

## Using Picture Cards to Teach Reading for The First Grade Students of MI Al-Hidayah Madiun

Yuli Kuswardani<sup>1\*</sup>, Nuri Ati Ningsih<sup>2</sup>, Afrilia Nur Lidiawati<sup>3</sup>,  
Wiwik Sulistyanningrum<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>1</sup>Universitas PGRI Madiun

<sup>2</sup>Universitas PGRI Madiun

<sup>3</sup>Universitas PGRI Madiun

\*Corresponding author: [kuswardani@unipma.ac.id](mailto:kuswardani@unipma.ac.id)

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**Abstract:** The use of media in language learning is very important. It will make the teaching and learning process be more attractive and effective. Media are an aid which is able to help teacher in their teaching activity. Picture cards consist of the vegetables pictures and the names. Pictures can become useful media and are able to engage students in doing their reading comprehension. Reading is a process of decoding and understanding written text. This study aims to investigate the use of picture cards to enhance the reading skill of students of first grade in Al-Hidayah elementary school. By using picture card, students can obtain benefit since they are interested in seeing the pictures. Objective of the study was to find out whether or not the use of picture card significantly improved students' reading skill. The research design in this study is qualitative research. The mini-research was conducted in English learning for the age of 7-8 years old. It was done for one day in total of 1 meeting, with duration about 80 minutes. The subject of this research is students of MI Al-Hidayah Madiun, they are 28 students and as a sample of this research. The findings of this research show that the students are able to improve their reading skill by picture cards. Students are being attracted and having good participation in the learning process. The researchers recommend the more detail study for the further research.

**Keywords:** *Reading Skill; TEYL; Picture Cards*

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## INTRODUCTION

Reading skill is one of the four skills which is must be mastered by the students. Reading is the process of deriving meaning from the text. For the majority of readers, this process involves decoding written text. Some individuals require adaptation such as Braille or auditorization to support the decoding process. Understanding is determined by the purposes for reading, the context, the nature of the text, and the reader's strategies and knowledge (Cline et.al, 2006: 2). Reading is defined in many ways. it all depends on a person's background knowledge and their goals in reading activities. Reading is an activity or activity that produces sound from what is read. Many linguists define reading as a process of interaction. Involving an interactive process that links the reader's background knowledge and processing strategies with the text he reads is part of reading (Lems, 2010). At the elementary school level, reading is one of the basic focuses. Students must have good and comprehensive reading skills.

Teaching English for young learners has its own challenges and difficulties. The teacher has to understand the characteristics of the young learners. As the concept "teaching English for young learners" suggests, age plays a crucial role in what teachers teach and how they teach it, since a young learner class is different from an adult and/or a teenager class in terms of the learners' language learning needs, the language competences emphasized, and the cognitive skills addressed. That is why, it is highly important to understand the characteristics of the young learner as stated by Harmer (2007) that young learners learn from everything around them, they respond although they do not understand, and they are difficult to deal with abstract concept. So the teacher must understand the way to teach young learners especially in teaching English. Since teaching English is not easy, then teacher needs an attractive and interesting media to be used in the learning process. In reading and learning process, the teachers should use the media to easier in understanding the materials delivered. The use of media in teaching-learning process is needed to attract students' attention and to make teaching-learning activities more interesting and also effective.

Nowadays, media are flexible because they can be used for all level of students and in all subjects. The media chosen in this mini-research is picture cards. For children at reading age, picture cards can be used in conjunction with word cards. Picture cards are a really handy resource to have and can be useful at every stage of the class. They are a great way to present, practice and recycle vocabulary and when students become familiar with the activities used in class, they can be given out to early-finishers to use in small groups. Some studies reported that language learners could more effectively improve their vocabulary by using the picture cards instead of word lists. Pictures can also be used in different activities to increase learning and practice. By using picture cards in teaching reading which has ever done on previous research in *Asian*

*EFL Journal/ Professional Teaching Articles/ August 2015, Issue 86* with the title "The Attitudes of Teachers and Students of EFL Classes toward English Teaching and Learning Using Games and Pictures in Rural and Disadvantaged Schools in Indonesia: A Case Study" by Santri Djahimo. This research has an impact on more meaningful learning in the classroom. Not only the result but also the process that is expected to be the goal. A combination of images and verbal will give better results.

All in all, this mini research is conducted in local children English elementary school in Madiun. The researcher chooses the young learners at the age of 7 to 8 (grade 1 of elementary school). It aims to know how to use picture cards in improving students' reading skill of the first grade elementary school.

## **METHOD**

In accordance with the aim of the research about knowing how to use picture cards in improving students' reading skill of the first grade elementary school, a qualitative research design was used. The design was greatly appropriate for, it described the phenomena naturally. This research involved 28 students of local children English elementary school in Jl. Serayu Timur, Pandean Madiun. It is located in Madiun. The researchers became active observers, since the researchers did a teaching process. The lesson plans were made for a day, in total of 1 meeting. The meeting spent 2x40 minutes dividing into pre, main, and closing activities. First, in the pre-activity, the researchers asked the students' background knowledge about the material. Second, in the main-activity, the researchers taught the students using picture cards. Last, in closing-activity, the researchers checked the students' understanding about the material.

Data researchers collect not only through observation, but also documentation and interviews. While observing them in the teaching and learning process, the researcher also uses unstructured interview techniques with students. Then, the researcher documented the students' grades during the teaching and learning process. Scores include student progress in terms of products and performance. Data were analyzed in three ways according to the theory of Miles and Huberman (1994), namely: application of data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. So, this research was one day-research with 3 main phases i.e. pre-activity, main-activity, and closing-activity which was conducted to know the use of picture cards to improve students' reading skill.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**



This research is conducted in the first grade elementary students of MI Al-Hidayah in Madiun. The class consists of 28 students. In this class, there are male and female students. They are around 7 and 8 years old. The research is started by praying together with the main materials that day. The first activity is by giving the students a brainstorming about the material which is being taught by the researchers. For example, by asking the students “who has ever gone to the traditional market?”, “who has ever seen the vegetables?”, “what are the names of vegetables you ever see or eat?”, “is there anyone who likes vegetables?” , “please mention the name of vegetables around you in English!”. The research is about 80 minutes. In the first 5 minutes, the researchers try to introduce the material to the students to make them feel attracted to the lesson. Next, the researchers ask the students’ background knowledge about the material which is being taught. The researchers find that some students already have background knowledge about the material that is vegetables. The researchers start to teach the students by using picture cards about reading skill. The material is about twelve names of vegetables. Some students feel attracted when the researchers show the picture cards. The picture is about cabbage, carrot, potato, onion, garlic, celery, spinach, cauliflower, eggplant, mushroom, cucumber, and tomato. Moreover, they attract to guess the card with English word by translating it into Bahasa Indonesia by open their book. They also try to match the picture on the card with the picture on their books. So they hope they can know it before their others friends know. It is extremely shown in the excerpt “*Bu, itu namanya apa? Ada gambar-gambaranya*”. Which in English means “*Miss, what is the name of it? There are many pictures*”. Knowing this, the researchers know that there would be good learning process by using picture cards. Since catching students’ interest is the most important part in learning process.

In the middle of learning process, the researchers ask the students to come forward to test their knowledge about the materials they get. First, no one of them wants to try. It is because they are still afraid if they can’t answer the question clearly, but the researchers convince them that everything will be okay and they will get more knowledge when they try to come forward and doing what the researchers ask them to do. Then, they want to come in front of the class. In the first section, the researchers show them a picture and the students have to answer what is the name of the picture. Then they have to write it down on the whiteboard. The researchers find that the students were good enough in spelling the words but they have lack in writing the words. When the researchers ask about the mistake, they often remain silent and the researchers help them until they can clear the words after they do the mistake. So, if there is student who gets wrong in spelling or writing, the researchers ask them to discuss it together and make it clear.



On the other side, the researchers also find that there is a smart student but he does not want to express his intelligence. The researchers have to make him feels confident. It's common thing that sometimes students are confident to show themselves to their friends and some students are shy.

On the next section of the learning process, the researchers give the chance to two students to come forward and doing the task. Unexpectedly, the interest of the students is increased after the first performance of previous students. The task is about guessing picture, one student holds the picture card and the other has to guess the vegetable name is on the card. There is a student who wants to come forward again after his previous chance, but then his friends say, "*Bu, dia tadi sudah maju lho...*", which in English means "*Miss, he already came forward*". Here the researchers have known that picture cards are attractive for the students.

When doing the tasks, some students face difficulty in pronouncing English words, so the researchers should teach them how to pronounce it well. For example when they get cards of "*cucumber*", they say "*cu-cum-ber*", they pronounce it in Indonesia's pronouncing style. Similarly, when the researchers ask the students right after teaching learning process, they face difficulties in pronouncing English words. The students often face difficulty in pronouncing English words, since the way to pronounce English words is very different from their native language.

All results above generally show that participants enjoy participating in activities conducted through the use of picture cards. The use of picture cards in teaching reading helps the participants to remember the names of the picture show as they can see the characteristics, colors and special features of the picture. For example, student A states that "*aku bisa mengingat kata-katanya karena gambarnya berwarna*" in English means "*I can remember the words because I can see colorful pictures*". This is supported by student B who states that "*aku bisa ingat nama wortel karena bentuknya*" in English means "*I can remember the name of the carrot because of its shape*".

When the researchers ask why they enjoy the lesson, all students agree that they like the games conducted after each session. Although the games are used to check their understanding of the vocabulary masters, the students do not feel bored. Instead they are very eager to participate in every game. This is evident when one of the students, student C, states "*aku cuma boleh main sekali doang sih*" in English means "*I only had one chance to play the game*". It shows that the use of picture cards attracts them well. The last is that students are asked by the researchers to do the task. The task is that students must match the vegetables pictures with the right name in each number on paper which is given by the researchers. Further analysis of the transcription provides evidence that the students feel highly motivated when using picture cards. This further



suggests that picture cards can be used as an enrichment tool for teaching reading for elementary school.

This research provides evidence of the value of using picture cards in elementary school teaching reading. According to Glenn. D. (2008) reading is one of the most importance skills a teacher can give to a child. Many children who only know the alphabet letters when beginning school struggle with reading, therefore both sound and alphabet flashcards should be used. The researchers find that pictures and words in the form of cards assist in teaching reading. It can be looked by the finding we do. Picture cards can make the students to be active and interest in the learning process. By the picture cards also build their spirit and they can easier to get information and remember it. On the other side, picture cards can increase students' vocabulary so the students can imagine the vocabulary they learn especially in this case or in reading process by using picture cards although they do not understand the vocabulary before. In general, according to Latuheru (in Sa'diyah, 2008) the use of media can give rise to certain advantage in the teaching-learning process that is attracting and increasing students' attention. So, when the students get a new word that they do not know before they will be easier to catch the new vocabulary they look, learn, and hear. It is besides they still in the first grade in elementary school. Picture cards are excellent English teaching tools when teachers are introducing new vocabulary words and drill practice.

Other reasons for choosing pictures in the classroom are because they are easily found, they can be used for enjoyment, they set the scene or context, they give us information, they interest us, and they are a key resource (Goodman, 2006, p. 1). The researchers learn that highlighting the characteristics, colors and special features of the pictures in picture cards helps the students to learn the words. It makes the picture more interest, easier to remember what on card involves, and fun to play it. It's supported by the previous research of Elsa Yusrika Sitompul with the title "Teaching Vocabulary Using Flashcards And Word List" clearly shows that using picture gives many benefits to the students. They become motivated and interested in learning English, understood the words easily and memorized the words faster. However, this research has weaknesses like the student to come forward one by one watch and read the name of vegetables and make the pronoun clear if they are wrong. The second is they do not like learning vocabulary, it makes the media or picture cards are not useful to be used.



## CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Using picture cards in teaching reading for elementary students have improved students' ability. Students have experienced to work with their classmates during the learning process. The learning process has become very interesting for the students, it can be seen from the students' interest in joining the learning process. The use of picture cards attracts the students very well, they feel so attracted and active in the class. The findings also show that using picture card for teaching reading can increase the students' self-confidence. By giving exercise during the learning process can also make the students socializing with their classmates. Therefore, beside the innovative techniques and how teachers create the learning process, the use of media which is picture cards is really important to create an interesting learning process for the students.

This research contributes an important innovation for teaching reading in elementary school. The students become more attracted and confident in exploring their reading skill and ability. The students also become more sociable with their classmates. For the teachers and researchers, this research can stimulate them to explore the innovation for teaching design by using picture cards. And they become more aware of creating an interesting learning process for elementary students.

In hope, the further studies can be designed for exploring more the use of picture cards. A quantitative research may be conducted to make a detail research and results. The researchers may use different variables and participants to gain specific findings of using picture cards in learning process of teaching reading for elementary students.

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