships using control groups and experiments (Creswell & David Creswell, 2018).

This present research was conducted at a state elementary school in Surabaya, East Java. The research was conducted at the school. This present research was conducted in the odd semester of 2025/2026. The research

subjects were two fifth-grade classes. The classes were selected based on the recommendation of the English teacher at the school, considering that the English proficiency levels of the two classes are similar or do not differ significantly from one another. The school has adequate facilities, including adequate classrooms and LCD projectors. These facilities support the implementation of this research to apply two methods, namely the use of guessing games with flashcards and the use of PowerPoint.

This study focused on the implementation of flashcards as a learning medium with guessing games to improve the vocabulary mastery of elementary school students. Therefore, the participants of this study were fifth-grade elementary school students and English teachers. The reason for choosing grade 5 at that school was that interactive learning had not yet been implemented. This research used two classes: one class was the control, and the other was the experimental class. The classes were decided based on the recommendations from English teachers. The English teacher maintained records about the students' abilities. Classes with similar English language abilities were used for this research sample.

This study was designed for elementary school students with a population of 2 classes, each class consisting of 25 children. The school was selected because the use of flashcards combined with guessing games had never been implemented before in English language learning. Therefore, this study was conducted to test the effectiveness of the proposed method in addressing the research problem.

In this research, the researcher used several instruments to collect data, namely: a pre-test and a post-test. The pre-test to determine students' initial proficiency in English. The pre-test in this study was used to measure vocabulary mastery orally. The pre-test was conducted to develop a treatment plan to be implemented to obtain appropriate data. The pre-test was also used to determine whether the experimental class or the control class was used. A post-test, which is a final test conducted after the treatment, is used to determine whether there has been a significant change as a result of the guessing game using flashcards treatment. The post-test is also one of the components used to identify the final results of the treatment.

A data collection technique is a method that shows how researchers collect data. A data collection technique is a systematic process for gathering information from various sources to answer research questions and evaluate results (Creswell & David Creswell, 2018). The steps in this research include classifying the control class and the experimental class based on the scores of the English teachers at the school. The researcher provides materials

and a pre-test to obtain the students' initial scores. Giving the treatment. Next, the researcher gives the experimental group treatment using flashcards as a learning medium, combined with guessing games, and gives the control group treatment using PowerPoint as a learning medium. Administering the Post-test. After all treatments have been administered, the researcher conducts a post-test to determine if there has been any improvement. The final step is evaluating the data to determine the extent of the improvement.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**Table 1**

*Paired Sample Test*

Name of Measurement Pair	Paired differences				t	d	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Dev	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
			Lower	Upper			
Pair 1 Vocabulary (Pre-treatment) - Vocabulary (Post-treatment)	-9.000	2.06155	-9.8507	-8.1493	-21.28	24	.000

First, the researcher used a paired sample t-test to analyze the changes that occurred between the pre-test and post-test in the experimental class. Based on the paired sample t-test table, the average in the table shows a figure of -9,000, which means that the score during the post-test was higher because it had an average difference of 9 points compared to the pre-test. The negative sign (-) in the table above means that students have a significant improvement after being given treatment. Students' abilities have increased up to 95%, as evidenced by the values that are in the range of -9.85 to -8.15. This states that the improvements that students have continued to increase consistently. The significance value is 0.000, which is less than 0.05, indicating that 0.05 is the level of significance. This indicates that the table above shows a very significant improvement in the statistical analysis between the scores before and after the treatment. The results prove that using guessing games with flashcards can significantly improve students' vocabulary mastery.

**Table 1**

*Normality Test*

		Unstandardized Residual
N		25
Normal parameters a,b	Mean	.0000000
	Std. Deviation	1.35597326

Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.110
	Positive	.110
	Negative	-.085
Test Statistic		.110
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.200 c,d

In the next step, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was conducted to test the normality of the unstandardized residuals. The data analyzed consisted of 25 data points, with a mean of 0.000 and a standard deviation of 1.356. The test results showed a KS statistic of 0.110 with an Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) value of 0.200. Since this significance value exceeds the 0.05 threshold, it can be concluded that the residual data are normally distributed. With the assumption of normality satisfied, the analysis proceeded to the next step, namely the independent t-test.

**Table 3**

*Group Statistic*

Class	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Score Posttest Controll	25	3.92	1.998	.400
Score Posttest Experiment	25	13.00	3.041	.608

Lastly, the researcher used an independent-samples test to analyze the significant improvement between the post-test of the control group and the post-test of the experiment group. According to the table, it can be seen that the experimental class's average score is 13.00 with a standard deviation of 3.041, which is higher than the control class's score of 3.92 with a standard deviation of 1.998.

**Table 4**

*Independent Sample Test*

Score	Sig.	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
				Lower	Upper
				Equal variances assumed	.049
Equal variances not assumed		.000	-9.080	-10.549	-7.611

After conducting an independent samples t-test, Levene's test was used to assess the homogeneity of variances between the two groups. The test yielded a p-value of 0.049, which is below the 0.05 significance level, indicating that the variances of the two groups are not homogeneous. Consequently, the results were interpreted based on the "Equal variances not assumed" row. The t-test yielded a p-value of < 0.001, confirming a statistically significant difference in post-test scores between the control group and the experimental group.

The results of this present study show that guessing games using flashcards are an effective activity that can be

applied in learning to improve students' vocabulary, especially elementary school students. This proves that the use of this activity can have a positive effect on improving student learning, especially in the area of vocabulary mastery.

Vocabulary mastery in this study was enhanced by a guessing game activity, which encouraged students to take an active role in the learning process. During the game, students viewed pictures on flashcards and described their characteristics using relevant vocabulary to help their classmates guess the correct answers. This interactive process not only increased student engagement but also strengthened their memories of the vocabulary they had learned. Furthermore, flashcards serve as an effective visual aid that supports students' comprehension of new words through images, which is particularly beneficial for young learners who highly depend on visual aids to acquire new knowledge. These findings align with those of (Oanh & Thanh Dung, 2022), who demonstrated that game-based learning activities, particularly those incorporating flashcards, result in significant improvements in students' vocabulary mastery and their ability to recall newly acquired information. This study further reinforces these findings, as evidenced by a statistically significant increase in post-test scores among students in the experimental group compared to those in the control group.

Furthermore, the improvement of students can be seen in their quick response to the material, spelling, and correct pronunciation. After implementing this guessing game using flashcards, students showed significant improvement, from understanding vocabulary through flashcards as a visual medium to quickly identifying the vocabulary contained therein. Furthermore, students were also able to strengthen their memorization of the vocabulary learned using the guessing game.

Through the guessing game activity, students were encouraged to recall and explain vocabulary words related to the pictures on the flashcards. This activity provided multiple benefits, including helping students understand the material in an engaging way while simultaneously reinforcing their vocabulary comprehension. Additionally, students showed increased confidence in pronouncing vocabulary correctly, demonstrating that the game reduced anxiety and fostered a more supportive learning environment. These combined benefits underscore the consistent positive impact of guessing games on both vocabulary comprehension and practical language use.

Flashcards also performed a significant role in supporting vocabulary learning. Previous studies have shown that flashcards make learning more engaging and help students internalize word structures more effectively. As a visual learning tool, flashcards enabled students to

associate words with images, which facilitated better vocabulary retention. The present study supports these Findings, showing that the use of flashcards not only improved students' vocabulary mastery but also increased their motivation and interest in learning English. This aligns with Agung et al (2021), who found that flashcard-based activities effectively motivated students to engage with English vocabulary learning.

Furthermore, flashcards motivated students to remember vocabulary through visual association, thereby enhancing long-term memory retention. This is particularly relevant for elementary school students, who benefit significantly from visually-oriented learning materials that make otherwise abstract concepts more concrete and accessible. The findings of this study align with those of Firdausi (2024), who similarly observed that flashcard-based instruction improved students' comprehension and mastery of vocabulary.

In conclusion, the use of guessing games with flashcards proved to be an effective and engaging learning activity for improving students' vocabulary mastery. Beyond academic achievements, this game encouraged students to participate actively and interact with their friends, fostering a more dynamic and enjoyable classroom environment. These findings suggest that guessing games using flashcards can be considered a recommended strategy for English vocabulary instruction, particularly at the elementary school level.

## **CONCLUSION**

This present study was designed to determine the effectiveness of using guessing games with flashcards in significantly improving students' vocabulary mastery. The present study focused on measuring vocabulary achievement through pre-test and post-test scores, which were analyzed using statistical methods, including the Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test and the independent samples t-test.

Based on the results of the data analysis, the use of guessing games with flashcards significantly improved students' vocabulary mastery. This is supported by the fact that post-test scores were higher than pre-test scores, indicating that students were better able to identify and recall vocabulary from the flashcards after the treatment. This improvement was further confirmed by the statistical analysis, which indicated a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores ( $p < 0.05$ ).

Furthermore, the use of guessing games with flashcards enhanced the learning process, encouraged students to participate more actively in class, and made the experience more engaging and enjoyable. Flashcards provided visual representations of words, which helped students more easily retain and recall the vocabulary they

had learned. These benefits are particularly beneficial for elementary school students, who respond positively to interactive and visually supported learning activities.

In conclusion, the use of guessing games with flashcards proved effective in improving elementary school students' vocabulary mastery. Beyond academic achievement, this activity promoted student enthusiasm and active participation in the learning process. Therefore, guessing games using flashcards are recommended as an alternative instructional strategy for English vocabulary learning, particularly for educators seeking more interactive and student-centered approaches.

Nevertheless, this study has several limitations that should be recognized. First, the study was conducted in only one elementary school, which limits the generalized applicability of the findings to other educational settings. Second, the study focused specifically on vocabulary mastery and did not evaluate other English language skills. Third, the implementation of the guessing game activity was constrained by limited instructional time. Therefore, the findings of this study should be interpreted with caution and cannot be generalized to a more extensive population without further research.

Future researchers are expected to conduct more studies on this research by varying several factors, such as a larger number of students, a longer timeframe, and different research methods. Future researchers can also explore information related to this research on other skills, such as writing, speaking, reading, and listening. These developments will help this research contribute to research in the field of English, especially in learning English.

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