

THESIS ARTICLE

**"THE CONTRIBUTION OF FLASHCARDS IN LEARNING VOCABULARY:
AN EXPERIMENTAL STUDY AT THE SEVENTH GRADE STUDENTS OF
SMPN 1 AIKMEL IN ACADEMIC YEAR 2014/2015"**



*Presented as Partial Fulfilment of the Requirement for the Degree of Bachelor of
Art (S.Pd) in English Education Program*

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MATARAM UNIVERSITY
2015***

APPROVAL

The journal entitled

“The Contribution of Flashcards in Learning Vocabulary: An Experimental Study at the Seventh Grade Students of SMPN 1 Aikmel in Academic Year 2014/2015”

has been approved in Mataram on Monday, 2nd of March 2015

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**The Contribution of Flashcards in Learning Vocabulary:
An Experimental Study at the Seventh Grade Students of SMPN
1 Aikmel in
Academic Year 2014/2015**

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this research was to find out the contribution of flashcards in students' vocabulary learning. The samples were divided into two groups, experimental and control group. Each group consisted of 38 students. The control group received the conventional treatment while the experimental group received the flashcard treatment. The method used in this study was quantitative study. The data gained through two phases of tests: pre-test, and post-test. Then the data gained from the pre-test and the post-test were analyzed by using statistical analysis with t-test formula. The final result indicated that the improvement of students' scores in the experimental group was higher than that in the control group; and also, the result of the t-test (4.75) was higher than t-table critical value at the confidence level of .05 (1.992) and .01 (2.652). Thus, the null hypothesis (Ho) was successfully rejected and obviously the alternative hypothesis (Ha) was accepted. In other words, flashcards was successfully proven to be a good visual media to improve students' interest in learning vocabulary.

Key words: Contribution, Vocabulary, Vocabulary learning, and Flashcards

ABSTRAK

Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk meneliti apakah penggunaan flashcards berkontribusi dalam pembelajaran kosakata. Sampel dibagi menjadi dua grup, grup eksperimen dan grup kontrol. Setiap grup terdiri 38 siswa. Pada kontrol grup, siswa belajar kosakata dengan cara biasa; sedangkan di eksperimental grup, siswa belajar kosakata dengan menggunakan flashcards. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah kuantitatif. Data didapatkan melalui dua tahap tes, pre-test dan post-test. Kemudian data dianalisa dengan menggunakan analisis statistic dengan rumus t-test. Hasil akhir mengindikasikan bahwa peningkatan nilai siswa pada grup ekperimental lebih tinggi dari nilai siswa pada grup control; hasil dari t-test (4.75) juga lebih tinggi dari t-table pada critical value dengan confidence level .05 (1.992) dan .01 (2.652). Dengan demikian, null hipotesis (H_0) berhasil ditolak dan alternative hipotesis (H_a) diterima. Dengan kata lain, flashcards berhasil dibuktikan sebagai media visual yang baik untuk meningkatkan minat siswa dalam pembelajaran kosakata.

Kata kunci: Kontribusi, Kosakata, Pembelajaran kosakata, dan Flashcards

A. INTRODUCTION

One of the most important challenges that students face during the process of foreign language learning is learning vocabulary. As Carpenter and Olson (2011) states, in an EFL classroom, vocabulary is needed for expressing meaning and conveying thoughts through both receptive and productive skills. Furthermore, Cameroon (2001) believes that vocabulary is central to the learning of a foreign language at primary level to enrich their language. Thus, there should be a strategy to help students learn vocabulary.

Based on my observation at SMPN 1 Aikmel, learning vocabulary using common technique such as learning vocabulary by reading English-Indonesian dictionary seems boring for students, especially at the seventh grade students of this school. Students in this grade were similar to the sixth grade of elementary school. They easily got bored; they could not

memorize the vocabulary in a large amount; they forgot them easily. Moreover, almost all of them did not get English lesson in their previous school. So, their vocabulary achievements were not equal when it was compared with those who got English lesson in their elementary school. Thus, they need special strategy to achieve more success in learning vocabulary. However, almost all of them cannot establish their own strategy. As Baleghizadeh and Ashoori (2011) studied in one junior school in Iran, young learners cannot make an appropriate strategy for their learning process. In addition to being interesting, this strategy must be the simplest one; it must be easy to obtain, easy to use and easy to understand. Related to these criteria, teaching media such as flashcards can be an alternative strategy for the students in learning vocabulary. It can draw their interest and raise their motivation in learning vocabulary; so that the English

teaching and learning process will be more effective.

By using this media, the vocabulary learning process can be more fun and interesting; so, the students can be more motivated to learn vocabulary. As Komachali and Khodareza (2012:137) state, flashcards are useful for drilling new letters, syllables, words, and other information. In addition, Bard and Bard (2002:164) said that flashcards are an effective tool for memorizing spelling words, multiplication tables, and other information that does not require analysis.

Based on the statements above, I conducted a study on “The Contribution of Flashcards in Learning Vocabulary: An Experimental Study at the Seventh Grade Students of SMPN 1 Aikmel in Academic Year 2014/2015”.

The research question of this study is “*Does flashcard contribute to vocabulary learning at the seventh grade students of SMPN 1 Aikmel?*”

The scope of this study was limited towards learning vocabulary about label and list of things around the students by using flashcards to the seventh grade students of SMPN 1 Aikmel.

The objective of this study was to find out the contribution of flashcards in learning vocabulary at the seventh grade students of SMPN 1 Aikmel at academic year 2014/2015.

The significances of this study are as follow:

a. For students

This study can be helpful for students in learning vocabulary. Using flashcards in learning vocabulary is interesting for

students in the seventh grade of junior high school. It can help them to understand the vocabulary easier.

b. For English Teachers

After knowing the benefit of flashcards in vocabulary learning, English teachers can implement this method when they teach vocabulary.

c. For other researchers

This research can be a source of information for other researchers who are also investigating vocabulary learning especially at the seventh grade students of junior high school.

B. RESEARCH METHODS

This study deals with the contribution of flashcards in vocabulary learning. Therefore, in conducting this study, the experimental design was used as the research design. It is an approach to educational research in which the idea of hypothesis is tested or verified by setting up situation in which relationship between different subjects or variables can be determined (Richards and Schmidt, 2010:210). The principle of the experimental research is to provide the opportunity to identify cause-and-effect relationships.

While, the way of experimentation design used in this study is between groups. It is a kind of experimental design where each participant serves in only one experimental condition (Richard and Schmidt, 2010:53). These two groups were divided into experimental group and control

group. Experimental group is the group which is assigned to the experimental variable or treatment; whereas, control group is the group which is allotted to controlled variable (Singh, 2006:137). In analyzing the effects of the new method, the value of the test in experimental group compared to the value of the test in control group.

The population of this research was all of the seventh grade students of SMPN 1 Aikmel in Academic Year 2014/2015. It was divided into nine classes, VII 1 until VII 9. Each class consisted of 38 students, so it can be calculated that the population of this research is 342 students.

The sample of this research was only two classes of the seventh grade students of SMPN 1 Aikmel, VII 2 and VII 3. It was chosen by using prospective sampling method. Prospective sample is a sample that is deliberately chosen without using randomizing techniques (Richards and Schmidt, 2010:506).

Each class consisted of 38 students. It means that, the total sample of this study was 76 students; 20,47% of the whole population. These classes were divided into two classes, an experimental class and a control class. Class VII 2 as the experimental group and class VII 3 as the control group. Students in class VII 2 were learning vocabulary by using flashcards, and students in class VII 3 were learning vocabulary by common technique without using flashcards.

The data of this study were gained by using pre-test and post-test. The instrument that was

administered to the students was purposed to reveal the students' vocabulary.

However, before giving the instrument to the control group and experimental group; I had to ensure that the test was valid and reliable by doing try out; giving the test to other group. The purpose of this try out was to measure the accuracy of the instrument; because an accurate instrument which is used in a research had to fulfill the validity and reliability.

Validity, according to Richards and Schmidt (2010:495), is the degree to which a test measures what it is supposed to measure, or can be used successfully for the purposes for which it is intended. While reliability is a measure of the degree to which a test gives consistent results (Richards and Schmidt, 2010:495). An instrument said to be reliable if it gives the same results when it is given on different occasions or when it is used by different people.

After trying the instrument out, its result was calculated in order to find its validity and reliability by using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 16 for windows. So, the accuracy and trustworthiness of the instrument can be known before it was given to the two major groups, experimental and control group.

Before providing the treatment to the experimental group; I firstly gave all pre-test to both of groups, the experimental and the control group. The pre-test had a purpose to measure the students' basic

vocabulary achievement. After checking the result of the pre-test, both of the experimental and control groups received the treatment. The students in the control group learned vocabulary using a conventional technique as usual. On the other hand, the students in the experimental group learned vocabulary using flashcards.

Post-test, as the last test which was administered, was conducted after all of the participants received the treatment. It aimed to get information about the result of the treatment done in the vocabulary learning activities through flashcards. It was used in order to support my expectation that flashcards can improve the students' interest in learning vocabulary; or it can prove that learning vocabulary using flashcards has the same impact with conventional technique vocabulary learning.

In the last step, the result of the pre-test and post-test was compared to find out whether flashcards has contribution in students' vocabulary learning or not.

Since the kind of data gained in this research was quantitative data; so, the test must be used as the instrument. A test, according to Richards and Schmidt (2010:591), is any procedure for measuring ability, knowledge, or performance. It was given in order to help the students assess the effect of experimentation and to know how far the students can understand what they have learned.

However, before giving the instrument to the students in the control and experimental group,

there was a try-out. In this case, class VII 5 was chosen as the try-out class. The instrument for try-out test consisted of 20 items. This process was done in order to find out the validity and reliability of the test items.

According to Hadi (1997), the aims of trying the test are as follows:

- 1) To avoid misunderstanding on the question
- 2) To drop the difficult and confusing words
- 3) To substitute the easy questions with the ones that needs deeper answer
- 4) To add items, which are completely needed and to drop away the irrelevant ones.

There were two kinds of test which were given to the students in the experimental and the control group.

1) Pre-Test

The first test, called pre-test, was given before the treatment. It was aimed to determine students' vocabulary abilities before the treatment. This test consisted of 15 items in multiple-choice. The time allocated was 40 minutes.

2) Post-Test

The second test called post-test, it was given after the treatment. It was aimed to determine students' vocabulary achievement after the treatment. This test also consisted of 15 items in multiple-choice. The time allocated was also the same as pre-test, 40 minutes.

Both pre-test and post-test for the experimental group and

control group had the same procedure. They also contained the same material. These tests were given on the same day at different time based on the schedule of the school.

The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 16 was used as the alternative program in analyzing both of the reliability and validity of the test; and r-table used as the standard in testing whether these tests are valid and reliable or not. Since the number of students in try out classes were 38 students; the degree of freedom was 36. Thus, the significance level in 0.05 r-table was 0.320.

Based on the statement above, it could be concluded that the criteria of reliable and valid tests are as follow:

- a) An item is said valid if its Pearson Correlation > 0.320 (r-table); or its significance (2-tailed) < 0.05 . If an invalid item is found, it will be erased. So, I have to find another valid question to replace it.
- b) Guilford states the classification of reliability as follows:
 - 0.80 , $r_{11} \leq 1.00$: Very high
 - 0.60 $< r_{11} \leq 0.80$: High
 - 0.40 $< r_{11} \leq 0.60$: Average
 - 0.20 $< r_{11} \leq 0.40$: Low
 - 1.00 $\leq r_{11} \leq 0.20$: Very low (Unreliable)

After analyzing the validity and reliability of the test, I also analyzed the result of the test. The students' score were divided into two criteria; passed and failed. These criteria were made based on the rule

of the school. Since the minimum completeness criteria (KKM) of English in SMPN 1 Aikmel is 65; so, it can be concluded that the criteria of the students who failed/passed in the test are as follow:

- a) The student is said to fail in the test if his/her score is less than 65.
- b) The student is said to pass in the test if his/her score is higher than 65.

In addition to the criteria of the test score above, the mean score of the experimental and control group were also calculated. It was calculated using descriptive method. The formula in descriptive method is as follows:

$$Mdx = \frac{\sum dx}{nx} \quad Mdy = \frac{\sum dy}{ny}$$

Where:

- Mdx : Mean score of experimental group
- Mdy : Mean score of control group
- dx : Deviation score of pre-test and post-test of experimental group
- dy : Deviation score of pre-test and post-test of control group
- nx : Number of sample in experimental group
- ny : Number of sample in control group
- : Sum of.....

Finally, the correlation of the two means scores computed in order to know whether it is significant or not. Here is the formula:

$$Tobs = \frac{Mdx - Mdy}{\frac{\sum dx^2 + \sum dy^2}{nx + ny - 2} \frac{1}{nx} + \frac{1}{ny}}$$

Where:

- tobs : The degree of differences
- My : Mean score of control group
- dx : Square deviation of experimental group

s_{dy} : Square deviation of control group
 n_x : Number of the sample of the experimental group
 n_y : Number of the sample of the control group
 Σ : Sum of.....

In this research, the hypotheses were tested by the critical value of t-distribution table for two tailed test. Since the degree of freedom (df) is 74 (38+38-2=74) with 95% (0.05) and 99% (0.01) significance level for two-tailed test, the criteria value in the t-table is in 74 degree of freedom. If the result of the t-test was less than t-table, the null hypotheses (Ho) is accepted. On the other hands, if the result of t-test was equal to or exceeds t-table, the alternative hypotheses (Ha) is accepted and consequently the null hypotheses (Ho) is accepted (Hatch et al, 1982:272).

C. RESEARCH FINDINGS

In analysing the data, I used t-test in order to know the contribution of using flashcards in students' vocabulary learning. While, in finding the analyzing the validity and the reliability, I used SPSS 16.

The table below showed the result of data analyzed by using SPSS 16. It can be seen that there are 15 valid items and 5 invalid items.

No	Pearson Correlation	Significant (2-tailed)	Criteria
1	0.456	0.003	Valid
2	0.690	0.000	Valid
3	0.306	0.062	Invalid
4	0.608	0.000	Valid
5	0.436	0.006	Valid
6	0.480	0.002	Valid
7	0.690	0.000	Valid

8	0.349	0.032	Valid
9	0.608	0.000	Valid
10	0.436	0.006	Valid
11	0.579	0.000	Valid
12	0.355	0.029	Valid
13	0.67	0.024	Valid
14	0.243	0.141	Invalid
15	0.298	0.069	Invalid
16	0.274	0.096	Invalid
17	0.566	0.000	Valid
18	0.589	0.000	Valid
19	0.205	0.216	Invalid
20	0.384	0.017	Valid
SUM			
Valid = 15; Invalid = 5			

*An item said valid if its Pearson Correlation > 0.320 (r-table); or its significance (2-tailed) < 0.05.

The reliability of the instrument was 0.785. It was indicated that the test which had administered was reliable in high level. This result was simply shown on this following table:

Table: Reliability of the test

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.785	20

Based on those tables above it can be concluded that there were 15 items of 20 items which were valid and reliable. In the other words, it can be said that these items can be used as the instrument of this research. These items were taken as the pre-test; and questions for the post-test items were similar to those in the pre-test.

The result of the pre-test and post-test of experimental group can be seen in the following table:

a) Pre-test

$$\bar{x}_1 = \frac{\sum x_1}{N} = \frac{1724}{38} = 45.37$$

b) Post-test

$$\bar{x}_2 = \frac{\sum x_2}{N} = \frac{2766}{38} = 72.79$$

After distributing the pre-test and post-test score of the experimental and the control group, the deviation score gained from raw score of both groups were calculated. The calculation can be seen in the following table:

Table: The Deviation Score of the Experimental

No	Subject	Experimental Group		dx	dx ²
		x ₁	x ₂		
1	B1	53	87	34	1156
2	B2	53	80	27	729
3	B3	34	67	33	1089
4	B4	34	60	26	676
5	B5	34	73	39	1521
6	B6	60	73	13	169
7	B7	27	60	33	1089
8	B8	53	80	27	729
9	B9	47	80	33	1089
10	B10	60	73	13	169
11	B11	53	80	27	729
12	B12	34	60	26	676
13	B13	40	73	33	1089
14	B14	40	67	27	729
15	B15	53	73	20	400
16	B16	40	73	33	1089

17	B17	47	67	20	400
18	B18	67	93	26	676
19	B19	53	80	27	729
20	B20	40	73	33	1089
21	B21	47	67	20	400
22	B22	53	73	20	400
23	B23	60	87	27	729
24	B24	47	73	26	676
25	B25	40	73	33	1089
26	B26	53	73	20	400
27	B27	60	87	27	729
28	B28	34	60	26	676
29	B29	20	67	47	2209
30	B30	53	67	14	196
31	B31	47	73	26	676
32	B32	34	73	39	1521
33	B33	40	67	27	729
34	B34	34	73	39	1521
35	B35	47	67	20	400
36	B36	53	80	27	729
37	B37	27	67	40	1600
38	B38	53	67	14	196
Total		1724	2766	1042	30898
Mean Score		45.37	72.79		

Table: The Deviation Score of the Control Group

No	Subject	Control Group		dy	dy ²
		y ₁	y ₂		
1	C1	47	60	13	169
2	C2	47	60	13	169
3	C3	34	67	33	1089
4	C4	67	87	20	400
5	C5	40	67	27	729
6	C6	47	73	26	676
7	C7	47	73	26	676
8	C8	53	73	20	400
9	C9	47	60	13	169
10	C10	67	87	20	400
11	C11	53	67	14	196
12	C12	53	73	20	400
13	C13	53	67	14	196
14	C14	34	53	19	361
15	C15	20	53	33	1089
16	C16	34	53	19	361
17	C17	47	60	13	169
18	C18	53	73	20	400
19	C19	67	73	6	36
20	C20	40	53	13	169
21	C21	60	67	7	49
22	C22	53	73	20	400
23	C23	40	67	27	729
24	C24	20	53	33	1089
25	C25	47	67	20	400
26	C26	47	67	20	400
27	C27	47	73	26	676

28	C28	60	73	13	169
29	C29	53	73	20	400
30	C30	53	73	20	400
31	C31	40	60	20	400
32	C32	34	53	19	361
33	C33	47	67	20	400
34	C34	43	53	10	100
35	C35	34	53	19	361
36	C36	40	53	13	169
37	C37	67	73	6	36
38	C38	40	73	33	1089
Total		1775	2503	728	15882
Mean Score		46.71	65.87		

By using the data in the table above, the Mean deviation (Md) and the sum square of the mean deviation (**dx² and dy²**) of both groups can be calculated by using these following formulas:

$$Mdx = \frac{\sum dx}{Nx} \text{ and } Mdy = \frac{\sum dy}{Ny}$$

Meanwhile, the formula used in finding the sum square of the mean deviation (**dx² and dy²**) as follow:

$$\sum dx^2 = \sum dx^2 - \frac{(\sum dx)^2}{Nx}$$

and

$$\sum dy^2 = \sum dy^2 - \frac{(\sum dy)^2}{Ny}$$

Then, the calculation of the mean deviation score and the sum square of the mean deviation for both groups can be calculated as follows:

<p>The Experimental Group</p> <p>The mean deviation score:</p> $Mdx = \frac{\sum dx}{N_x}$ $= \frac{1042}{38}$ $= 27.42$ <p>The sum square of the mean deviation:</p> $\sum dx^2$ $= \sum dx^2 - \frac{(\sum dx)^2}{N_x}$ $= 30898 - \frac{(1042)^2}{38}$ $= 30898 - \frac{1085764}{38}$ $= 30898 - 28572.74$ $= 2325.26$	<p>The Control Group</p> <p>The mean deviation score:</p> $Mdy = \frac{\sum dy}{N_y}$ $= \frac{728}{38}$ $= 19.16$ <p>The sum square of the mean deviation:</p> $\sum dy^2$ $= \sum dy^2 - \frac{(\sum dy)^2}{N_y}$ $= 15882 - \frac{(728)^2}{38}$ $= 15882 - \frac{52984}{38}$ $= 15882 - 13946.95$ $= 1935.05$
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$$T_{obs} = \frac{Mdx - Mdy}{\frac{\sum dx^2 + \sum dy^2}{nx + ny - 2} \sqrt{\frac{1}{nx} + \frac{1}{ny}}}$$

$$= \frac{27.42 - 19.16}{\frac{2325.26 + 1935.05}{38 + 38 - 2} \sqrt{\frac{1}{38} + \frac{1}{38}}}$$

$$= \frac{8.26}{\frac{4260.31}{74} \sqrt{\frac{2}{38}}}$$

$$= \frac{8.26}{\frac{4260.31}{74} \cdot \frac{1}{19}}$$

$$= \frac{8.26}{\frac{4260.31}{1406}}$$

$$= \frac{8.26}{3.03}$$

$$= \frac{8.26}{1.74} = 4.75$$

$$Df = (N_x + N_y - 2)$$

$$= (38 + 38 - 2)$$

$$= 74$$

From the calculations above, it can be seen that the mean deviation score and the sum square of mean deviation score of the experimental group (27.42 and 2325.263) were higher than the control group's (19.16 and 1935.05). It shows that there was improvement from both data before and after getting the treatment. So, it was proven that the use of flashcards improved students' interest in learning vocabulary at the seventh grade of SMPN 1 Aikmel.

The result of the t-test was also calculated in order to find out the contribution of flashcards in vocabulary learning at the seventh grade students of SMPN 1 Aikmel. The formula of significance test is as follow:

From the calculation above, it can be seen that the value of the t-test is 4.75 and the value of t-table for significance level of 74 df at .05 is 1.992; while its significance level at .01 is 2.652. Thus, the result of the t-test was higher than the t-table, or in other words it proved that the result was significant. Based on the criteria of hypothesis testing proposed, it could be concluded from this study that the Null Hypothesis (Ho) was rejected and alternative Hypothesis (Ha) was accepted. Thus, flashcards contribute to vocabulary learning at the seventh grade students of SMPN 1 Aikmel in academic year 2014/2015.

Table: The result of t-test and t-table

t-test	t-table		
	Df	.05 (95%)	.01 (99%)
4.75	74	1.992	2.652

D. DISCUSSION

After analyzing the result of the pre-test and the post-test in the experimental and the control group, it was found that many improvements have appeared. These improvements were shown at the following table:

The Experimental Group				Range	
Pre-test	Min	20	Post-test	60	40
	Max	67		93	26
	Mean	45.37		72.79	27.42
	Passed	1		34	33
	Failed	38		4	3
The Control Group				Range	
Pre-test	Min	20	Post-test	53	33
	Max	67		87	20
	Mean	46.71		65.87	19.16
	Passed	4		14	10
	Failed	34		28	6

Based on the table above, the level of students' basic vocabulary knowledge between the two major groups seemed equal. It can be seen from the result of the pre-test between these groups including the lowest score, and the highest score which were the same; 20 and 67. Moreover, the pre-test result including the mean score, the number of students who passed/failed in the pre-test were not far different.

The range score of the mean score in the experimental group and the control group were 27.42 and 19.16 respectively. Thus, it can be said that the experimental group gained more significant effects in the scores of the pre-test and the post-test. In the other words, learning

vocabulary by using flashcards has more effects than using common technique.

Then, the t-test and t-table were calculated. As the final result, it was gained that the value of t-test (4.75) was higher than that of the t-table (1.992 and 2.652) which indicated that they were significantly different. It means that flashcard affected the students' vocabulary achievement. This finding was relevant to the previous studies' which also found that flashcards could improve students' vocabulary achievement.

E. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on the data analysis and discussion in the previous chapter, it can be concluded that:

- There was a significant difference between the students' progress before and after learning vocabulary using flashcards.
- The result of the calculation of t-test formula was 4.75. While the value of t-table for significance level of 74 df at .05 was 1.992; while its significance level at .01 was 2.652. Thus, the result of t-test was higher than t-table, or in the other words it proved that the result was significant. In conclusion, the null hypothesis (Ho) was successfully rejected and obviously the alternative hypothesis (Ha) was accepted. In other words, flashcards proved to be a good visual media that can draw students' interest in learning vocabulary.

There are several suggestions which can be taken from this study. They are as follow:

1. To the English teachers
 - The teacher needs to identify the students' behaviour first before presenting the lesson. It is aimed to choose an appropriate technique;
 - It is necessary for the teacher to use interesting technique and media, such as flashcards, so the students will be interested in joining the lesson;
 - The teacher should be able to develop a good atmosphere in the class, so that the students learn at comfortable situation.
2. To the students

Some students might consider English as a difficult subject if there is no motivation to learn. The students should encourage themselves to learn more, to ask more, and to know more.
3. To other researchers
 - Other researchers interested in increasing students' vocabulary achievement by using flashcards could do similar research with wider scope and population. Flashcards can be applied in other aspects of learning, not only in vocabulary learning.
 - This research was conducted in the seventh grade of Junior High School, hopefully, another researcher conduct in higher grade or educational level.

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