

The Effectiveness of Flashcard Media in Improving Javanese Vocabulary Among Kindergarten A Students

Dwi Bakti Indri*¹, Ajeng Vika Faradina*², and Hany Aulia*³

¹²³*Universitas KH Abdul Chalim, Indonesia*

e-mail Correspondence: dwi.bakti@uac.ac.id

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ABSTRACT. This study is motivated by the low level of students' ability to recognize Javanese vocabulary, mainly due to the lack of appropriate learning materials. To address this issue, flashcards were used to stimulate students' interest and improve their recognition of Javanese vocabulary. This research employed a Classroom Action Research (CAR) design to improve Javanese vocabulary mastery among Kindergarten-A students through the use of flashcards. The problem arose from monotonous, less varied learning conditions that were still dominated by lecture methods and unengaging instructional media. The study focused on two variables: Javanese vocabulary mastery as the dependent variable and the use of flashcards as the independent variable. The population comprised all 15 Kindergarten-A students at TK Nuruddinul Islam, selected through purposive sampling. The findings indicate an improvement in students' vocabulary skills following the implementation of flashcards. In the pre-cycle stage, most students (60%) were classified as Fair, whereas the remainder were classified as Poor or Very Poor. In Cycle I, all students showed progress and reached the Fair category, with no students remaining in the lower categories. More significant progress was observed in Cycle II, in which six students (40%) achieved the Good category, and only one student continued to demonstrate limited ability. These results demonstrate that flashcards are effective learning aids for enhancing Javanese vocabulary mastery among Kindergarten-A students.

Keywords: Flashcard media, Javanese vocabulary, Early childhood education, Kindergarten students

INTRODUCTION

Education is a process designed to equip children to adapt to their environment. Through education, children experience changes that encourage them to take an active role in society. The policy set out in Permendikbud (Minister of Education and Culture Regulation) No. 18 of 2018 on Early Childhood Education (PAUD) services was formulated to support children's development from birth to age 6. This program focuses on providing educational stimulation to optimize children's physical and mental development, thereby preparing them to advance to the next level of education (LINA ENY YULIATI 18156151, t.t.). Language plays a vital role as a medium of communication in human life. In addition to serving as a tool for expressing ideas and emotions, language enables individuals to understand others' thoughts and feelings. The Javanese language,

as a means of communication among Javanese people, is used in various daily interactions, both oral and written. Like other languages, Javanese functions as a medium for conveying ideas.

Early Childhood Education (PAUD) represents the initial stage of the educational system, occurring before children enter formal primary education. This program is designed to optimize children's cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development from birth through age 6, ensuring they are prepared for the following stage of education. At this phase, stimulation is highly effective, particularly during the golden age, a period when children have an exceptional capacity to absorb information from their environment. During this period, mastery of the Indonesian language vocabulary is a crucial aspect of early childhood development. However, alongside the national language, regional languages—such as Javanese—also require attention and systematic development. Mastering the Javanese language at an early age is essential, given that it is the second official language after Indonesian and serves as a supporting language of the national language. Javanese continues to be preserved as a mother tongue and is still used as a language of instruction in lower primary grades. Nevertheless, attention to Javanese instruction at the kindergarten level remains limited. The teaching of Javanese to young children has not yet been optimized, as evidenced by the limited variety of instructional media, which may influence the development of children's language skills. In addition, teachers' limited awareness of the importance of regional languages poses an additional challenge to efforts to sustain the use of Javanese from an early age.

Language development plays a significant role in early childhood education, particularly at the kindergarten level. According to the Ministry of Education and Culture, language competence in kindergarten aims to help children communicate verbally with those around them—including peers, playmates, and adults at home and at school. Instructional media create more concrete learning experiences, enabling children to understand the material more effectively. Such media encompass various tools and resources that assist teachers in conveying learning content. One example is the flashcard, a visual aid used in both small- and large-classroom settings, as well as in individual instruction. Flashcards are designed to elicit student responses and facilitate recall of information associated with the images or words presented. Research by language experts has shown that Javanese, in addition to being recognized as Indonesia's second official language, also functions as a support for the national language. Until today, Javanese remains the mother tongue and is taught in lower-level primary schools. However, at the kindergarten level, attention to its use remains minimal, resulting in suboptimal instruction. The limited variety of media used in teaching can hinder the development of children's Javanese language skills. Furthermore, teachers' lack of awareness regarding the importance of local languages poses an additional challenge in maintaining the existence of Javanese from early childhood. One potential method to address this issue is the use of role-playing activities, which allow children to interact with their peers. This approach enables children to use language actively in communication and to exchange ideas.

Currently, the Merdeka Curriculum is in use, and it excludes several subjects, including Javanese at certain educational levels. However, the forthcoming curriculum will prioritize programs that develop language and literature. Based on preliminary observations conducted in Kindergarten-A at TK Nuruddinul Islam Leminggir, Mojosari, children's language development has not yet reached the desired level. The daily lesson plans remain in an early developmental phase, and the children have not yet demonstrated the ability to distinguish between letters or combine them into meaningful words. Information gathered from Kindergarten-A at TK Nuruddinul Islam Leminggir, Mojosari, indicates that flashcard media have already been used in instruction; however, their implementation has not been optimal. The methods employed are often monotonous, leading children to lose interest during learning activities. When asked to identify letters of the alphabet, form words, or recognize colors displayed on flashcards, many children still have difficulty with these tasks. This challenge arises because the instructional media currently used have not yet fully captured children's attention or motivated them to learn.

To enhance the effectiveness of flashcard use, design variations and more interactive learning approaches should be implemented, for example, by using contrasting colors, more engaging images, and integrating play-based methods into instruction. The purpose of this study is to introduce the Javanese language to young learners, given that many children today primarily use Indonesian in their daily interactions. Moreover, modern parents also tend to communicate with their children in Indonesian. Instilling Javanese language skills from an early age is therefore an essential step in preserving regional languages while improving children's communication abilities. Although some elementary and Islamic schools (SD/MI) have implemented bilingual programs, Javanese remains part of the curriculum. Teaching Javanese from an early age helps children not only understand vocabulary and linguistic structure but also appreciate the cultural values embedded within the language. Through engaging and interactive methods—such as games, folklore, or visual media like flashcards children can more easily absorb and use the language in everyday life. Such efforts contribute to the development of a linguistically competent generation capable of maintaining cultural identity while navigating the challenges of communication in a globalized era. Accordingly, this study was conducted in Kindergarten-A at TK Nuruddinul Islam Leminggir, Mojosari, under the title “The Effectiveness of Flashcard Media in Improving Javanese Vocabulary Among Kindergarten-A Students at TK Nuruddinul Islam Leminggir, Mojosari.”

METHOD

In accordance with the objectives of this study, namely, (1) to identify the Javanese vocabulary of Kindergarten-A students at TK Nuruddinul Islam Leminggir, Mojosari; (2) to examine the instructional methods used in teaching Javanese vocabulary through flashcard media among these students; and (3) to determine the effectiveness of flashcard media in improving Javanese vocabulary mastery among Kindergarten-A students at TK Nuruddinul Islam Leminggir, Mojosari, the research employed a Classroom Action Research (CAR) design. This type of research originates from problems encountered in the field, which are then analyzed reflectively and addressed through the implementation of corrective actions within the learning context. The Classroom Action Research plan in this study was carried out through several action cycles. Each cycle was designed to follow the four main stages adapted from the Kemmis and McTaggart model: Planning, Acting, Observing, and Reflecting. The data obtained from observations were analyzed to evaluate the success of each intervention, thereby informing planning for subsequent cycles. The data collection method in this study employed a field research approach, drawing on both primary and secondary data sources. The main objective of this method was to obtain accurate and relevant information on the effectiveness of flashcards in enhancing Javanese vocabulary mastery among Kindergarten-A students at TK Nuruddinul Islam in Leminggir Village, Mojosari District.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

Based on research conducted with fifteen Kindergarten-A students at TK Nuruddinul Islam, data were collected regarding their mastery of Javanese vocabulary. The findings revealed that most students possessed a *fair* level of ability in Javanese vocabulary. A total of nine students (60%) obtained a score of 2, indicating that they recognized *Ngoko Lugu* and *Ngoko Alus* vocabulary forms at a satisfactory level. Meanwhile, two students (13.3 percent) were categorized as *poor* with a score of 1, and three students (20 %) were classified as *very poor* with a score of 0, meaning they were not yet able to recognize either vocabulary form. The data show that 66.67% of the total fifteen students demonstrated a *fair* level of proficiency, suggesting that two-thirds of the students had

developed an adequate understanding of Javanese vocabulary. However, 13.33% of students remained in the *poor* category, and 20% in the *inferior* category.

These findings indicate that although the majority of students had achieved a basic understanding of Javanese vocabulary, a number still required additional attention to enhance their proficiency. Vocabulary mastery is an essential component of early childhood language development. A sufficient vocabulary supports children's ability to communicate, express their thoughts, and understand the social and cultural environment around them—including local cultures such as Javanese (Lestari dkk., t.t.). According to John W. Santrock, language development in preschool children is strongly influenced by social interaction and environmental stimulation, particularly from teachers and parents (Arifani dkk., 2020). In this context, when children are frequently exposed to their mother tongue or local language, such as Javanese, in daily conversation, their vocabulary acquisition becomes faster and more diverse. However, one of the current challenges is the dominance of Indonesian and foreign languages in media and education, which indirectly displaces the use of regional languages in children's daily environments. The results of this study are consistent with Wijayanto's view that children's success in mastering regional languages depends on the extent to which those languages are used at home and in school. One major contributing factor is the shift in family and community communication patterns, in which Indonesian or hybrid forms incorporating foreign languages are increasingly used in daily interactions. Rahmawati and Yuliaty further emphasize that early childhood language development is primarily influenced by the frequency of language exposure, the social environment, and the instructional methods applied. When children are not accustomed to hearing or using local languages, such as Javanese, in daily contexts, they are likely to encounter barriers to mastering vocabulary and proper speech structures. One strategy recommended for regional language instruction is the use of visual media, such as flashcards. This medium is considered adequate because it captures children's attention, provides both visual and verbal stimuli, and facilitates vocabulary repetition (Sulasih dkk., 2024). Although the use of flashcards in this study did not yet yield a high level of proficiency, it demonstrated that most students attained a *fair* level of understanding. This suggests a strong potential for improvement if the medium is used consistently and interactively.

In the case of Kindergarten-A at TK Nuruddinul Islam, the role of educators and the inclusion of Javanese language in the curriculum likely contributed to the predominance of the *fair* category. The researcher emphasizes that preserving the Javanese language from an early age is vital to the transmission of cultural heritage. Schools should strengthen the integration of Javanese into thematic learning activities through creative and enjoyable approaches, so that students become more familiar and enthusiastic about using their regional language. Furthermore, parental involvement in encouraging the use of Javanese at home is crucial for improving children's vocabulary mastery. In this regard, Javanese language instruction not only serves a linguistic purpose but also plays an essential role in character education and cultural preservation. Therefore, collaboration among teachers, parents, and the school environment is necessary to provide comprehensive support that enables children to use their regional language actively.

The classroom action research (CAR) conducted in Cycle I employed flashcards as a learning medium to support Javanese vocabulary instruction in Kindergarten-A. The results were generally encouraging. It was found that the ability to recognize Javanese numerical vocabulary, particularly in Ngoko Lugu and Ngoko Alus forms, among most Kindergarten-A students at TK Nuruddinul Islam Leminggir, was classified as fair, and of the fifteen students observed, all (100%) obtained scores between 2 and 3, which collectively fell within the fair category. Thirteen students achieved a score of 2, indicating a grade of "C" in both aspects (Ngoko Lugu and Ngoko Alus). In comparison, two students, identified as ASQ and KD, received a score of 3, indicating a combination of grades "B" and "C" across different aspects. No students obtained high scores (e.g., 4) or were classified in the good category, nor were there any who fell into the poor category.

These results indicate that 66.67% of students were classified as fair, 13.33% as poor, and 20% as very poor. Instructional media serve as teaching aids to make learning materials easier for young children to understand. Flashcards, as a visual medium, consist of illustrated cards paired with words and are designed to introduce objects or vocabulary in a concrete and engaging way. According to Heinich et al., visual media such as flashcards are highly effective in enhancing attention, retention, and learning motivation, particularly among preschool children (Sulasih dkk, 2024). With their colorful, visually appealing imagery, flashcards stimulate children's cognitive processes and facilitate gradual recognition and understanding of vocabulary. Riyadi and Anggraini emphasize that flashcards accelerate the associative process between symbols (written words) and meanings (images or objects), a crucial aspect of second-language or regional-language learning. In Jean Piaget's theory of cognitive development, children aged four to six years are in the preoperational stage, where learning occurs through symbols and concrete representations. Flashcards, which display both images and words, are particularly suitable for this developmental phase, as they help children form symbolic connections between words and meanings through visualization (Arifani dkk, 2020). Research further suggests that language learning through visual media is most effective when supported by repetition and contextual association strategies, such as linking images to children's everyday experiences. Thus, the effectiveness of flashcards also depends on how teachers connect lesson content to students' real-life contexts.

Teaching the Javanese language involves not only linguistic development but also the internalization of local cultural values. Introducing regional languages at an early age is a vital step in shaping cultural identity and fostering multicultural awareness from childhood. Research shows that integrating creative approaches, such as songs, folklore, and flashcards, into Javanese language instruction can increase students' enthusiasm, engagement, and affection for their mother tongue. Effective early childhood education emphasizes not only content mastery but also interactive and enjoyable learning experiences. As Riyadi and Anggraini recommend, learning activities should incorporate play-based methods, such as word-guessing games or image-word matching using flashcards (As & Faisal). When used in playful, engaging settings, flashcards strengthen memory retention, make learning more meaningful, and encourage active participation by children. The researcher concludes that the use of flashcards in Cycle I had a positive effect on students' acquisition of Javanese vocabulary. The predominance of fair results indicates that flashcards successfully supported students in recognizing and understanding basic vocabulary. However, these results also highlight the need to enhance instruction through more varied and contextualized methods. It is recommended that future cycles integrate flashcards with complementary strategies, such as singing, role-playing, and storytelling, to enrich the contextual use of vocabulary. Such activities can help children not only recognize words but also apply them in meaningful situations. Moreover, parental involvement in reinforcing Javanese vocabulary practice at home will further strengthen learning outcomes achieved in school.

Discussion

Following improvements to the instructional approach during Cycle I, flashcard-based learning continued in Cycle II. Observations in this stage revealed a significant improvement in students' mastery of Javanese vocabulary. Six students (40%) achieved a score of 4, categorized as *Good*, meaning they could accurately recognize Javanese vocabulary in both *Ngoko Lugu* and *Ngoko Alus* forms (receiving a grade of "B" in both aspects). Eight students (53.3%) earned scores of 3 or 2, categorized as *Fair*, and only one student (6.7%) remained at a limited proficiency level with a score of 2. No students were classified as *Poor* or *Very Poor* in this cycle. These results demonstrate notable progress from Cycle I, suggesting that the refinements in teaching strategy had a positive impact on students' vocabulary acquisition. Language learning for early childhood requires engaging, interactive, and stimulating methods and media that address multiple dimensions of

development, particularly vocabulary acquisition. One of the most widely used and empirically supported tools for this purpose is the flashcard. Flashcards are instructional aids consisting of illustrated cards with corresponding words that act as visual stimuli to help children recognize and memorize new words more easily and enjoyably.

According to the principles of multimedia learning, combining text and images enhances comprehension and memory. Flashcards, as visual-verbal media, facilitate *dual coding*—the simultaneous processing of information through both visual and verbal channels—which, as Paivio (2014) posits, strengthens memory retention and conceptual understanding. Kindergarten-aged children, still within Piaget's preoperational developmental stage, particularly benefit from concrete and visual media such as flashcards, as they learn best through tangible representations they can see and touch. Furthermore, Shams and Seitz explain that multisensory learning, involving stimulation of multiple senses (e.g., sight and hearing), reinforces learning and enhances memory efficiency. Flashcards, when accompanied by teacher guidance through verbal pronunciation and interactive dialogue, enable children to receive information holistically. This integration makes the process of acquiring Javanese vocabulary both more effective and enjoyable. Teaching regional languages such as Javanese through flashcards also serves a cultural preservation function. Suryani emphasizes that the introduction of regional languages in early childhood education is essential for developing cultural identity and fostering multicultural awareness. Learning Javanese vocabulary through flashcards depicting culturally specific objects, activities, or symbols nurtures children's appreciation of their local language and culture. In addition, contextualized learning with flashcards can make vocabulary more meaningful and memorable.

Repetition plays a key role in vocabulary learning. As Slavin notes, structured and consistent repetition strengthens the connection between words and meanings, thereby facilitating the encoding of new vocabulary into long-term memory. This process also minimizes the forgetting curve, which is common among early learners. Regular use of flashcards, combined with playful activities such as guessing games or image–word matching, creates active learning experiences in which children are not passive recipients but active participants. In addition to cognitive development, flashcards also enhance children's motivation and emotional engagement. Hurlock (2019) emphasizes that enjoyable and stimulating learning experiences foster children's intrinsic motivation to continue learning (Elizabeth_Hurlock_Psikologi_Perkembangan, t.t.). Colorful, visually appealing flashcards attract children's attention and stimulate their curiosity about new vocabulary. This engagement builds self-confidence and contributes to overall language-learning success. In the context of TK Nuruddinul Islam Leminggir, Mojosari, the use of flashcards not only supported recognition of Javanese vocabulary but also encouraged social interaction among teachers and students, as well as among peers. Such interaction is crucial for the development of expressive and communicative language skills. Integrating flashcards with role-playing, storytelling, or singing activities further enhances cognitive and affective engagement in language learning. These approaches not only expand vocabulary mastery but also improve comprehension and the ability to use language in real-life situations.

Overall, existing literature and the present study confirm that flashcards are an effective and developmentally appropriate medium for improving regional language vocabulary among young learners, particularly in Javanese. They promote holistic development—cognitive, affective, and social—while simultaneously contributing to the preservation of local language and culture through enjoyable, contextual, and interactive learning experiences. The researcher concludes that flashcard media are effective in improving Javanese vocabulary mastery among Kindergarten-A students. The results of Cycle II demonstrate measurable learning gains, with most students reaching the *Good* category. This confirms that the revised instructional strategies—such as repetition, flashcard-based storytelling, and active student participation through games and quizzes—significantly improved learning outcomes. It is recommended that the use of flashcards be further developed by integrating elements of local culture, such as traditional Javanese objects, clothing, and activities.

Additionally, parental involvement in reinforcing vocabulary practice at home can strengthen learning outcomes achieved in school.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion summarizes the research results and addresses the problem formulation. Conclusions must be aligned with the problem formulation and research objectives. If the conclusion comprises more than one point, it should be presented as numbered paragraphs rather than bullet points, and the writer may also include the prospect of developing the research results or implications, as well as the prospects for further research. Based on the study's results and data analysis, it can be concluded that the use of flashcards effectively improved the Javanese vocabulary of Kindergarten-A students at TK Nuruddinul Islam Leminggir, Mojosari. Prior to the intervention, learning activities at TK Nuruddinul Islam were relatively monotonous, dominated by lecture-based instruction and less engaging media, which made learning less stimulating for students. Therefore, the researcher employed flashcards as an alternative medium to enhance students' mastery of Javanese vocabulary.

Observational data collected from the pre-cycle through Cycle II (Meeting 1) involving 15 students demonstrated a clear positive impact of flashcard use on vocabulary development, particularly in recognizing the *Ngoko Lugu* and *Ngoko Alus* forms of Javanese. During the pre-cycle phase, the majority of students (60%) were classified in the *Fair* category, while some remained in the *Poor* and *Very Poor* categories. In Cycle I, all students showed improvement, with every student reaching at least the *Fair* category, and none remaining in the lower categories. More significant progress was observed in Cycle II, where six students (40%) achieved the *Good* category, and only one student continued to exhibit limited proficiency. These findings indicate that flashcards are an effective pedagogical tool for enhancing early learners' recognition of Javanese vocabulary and numbers. It not only improved students' linguistic competence but also gradually reduced the proportion of students with low proficiency levels. This aligns with Vygotsky's theory of the Zone of Proximal Development, which emphasizes the importance of social interaction and scaffolding in promoting children's linguistic and cognitive development. Furthermore, consistent with Rahayu and Mustofa's findings, integrating culturally relevant media, such as flashcards based on local traditions, can enrich learning experiences and strengthen children's connection to their linguistic and cultural heritage. In conclusion, the use of flashcards proved to be a compelling, engaging, and culturally responsive method for developing Javanese vocabulary among early childhood learners. The approach is recommended for broader application in early education settings as part of efforts to preserve regional languages and promote culturally grounded literacy development.

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