



IMPROVING STUDENTS' LEARNING OUTCOMES ON ADJECTIVES USING PROBLEM-BASED LEARNING ASSISTED BY FLASHCARDS

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Abstract

This study aims to improve fifth-grade learning outcomes at SDN Sayangan, Surakarta, Indonesia, for the 2023/2024 academic year through problem-based learning with flashcards. This study was conducted as classroom action research over two cycles, involving planning, implementation, observation, reflection, and revision. The data collection process utilized observation and tests. Results indicated substantial improvement, with the class average rising from 60 in Cycle 1, where 61.90% achieved the Minimum Mastery Criterion, to 80 in Cycle 2, where 80.95% met the standard.

Keywords: Problem-Based Learning, Flashcards, Adjectives

INTRODUCTION

The study of the English language at the primary school level in Indonesia exhibits variability in its implementation, with certain institutions designating it as local content while others classify it as a compulsory topic. With the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, English has become a mandatory subject in primary schools, signifying a heightened need for English language proficiency at an early age. This method necessitates that schools enhance the quality of English instruction for primary students (Ma'rufa & Setiyawan, 2022). Santrock (2007), as cited in Shobikah (2018), asserts that children acquire languages more rapidly than adults. Childhood represents an optimal period for language acquisition.

Nevertheless, elementary schools frequently encounter a variety of challenges when it comes to teaching the English language, such as students' low motivation, low engagement, and their inability to effectively comprehend and apply terminology. These



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issues were evident in the learning outcomes of Grade V students, particularly in their command of adjectives, as evidenced by observations at SDN Sayangan. Students experience difficulty in utilizing appropriate adjectives to describe objects, people, and animals, which has a significant impact on their overall proficiency in English communication. This issue underscores the importance of innovative teaching methods that not only enhance students' comprehension but also enhance the interactive and pleasant nature of the learning experience.

An effective strategy for teaching adjectives entails the implementation of a more dynamic learning methodology, such as problem-based learning (PBL) (Berliani & Katemba, 2021). Furthermore, studies show that active involvement in the learning process tends to increase comprehension and prolong memory retention among students (Seknun et al., 2023). These solutions can be directly implemented in accordance with their individual requirements when employing the language (Hadi & Izzah, 2019). In addition, because it typically incorporates case studies or projects that are reflective of actual circumstances, problem-based learning makes it easier to grasp and use adjectives in realistic and relevant contexts (Kim & Kim, 2021). Therefore, the researcher intends to resolve the students' issue by implementing the problem-based learning (PBL) model.

The necessity of incorporating the PBL model with flashcards into English lessons is a result of the need to transition from traditional, teacher-centered instruction to more active, student-centered learning environments. A flashcard is a piece of cardboard featuring a word, a sentence, or a basic image (Komachali & Khodareza, 2012). According to Sholihah et al. (2021), the variety of media can be useful in the teaching and learning process. The integration of flashcards into the PBL approach allows students to visualize adjectives, practice their use in a variety of contexts, and collaborate with their classmates to resolve language-related challenges. The images and texts in the flashcards can be made more easily comprehensible and readable by designing the images and text at a larger and more lucid dimension. This model not only improves overall language skills but also cultivates a more profound comprehension of the function of adjectives within sentences, thereby enhancing vocabulary acquisition.

The researcher has identified several prior studies that are pertinent to this research. Initially, Pramesti et al. (2023) conducted research. The findings showed that students' vocabulary mastery improved on average from the pre-cycle to cycle 1 and

from cycle 1 to cycle 2. Moreover, Erma et al. (2019) conducted research that demonstrated that the critical thinking abilities of students in the quite critical category were 32.5% in the first cycle and increased to 75% in the second cycle. Putri (2016) conducted an additional study that demonstrated the potential of flashcards to enhance one's comprehension of English vocabulary. The mastery of vocabulary and the level of student engagement could be enhanced through the use of flashcards (Laila, 2019). The use of flashcard media can increase student engagement by allowing them to readily observe and fostering creativity (Yunianti & Vendityaningtyas, 2024).

On the whole, these studies underscore the need to focus on vocabulary acquisition in implementing effective learning using flashcards. Nonetheless, research in the existing literature utilizes a problem-based learning model to improve students' command of adjectives and their learning outcomes. The objective of this study is to improve students' learning outcomes through the implementation of problem-based learning utilizing flashcards. The research, titled *"Improving Students' Learning Outcomes on Adjectives Using Problem-Based Learning Assisted by Flashcards,"* would be conducted using a problem-based learning model assisted by flashcards in order to enhance the learning outcomes of students at SDN Sayangan. This is in accordance with the aforementioned explanation.

RESEARCH METHOD

The Classroom Action Research (CAR) method, which was developed from root action research, was employed by the researcher to conduct the research. Classroom Action Research was the name given to it as a result of its occurrence within the classroom. In Hammersley (1993), Kemmis defined action research as the following: "Participants in a social (including educational) situation undertake action research as a form of self-reflective inquiry to enhance the rationality and justice of (a) their own social or educational practice, (b) their comprehension of these practices, and (c) the environment in which the practice takes place." Consequently, it is evident that classroom action research is a reflective and evaluative approach to facilitating practice development and change.

The research was conducted at SDN Sayangan in Surakarta, in the second semester of the academic year 2023/2024. Students in the fifth grade of Sayangan

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Elementary School in Surakarta comprised the subjects of this research. The total number of students was 21. The rationale for selecting it as a research subject was the existence of a learning issue, specifically the fact that the learning objectives had not yet been achieved, resulting in low learning outcomes. Observation and testing were employed as data collection methods. Data on the learning outcomes of students' vocabulary was collected through a flashcard-media-based test. The success criteria established in this study were a minimal class average score of 70, which is equivalent to KKM.

Additionally, the researcher gathered data on the abilities of the students and the activities of the class during the planning phase. The researcher would subsequently evaluate this data in order to identify the issues that require resolution. Those procedures would be followed by the arrangement of teaching instruments, such as teacher plans, observation sheets, and tests. The class implemented the planned and organized teaching technique during the action and observation phases. The observer observed the teaching and learning activities that were conducted during the activities. The act of observation entailed the collection of data to assess the degree to which the actions achieved the intended result. The objective was to ascertain the development of the learning process and the impact of the action. Qualitative and quantitative data were scheduled to be collected. The quantitative data encompassed the students' ratings, which represented their progress, whereas the qualitative data consisted of the students' responses and their interest. Reflecting was the final phase. Following the collection of data, an analysis of the teaching-learning process would be conducted. The researcher then contemplated the outcome of the observation, which determined whether the teaching-learning process was being conducted effectively. The researcher would develop a new plan, known as re-planning, to address the students' issues and improve both the teaching-learning process and the students' achievements if the initial plan was ineffective, as evidenced by the students' accomplishments.

For instruments of research, several instruments were used, such as lesson plans, tests, and observation. The lesson plan was the researcher's road map of what students needed to learn and how it would be done effectively during the class. Before arranging the lesson plan, the researcher considered identifying the students and class conditions to determine the proper strategy and technique for an effective teaching and learning

process. The lesson plan consists of basic competencies, an indicator of learning outcomes, specific learning objectives, and interactive activities. The lesson plan was made based on the fifth-grade syllabus in the second semester of the academic year 2023/2024. For the test, it would be designed based on the learning objectives. The test would be used to determine the students' vocabulary mastery and would be given to them at the end of classroom activities. Another instrument was the observation sheet; this was used to measure the progress of students during the ongoing learning process. The researcher also used the observation sheet to reflect on the next cycle.

The quantitative and qualitative data analyses are discussed in this section. The researcher initially endeavored to determine the average of students' adjective vocabulary mastery per action within each cycle by analyzing the numerical data test results. It was employed to determine the overall proficiency of students in vocabulary acquisition. It implemented the percentage formula. The second objective of the writer was to determine the percentage of students who successfully completed the KKM 70 (seventy). It employs the following formula:

P = the class percentage

$$P = \frac{F}{n} \times 100\%$$

F = total percentage score

N = number of students

Third, the writer ascertained whether students could have improved their vocabulary scores as a consequence of the test results in cycles 1 and 2 by calculating the average of students' scores for each action. This research would be considered successful if 75% of the students achieve the target score, surpassing the established criteria. This implies that students must attain a target score of KKM 70 on the vocabulary exam during the CAR, commencing with the first test in cycle I and continuing through the second test in cycle II. Furthermore, we could classify the CAR as a failure if it did not meet the established criteria. In the subsequent cycle, we would implement the alternative action.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The first test took place on April 17, 2024, and the third weeks of March 27th and April 10th, 2024 saw the completion of cycle 1. Adjectives were the subject of the initial meeting. During the acting phase, we employed flashcards to facilitate problem-based learning. After the initial cycle concluded, the researcher administered Test 1 to assess the students' proficiency in acquiring adjective-related vocabulary. During the initial cycle, the researcher also collected additional data. The observation document revealed that some students were not participating in the discussion and seemed to be preoccupied with their personal matters. Despite the uncontrolled classroom conditions, some students continued to disrupt the learning process.

The researcher conducted two meetings during the fourth and first weeks of cycle 2, on April 24th, 2024, and May 1st, 2024, respectively. The researcher administered the second test on May 8th, 2024. In the second cycle, flashcard media facilitated some modifications to the problem-based learning process. Taking into account the previous cycle, teachers implemented certain modifications in their instruction. In cycle 1, the teacher merely waited for students to ask, whereas in cycle 2, the teacher took the initiative to be more active in monitoring the discussion and asking students' difficulties. This effectively increased students' self-confidence and encouraged them to be more courageous in expressing their concerns to the teacher. The researcher randomly posed a query to the students and provided feedback in accordance with their responses after the discussion concluded, as it had in the initial cycle. The researcher administered the posttest during the most recent meeting. The observer endeavored to observe all classroom activities during this cycle. Flashcard media facilitates problem-based learning, which may involve students in the teaching and learning process.

Pre-Cycle

Table 1. Learning Outcome Data Related to Vocabulary Mastery on Adjectives

Criteria	Number of Students	Percentage	KKM
Number of students scoring < 70	16	76,19%	70
Number of students scoring $\geq$ 70	5	23,80%	70
Highest Score	75		
Lowest Score	10		
Average Score	50		

The initial analysis of vocabulary adjectives yielded the data presented in Table 1. The analysis revealed that the number of students who have met the passage criteria, specifically a KKM value of ≥ 70 , is still extremely low—at only five students, or approximately 23,80% of the total. Sixteen students, or 76.19%, did not satisfy the criteria. The evaluation of learning outcomes demonstrated that students at this stage attained the highest score of 75 and the lowest score of 10. The average score for students' learning outcomes in mastery of adjective vocabulary is 50 when viewed classically. We have not yet achieved the average score of students' learning outcomes on the mastery of classical adjective vocabulary.

1st Cycle

After obtaining the pre-cycle learning results, the next step involved identifying the issues associated with the mastery of adjective vocabulary. Table 2 presents the learning outcomes from cycle 1, a result of the teacher's implementation of problem-based learning with the aid of flashcard media.

Table 2. Learning Outcome Data Related to Vocabulary Mastery on Adjectives

Criteria	Number of Students	Percentage	KKM
Number of students scoring < 70	8	38,09%	70
Number of students scoring ≥ 70	13	61,90%	70
Highest Score	85		
Lowest Score	20		
Average Score	60		

Table 2, based on their learning outcomes, illustrates the mastery of adjective vocabulary among students in cycle I. The table indicated that 13 students (61.9%) have achieved completion, while 8 students (38.09%) have not. Students achieved the greatest score of 85 and the lowest score of 20 during this cycle. The class average is 60. The number of students who are complete according to the KKM is ≥ 70 , and the classical average score has increased as a result of the mastery of vocabulary related to adjective material. However, this cycle does not meet the criteria for classical student completion. As a result, the researcher implemented enhancements for cycle II, aiming to encourage and increase student engagement through group learning and discussions.

2nd Cycle

The researcher has implemented numerous enhancements to the learning process during cycle II. One of the objectives was to improve students' learning outcomes. The researcher implemented the discussion method in cycle II to create and utilize flashcard media. In cycle II, the researcher attempted to organize students into groups of 4-5 to learn English vocabulary. The teacher then instructed the students to read and memorize five vocabulary words, providing examples based on the adjective vocabulary they had learned. We anticipated that this approach would alleviate students' boredom during the learning process and provide them with an enjoyable experience, thereby enhancing their ability to comprehend adjective vocabulary. The students in cycle II achieved the following learning outcomes.

Table 3. Learning Outcome Data Related to Vocabulary Mastery on Adjectives

Criteria	Number of Students	Percentage	KKM
Number of students scoring < 70	4	19,04%	70
Number of students scoring $\geq$ 70	17	80,95%	70
Highest Score	100		
Lowest Score	50		
Average Score	80		

As shown in Table 3, the information on how well students learned adjective-related vocabulary in cycle II came from problem-based learning that was made easier by flashcards. The findings indicated that 17 students (80.95%) had achieved mastery, while 5 students (19.04%) had not yet achieved excellence. In this cycle, the class average score was 80, meeting the criteria for classical completeness, defined as an average value of at least 70 based on the KKM values. Students achieved the highest score of 100 and the lowest score of 50. The implementation of the learning process underwent another substantial enhancement in Cycle II.

The researcher could give the perception that the use of visual media, such as flashcards, along with problem-based learning methods is effective for improving students' vocabulary mastery, particularly in the context of adjectives. This outcome is in accordance with numerous prior studies. For example, Pramesti et al. (2023) found that students' average vocabulary mastery improved from pre-cycle to cycle I and cycle I to cycle II.

Erma et al.'s (2019) research, which showed a significant improvement in students' critical thinking skills from cycle I to cycle II, is also consistent with these results. Specifically, students' critical thinking abilities increased from the moderately critical category (32.5%) to the critical category (75%). This demonstrates that the implementation of active learning, which entails direct engagement with students, such as PBL, enhances students' critical thinking skills and their mastery of the material. Putri (2016) also supports these findings, demonstrating that the use of flashcards can enhance English vocabulary mastery. Flashcards, as a visual learning medium, facilitate the retention and comprehension of new words and offer a visual context that enhances students' memory. Kurniasari's (2023) research findings demonstrate that problem-based learning serves as an effective strategy for teaching adjectives, enhancing students' vocabulary mastery through active problem-solving. This study showed that introducing problem-solving methodologies into the learning process increases students' linguistic skills, notably their knowledge and use of adjectives. In the study by Puspitasari et al. (2024), the test score results indicated an enhancement in students' English vocabulary through the use of flashcards as a teaching medium.

Consequently, the findings of this research serve as confirmation that the integration of visual media and active learning methodologies has the potential to enhance the overall quality of learning. In general, the findings of this study indicated that the use of flashcards in conjunction with a problem-based learning model effectively enhances students' vocabulary acquisition, which is consistent with previous research. Employing comparable methodologies in a variety of settings can achieve analogous outcomes, as this research provides empirical evidence.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research conducted in fifth grade at SDN Sayangan, the learning outcomes of students can be enhanced by the use of flashcards in problem-based learning, as evidenced by the scores they attain. In relation to the test results, thirteen students in the class, or 61.90 percent, successfully completed the KKM in cycle 1. Subsequently, seventeen students, or 80.95 percent, of the class passed the KKM, as indicated by the results of test 2 in cycle 2. The students have made substantial progress, as demonstrated by their rising scores in the pre-cycle, first cycle, and second cycle.

Additionally, the students' enthusiastic response to the teaching and learning activity during CAR illustrated their enthusiasm for acquiring adjectives through problem-based learning with the assistance of flashcards. Flashcards facilitated the implementation of problem-based learning, enhancing the students' adjective vocabulary mastery. The students' responses to the question and opinions during the discussion showed their confidence. Participation in group discussions and social interactions within the classroom serves as evidence. We urge future researchers to expand the scope of this study by incorporating additional research instruments, like questionnaires, to strengthen the validity of their findings.

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