

## The Use of Puppet and Flashcard as Media in Teaching Vocabulary for Children with Special Needs

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### Abstract

Teaching vocabulary to children with special needs is not easy. There are some problems faced by teachers when they taught English vocabulary to the children with special needs, they did not pay attention to the teacher, and they lost their interest in English subject. This quasi experimental research attempted to describe what extent puppet and flashcard lead the children with special needs to the vocabulary development and to discuss students' attitude towards puppet and flashcard media in learning vocabulary. The participants were students of eighth-grade of SLB Negeri Ungaran and SLB Widya Bhakti Semarang. There were two instruments; test and questionnaire. The results showed that the significance between post-test score of puppet group and flashcard group was 0.000 with significance  $0.000 < 0.05$ . Furthermore, according to result of the questionnaire, students perception towards both media were positive, yet their interests in flashcard was higher than those in puppet media. It is suggested that flashcard media was more effective to be used in teaching vocabulary for children with special needs.

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## INTRODUCTION

Teaching vocabulary to children with special needs is not easy. There are many problems faced by teachers when they taught English vocabulary to the students with special needs, especially in special Junior High School, for example the students never been taught English in Elementary School, they are not pay attention to the teacher, and they lost their interest in English subject. Based on the interview by asking some questions to three teachers of special junior high school, there are some problems in teaching English especially vocabulary. The first problem is the students did not pay attention when teacher gives explanation about vocabulary, they did not focus on the lesson. The second problem is the students felt bored when learning English because they think English is hard to learn.

The writer tried to use puppet and flashcard as media in teaching vocabulary to overcome students' problem in learning vocabulary. Some previous studies have been conducted dealing with teaching to children with special needs. Such as, Lin and Nzai (2014) about using iPad Apps to teach vocabulary. Some findings of the study are iPad can enhance literacy skills, not only that it can motivate students using technology. To do this, teacher would gain information how to incorporate iPad apps into their daily teaching practice and curriculum design. Kokkalia and Drigas (2016) studied about teaching strategy in English. The findings of the study are mobile learning support children with special needs to be familiar with common nouns and verbs signs. Applications can help children with autism and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and also children who face mental and physical disorder. Yahya, Yunus and Toran (2013) also conducted a research about a technique to learn vocabulary. In their research, they used teachers' practice and voice to teach vocabulary for students with special needs. In other words, teacher teaches vocabulary to his students with giving clear explanation or object and also uses his voice to make the explanation clearly. Moran (2012) in her thesis stated that using VAK Learning styles to teach English Vocabulary is affective. He found that the use of VAK learning help the students to mastering English vocabularies. Meanwhile, the learning style were a complete contribution focused on the improvement and development of a pedagogical methodology used for the acquisition of English vocabulary related to the learning process and learning context of a learner with mental retardation.

In addition, there is a study conducted by Surujlal (2013). In this study, using music and dance as learning interventions for children with special needs is effective enough. He found that the use of music and dance not only help the students be active and enjoyable in learning process but also improve vocabulary quite a lot. Moreover, children are acting the song so their vocabulary improves a lot. Similar with the study above, a study relating to vocabulary is also carried by Noori and Farvadin (2016). Their study has an objective to examine the effect of using audio-visual and pictures in teaching vocabulary. The result of the study shows that students give positive responses toward the media used by researcher. The students are motivated, so they can learn vocabulary easily. However, the use audio-visual aids can be more effective than pictures in learning vocabulary. Evi, Zainal and Dewi (2016) on their research about "Teaching Vocabulary by Using Picture for Autism Students" it revealed that the picture is effective to be used as an alternative media in teaching vocabulary.

The use of picture can minimize the students' difficulties in vocabulary. Rismanti (2017) on her research found it was positive effect of using flashcard in teaching English vocabulary for dyslexia students. Other finding showed that there was increasing on the average of post test. In pre test the average score was 58.64 and in post test was 77.95. In other words the use of flashcard was effective to teach English for dyslexia students. Bennett (2002) on his research it was found that the benefits of the use of puppets in the classroom are many and varied. Such as provides an opportunity for student expression through the social aspects of communication. Students who are working in a group to prepare and present a puppet show are learning to work cooperatively with others, where there is give and take and sharing of ideas. This offers the students the advantage of making group cohesion.

All of the studies above concern with teaching English for children with special needs which is similar with the topic brought by the writer. Some of those studies discuss about media or techniques used to teach English. A few studies analyze learning media used by teacher in teaching vocabulary.

Therefore, this study aimed to to describe what extent puppet and flashcard lead the children with special needs to the vocabulary development and to discuss students' attitude towards puppet and flashcard media in learning vocabulary. It was expected that the findings of this study would help teacher to teach vocabulary for children with special needs.

## **METHODS**

### **Research Design and Participants**

This research was a quantitative research especially quasi experimental. Six students participated in this research. The sampling technique was used in this study is purposive sampling that is a non-probability sample that is selected based on characteristics of a population and the objective of the study. They were students of eighth grade of SLB Negeri Ungaran and SLB Widya Bhakti in academic year 2018/2019.

### **Instruments**

In this research, the writer used tests and questionnaire. The writer used them to obtain data of students' development in learning vocabulary and students' perception towards the media. The type of test used was pre-test and post-test. In this test, students were asked to do 20 questions. The test was conducted twice that was pre-test and post-test.

Regarding with the questionnaire, it was used to know what students' perception about the use of puppet and flashcard in teaching vocabulary. The writer gave a set of statements related about students' perception toward the media. They included: 1) students' interest, 2) students' relevant, 3) the advantages of using puppet and flashcard media, 4) students' sustainability. Questionnaire was given after doing post-test. It was to support the primary data in this research and to know how far the results effected on the students.

### **Treatment**

The writer conducted this research at SLB Negeri Ungaran and SLB Widya Bhakti Semarang. This research was started from November 19th 2018 until November 28th. The treatment for both puppet and flashcard media was done at the same time. Each treatment needs five meetings. In the first meeting, the writer came to the class and got acquainted with the students. Second meeting, the writer gave a lesson using the media with material that have made. In this meeting the writer taught eight vocabularies. In third meeting, the writer did the same thing as in the second meeting with taught 8 vocabularies. In the fourth meeting, the writer taught the students with 5 vocabularies. In the fifth meeting, the writer gave post test to the students and questionnaire.

### **Data Analysis**

In order to check whether or not the difference between the means of the control group and the experimental group was statically significant, the writer used a t-test in SPSS 16.0. A t-test is a statistical test used to compare two means to determine the probability that difference between the means is a real difference rather than a chance difference. In this study, it was used to see the difference in students' achievement between those were taught using puppet and those were taught using flashcard was significant or not. From the result of calculation above, if obtained t value is higher than the critical r value, it could be inferred that there is significant difference in vocabulary achievement between experimental group, control group and vice versa.

Before administering pre-test and post-test, test reliability and test validity for each item of the tests were also included. In testing the validity and reliability with 4 samples and the level of significance 0.05, the rtable was 0.632. In order to be valid and reliable, each item should have  $r_{xy} > 0.632$ . Meanwhile, the questionnaire was analyzed using Likert Scale Response Anchors then reported in the form of descriptive statics.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

Vocabulary was defined as the collection of words that an individual know. It means that students should have a lot of vocabularies to make easier the communication with others (Linse, 2006). Hornby (2006) argued that vocabulary as the words that people use when they are talking about particular object. In addition, Farqi (2014, p. 27) every word that is learnt in the foreign language belongs to vocabulary. Teaching English vocabulary is not easy. Berne and Blachowics (2008) implied that few research indicate that teaching vocabulary can be considered as problematic, as some teachers are not really sure about the best practice in the teaching and sometimes not really aware how to start forming an instructional emphasis on vocabulary learning. However, teachers have to know the students' character and style they learn. Besides that, teachers have to know the right way to teach English vocabulary. In line with Thornbury (2002) the development of vocabulary teaching depend how the teacher present of new word in vocabulary learning, so the teaching and

learning vocabulary can improve students' knowledge but it should be assisted through media to make students more understand. Many teachers use interactive media to enhance students' understanding. So, the students understanding well.

In teaching vocabulary for students with special needs, teacher starting with simple vocabulary such as animals, colors, objects, and activities that surround them. It is needed a media to encourage student to learn vocabulary. In line with Wallace (1982) that teaching vocabulary should consider with some factors. They are aims, quantity, need, frequent exposure and repetition, meaningful presentation, situation and presentation. The purpose of teaching English vocabulary for students with special needs is to introduce simple vocabulary which they use in their life.

One of the research findings showed that the use of puppet and flashcard media in teaching vocabulary for students with special needs. Flashcard media was effective to be used in teaching vocabulary for students with special needs. It was very useful for students to remember English vocabulary. The students pay attention when the writer taught them using flashcard media. They saw the flashcard media, and said the word enthusiastically. It was in lines with Evi, Zainal and Dewi (2016) it revealed that the picture as visual media is effective to be used as an alternative media in teaching vocabulary, the use of picture can minimize the students' difficulties in vocabulary.

Flashcard media could improve students' vocabularies mastery in two aspects. First, flashcard gave an impact to students in remembering vocabularies. When teaching using flashcard, students see the picture and the name of noun. So, they became more familiar with English vocabulary. Second, this media helped students to communicate with their friends even though in simple sentence, for example my book, your pencil, my shoes. It was in line with Bennett (2002) stated that the benefits of the use of puppets in the classroom are many and varied. Such as provides an opportunity for student expression through the social aspects of communication. Students who are working in a group to prepare and present a puppet show are learning to work cooperatively with others, where there is give and take and sharing of ideas. This offers the students the advantage of making group cohesion.

**Table 1 The Independent Sample T-test of Post-test**

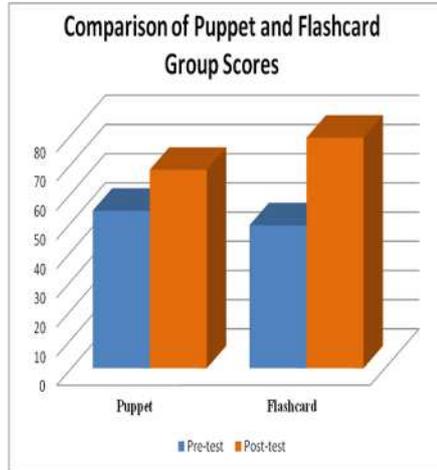
Independent Samples Test										
	Levene's Test for EV			T-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.		T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Dif.	SED	95% CID	
									Lower	Upper
Post-test	Ev <sup>1</sup>	.500	.506	2.178	6	.000	8.750	4.018	18.582	1.082
	Ev <sup>2</sup>			2.178	5.534	.000	8.750	4.018	18.786	1.286

- Note 1: Ev<sup>1</sup> = Equal variances assumed
- Note 2: Ev<sup>2</sup> = Equal variances not assumed
- Note 3: Mean Dif. = Mean Difference
- Note 4: SED = Std. Error Difference
- Note 5: CID = Confidence Interval of the Difference

In addition, puppet media was effective to be used in teaching English vocabulary. After the treatment, the students from puppet group were practice with their pair. They play puppet with dialogue that made by them. Not only that, they also pointed thing and said the English vocabulary.

Both puppet and flashcard media were effective to improve students' mastery English vocabulary. While puppet media focused on the use of sentence in dialogue, flashcard focused on the common vocabulary. However, these two media had different influence on students' achievement. In independent T-test, it was showed that the sig (2-tailed) score was 0.000, which was less than 0.05. It meant that the Hw was accepted. There was a significant difference between students who were taught by puppet and those who were taught by flashcard. Moreover, the mean difference was 8.75. It resulted in positive meaning that flashcard was more effective to improve

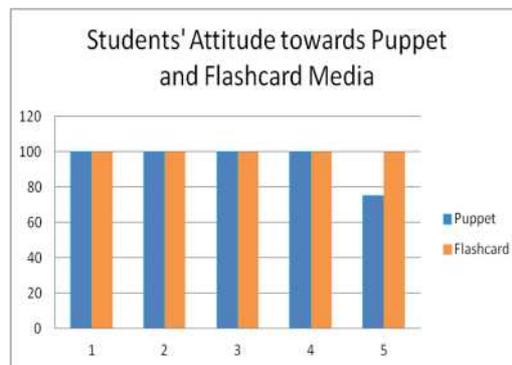
students' vocabulary mastery than puppet media. The result in line with Rismanti (2017) stated that it was positive effect of using flashcard in teaching English vocabulary for students with special needs, in her case dyslexia students. Other finding showed that there was increasing on the average of post test. In pre test the average score was 58.64 and in post test was 77.95. In other words the use of flashcard was effective to teach English for students with special needs.



**Figure 1**

**Comparison of Puppet and Flashcard Group Score**

Regarding with students' attitude, both of the media had a lot of positive responses. They were more than 80%. However, flashcard media had more positive responses. Flashcard media was more applicable and effective in teaching English vocabulary for students with special needs. This result could be seen between the post-test and the questionnaire responses.



**Figure 2**

**Students' Attitude towards Puppet and Flashcard Media**

**CONCLUSION**

Teaching English for students with special need is not easy. It is need a media to encourage them to learn English. A media that can help students to remember common vocabularies easily. The writer tried to use puppet and flashcard as media in learning English. Using puppet and flashcard in learning English can help students to remember common vocabulary that they have found in their live. Based on the computation using SPSS, both puppet and flashcard can use in learning vocabulary. However, flashcard is considered more effective since the improvement of students' achievement of flashcard group is higher than puppet group.

On the other hand, students' attitude towards the media shows a different result. Students are more interested in flashcard media than puppet. One possible explanation is flashcard is more applicable to learn vocabulary than puppet media.

A further investigation about media in learning English for students with special needs should be done. Because of the time limitation, a huge amount of time to conduct a research is needed to measure the improvement of students' achievement in learning English vocabulary. It is because students should learn more vocabularies that related with their school material. In addition, it would be better if the number samples is bigger so the finding of the research is more valid. Thus, learning English for students with special need can be done with suitable media with their ages and their school materials. This study is limited to media and instruments. In which the media that used were puppet and flashcard, while the instruments made by the writer. For the next researcher can be more explore media in learning vocabulary for students with special needs. It is also hoped that the further research can investigate this topic with different students in different ages and grades.

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