ประสิทธิภาพของเกมแฟลชการ์ดสำหรับผู้เรียนภาษาที่สอง

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บทคัดย่อ

ปัจจุบันบัตรคำศัพท์ได้กลายเป็นแหล่งข้อมูลที่มีประโยชน์มากที่สุดในการเรียนรู้ภาษาที่สอง ไม่เพียง แค่ช่วยให้ผู้เรียนภาษาที่สองได้สามารถจดจำคำศัพท์ผ่านภาพเท่านั้น แต่ยังช่วยสร้างสภาพแวดล้อมในการ เรียนรู้ที่เป็นเชิงบวกอีกด้วย บทความนี้กล่าวถึงการใช้เกมแฟลชการ์ดเพื่อเพิ่มการจดจำคำศัพท์ที่เป็นเป้าหมาย ในกลุ่มนักเรียนอนุบาลของไทย เมื่อเรียนภาษาอังกฤษในบริบทของ EFL (ภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษาต่างประเทศ) ซึ่งมีการกล่าวถึงการใช้วิธีการสอนทั้งแบบโดยอ้อมและโดยตรง (โดยนัยและชัดเจน) เมื่อมีการสอนคำศัพท์ใหม่ และพบว่าวิธีการสอนแบบโดยอ้อมจะช่วยให้คงคำศัพท์ได้ดีกว่า แต่การผสมผสานของทั้งสองวิธีมีผลในระยะที่ ยาวนานขึ้นในการจดจำคำศัพท์ กรณีศึกษาครั้งนี้ ประกอบด้วยสองชั้นเรียน K2 (อายุสี่ขวบ) โดยมีจำนวน นักเรียนสิบหกคนในแต่ละชั้นเรียน ใช้ระยะเวลาสองสัปดาห์ ซึ่งพบว่า ทั้งสองชั้นเรียนเรียนรู้คำศัพท์เป้าหมาย โดยใช้แฟลชการ์ดที่มีการให้คำแนะนำทั้งโดยตรงและโดยอ้อม แต่มีเพียงหนึ่งในชั้นเรียนเท่านั้นที่เข้าร่วมเกม แฟลชการ์ดเป็นพิเศษ จำนวนสี่ครั้งต่อสัปดาห์ โดยเกมสุดท้ายของแต่ละสัปดาห์จะมีรางวัลเพิ่มเข้ามาสำหรับ เวลาที่ใช้ทำคะแนนได้เร็วที่สุดในเกม การศึกษาใช้การทดสอบก่อนเรียนและหลังการทดสอบ โดยผลการ ทดสอบหลังเรียนแสดงให้เห็นว่าชั้นเรียนที่มีเกมแฟลชการ์ด มีการจดจำคำศัพท์เป้าหมายไว้สูงกว่าชั้นเรียนที่ ไม่ได้เข้าร่วมเล่นเกม ผลการวิจัย พบว่า การใช้เกมแฟลชการ์ดช่วยให้จดจำคำศัพท์ได้ดีขึ้น แต่ได้มีการกล่าวถึง ปัจจัยอื่นไว้ในส่วนอภิปรายผลและจากการที่นักเรียนได้รับการสอนโดยผู้วิจัยมาระยะหนึ่งแล้วนั้นอาจส่งผลต่อ ผลลัพธ์ที่ได้จากการศึกษา นอกจากนี้มีการทดลองใช้คำศัพท์เพียงแปดคำในการวิจัยนี้ อาจจะเป็นคำที่นักเรียน รู้จักหรือคุ้นเคยอยู่แล้ว ดังนั้นจึงควรทำการศึกษาซ้ำกับครูหลาย ๆ คนและใช้คำศัพท์ที่นักเรียนไม่คุ้นเคย

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THE EFFECTIVENESS OF FLASHCARD GAMES
FOR SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNERS

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Abstract

Nowadays flashcards have become one of the most useful tools in learning a second language. Not only do they help second language learners remember words through images, but they also help create a positive learning environment. This paper examines the use of flashcard games to improve the retention of target vocabulary in Thai kindergarten children learning English in a EFL (English as a Foreign Language) context. The use of indirect and direct (implicit and explicit) teaching methods in teaching new vocabulary is discussed, and it was found that the indirect method produced better retention, but that a mixture of both methods had a more lasting effect on vocabulary retention. The case study involved two K2 classes (four-year-olds) with sixteen students in each class over two weeks. Both classes learned target vocabulary using flashcards under direct and indirect instruction, but only one of the classes participated in additional flashcard games four times per week, with the last game of each week involving a reward for the fastest time on one of the games. Posttest results showed that the class with the flashcard games retained target vocabulary better than the class that did not participate in the games. The results showed that the use of flashcard games improved vocabulary retention, but other factors were mentioned in the discussion. The students had been taught by the researcher for some time, which may have influenced the results. Also, only eight vocabulary words were used in the study, which may have been familiar to the students. The study should be repeated with other teachers and with more unknown words.

Keywords: Total Physical Response (TPR), English Foreign Language (EFL), Implicit Instruction, Explicit Instruction

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Introduction

Vocabulary acquisition has traditionally been recognized as one of the most fundamental aspects of language comprehension. In addition to knowing definitions, however, language learners should also integrate lexical items into their existing knowledge. To improve vocabulary acquisition, numerous strategies, such as direct and indirect methods, can be implemented. Therefore, the purpose of the present study was to explore the impact of implementing direct versus indirect vocabulary items on the vocabulary knowledge of pre-intermediate language learners.

In the 21st century, students learn a little vocabulary from school. It is very important for students to learn vocabulary in order to communicate their daily life. The purpose of this research was to find which teaching methods work well for EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students to absorb and retain new vocabulary when learning English (Suikkanen, 2022). Previous studies at Thongsook College Bangkok, Thailand taught that there are several different methodologies to aid with vocabulary understanding and retention. Some of the courses which were helpful were Understanding Teaching and Learning, which looked at culture, gender role differentiation, linguistic imperialism, structured immersion, subtractive / additive language learning, the role of educators, error correction types, and different learning styles (Pinter, 2022). In addition, Language Acquisition, which looked at how languages are learned and how it differs between L1 (first or native language) and L2 (second language). It covered fossilization, and how languages differ and where they originated.

The development of grammar, the rise of new languages, and the impact of universal grammar. Walldén (2020) states that the course on Teaching to Young Learners covered the differences between adults and children when learning a second language. Young learners require more support and reassurance. There must be more engagement and their L1 skill levels should be considered (Cook & Powell, 2022). Classes must be enjoyable, meaningful, purposeful, social, include lots of practice and foremost must be supported correctly (Johnson, 2022). These courses were taught in the second year of the B.A. in TESOL when teaching in a Thai kindergarten the researcher noticed a difference in target vocabulary retention in learners when they were introduced to flashcard games. Therefore, this paper looks at examples of flashcard games for kindergarten aged learners and discusses their effectiveness against a class who did not have additional flashcard games. It would be the same in a case study.

Research Objective

    1. To examine the outcome of total physical response approach in second language learners to enhance the level of individual's learning comprehension.

    2. To examine the effectiveness of vocabulary instructional practices between implicit and explicit language instructions.

Literature Review

Second Language Acquisition

Over the years, researchers, linguists, and others have all conducted various studies on how second language acquisition can be improved. Whether it is English, French, or even Spanish, second language acquisition can sometimes seem difficult and impossible to some, and these studies have been done to try and find the best way to improve language acquisition. Some studies even focused on what factors influence second language acquisition, and how these factors could be changed. The factor that seemed to be one of the major influences in all studies, seemed to have been the motivation and attitude of students toward learning a new language.

One such study, conducted in Montreal in May 1975, focused on what may influence a student's attitude, as well as what could be done to change it. The study has been done on 304 grade 10 and grade 11 students; and these students were provided with attitude and motivation scales that they had to complete. The aim of the study was to determine the major factor of what negatively influences a student's attitude. The researchers provided the students with 38 variables that another study found as factors that negatively impact attitude, and students had to choose the ones they agree with. Various tests to determine English proficiency amongst students in the study were also conducted, in order to determine attitude versus proficiency. The study found that major factors that influenced attitudes for second language learning, are as follows: Integrative motive, self-confidence with English, academic achievement, and alienation factors. Looking at these results, it can be said that a community a student lives in, could have a major effect on how said student learns a second language. Students would not put in the effort to learn a second language, if they feel they might be rejected by the rest of the community. It can also be said that if a second language is needed for Academic achievement, students would perform better, in order to achieve the goals set for them (Clement, Gardener, & Smythe, 1976).

According to Blair (2022), Language acquisition is the way people acquire the ability to perceive a language. It is different from language learning in that it is absorbed rather than taught. Children hearing the word 'eat' before eating will start to understand what the word 'eat' means. This is them acquiring the word rather than being taught it. Language is acquired by listening to people speaking in the second language (L2) and the learners processing and finally understanding what they have heard. The L2 is picked up whilst listening and relating it to the actions of the speakers and the context of the conversation. Li (2022) states that the best way to learn a language is through immersion, but this is not always possible, especially with young learners where English is a foreign language (EFL) and not a second language (ESL). EFL is where the language is learned in a country where the second language is not readily spoken or the learners do not have access to it being spoken every day, like children living in Thailand, where ESL is where the main language of a country the learners are living in is not their native language and they hear it spoken every day, like a Thai national living in England. Godfroid (2019) states that Learners being taught new vocabulary or grammar can improve their skills by listening to native speakers' conversations, with young learners this can be when listening to their teachers talk to each other. In this aspect they are acquiring the language, not being taught it. Learning a second language through acquisition only depends on several factors. The motivation of the learner, their access to the new language, and how well they absorb and retain information, and correct understanding of the second language. For most people this is not the best way to learn a second language and a teacher is required.

Ravem (1974) conducted research with his six-year-old son where he would say sentences and ask questions for his son to acquire English utterances and interrogatives. The family were Norwegian, and they had spent some time in Scotland, so his son had some basic English skills. The method used was free conversation followed by a translation test. The idea was to see if his son acquired correct grammar, notably the verb 'do', from the listening to his father's questions and statements. The research was successful although, Norwegian is closer related to the English language than the Thai language so if research like this was done in Thailand the results may differ greatly, however it shows how young learners can acquire a second language by listening to a native or fluent speaker.

Indirect Teaching Method (Implicit Instruction)

In English language lessons, emphasis is placed on cultivating students' critical thinking in regard to language content, results, and learning activities. There are extensive and intricate student-teacher relationships within even beyond the classroom. Indirect instruction has one

advantage over direct instruction in that it is more adaptable to the student. As a result, it will be more tailored to the student's specific needs. Furthermore, indirect instruction consumes less time than direct instruction, making it more convenient for teachers. (Ryan, 2022)

Ahmadian (2020) states that the indirect teaching method is student centered and allows students to figure things out by themselves or with the help of their peers. This type of teaching method promotes creative thinking and better understanding of the target topic. When teaching to young learners it is better to see that the learners fully understand the topic and using implicit instruction allows them to question what they are learning and put it into and understandable and relatable format for better memory retention. Implicit instruction gives the learners the opportunity to obtain the information required using problem-centered learning and is inquiry based. The learners think for themselves to understand the target topic. Taimalu and Luik (2019) states that students learn through observation, investigation, and inference from facts during indirect instruction, which is a student-centered method of teaching. Instead of providing direct teaching in this instructional paradigm, academics play the function of a facilitator or supporter.

Lopez Vera (2022) studies showed that retention of newly learned vocabulary highly correlated positively with the attention amount on them. When teaching target vocabulary with flashcards the teacher can become lazy and say the word, then move on to the next flashcard. The teacher says "dog" and points at the flashcard. With implicit instruction this can be expanded to include concept check questions. "What is this?" "Is it big or small?" "Are they friendly or scary?" "Can we eat it?" This last question can have different answers depending on the country you are teaching in or even the region of the country you are teaching in. Godfroid, Boers, and Housen (2013) and Dolgunsöz (2015) states that using concept check questions like this reinforces the understanding of the words and allows the teacher to see that the learners do understand the words. Going over target vocabulary from previous weeks aids with retention and reinforces understanding and knowledge. Having learners infer word meaning from context is also a good way to enhance vocabulary retention, but it is more difficult to use this technique with younger learners as they must understand all the words in the sentence where the target word is to be inferred. Vasu, Mei Fung, Nimehchisalem and Md Rashid (2022) states that putting the new words into context for the learners also aids with target vocabulary retention. When the target word is 'dog' talking about dogs in story form is a good way of doing this and is why reading stories to young learners is an important teaching tool.

Direct Teaching Method (Explicit Instruction)

The direct teaching method is teacher centered and is more structured than the indirect teaching method. Clear instructions are given to enable the learners to understand what is required of them and what they are expected to achieve at the end of the activity or exercise (Toth, 2022). The learners listen to the instructions and follow them. This is more of an authoritative style of teaching.

Ahmed, Miciak, Taylor and Francis (2022) states that direct instruction often refers to instructional strategies that are planned, carried out, and directed by instructors, and the presentation of academic material to students by teachers, such as during a lecture or demonstration. Unlike implicit instruction the teacher would show the learners a picture of a dog and tell the students what he wants them to understand about it. "This is a dog; they are different sizes but mostly small. They are friendly. We do not eat them." Even if all the learners repeat what the teacher says and even nod their heads the teacher cannot have a clear understanding that the learners understand the target word.

Explicit instruction does not allow for critical thinking and is more of a listen and repeat approach to learning which research has shown to not be as effective when teaching languages (Yeldham & Choy, 2022). A mixture of both implicit and explicit instruction is a great way to help with target vocabulary retention, finding the correct balance takes practice.

Flashcards / TPR

Schmidt (2010) mentioned that people learn things they pay attention to and do not learn much about things they do not attend to. Flashcards are considered as a very useful tool to grab the learner's attention and helps to increase their motivation in learning English language. Flashcards are picture representations of target vocabulary the student is to learn. It is easier to show a picture of a dog and say "dog" than trying to explain what a dog is. Flashcards are an extremely useful classroom tool when teaching languages in the same way Bakhodirovna (2022) states that total physical response is an important method. TPR is method of acting out the target vocabulary you are teaching. Teaching the word "stand-up" and doing the action of standing up reinforces the meaning of the word and gives the learners a better understanding of the words. TPR is an indispensable tool for any EFL or ESL teacher. If the learner has no understanding of the L2 they are learning they will know the action in L1 and with practice and repetition, they will associate the action with the L2 word. TPR is also effective when used with corresponding flashcards.

Dewi and Fatmawati (2022) states that when teaching nouns flashcards are what TPR is for verbs, although TPR can also be used to teach nouns. The clarity of the flashcards is important. Keep them simple and to the point. If the word you are teaching is "dog" the flashcard should be of just a dog, not a dog being walked by someone through a field with other animals on the card. With flashcards, less is more. TPR is sometimes referred to as 'language body conversations.' where parents talking with their young children act out the words, they want them to learn and remember. Moreover, Gumiandari (2021) states that TPR is a method of teaching language or vocabulary concepts by using physical movement to react to verbal input. The process mimics the way that infants learn their first language, and it reduces student inhibitions and lowers stress. The purpose of TPR is to create a brain link between speech and action to boost language and vocabulary learning.

Research Methodology

The research was conducted over a two-week period with one thirty-minute English class per day. The study was conducted among two K2 level (four-years-old) private Thai kindergarten classes. Each class had sixteen students aged four to five years old. Most of the students had attended Pre-k and K1 classes at the same school which has a high focus on English learning. The learners receive two hours of lessons in English from a native speaker daily which is reinforced by non-native speaker instruction classes.

The school had eight classes in each year group but two were chosen by the researcher as he was already teaching said classes. The students had been taught by the researcher for six months prior to the research taking place and were therefore comfortable with the researcher and his teaching methods. The students consisted of both boys and girls with a split of roughly fifty-fifty. The lessons covered were not only English but math, science, phonics, art, and coding. The curriculum is based on a scaffolding method, where each lesson builds from previous lessons and it is based on an Oxford English curriculum amended for an EFL context with worksheets and flashcards. There were two worksheets for the topic, one per week, with each worksheet being completed on Thursday to ensure enough time to finish it during the week.

The focus of the research was on Group 1 where the students are exposed to the use of flashcard games for vocabulary retention and not in the use of TPR. Flashcards are utilized routinely in every subject with each teacher having their own allocation of flashcards for each subject at the start of the school year. While Group 2 students were only taught through direct teaching instruction and mainly focused on the words given from a textbook.

Flash cards are utilized in the classes for each of the subjects, but the subject chosen was English. The topic was rooms of the house, and the words were living room, bedroom, bathroom, toilet, kitchen, hallway, garden, and dining room. The flashcards are A4 size and laminated. The pictures are the same as used in the worksheets to avoid any confusion. Both classes were shown flashcards during the teaching process but only one of the classes had extra flashcard games to reinforce the topic vocabulary. On the first day both classes had the vocabulary drilled using the flashcards, but no games were played. The games started on the second day of the week, with the first day being used to drill the flashcards.

There were four games used during the research period. In the first game the flashcards were placed on the whiteboard. The students were given a squeaky hammer and they had to hit the flashcard and say the word. This game was played twice a week with the second game the teacher would give the student a word and they had to choose the correct one, hit it with the hammer and say the word. In the second game the flashcards were stuck on the walls in different places whilst the students were on a break and they had to choose the correct flashcard one at a time, each student would have to find three flashcards. For the third game the flashcards were placed on the floor in pairs and the students had to throw a bean sack onto them. The student then had to say each of the words in the pair of cards. The pairs were always different for every game.

The last game the flashcards were laid on the floor, one after the other. Students had to run up and say each of the flashcards in turn and were timed. The times were then written on the board and the winner of each game received a reward, a packet of Gummy bears. This was the only game with a reward associated with it. This made the students competitive as they all wanted the Gummy bears. If students wanted to challenge the winner, they could have another go. This game was played once at the end of each week. Throughout the two-week research period all the learners were rewarded with stickers when they did well as a class and not just as individuals. During the period, both results from post-tests and pre-tests from Group 1 and Group 2 students are being recorded. Both classes were subjected to a pre-test and post-test. Both classes were shown the flashcards at the start of the two-week period and were marked on how many they said correctly. This is one of the reasons rooms of the house was chosen as the students will have already, in theory, had some exposure to the target vocabulary. At the end of the research the students had a post-test where they were asked to complete the sentences with the correct room in the house and then point to the correct flashcard. The students had to answer in full sentences, but correct grammar was

not marked at this point. If they attempted a full sentence and said the correct room, they were given a point. Testing was conducted outside the classroom away from the other students. The data the data from flashcard games will be analyzed with the mean (M), standard deviation (S.D) and independent-samples t-test.

Research Findings

The results were analyzed used t-test to compare the flashcard games from two groups first and last weeks.

Table 1 Students learning vocabulary through the flashcard game

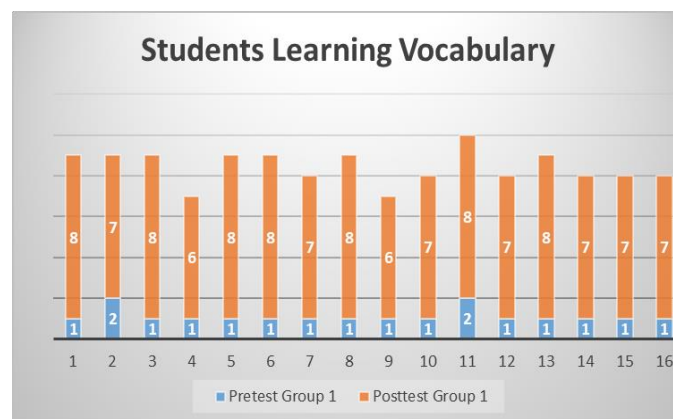|	Group 1 Mean (S.D)	Group 2 Mean (S.D)	t-tets	P- value
Pretest	19 (1.18)	63 (3.9)	0.05	0.17
Posttets	19 (1.18)	65 (4.0)	0.07	0.003

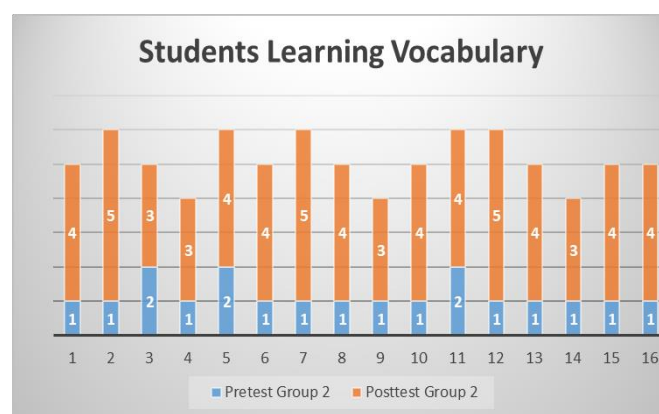**Figure 1** Students Learning Vocabulary: Group 1

Figure 2 Students Learning Vocabulary: Group 2

The Table 1 shows that that there was no significant difference in the between mean scores of the group 1 and the control group. The pretest scores from both figures indicated that the students did have some prior knowledge of the target vocabulary and both classes scored a mean score of 2/8 with learners showing an understanding of which activities are carried out in different rooms. On the post-test the class who had not had the flashcard games scores a mean score of 4/8 whilst the mean score of the class who participated in the flashcard games had a mean score of 7/8. These findings show that the use of flashcard games with rewards greatly aided to target vocabulary retention in the learners. When the reward was introduced in the last game of each week the learners became competitive as they wanted to win the Gummy bears. The results were as per expected and shows that the use of games when teaching kindergarten level students distracts them realizing they are learning and makes the learning environment fun.

The result of the study reveals that total physical response approach is extremely effective for young learners. It can be said that both implicit and explicit instructions should be applied to increase the learner's ability to become critical thinkers. If a teacher prefers to use only one specific approach in a classroom, it may not be as successful due to the high expectations of today's educational world.

The attention span of young learners is much less than adults which can be difficult to achieve daily. This is the reason why there were four games and not the same game over and over. Only one learner cried when he did not win the game. This learner was in the group who did not participate in the flashcard games. Thongsook college has provided a class on Teaching to Young Learners aided the research and helped with the creation of the games for this research.

Discussion and Suggestion

The research was conducted with vocabulary the learners had been exposed to even if it had only been for a short time. Many of the learners knew which activity takes place in the different rooms of the house. Had the research been conducted with new vocabulary words the results could have been different. Some of the other target vocabularies cover fruit and vegetables, colors, shapes, feelings and emotions, as well as weather and animals. For some of the other vocabularies this would have been the students first time hearing the words in English. Would this have affected the results?. The target vocabulary consisted of eight

words; would the results be repeated if there were twenty words. In addition, this research promote the students learning vocabulary through the flash games.

For this research it was decided that eight words was sufficient given the age of the learners involved. Furthermore, the learners were already being taught by the researcher and where comfortable with the methods used in class. Kindergarten students respond better when they are in a comfortable environment, know and like their teacher. Maybe if the research was repeated with a new teacher and unheard target vocabulary the results would be different. Would this new study feel like a test to the learners? Would this affect the results? Several studies should be conducted simultaneously with more participants and a larger vocabulary for comparison.

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