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The Use of Bilingual Flashcards as Learning Media to Teach English Vocabulary for Young Learners

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the implementation of bilingual flashcards as a learning medium in teaching English vocabulary to kindergarten students at A Public School in Singaraja and explore teachers' opinions regarding its use. This study used a qualitative descriptive method involving three teachers as research subjects. Data were collected through participant observation, in-depth interviews, and open-ended questionnaires. The results showed that bilingual flashcards were implemented in the main activity during circle time, with each teacher having a different role. The learning strategies used were game-based, such as Show and Tell, Find the Flashcard, Match the Animal, and Role Play. In the pre-activity stage, teachers focused on creating a comfortable learning environment so that students were ready to receive the material. While in the post-activity stage, flashcards were used to review vocabulary through discussion, repetition games, and pronunciation exercises. Teachers also implemented formative assessment by observing students' understanding through verbal interaction and activity participation. Besides that, the three teachers argued that bilingual flashcards were an effective learning medium for teaching English vocabulary. This media helps to increase students' motivation, facilitates memorization and recall of vocabulary, improves vocabulary mastery, and makes learning more fun and interactive. However, this study also found several challenges, such as inadequate card size, the potential for increased noise in the classroom, demands for more creativity for teachers, less effectiveness for non-visual students, and the tendency for students to become dependent on flashcards.

Keywords: Flashcards; Bilingual; English; Young Learners; Vocabulary

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia has implemented early English language teaching, especially for kindergarten students. Learning English from an early age can help children improve their overall language skills, including understanding correct grammar and sentence structure, and communicating effectively, both orally and in writing. Teaching young learners significantly

differs from teaching adults, requiring appropriate and engaging strategies and media to prevent boredom (Mutiah et al., 2020). Ratminingsih and Budasi (2018) also noted that young learners get bored quickly, enjoy rewards, and are discouraged by complex tasks due to low motivation. To address the boredom problem among young learners, teachers must adopt innovative teaching media and strategies that engage students and facilitate vocabulary development. Therefore, teachers must use media and learning strategies appropriate to young learners' characteristics to improve their language skills effectively.

Vocabulary is a fundamental foundation of one's English ability. Expanding one's vocabulary can significantly facilitate students in learning English. Mastery in English can be achieved when one possesses an extensive vocabulary. A strong vocabulary base enables students to comprehend texts, express ideas clearly, and communicate more confidently. Despite its critical role, vocabulary instruction is often underemphasized in English language teaching. Alahmadi et al., (2023) pointed out that a common issue faced by English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students is insufficient vocabulary. Marianca et al., (2022) explains that numerous students struggle to comprehend English texts and respond to reading questions due to their insufficient vocabulary. Consequently, they encounter challenges in recalling and comprehending vocabulary, as it is affected by their native language. Teaching English to students in Indonesia presents challenges because English is a second language, and it is not the' mother tongue of many students (Dilago et al., 2022). These barriers underscore the need for more focused and effective vocabulary instruction in EFL classrooms.

Learning media is a tool for delivering educational content, stimulating students' thoughts and motivation and thereby enhancing the learning process. There are three different types of media: audio, audiovisual, and visual (Suharsiwi et al., 2022). Moreover, according to Permana (2020), that visualization is the most effective method for teaching new vocabulary across all subjects. Visual media, regarded as one of the most pivotal forms of vocabulary instruction, facilitates easier learning and information retention for students (Suhartono & Laraswati, 2016). Through the utilization of visual aids, teachers can effortlessly convey information to students, enhancing comprehension by providing direct visualization of concepts (Syandri, 2015). Moreover, through visual media, learning vocabulary becomes more fun and not stressful (Liando et al., 2022). Therefore, teachers are encouraged to use visual media in teaching vocabulary because it not only simplifies the delivery of material but also helps students remember the meaning of words for a longer time.

Flashcards are a visual medium that can be used to teach and learn English vocabulary. Flashcards are a popular learning media used at various levels of education. These learning media are simple two-sided picture cards, with pictures on the front and definitions or appropriate information on the back, making them a practical and easy-to-make learning medium (Permana, 2020). The contents of the flashcards can be modified according to the level of the students, whether they are elementary, intermediate, or advanced (Aba, 2019). In addition, teachers usually hold and quickly move picture cards from the pile to the front, which may be the reason why these cards are called flashcards (Erniwati et al., 2021). They also offer an enjoyable and flexible learning experience, frequently used in games and other creative activities to support vocabulary retention and understanding (Maryanto & Wulanata, 2018).

These characteristics and ease of use make flashcards a staple learning tool for young learners and adults (Elisa & Tuti, 2020).

Bilingual flashcards extend traditional flashcards by presenting translations or related terms in two languages, enhancing language proficiency (Wong & Nunan, 2011). Research indicates that bilingual exposure benefits language development. Supporting this perspective, Widiantari and Dewi (2023) emphasize that bilingual young learners benefit significantly from multimodal and interactive learning media, which enhance comprehension and retention. Bilingual flashcards encourage students to be more active in learning by engaging themselves in the material through interactive games or exercises, making the learning process fun and effective. This is related to gamification, a technique that uses game-like activities to make learning more enjoyable, motivating, and educational (Kapp, 2012). In line with this argument, Purnawan et al. (2022) stated that learning using gamification provides beneficial effects that impact student success and progress by offering personal and meaningful feedback while delivering vocabulary material through various engaging features. Using gamification techniques, bilingual flashcards help students remember words better and make learning fun and motivating.

A Public School in Singaraja incorporates bilingual flashcards uniquely in its curriculum, aligning with Public principles of independent learning and individual development. The school uses these bilingual flashcards from kindergarten to grade 3, with this study focusing on kindergarten students to analyze early vocabulary acquisition in a bilingual environment. However, Berne and Blachowicz (2008) highlight that many teachers face challenges in teaching vocabulary due to a lack of confidence in best practices and uncertainty about where to begin. Teachers should implement key teaching skills to overcome these challenges and ensure effective instruction. Ratminingsih and Budasi (2018) state that young learners get bored quickly enjoy rewards and are discouraged by complex tasks due to low motivation. In this context the basic level, TEFL must integrate 21st-century skills, such as communication and creativity, while using interactive learning media to maintain motivation and increase understanding (Padmadewi et al., 2020).

Previous studies highlight the effectiveness of bilingual flashcards in vocabulary mastery at different education levels. Elisa and Tuti (2020) state that bilingual flashcards are suitable for young learners, especially kindergarten students. Widya et al., (2020) state that teaching vocabulary to young learners with flashcards supports teachers effectively. Flashcards are seen as an appropriate medium for teaching vocabulary to young learners. However, there are challenges, such as the need for teachers to make lessons as engaging as possible. Additionally, flashcards are often too small and overused in class, prompting participants to create their own. Arsana and Maharani (2021) find out the stages of using flashcards and the advantages and disadvantages of using flashcards. Flashcards are portable, allowing students to practice vocabulary anywhere. They aid in summarizing, memorizing, and making learning fun through games, enhancing understanding and skills. However, their size can be a drawback, as students at the back may struggle to see them clearly, affecting learning outcomes. Despite this, flashcards remain an effective tool that motivates active student engagement. Erniwati et al. (2021) state that flashcards were suitable for young learners, especially kindergarten students. the study concluded that using flashcards with a bilingual approach is highly

recommended for teaching vocabulary to young learners, as it facilitates easier recall and enhances language acquisition. Yuliantari et al. (2021) examined their use in Google Classroom for fifth-grade English learners, identifying benefits like increased motivation and retention alongside challenges such as student dependency and internet issues. Sang and Loi (2023) explored Lithuanian EFL teachers' attitudes toward flashcards for adult learners, revealing a lack of widespread use and the need for professional development. However, bilingual flashcards were found effective when used strategically for spaced learning. Sarifudin and Rahayu (2023) studied bilingual flashcards in Fiqh lessons for first graders, showing significant improvements in vocabulary and understanding. Tirtayani et al. (2017) found that bilingual flashcards increased engagement and reduced monotony in English learning.

Bilingual flashcards are an effective tool across educational levels, making vocabulary learning more engaging and stress-free. However, challenges remain, such as teacher proficiency and the suitability of flashcards for non-visual learners. (Aziza, 2020). The study mentions that, compared to monolingual flashcards, bilingual versions provide direct translation and contextual support, which can be particularly beneficial for better language learners. Apart from that, while traditional vocabulary teaching tools, such as rote memorization or isolated word lists, flash cards promote active recall and spaced repetition. However, varying levels of teacher proficiency in both language and the limited effectiveness of visual aids for non-visual learners remain challenges. Despite their potential, there is a noticeable gap in research regarding the use of bilingual flashcards in public school settings, especially at the kindergarten level. This study aims to address these gaps by examining how bilingual flashcards are utilized by young learners at Public School Singaraja and by exploring teachers' perspectives on their advantages and limitations. This research seeks to contribute new insights to the literature on vocabulary instruction tools in early childhood education through a qualitative approach.

METHOD
Design

This study applied a descriptive qualitative research design. According to Taylor et al., (2015), descriptive qualitative research is an investigative approach that begins with assumptions, uses an interpretive or theoretical lens, and studies a research problem to understand the meaning individuals or groups give to social or humanitarian issues that yield descriptive data. In the context of this study, the design was chosen to analyze how bilingual flashcards are used as a medium for teaching English vocabulary to kindergarten students at a public school in Singaraja and to explore teachers' insights into the benefits and challenges of using this tool. This method allows for a rich, contextual understanding of classroom practices and teacher perceptions, aligning closely with this study's objective to investigate real-world educational experience.

Participants

The subject of this study was three kindergarten teachers at Singaraja Public School. The subject was selected based on the active use of bilingual flashcards in the classroom and their willingness to participate in this research. Based on preliminary observation, bilingual flashcards are utilized as a learning medium from kindergarten to third grade. This study

focused on kindergarten teachers to explore how flashcards are implemented at the earliest stage of formal education. While the primary data source was teacher interviews, the study did not directly assess student perspectives or learning outcomes. However, incorporating student feedback or performance data in future research could offer a more comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of bilingual flashcards in early language development.

Data Collection

The data were collected through participant observation, field notes, document analysis, and in-depth interviews. Observations were conducted over five meetings using bilingual flashcards with the same topic, "Animals," until data saturation was reached, as no new information emerged. To strengthen the findings, in-depth interviews with the teachers provided additional insights, validating and enriching the observed patterns for a comprehensive understanding of the implementation process.

Data Analysis

This study used an interactive model analysis adapted from Miles and Huberman (1994), which consisted of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. To enhance the analysis, Braun and Clarke (2006) thematic analysis was also applied, involving six systematic steps: familiarizing data through repeated reading transcripts, generating initial codes manually by highlighting significant pattern and recurring ideas, searching for themes by grouping related codes, reviewing and refining themes to ensure coherence and relevance, defining and naming themes to capture their essence, and producing a final report that integrated key findings. Although the coding process of this study was conducted manually to allow for close engagement with the data, qualitative data analysis software was not used in this study.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Implementing bilingual flashcards in Public classrooms was carefully planned and structured to align with the Montessori method. Teachers designed learning activities based on core competencies and learning objectives, integrating bilingual flashcards into the language schedule and reviewing materials to ensure their suitability for young learners. The flashcards are used multiple times weekly, emphasizing repetition and interactive activities such as games and group exercises to reinforce vocabulary learning. Lessons follow a structured format, allocating time for preparation, vocabulary introduction, practice, and review. Throughout the process, teachers act as facilitators rather than traditional instructors, guiding, observing, and supporting students to acquire vocabulary naturally. They tailor learning indicators to each child's progress, ensuring individualized instruction that fosters independent learning in line with Montessori principles.

Table 1. Recapitulation of Observation Sheet

Steps of Teaching	Teacher's 1 Activity	Teacher's 2 Activity	Teacher's 3 Activity	Student's Activity
Pre-activity	Guides students to sit in a circle greets them, leads prayer, reminds them to show respect, and	Supports Teacher 1 in organizing the circle, encourages students to share	Prepares bilingual flashcards, monitors student behavior, and encourages shy	Sit in a circle, greet the teacher, pray, share stories, and sing when prompted.

	uses icebreakers if needed.	stories, and keeps them focused.	students to participate.	
Whilst activity	Introduces bilingual flashcards, demonstrates their use, and asks students to find them.	Explains game rules, monitors group activities, and provides feedback.	Organizes students into groups, places flashcards randomly, and assists those needing extra help.	Listen to instructions, play the game by guessing and identifying words in two languages, and actively participate.
Post-activity	Summarizes the lesson, leads reflection, and closes with prayer.	Ensures students stay focused during the summary.	Assists students in cleaning up materials.	Listen to the summary, reflect, and help tidy up.

Observations and document analysis data confirmed that teachers consistently followed the module's guidelines during learning activities. This study involved three kindergarten teachers and 22 students at Singaraja Public School, structured into three stages: pre-activity, main-activity, and post-activity, with the topic of animals. In the pre-activity, teachers greeted students, led prayers, and created an engaging atmosphere before introducing bilingual flashcards. The main activity focused on using flashcards to introduce, practice, and reinforce vocabulary through interactive games like guessing, matching, and acting. In the post-activity, students reviewed their learning, reflected on the lesson, and helped tidy up the classroom. A key distinction of this study is the integration of Circle Time, where Teacher 1 sat in a red-painted circle with students to ensure equal visibility of flashcards, while Teachers 2 and 3 provided support. Repetition was crucial in reinforcing vocabulary retention through pronunciation drills and interactive activities. Beyond vocabulary learning, bilingual flashcards also served as a formative assessment tool. Teachers observed students' responses, participation, and pronunciation, using interactive questioning and verbal feedback instead of formal assessments. Activities like "Guess the Animal" and "Find the Flashcard" allowed students to demonstrate understanding in a fun, engaging way. Following the Montessori approach, teachers provided direct feedback, encouraged peer learning, and adapted assessments to track individual progress effectively.

Assessment is essential in ensuring students effectively acquire and retain vocabulary. at Singaraja Public School, kindergarten teachers implement formative assessment through continuous observation and interactive activities. They evaluated students' comprehension by monitoring participation, analyzing responses, and engaging them in activities like guessing the card, matching the card, and finding the flashcards.

According to Teacher 2, formative assessment combines oral, written, and interactive methods, ensuring activities are fun and age-appropriate:

> *"We observe students' use of vocabulary in daily conversations and interactive games. Small Q&A tests also help measure understanding, allowing us to provide constructive feedback."* (T2)

Beyond structured assessments, teachers offer ongoing feedback to support learning. Teacher 1 highlights the importance of observing students' reactions:

> *"If they can confidently say the word when shown a flashcard, it indicates their understanding."*(T1)

These findings confirm that the formative assessment of bilingual flashcards is an effective method for teaching English vocabulary in kindergarten classrooms.

At Singaraja Public School, three kindergarten teachers have implemented bilingual flashcards in teaching English vocabulary. In line with the Montessori method, these teachers act as facilitators, encouraging hands-on and interactive learning rather than relying solely on direct instruction. Their role involves observing students' engagement with bilingual flashcards, fostering independent exploration, and providing support when needed. Creating a structured yet flexible environment allows students to develop vocabulary naturally through meaningful, self-directed activities. The follow-up interviews provided profound insights into their experiences and strategies for implementing this learning medium.

Teachers emphasized that colorful visuals and relatable content make learning feel like play, keeping students engaged. Seeing words in their native and target languages boosts the students' confidence and active participation.

> *"Bilingual flashcards make learning more engaging, easier to understand, and improve memory retention. The Indonesian translation aids comprehension, while repetition and visualization strengthen recall."* (T1)

> *"Flashcards present vocabulary in an appealing visual format, making learning enjoyable. The bilingual word pairs help students connect their first and second languages."* (T2)

> *"Children enjoy active and visual learning. Flashcards incorporate letters, colors, and images, making English vocabulary easier to grasp."* (T3)

The interviews indicated that all three teachers at A Public School in Singarajapositively perceived bilingual flashcards, emphasizing their role in increasing students' motivation, enhancing vocabulary mastery and recall, and making learning more engaging and enjoyable. They agreed that combining images, colors, and bilingual translations helped students understand new vocabulary more effectively. Additionally, they noted that bilingual flashcards align with Montessori principles by integrating visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learning experiences, allowing students to form natural language connections through direct engagement.

Despite these advantages, the teachers acknowledged particular challenges in implementing bilingual flashcards, particularly in maintaining students' focus, managing classroom noise, and addressing diverse learning styles. Some students became overly excited during flashcard activities, making classroom management more difficult, especially when adapting to different learning levels. Teachers employed strategic solutions such as interactive activities, structured classroom management, and multimodal learning techniques to overcome these challenges. By doing so, they were able to maximize the benefits of bilingual flashcards while minimizing their drawbacks. Moreover, they highlighted the importance of creative and varied teaching strategies to prevent over-reliance on flashcards and to encourage students to expand their vocabulary beyond the provided materials.

As seen in Singaraja Public School's kindergarten program, bilingual flashcards are an effective tool for young learners to acquire vocabulary. Their use is integrated into interactive, game-based activities, such as guessing the animal, matching the animal, and finding the flashcards, aligning with Kapp (2012) gamification theory, emphasizing motivation and engagement in learning. This supports Korosidou and Griva (2016) view that fun learning environments enhance language acquisition. Ningsih (2023) also emphasized the used of games in helping young students to understand vocabulary and affecting students' capacity to create imaginative abilities, basic considering and digital skills Teachers greeted students, prayed together, sang songs, and encouraged self-expression before transitioning to vocabulary instruction. During the main activity, flashcards facilitated vocabulary introduction, practice, and reinforcement, while in the post-activity, they were used for review and assessment, supporting Nation (2017) principles of vocabulary learning.

These methods are consistent with Montessori principles which emphasis on play-based learning (Korosidou & Griva, 2016; Dilago et al. 2022). Flashcards also served as an informal assessment tool, allowing teachers to monitor vocabulary retention through interactive questioning and feedback as Mahendra et al. (2021) supported. The structured implementation of bilingual flashcards, gamification, and Montessori methods created an engaging and practical learning experience. The study highlights the importance of structured repetition, interactive activities, and teacher facilitation in enhancing vocabulary acquisition (Nation, 2017; Dilago et al., 2022; Sang & Loi, 2023). The findings indicate that bilingual flashcards foster motivation, retention, and active learning when integrated with game-based strategies, making them a valuable tool for teaching English vocabulary to young learners at Singaraja Public School.

This study gathered the opinions of three kindergarten teachers at A Public School in Singaraja through an open-ended questionnaire and in-depth interviews. The teachers played distinct roles in implementing bilingual flashcards. Teacher 1 acted as the leading facilitator, Teacher 2 assisted with pronunciation and comprehension, and Teacher 3 provided individualized support. These roles align with Padmadewi et al. (2023), who emphasized essential micro-teaching skills, including lesson planning, instructional media use, and assessment. A key feature of this study is the incorporation of Circle Time, which distinguishes it from previous research, such as Teacher 1 sitting with students in a red-painted circle for better engagement, while Teachers 2 and 3 observed and assisted.

One of the key advantages noted is that bilingual flashcards engage students visually, making vocabulary learning enjoyable and reinforce vocabulary through direct word associations and frequent repetition (Elisa & Tuti, 2020). Flashcards are also well-suited for children with short attention spans, as they provide structured, engaging learning experiences (Sarifudin & Rahayu, 2023). Teachers highlighted the advantages of bilingual flashcards, including increased motivation, enhanced vocabulary retention, and enjoyable learning experiences. However, they also noted challenges such as classroom management difficulties, preparation time, and the need to accommodate diverse learning styles. Classroom management was another concern, as flashcards sometimes led to excessive excitement and noise (Widya et al., 2020). Additionally, teachers noted that preparing effective flashcards requires significant

effort and creativity (Arsana & Maharani, 2021), prompting them to collaborate on lesson planning to ease the workload.

The findings provided insights into optimizing the use of bilingual flashcards in teaching vocabulary. Teachers utilized flashcards efficiently across different phases of the lesson. During the pre-activity phase, the teacher used flashcards to introduce new vocabulary. In the main activity, the flashcard reinforces learning through games and repetition. In the post-activity phase, it was used to review and assess understanding. The teacher played distinct roles in facilitating learning, aligning with micro-teaching strategies (Padmadewi et al., 2023). Additionally, repetition was essential for reinforcing vocabulary (Nation, 2017). However, teachers must implement structured management techniques to prevent classroom disruptions, such as setting clear rules and structuring activities effectively (Elisa & Tuti, 2020). Creativity remains crucial in designing engaging flashcard-based lessons. Teachers should continue professional development to explore innovative approaches, including digital flashcards for improved accessibility. The study also highlights the importance of flashcard size for visibility, suggesting that alternative formats could enhance engagement (Barat & Talukder, 2023).

Implementing bilingual flashcards as a media for teaching English vocabulary to young learners at A Public School in Singaraja demonstrates significant benefits in terms of vocabulary retention, student engagement, and interactive learning. To maximize these benefits, teachers must apply structured repetition techniques, maintain a dynamic yet well-managed classroom environment, and continuously adapt their instructional strategies to meet diverse learner needs.

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis conducted, it can be concluded that bilingual flashcards play a significant role as a learning media. It is particularly in teaching English vocabulary to kindergarten students at Singaraja Public School. The findings indicate that bilingual flashcards are primarily implemented during the main activity, where students actively engage with vocabulary through interactive games and hands-on learning experiences. This approach aligns with the Montessori method, which emphasizes concrete and manipulative experiences as well as independent learning. Incorporating circle time, repetition, and formative assessments in the outreach and post-activity phases further strengthens learning outcomes.

The findings also highlight several advantages of using bilingual flashcards. First, they help motivate young learners by making vocabulary learning visually appealing and engaging. Second, they facilitate easier memorization and recall by providing direct associations between words and images. Third, they enhance vocabulary mastery by reinforcing pronunciation, word meanings, and contextual usage through repeated exposure. Additionally, bilingual flashcards make learning more enjoyable by incorporating interactive elements, such as matching games, storytelling, and movement-based activities. They also increase student engagement, ensuring that children remain focused and actively involved in learning. Lastly, bilingual flashcards are suitable for young learners' characteristics, as they cater to short attention spans and support a multi-sensory learning approach.

Although bilingual flashcards offer many advantages, kindergarten teachers also argue that bilingual flashcards have some disadvantages. One major issue is the size of the flashcards,

which can affect visibility for students seated at a distance. Another challenge is increased classroom noise and disruptions, as students may become overly excited or distracted during interactive flashcard activities. Teachers must be more creative in designing and implementing bilingual flashcards to keep students engaged. Furthermore, bilingual flashcards may be less effective for non-visual learners. It might struggle to retain information presented primarily through visual cues. Lastly, concerns about reduced student independence in vocabulary learning were raised. Students may rely too much on flashcards instead of exploring new words through other resources.

In conclusion, bilingual flashcards are an effective and engaging vocabulary learning tool that aligns with the Montessori approach and gamification-based learning strategies. However, teachers must implement classroom management strategies, differentiated teaching methods, and multimodal learning approaches to maximize their benefits and address the challenges. By balancing structured flashcard activities with diverse learning techniques, bilingual flashcards can significantly enhance young learners' vocabulary acquisition. At the same time, maintaining a dynamic and interactive classroom environment. Future research could explore the long-term impact of bilingual flashcards on vocabulary retention and student autonomy. To add more, investigate student perspectives to provide a more holistic understanding of their learning experience.

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