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**The Effect of Using Flashcards on Developing Dolch  
Sight Word Recognition Skills among Primary School  
Pupils in Kuwait**

By

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**Abstract:**

The current research aimed to identify the effect of using flashcards on developing Dolch Sight Word Recognition Skills among primary school pupils in Kuwait. The researcher prepared Flashcards on Dolch Sight Words suitable for second and third-graders at primary school. Recognition Skills were measured using an assessment card of Dolch Sight Word Recognition Skills for second and third-graders at primary school. The significant differences between the pre and post-measurements were calculated in the Dolch Sight Word Recognition test. The results showed statistically significant differences at the level (0.01) between the mean scores of the female second graders on the assessment card of Dolch Sight Word Recognition Skills in favor of post-measurement and statistically significant differences at the level (0.01) between the mean scores of the female third graders on the assessment card of Dolch Sight Words Recognition Skills in favor of post-measurement.

**Keywords:** Flashcards, Dolch Sight Word, Primary School Pupils

## Introduction

In recent years, the most important change in the field of teaching and learning a second/foreign language has been the shift from a focus on language to a focus on language teaching methodology to language learners and the learners' variables that affect language learning. As a result, individual differences and learning styles have become increasingly important as they play a vital role in helping learners achieve better achievement in language learning.

Samih (2017) believed that learning vocabulary is an essential part of the language learning process, enabling learners to discover and acquire the meanings of new words in books or words they interact with inside their classrooms. Hence, it is not surprising that learning vocabulary is one of the basic foundations for teaching any language, whether it is the first or second language. Flashcards refer to card games that are performed by quickly displaying pictures to stimulate a child's brain to receive the information in front of them and are very effective for helping children learn to read and identify numbers and letters as early age as possible (Sugiantiningsih & Antara, 2019).

Despite what studies and research have confirmed about the importance of vocabulary for mastering learning the four basic skills of English and improving language proficiency in general, multiple studies have shown that there are difficulties facing learners in this field, including what Albousaif (2011) mentioned in his study that learners face many difficulties in learning English - in general, and in learning vocabulary in particular and what Al-Zahrani (2011) indicated in his study that most learners of English - as a foreign language - face difficulties in communicating in English, due to their limited vocabulary.

There are numerous teaching aids available that teachers can use to introduce the material and help learners understand the material. According to the results of many studies, it is recommended that teachers apply different media to improve the quality of teaching and learning English in the classroom, such as role-playing games, flashcards, and picture series. However, many primary school pupils still face difficulties when learning English. Using flashcards can increase pupils' vocabulary proficiency when learning English and make vocabulary learning engaging and fun. Pupils' imaginations can also be stimulated to develop their ideas and learn and find new vocabulary by using flashcards (Hamer & Rohimajaya, 2018).

Children must develop certain skills to read fluently. Automatically recognizing high-frequency words is one of those skills. These words, also known as sight words, were compiled by Dolch and should be taught to pupils at a certain grade level or frequency (Farrell, Osenga, & Hunter, 2013). Many teachers and schools used the Dolch sight word list as a guide in teaching sight words to students. For each grade level, Dolch sight words consist of frequently occurring words in books. Words like "in" and "can" are included in these lists. If students can't identify sight words, it will have a significant effect on their ability to read. Some students have trouble recognizing high-frequency words because they have not been exposed to them because they do not have a clear definition or do not follow a grapheme-phoneme pattern, because they have difficulty processing or remembering information, or because they speak more than one language (Kagan, 2018).

There are four distinct phases in developing sight words (Gaskin, Ehri, Cress, O'Hara & Donnelly, 1996). These phases are characterized by the type of alphabetic knowledge used to form neural connections. The four phases are pre-alphabetic, partial, full, and consolidated alphabetic phases. Ehri (2005) developed and researched the commonalities that underlie the

written forms of English words because all learners must go through all four phases of developing sight words before beginning to memorize them. When the child masters the four phases (pre-alphabetic, partial, full, and consolidated alphabetic), he can form connections in his brain that link the written forms of sight words with their pronunciation and meanings (Ehri, 1995). With each development phase, the process of forming a connection is clear and helps children place the word in sight memory.

### **The Study Problem**

Teaching English as a second language receives obvious attention from the Ministry of Education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia because it has been approved for teaching it to fourth graders at primary schools in the past few years. Despite the efforts made to develop English language courses represented in the curriculum development project, there are indications of poor achievement of pupils and their lack of vocabulary. Al-Zuhairi (2008) indicated that one of the reasons for pupils' underachievement in learning English is the ineffectiveness of the teaching methods used and the lack of motivation among pupils in learning English. Al-Tawyan (2015) also indicated that learners are bored with the traditional methods based on repeating and rewriting words.

Consequently, teaching English to primary pupils should emphasize the playful learning principle because children prefer learning through something that interests them. Thus, teachers should create creative and interesting activities to make pupils enjoy, be interested, and be active in the learning process so they do not get bored or sit without doing anything (Astuti, 2015).

One of the problems that pupils suffer from is forgetting the English language vocabulary. They learn vocabulary and memorize it, but they do not recall it in the appropriate situation, causing a barrier to communication.

The student of any language cannot understand it unless he understands its elements (Abdel-Razek, 2008). Abu Jamous and Abdullah (2009) showed the statistically significant effect of using flashcards on developing words recognition skills among the pupils of the first three grades in the Arabic language, as there were statistically significant differences at the level (0.01) between the performance of pupils in the two experimental groups, and the control group in favor of the experimental group.

Maajini (2020) showed the effectiveness of using PowerPoint presentations to teach sight words to children with ASD. Aisyah, Ridwan, Faisol, and Muawanah (2022) showed the effectiveness of using flashcards in improving letter recognition in kindergarten in the English language. Farida, Isrina, and Apsari (2019) showed the effectiveness of using flashcards in improving English language vocabulary for seventh graders, as it found statistically significant differences between the mean scores of pupils in the pre and post-measurements for (vocabulary meanings, spelling aspect, vocabulary use, vocabulary reading) in favor of the post measurement. On the other hand, Ngarofah and Sumarni (2019) showed an effect of using flashcards in teaching vocabulary to second graders, as the research results showed an improvement in pupils' proficiency in vocabulary because they could memorize and understand easily while learning English language vocabulary. The research recommended the use of flashcards in teaching English.

Munawaroh's study (2022) aimed to improve eighth-grade pupils' proficiency degree of vocabulary by using flashcards as a model to enhance English learning vocabulary. The study showed a significant difference in pupils' total vocabulary before and after being taught with flashcards. The differences showed that the post-test mean is higher than the pre-test mean, indicating the effectiveness of using flashcards in improving pupils'

vocabulary. The results of the (Hardiyanti & Herda, 2023) study showed the effectiveness of using flashcards in improving English vocabulary recognition among secondary school students. The study showed that flashcards are useful in teaching vocabulary and improving understanding of the meanings of English words, which can be used or applied in the context of the language.

It is noted that there is no study in the Kuwaiti environment- to the researcher's knowledge - that dealt with The Effect of Using Flashcards on Developing Dolch Sight Word Recognition Skills among Primary School Pupils in Kuwait. Thus, the current research problem is determined in an attempt to answer the following main question:

### **What is the effect of using Flashcards on developing Dolch sight word recognition skills among primary school pupils in Kuwait?**

**This question has the following questions:**

- 1) What is the effect of using Flashcards on developing Dolch sight word recognition skills among second-grade primary school pupils in Kuwait?
- 2) What is the effect of using Flashcards on developing Dolch sight word recognition skills among third-grade primary school pupils in Kuwait?

### **The Study Objectives**

**The current study aims to detect:**

- 1) The effect of using Flashcards on developing Dolch sight word recognition skills among second-grade primary school pupils in Kuwait.
- 2) The effect of using Flashcards on developing Dolch sight word recognition skills among third-grade primary school pupils in Kuwait.

## The Study Significance

**It is hoped that this research will benefit:**

- 1) English language teachers, as it deals with one of the ways to develop English vocabulary recognition skills, which is flashcards.
- 2) Pupils of primary grades in particular and different grades in general, in acquiring English language vocabulary using flashcards.
- 3) English language supervisors in training English language teachers to employ flashcards in teaching pupils vocabulary according to the Dolch list.
- 4) In filling some shortcomings in local and Arabic research that dealt with flashcards in teaching developing English vocabulary recognition skills.

## The Study Terminology

### English Vocabulary:

The researcher defines it procedurally as a set of meaningful words found in the English language course for the second and third grades of primary school, which female pupils acquire in the classroom and achieve successful communication with their peers, which leads to their development in the later stages.

### Vocabulary Acquisition:

The researcher defines it procedurally as a teaching-learning process in which the female pupil acquires a set of meaningful English vocabulary which achieves successful communication through integration with the surrounding environment and interaction with peers.

## The Study Limits

**The study limits are as follows:**

- **Thematic limits:** English language vocabulary (according to the Dolch list) is included in the curriculum of the second and third grades of primary school.



- **Human limits:** female pupils of the second and third grades of primary school at Al-Andalus Primary School for Girls, Al-Farwaniya Education District in Kuwait.
- **Spatial limits:** Al-Andalus Primary School for Girls, Al-Farwaniya Education District, Kuwait.
- **Temporal limits:** The second semester of the academic year 2022-2023.

### **The Study Population and Sample**

The study population consisted of primary school students in Kuwait for the academic year (2022/2023). The pilot sample was (35) female pupils, and the study was applied to a sample of (25 female pupils in the second grade and 25 female pupils in the third grade) at Al-Andalus Elementary School for Girls, Al-Farwaniyah Education District in Kuwait.

### **The Study Methodology**

The researcher used the experimental approach with a quasi-experimental design based on *a one-group pretest-posttest design* to measure the effectiveness of the independent variable (the flashcards) on the dependent variable (English vocabulary according to the Dolch list) for the second and third-grade pupils.

### **The Study Instruments**

#### **1) An Assessment Card of Dolch Sight Word Recognition Skills for Second and Third Graders at Primary School:**

**It includes two parts:**

- **The First Part** aims to assess the performance level of second-grade female pupils in reading vocabulary (19 words) within the specified levels. The assessment is based on measuring the degree of proficiency for pupils, which must be 75% or more.

- **The Second Part** aims to assess the performance level of the third-grade female pupils in using vocabulary (37 words) within the specified levels. The assessment is based on measuring the degree of proficiency for pupils, which must be 75% or more.

## 2) Flashcards:

These cards are made of Bristol or Duplex Paper in sizes that fit the word; their width is 14 cm. It is written on the top 10 cm of it only because 3 cm is hidden in the Board Pockets. One of its advantages is that it is attractive and arouses the pupil's attention, motivates him to follow up, and can be used for all grades in the primary stage.

## The Card Validity and Reliability:

### A. The Assessment Card Internal Consistency:

To verify the internal consistency of the card, Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated between the scores of the test items and the total score on the test after deleting the item score from the test score. The values of the correlation coefficients ranged from (0.527 to 0.746), and all of these values are statistically significant at the (0.01) level greater than (0.3), showing that the internal consistency of the card has been achieved.

### B. Discriminant Validity:

After applying the test to the pilot sample (40 pupils), the total score of the test was taken as a criterion for judging the validity of its dimensions, and the upper and lower 25% of the scores were taken to represent the highest 25% of the scores for the high group and the lowest 25% of the scores for the low group, using the “Mann–Whitney test” for the independent samples in the comparison between the mean scores of the two groups (high and low), **the results were as follows:**

**Table 1. The Test Discriminant Validity**

Dolch Sight Word Recognition Skills test		High group (N= 10)		Low group (N= 10)		Z value	Significance
		Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks		
1	Reading words	15.5	155	5.5	55	4.11	0.01
2	Using words	14.75	147.5	6.25	62.5	3.47	0.01
Total score		15.5	155	5.5	55	3.94	0.01

It is clear from the previous table that there are statistically significant differences at the level (0.01) between the mean ranks of the high group (upper 25%) and the mean ranks of the low group (lower 25%) in all subcomponents and the total score of the test, indicating the test discriminant validity.

### **C. The Test Reliability:**

To verify the test reliability, Cronbach's alpha coefficient and Spearman-Brown formula for Split-Half Method were used as the values of reliability coefficients for the test dimensions (reading word skill, using word skill) were Using Cronbach's alpha coefficient (0.807, 0.814), respectively, and using Spearman-Brown formula (0.821, 0.827), respectively and for the test as a whole was (Cronbach's alpha = 0.839, Spearman-Brown = 0.844) and it is noted that all values of reliability coefficients were acceptable (greater than 0.7).

### **The Study Procedures:**

- 1) Choosing the school- where the research will be applied- Al-Andalus Primary School for Girls.
- 2) Choosing a sample of female pupils in the second and third grades of primary school at Al-Andalus Primary School for Girls.

- 3) Preparing the study tools, including **An Assessment Card of Dolch Sight Word Recognition Skills for Second and Third-Graders at Primary School** and **Flashcards**.
- 4) Applying an **Assessment Card of Dolch Sight Word Recognition Skills for Second and Third-Graders at Primary School** at the beginning of the second semester of the academic year 2022-2023.
- 5) Implementation of teaching using flashcards for second and third-grade pupils.
- 6) Applying an **Assessment Card of Dolch Sight Word Recognition Skills for Second and Third-Graders at Primary School** at the end of the second semester of the academic year 2022-2023.
- 7) Organizing and processing the available data using IBM SPSS V.20 software.

## Statistical Methods

To analyze the current study results, the IBM SPSS V.20 program was used and the following statistical methods were relied on: Means and Standard Deviations, Paired Samples T-Test, Cohen's *d*, and Eta Squared equation for effect size.

## The Study Results

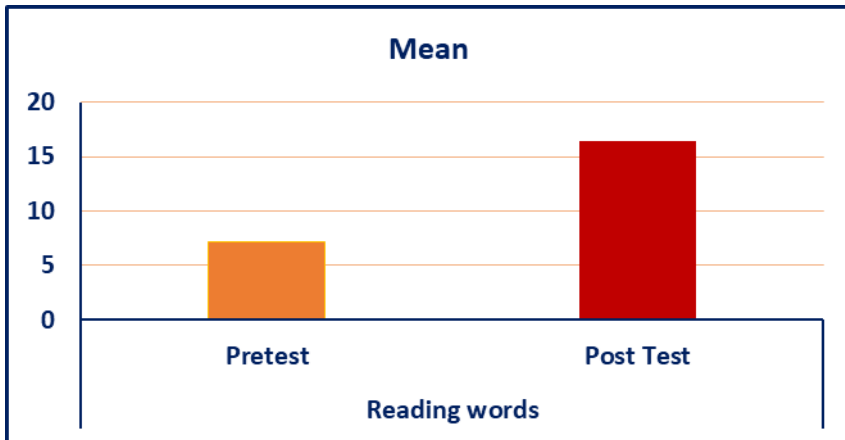
### First - The First Question Results:

1. **The first question states**, "What is the effect of using flashcards on developing Dolch sight word recognition skills among second-grade primary school pupils in Kuwait?"

To answer this question, means and standard deviations were calculated and Paired Samples T-Test was used to detect the significant differences between the mean scores of the second-grade female pupils in the research sample in the pre and post-measurements on **Assessment Card of Dolch Sight Word Recognition Skills**, as shown in the following table:

**Table 2. The significant differences between the mean scores of the second-grade female pupils in the pre and post-measurements on the Assessment Card of Dolch Sight Word Recognition Skills**

Variable	Pre-Post Test	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	df	T	Sig.	Proficiency degree
Reading words	Pretest	25	7.21	0.99	24	14.33	0.01	37.94%
	Post Test	25	16.39	1.87				86.26%



**Fig. (). The mean scores of the second-grade female pupils for skill of reading Dolch Sight Word list**

It is clear from the previous table that there is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of second-grade female pupils in the pre and post-measurements of the skill of reading the Dolch Sight Word list in favor of the post-measurement. The arithmetic mean value in the pre-measurement was (7.21) with a standard deviation of (0.99) and with a proficiency degree of (37.94%) and the arithmetic mean value in the post-measurement was (16.39) with a standard deviation of (1.87) and with a

proficiency degree of (86.26%). The "T" value was (14.33) with degrees of freedom of (24), which is a statistically significant value at the level of (0.01). The effect size value calculated using Eta Squared was (0.798), and the effect size value calculated using Cohen's d was (5.96). From the above, it is clear that there is an effect of using flashcards on developing the skill of reading the Dolch Sight Word list among second-grade female pupils in Kuwait.

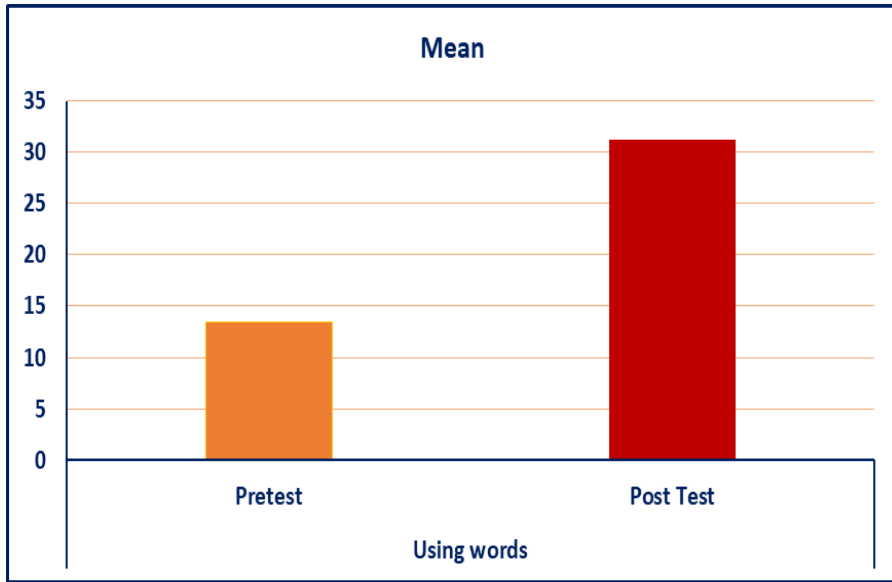
### Second - The Second Question Results:

2. **The second question states,** "What is the effect of using flashcards on developing Dolch sight word recognition skills among third-grade female primary school pupils in Kuwait?"

To answer this question, means and standard deviations were calculated and Paired Samples T-Test was used to detect the significant differences between the mean scores of the third-grade female pupils in the research sample in the pre and post-measurements on **Assessment Card of Dolch Sight Word Recognition Skills**, as shown in the following table:

**Table 3. The significant differences between the mean scores of the third-grade female pupils in the pre and post-measurements on the Assessment Card of Dolch Sight Word Recognition Skills**

Variable	Pre-Post Test	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	df	T	Sig.	Proficiency degree
Using words	Pretest	25	13.47	1.63	24	15.24	0.01	36.41%
	Post Test	25	31.15	3.87				84.19%



**Fig. (). The mean scores of the third-grade female pupils for skill of using Dolch Sight Word list**

It is clear from the previous table that there is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of third-grade female pupils in the pre and post-measurements of skill of using the Dolch Sight Word list in favor of the post-measurement. The arithmetic mean value in the pre-measurement was (13.47) with a standard deviation of (1.63) and with a proficiency degree of (36.41%) and the arithmetic mean value in the post-measurement was (31.15) with a standard deviation of (3.87) and with a proficiency degree of (84.19%). The "T" value was (15.24) with degrees of freedom of (24), which is a statistically significant value at the level of (0.01). The effect size value calculated using Eta Squared was (0.810), and the effect size value calculated using Cohen's d was (6.20). From the above, it is clear that there is an effect of using flashcards on developing the skill of using the Dolch Sight Word list among third-grade female pupils in Kuwait.

## **Discussion**

The results of the first question stating "What is the effect of using flashcards on developing Dolch sight word recognition skills among second-grade primary school pupils in Kuwait?" showed a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of second-grade female pupils in the pre and post-measurements of the skill of reading the Dolch Sight Word list in favor of the post-measurement with a proficiency degree of (86.26%), and the effect size values were large, confirming the significant effect of using flashcards on developing the skill of reading the Dolch Sight Word list among second-grade female pupils in Kuwait.

The results of the second question stating "What is the effect of using flashcards on developing Dolch sight word recognition skills among third-grade female primary school pupils in Kuwait?" showed a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of third-grade female pupils in the pre and post-measurements of skill of using the Dolch Sight Word list in favor of the post-measurement with a proficiency degree of (84.19%), and the effect size values were large, confirming the significant effect of using flashcards on developing the skill of using the Dolch Sight Word list among third-grade female pupils in Kuwait.

This achievement may be due to using flashcards because they are not an interesting educational method that the child deals with his desire to do so but they go beyond that as a tool to provide him with the skill of focus, the accuracy of observation, and work with language positively and in harmony. They also make pupils and teachers more creative and help them develop new ideas (Groinska, 1998). Using flashcards can contribute to increasing pupils' vocabulary proficiency when learning English. Besides, using flash cards can also make vocabulary learning engaging and fun. Pupils' imaginations can also be stimulated to develop their ideas and learn



and find new vocabulary by using flashcards (Hamer & Rohimajaya, 2018). The results of the current research are consistent with the results of some studies, including (Abu Jamous & Abdullah, 2009; Hussaini et al., 2016; Habibi, 2017; Tsai, 2018; Farida et al., 2019; Munawaroh, 2022; Aisyah, 2022; Hardiyanti & Herda, 2023) which showed in its results that the educational outcome using flashcards was statistically significant, and recommended using flashcards in presenting vocabulary.

## Recommendations

Upon this study's findings, the researcher concluded the following recommendations:

- 1) Including in the teacher's guide for English language books instructions and guidelines for making the various teaching aids, including pocket boards and flashcards.
- 2) Using flashcards to display new vocabulary in English reading lessons.
- 3) Using flashcards to display the meanings of new vocabulary in English reading lessons.
- 4) Carrying out similar research on fourth and fifth-grade pupils.

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