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Development of Photographic Thematic Flashcards as a Learning Medium for Introducing Basic English Vocabulary to Kindergarten Students at Kiddos Preschool

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis kebutuhan, merancang prototipe, serta menguji kelayakan media Photographic Thematic Flashcards sebagai alternatif pengenalan kosakata dasar bahasa Inggris pada anak TK A di Kiddos Preschool. Penelitian menggunakan metode Research and Development (R&D) tingkat 1 model Borg and Gall sebagaimana diadaptasi dalam Sugiyono (2019), meliputi analisis kebutuhan, desain produk, hingga validasi ahli tanpa uji coba lapangan. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi kelas, wawancara guru, analisis kurikulum, serta angket validasi ahli. Media pembelajaran yang selama ini digunakan di sekolah, seperti tayangan video melalui televisi, telah memberikan kontribusi positif dalam pengenalan kosakata, sehingga dikembangkan media visual pendamping berupa kartu bergambar berukuran 15 cm × 15 cm berbahan Art Carton 310 gsm dengan laminasi glossy dan sudut tumpul, yang dirancang selaras dengan tema kurikulum. Hasil validasi oleh dua ahli memperoleh skor rata-rata 71,5 kategori "Baik", dengan persentase kelayakan 79,44%. Dengan demikian, Photographic Thematic Flashcards dinyatakan valid secara akademis dan layak dikembangkan lebih lanjut melalui uji coba lapangan.

Kata Kunci : Photographic Thematic Flashcards, Bahasa Inggris Anak Dini, Media Pembelajaran, Penelitian Dan Pengembangan, Kiddos Preschool.

Abstract

This study aims to analyze needs, design a prototype, and test the feasibility of Photographic Thematic Flashcards as an alternative for introducing basic English vocabulary to Kindergarten A students at Kiddos Preschool. The study employed a Level 1 Research and Development (R&D) method based on the Borg and Gall model, as adapted by Sugiyono (2019), encompassing needs analysis, product design, and expert validation without a field trial. Data were collected through classroom observations, teacher interviews, curriculum analysis, and an expert validation questionnaire. Learning media previously used at the school, such as video presentations on television, have made a positive contribution to vocabulary introduction; therefore, a supplementary visual medium was developed in the form of 15 cm × 15 cm picture cards made of 310 gsm Art Carton with a glossy laminate and rounded corners, designed in alignment with the curriculum themes. Validation results from two experts yielded an average score of 71.5 in the "Good" category, with a feasibility percentage of 79.44%. Thus, the Photographic Thematic Flashcards were deemed academically valid and suitable for further development through field testing.

Keywords: Photographic Thematic Flashcards, Early Childhood English, Learning Media, Research and Development, Kiddos Preschool.

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Introduction

Early childhood education plays a key role in shaping a child's character, helping them develop thinking skills and learn to speak and understand language before they start going to school. Between the ages of 4 and 6, which is called the "golden age," kids' brains grow quickly, and they can learn and remember things very easily. One part of growth that really gets better during this time is how well someone can speak and communicate. Young kids use language to share their ideas and emotions, and also to talk with other children, learn about their surroundings, and start learning how to read and write (Eky et al., 2023; Wiratnaningsih, 2021). When teaching English to young learners, the way a foreign language is introduced needs to be changed to fit how young children think and learn.

Teaching English to Young Learners (TEYL) focuses on helping kids learn English from a very young age up to the early years of school. It's created in a way that works with how young kids think, grow, and play with each other. Unlike teaching adults, TEYL uses play, hands-on activities, and real things to help kids learn. It often includes flashcards, actual objects, songs, and Total Physical Response to keep students interested and help them remember new words (Cameron, 2001; Pinter, 2017). Two different theories about development explain why these methods work well for young kids. Piaget and Inhelder (1969) say that children between the ages of 2 to 7, like the 4 to 5 year-olds in this study, are in the preoperational stage. During this time, they use symbols, images, and words to think, but their thinking is based on what they can see or experience directly and isn't yet logical or abstract. Concrete objects and pictures help them understand and organize new ideas. Vygotsky (1978) says that children learn language by interacting with others using symbols and tools, and they learn new words most effectively in their zone of proximal development, where a teacher helps them by using real life materials that support communication between the teacher and students (Suyanto, 2010). When you look at all these ideas together, they show that the words used in kindergarten should be clear, real, and something that teachers and students can use when they talk to each other.

The use of educational media in preschools has its own characteristics and challenges. A study at Kiddos Preschool showed that audio-visual, screen-based media like television is already used to provide interactive content, and animated videos have also been used to teach English words to kindergarten children in Indonesia (Annisa & Muryanti, 2022). Television and videos are types of media where information is shown but not interacted with directly. Studies on how young kids understand symbols suggest that what they see on screens doesn't easily help them understand real things around them (Strouse et al., 2018). According to Piaget and Vygotsky, media is more effective when it is used along with physical items that kids can touch and play with while interacting with teachers and friends. Flashcards are one such material. These methods are suggested for teaching vocabulary to young learners, especially in a bilingual setting (Erniwati et al., 2021), and studies have shown they can help improve beginners' vocabulary test results and boost their interest in learning (Suryani et al., 2022). Most of the printed picture materials you can find today are drawn in a cartoon style. Studies with very young children show that when a picture looks more like the real object it is showing, kids find it easier to connect a new word with the actual object. Photos help with this better than cartoons do (Ganea et al., 2008; Strouse et al., 2018). Materials that show real pictures of the things kids see every day are better to use.

To help and improve the way current learning tools work, we need real and practical new ideas that can effectively support how children build their thinking patterns. The suggested approach is to create Photographic Thematic Flashcards. This medium differs from regular picture cards because it uses real, unchanged photos of actual items. It is made to match the school's theme-based learning plan and has special features that make it safe and long-lasting (Hasan, 2021). Several previous studies have shown that flashcards can support vocabulary learning at an early level. Kusumawati and Mariono (2016) created animal-themed flashcards for kindergarten kids in Surabaya. Suryani et al.(2022) and Erniwati et al.(2021) talked about how flashcards help young learners learn English vocabulary. The studies looked at here didn't create flashcards that use real,

unedited photos and match the theme-based learning plan of a specific school. The unique part of this study is creating Photographic Thematic Flashcards that match the topics taught at Kiddos Preschool. These flashcards are made using ideas from Piaget's preoperational stage and Vygotsky's scaffolding theory, so they offer hands-on and safe learning experiences for young children. The goals of this study are: first, to look at what teachers and students need when it comes to learning English vocabulary through different types of media; second, to create a prototype of Photographic Thematic Flashcards; and third, to check if the prototype is valid by getting feedback from experts.

Research Method

This research was conducted at Kiddos Preschool, located at Jalan Tukad Melangit No. 18, Samplangan Village, Gianyar District, Gianyar Regency, Bali. Kiddos Preschool is a bilingual preschool that focuses on developing young children's potential through an interactive and enjoyable learning approach. The subjects of this study were the kindergarten students of Group A at Kiddos Preschool, while the object of the study was the development of Photographic Thematic Flashcards to introduce basic English vocabulary, covering the visual design process, theme selection, and expert validation of the media.

This study is classified as research and development (R&D), which according to Borg and Gall in Sugiyono (2019) is a process used to develop and validate an educational product. The researcher conducted Level 1 R&D, in which the product design is validated internally by experts or practitioners without external field testing (Sugiyono, 2019). Level 1 R&D consists of five stages: (1) identifying potential and problems through observation and interviews with teachers; (2) reviewing literature and collecting information to support the development; (3) designing the product, including vocabulary, images, layout, size, font, color, and printing materials; (4) validating the design through expert assessment; and (5) refining the design based on the experts' suggestions.

Data were collected using a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. The qualitative method used classroom observation and an unstructured interview with a Kindergarten A teacher to identify the needs and characteristics of the learning media required. The quantitative method used a questionnaire distributed to expert validators to assess the quality of the developed flashcards. The instruments used are presented in Table 1, Table 2, and Table 3 below.

Table 1. Observation Sheet

Observable Things	Number of Item
How are visual media (such as TV) and other supporting media utilized in classroom learning activities?	1
What form does student engagement and active participation take during the learning process?	1
How effective is the use of audio-visual media for students' understanding and retention of new vocabulary?	1
Are there hands-on learning materials available to support the development of students' fine motor skills?	1
Are there various print media or concrete supporting materials available in the classroom?	1

Table 2. Interview Sheet

Questions	Number of Item
How can the use of television as an educational medium be optimized to support dynamic classroom learning?	1
How have the students responded to the learning activities conducted so far, and what is their level of enthusiasm?	1
How do physical interactions contribute to the growth, development, and learning of Kindergarten A students?	1
What are the learning topics currently being taught that are most needed to broaden students' horizons?	1
How do supplementary learning materials help teachers reinforce students' memories after they watch a TV program?	1

The questionnaire sheet used to validate the product consisted of 18 statements covering five aspects: Visual Display, Physical Quality, Practicality, Topic/Content, and Usability. Data analysis techniques used in this study were qualitative and quantitative. Qualitative data, in the form of comments and suggestions from experts, were used to refine the product, while quantitative data, in the form of validation scores, were analyzed using five quantitative scales adapted from Nurkencana (2006), as shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Five Scales of Validity (adapted from Nurkencana, 2006)

No	Score Interval	Category
1	$x \geq 72$	The Best
2	$60 \leq x < 72$	Good
3	$48 \leq x < 60$	Good Enough
4	$36 \leq x < 48$	Bad
5	$x < 36$	Worse

The interval was calculated from an ideal mean (Mi) of 54, obtained from (90 + 18) x 1/2, and an ideal standard deviation (SDi) of 12, obtained from (90 - 18) x 1/6, based on a questionnaire consisting of 18 items with a maximum score of 90 and a minimum score of 18.

Research Findings

The needs analysis was done by observing the classroom and talking to the Kindergarten A teacher at Kiddos Preschool. The observation found that using screen-based audio-visual media, like television, worked well and helped keep students interested and motivated. However, to make the audio-visual learning experience better, students still needed physical materials they could hold and play with directly. These items helped them explore by touching and moving things, and they were also useful for different group games in class. This finding was confirmed during the interview, where the teacher explained that using visual images from television along with real objects after watching helps children remember new words better in the long run. The teacher also appreciated having visual materials that are related to real-life situations, easy to use, and cover subjects like jobs, animals, vehicles, and plants, which are part of kids' everyday experiences.

Based on an analysis of the current semester's thematic syllabus for Group A, the researcher designed the flashcards to align with all the learning themes used at Kiddos Preschool, so that the media comprehensively covers the material studied throughout the year. As an example of how the themes were applied, the researcher selected the "Animals" theme to introduce the names of pets and common animals through clear, realistic photographs, following the principle that thematic content closely related to children's daily lives makes it easier for them to associate English words with real objects.

The design and development of the prototype followed three production phases. In the pre-production phase, the researcher compiled a list of English words appropriate for children aged 4-5, collected original photographs through the Pinterest platform to ensure the objects were depicted accurately and realistically, and determined the physical specifications of the media: a card size of 15 cm x 15 cm, 310 gsm Art Carton paper, and a waterproof glossy hot-laminate finish with rounded corners of a 5 mm radius for children's physical safety. In the production phase, the layout and graphics were designed digitally using Microsoft Word: the front side features a real photograph of an object centered against a colorful background, accompanied by an English vocabulary word written in a bold, clear Century Gothic font, while the back side was left plain white so that children's attention remains focused on the front. In the post-production phase, the cards were printed on 310 gsm Art cardboard, coated with glossy thermal laminate for protection against water and damage, and the corners of each card were rounded using a corner-rounding tool to ensure safety and comfort when handled by students.

The developed prototype was then validated by two expert judges, namely a Kindergarten 1 teacher and a lecturer experienced in early childhood learning. The validation results, covering 18 assessment items across five aspects, are summarized in Table 4.

Table 4. Expert Validation Results
(Rata-rata skor = 71,5; validity percentage = 79.44%)

Aspect	Expert 1	Expert 2
A. Visual Display (font style, size, color; background color; image clarity and layout)	24	22
B. Physical Quality (card size; durability; child safety)	11	12
C. Practicality (ease of use; ease of application in games)	10	8
D. Topic/Content (curriculum suitability; picture-vocabulary relevance; vocabulary selection)	13	12
E. Usability (attractiveness; image-word combination; interaction quality; usefulness for independent/group learning)	17	14
Total Score	**75**	**68**

Based on the validation data, the average score obtained from both expert judges was 71.5 out of a maximum ideal score of 90, equal to a validity percentage of 79.44%. Referring to the five-scale category in Table 3, this score falls within the range of $60 \leq x < 72$, placing the developed Photographic Thematic Flashcards in the "Good" category and indicating that the product is academically valid.

Although the quantitative results already indicated a good rating, the researcher continued to refine the product based on the qualitative feedback provided by the experts, as summarized in Table 5.

Table 5. Revision Summary of the Photographic Thematic Flashcards

Assessment Aspect	Before Revision	Expert Input	After Revision
Visual brightness and color contrast	The background color and visual contrast still appeared dim.	The validator recommended using a brighter background color to make the card more cheerful and eye-catching.	The background brightness was increased using bright colors preferred by young children, and the text color was changed to plain white for better contrast.
Card corner safety	The curvature of the corners was still too small, making the corners feel slightly sharp.	The validator recommended rounding the corners further to ensure children's safety during active play.	The edges were re-cut with a rounder, blunter, and safer curvature.

Discussion

This study aims to improve learning resources at Kiddos Preschool by creating Photographic Thematic Flashcards. The needs analysis shows that TV and other screen-based audiovisual media have worked well in grabbing students' attention at the beginning. To keep English words remembered for a long time in the mind, seeing them isn't enough. You also need real materials that let you touch and use them in a hands-on way, which helps make the words stick better (Amanda et al., 2025). According to Jean Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Development, children between the ages of 4 and 5 are in the preoperational stage, where they use concrete symbols to build their understanding of the world (Piaget & Inhelder, 1969; Santrock, 2018). Using actual photos on flashcards helps kids create clear connections between the real shapes of things they see every day and the English words that represent them.

According to Vygotsky's theory, young children learn a second language best when they interact socially and have support from others. Teachers can use flashcards to offer support that matches each child's learning level, helping them grow within their Zone of Proximal Development, as suggested by Vygotsky in 1978 and Suyanto in 2010. In the field of teaching English to young learners, kids learn best by moving and playing, as they take in language through hands-on activities and games. The cards are physically designed to be 15 x 15 centimeters in size, made from 310 gsm Art Carton material, and have rounded corners, making them safe and fun to use in both group and individual games. This helps students talk back and forth with each other and with the teacher, making learning new words feel more real and useful in everyday conversations.

The findings of this study match what media development theory says, which focuses on how important color contrast, clear text, and physical safety are (Indriana, 2011; Hasan, 2021; Suryana, 2022).They also support the results from Kusumawati & Mariono (2016) and Prastuti et al.(2025) about how effective picture cards can be. The key new idea in this study is creating a product using original photos that matches the local theme-based learning plan for Kiddos Preschool and is based on a strong theory about how children think. Overall, with an expert validation score of 71.5, which falls into the Good category, the Photographic Thematic Flashcards have been shown to be academically valid and are a good tool to use as an interactive way to help young children learn English vocabulary.

Conclusion

Based on the Level 1 research and development conducted at Kiddos Preschool, the Photographic Thematic Flashcards were successfully designed and developed in a structured manner to help young children understand and recognize basic English vocabulary. The development process was

grounded in an analysis of teacher and student needs as well as an analysis of the school's thematic syllabus, resulting in media that incorporate real photographs, a bold and legible Century Gothic typeface, and balanced 15 cm x 15 cm dimensions suited to young children.

The validity of the developed media was assessed by two expert validators and achieved an average score of 71.5 out of an ideal maximum of 90, placing the product in the "Good" category and confirming that it meets academic validity standards in terms of visual appearance, physical quality, ease of use, content suitability, and usability. The product was subsequently refined based on the validators' suggestions by increasing the brightness of the background color and rounding the card corners further, making the flashcards safer and more comfortable for children to use during classroom activities. Kindergarten teachers at Kiddos Preschool are encouraged to use these flashcards as a physical supplement to the school's existing screen-based media, while the institution is advised to duplicate and maintain the cards regularly to support their continued use in the classroom.

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