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The Impact of Using Picture Cards to Improve English Vocabulary Skills Among Kindergarten Students at TK Tunas Jaya

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ABSTRACT

Proficiency in English vocabulary constitutes a fundamental foundation for young learners, as it facilitates the development of listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. Nevertheless, many children in kindergarten still encounter challenges in recognising, recalling, and comprehending basic English vocabulary due to limited exposure to engaging and developmentally appropriate educational media. This study aims to investigate the influence of picture cards on enhancing English vocabulary mastery among children in Group B at TK Tunas Jaya. The research employed a quantitative methodology with a one-group pretest–posttest design, involving twenty children as participants. Data were gathered through vocabulary assessments administered before and after the intervention. The intervention comprised four instructional sessions utilising picture cards centred on themes such as colours, animals, fruits, and classroom objects. The strategies implemented included show and say, memory games, and flashcard drills, all designed to increase children's engagement and memory recall capabilities.

Keywords: Picture Cards, Vocabulary Mastery, Early Childhood Education, English Language Learning, Visual Learning Media.

INTRODUCTION

English is a global lingua franca that plays a crucial role in international communication, rendering early exposure indispensable for young learners. Early childhood represents a period of rapid development during which children assimilate information expeditiously when provided with suitable stimuli. During this stage, visual and concrete learning media are imperative to facilitate children's comprehension of foreign language concepts (Joseph et al., 2022). Mastery of vocabulary constitutes the foundation for developing speaking skills and understanding instructions. Consequently, engaging and developmentally appropriate instructional strategies are essential to ensure meaningful learning experiences. This viewpoint aligns with research findings indicating that visual techniques in vocabulary instruction effectively enhance students' comprehension (Noviarini, 2017).

In the context of English language acquisition, vocabulary is a vital component that must be mastered prior to progressing to other language skills such as speaking, reading, or writing (Daskalovska, 2020; Wang & Hu, 2021). Without adequate vocabulary, children will encounter difficulties in understanding words used in everyday communication and classroom interactions (MacChi et al., 2022). Vocabulary acquisition entails more than rote memorisation of isolated words; it involves the development of comprehensive language competencies. Children need to understand the form, sound, and meaning of words through concrete and meaningful approaches (Daskalovska, 2018; Zeng et al., 2022). Accordingly, learning media that support visual understanding are indispensable. This underscores the necessity for early childhood education to implement strategies that address children's developmental needs (Flynn et al., 2019; Nainggolan et al., 2019).

In an increasingly visual environment, children are immersed in abundant sensory stimuli that influence their educational experiences. Consequently, they respond more favourably to engaging images, colours, and shapes than to abstract verbal explanations. Many educators encounter difficulties when depending exclusively on oral explanations or rote vocabulary recitation absent visual support. Children may become disengaged and have difficulty maintaining focus due to the lack of concrete experiences in the learning process. Accordingly,

educational media that can render abstract concepts more tangible are vital. Visual tools such as picture cards serve as an effective means to augment children's comprehension of vocabulary (Supriatna et al., 2020; Yumarlin & Jemmy, 2019).

Observations across diverse early childhood education environments indicate that numerous kindergarten students continue to encounter difficulties in acquiring English vocabulary. These challenges are manifested in their limited capacity to recall words, identify objects in English, and comprehend their meanings. When instruction is conducted without the aid of supportive media, children tend to forget information rapidly and subsequently lose interest. This phenomenon is closely associated with their cognitive developmental stage, which necessitates concrete stimuli to facilitate their understanding of language concepts. Empirical evidence demonstrates that visual media can enhance the association between words and tangible objects. Consequently, incorporating supportive media is essential for augmenting the efficacy of Vocabulary instruction.

Numerous studies on children's language development suggest that visual experiences significantly contribute to vocabulary acquisition. The use of picture cards enables children to observe, recognise, and name objects directly. This activity not only enhances memory retention but also fosters a deeper understanding of word meanings. Research highlights that language development in children is strongly influenced by the interactions and learning experiences they encounter in their environment (Noviarini, 2018). These findings emphasise the need for providing appropriate stimulation to support children's foreign language learning. Visual media, therefore, serve as an important stimulus to facilitate vocabulary mastery in early childhood education.

Recent advancements in children's learning methodologies emphasise the importance of innovation in pedagogical strategies. Educators can no longer rely solely on monotonous techniques, as children require variety in their learning experiences. Many children tend to lose interest when media used in instruction fails to engage their attention (Kaimara et al., 2021). The proper application of media can assist educators in cultivating a more engaging and stimulating learning environment. Drawing cards represent a straightforward yet highly effective tool in educational contexts that demand creativity and adaptability. Through this medium, educators can deliver a more lively and interactive educational experience.

In practical application, picture cards constitute an accessible educational resource that kindergarten teachers can utilize without the need for specialized facilities. These cards can be incorporated into a variety of language-centered games designed to foster active engagement among learners. Children are able to point at, observe, and articulate words associated with the images displayed. Such activities promote active participation in the learning process, moving beyond passive reception of information. Moreover, this media is reusable, offering repeated opportunities for meaningful practice. Consequently, employing drawing cards can significantly enhance vocabulary acquisition in young learners.

Challenges observed in several early childhood education (PAUD) institutions indicate that vocabulary learning predominantly depends on conventional methods, with limited utilization of visual media. Educators often encounter difficulties in maintaining children's attention during extended lessons. In the absence of appropriate visual aids, children tend to exhibit decreased activity levels and increased boredom, which adversely affects vocabulary development due to a lack of visual stimuli to reinforce memory. Picture cards present an effective solution, facilitating more engaging presentation of instructional material. This approach can improve current learning conditions, which are often less effective.

In addition to advancing vocabulary skills, picture cards also contribute to the development of children's cognitive abilities. Through the use of drawing cards, children learn to identify categories of objects, shapes, colors, and other attributes that support systematic grouping of concepts. This categorization forms a fundamental basis for cultivating symbolic thinking skills. When children connect images with corresponding words, their comprehension is enhanced. This visual representation offers concrete experiences that align with the child's developmental stage.

Overall, this media proves highly pertinent to language education, particularly where accurate understanding of meaning is essential.

Based on these descriptions, using picture cards is a highly appropriate instructional tool for enhancing early childhood English vocabulary. This medium provides an engaging, tangible, and suitable learning experience that corresponds with the child's cognitive development. Furthermore, picture cards can assist educators in establishing a more enjoyable and interactive learning environment. The utilization of this medium can also effectively address various recent learning challenges. Given these benefits, this study concentrates on the application of picture cards in English vocabulary instruction. The participants of the study were children from Group B at Tunas Jaya Kindergarten.

METHOD

This research employs a quantitative methodology with a one-group pretest–posttest design. All participants adhere to a uniform sequence: they complete a pretest, engage in learning activities involving drawing cards (flashcards), and subsequently undertake a posttest. This structure enables researchers to evaluate changes in vocabulary proficiency attributable to the intervention.

The participants consisted of 20 children in Group B at TK Tunas Jaya. The research was conducted within the premises of the kindergarten, with the entire process- including the pretest, learning with picture cards, and posttest- conducted directly in the classroom environment. The learning sessions utilising picture cards were conducted over four meetings, covering themes such as drawing, colours, animals, and classroom objects. The instructional strategies employed included show and say, memory games, and flashcard drills.

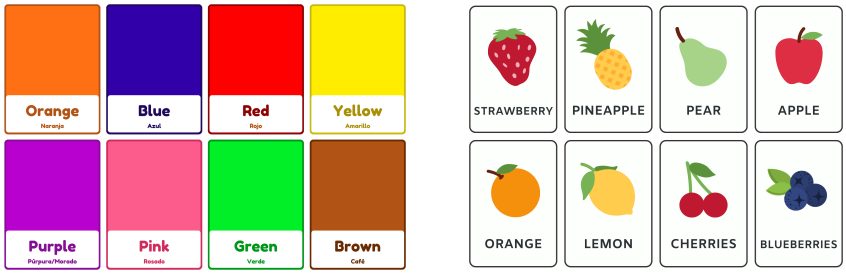


Figure 1. Picture Cards

The research instrument comprises a vocabulary mastery assessment sheet consisting of 10-15 fundamental English vocabulary terms associated with the relevant theme. The preliminary evaluation (pretest) is conducted to appraise the child's abilities prior to intervention, whereas the subsequent assessment (posttest) is administered following the completion of the entire instructional series. Data analysis entailed comparing the mean scores of the pretests and posttests to evaluate progress in the children's skills. A significant increase in the posttest scores relative to the pretest suggests that the utilisation of picture cards has a favourable impact on the children's vocabulary development mastery.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

This study involved twenty children in Group B of Tunas Jaya Kindergarten who participated in a series of pretests, treatments using drawing cards, and posttests. The pretest results indicated that most children were unable to mention or recognise colour vocabulary in English, such as red, blue, yellow, and green. Children often exhibited hesitation, errors, or required additional stimuli to recall the names of colours in English. This condition suggests that

the children's initial capabilities are in the low to medium range, according to the study's objective to assess the effectiveness of image card media as an educational aid.

Following four treatment sessions, there was a significant improvement in the children's abilities. They demonstrated increased speed in naming vocabulary, showed enhanced memory skills, and accurately associated colour images with their English names. These improvements are clearly reflected in the posttest results, which display an increase in scores across all participants. This confirms that the utilisation of drawing cards has a beneficial effect on visual memory and the ability to associate words with images in early childhood.

Table 1. Pretest and Posttest Scores

No	Child's Name	Pretest	Posttest
1	Child 1	5	8
2	Child 2	6	9
3	Child 3	7	9
4	Child 4	6	8
5	Child 5	5	8
6	Child 6	7	9
7	Child 7	6	9
8	Child 8	5	8
9	Child 9	6	9
10	Child 10	7	9
11	Child 11	5	8
12	Child 12	6	9
13	Child 13	7	9
14	Child 14	6	8
15	Child 15	5	8
16	Child 16	6	9
17	Child 17	7	9
18	Child 18	6	8
19	Child 19	5	8
20	Child 20	6	9

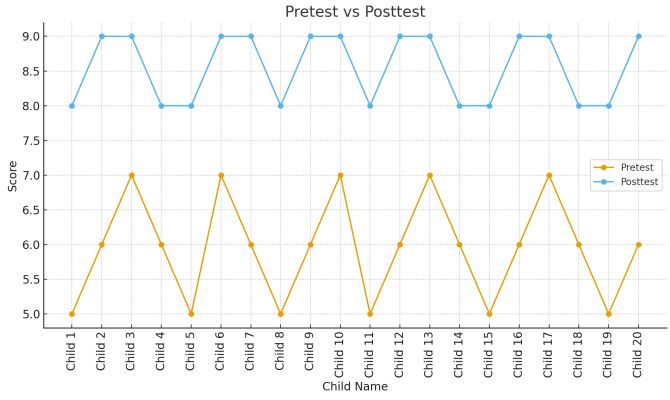


Figure 2. Comparison of Pre-test and Post-test

The graph demonstrates a steady increase in scores among all children, with the post-test line positioned above the pre-test line.

To strengthen the study's results, a score improvement analysis was conducted using the formula:

1. Pretest and Posttest Average

$$\text{Mean} = \frac{\sum x}{N}$$

Average Pretest: Total pretest score is 114, with a cohort of 20 children.

$$\text{Mean Pretest} = \frac{114}{20} = 5.7$$

Post-test rate: rate
Total post-test: 171

$$\text{Mean Posttest} = \frac{171}{20} = 8.55$$

The typical increase is as follows:

$$8.55 - 5.7 = 2.85$$

This shows a fairly high increase in vocabulary ability.

Based on the difference in scores between the post-test and pre-test, it was observed that all children demonstrated improvement in vocabulary skills following instruction with picture cards. This enhancement is evidenced by the gain score, which is calculated by subtracting the pre-test score from the post-test score. For instance, Child 1 exhibits an improvement of 3 points (8 – 5), Child 2 also demonstrates an improvement of 3 points (9 – 6), and Child 3 shows an increase of 2 points (9 – 7). Overall, the average increase ranges from 2 to 3 points, indicating that the utilisation of picture cards exerts a positive influence on the majority of children.

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Discussion

The results of the study indicate that the utilisation of picture cards positively impacts the development of English vocabulary among young children. Children exhibit improved recognition and pronunciation of vocabulary related to colours, animals, fruits, and objects within the classroom following a series of lessons incorporating visual media. This advancement aligns with the theory that concrete stimuli facilitate children's understanding of concepts during the stage of concrete operational development. The employment of picture cards assists children in better connecting visual representations with English terminology. These findings corroborate research confirming that visual media effectively enhance language acquisition in early childhood (Arsyad, 2019). During the pre-treatment phase, children demonstrate difficulties in recalling and naming vocabulary, primarily due to prior learning being predominantly verbal. When vocabulary is conveyed exclusively through verbal explanations, children lack the visual support necessary to reinforce long-term memory retention. This observation aligns with the perspective that preschoolers require concrete media to better comprehend abstract concepts (Siregar, 2020). Upon introduction of drawing cards, children become more attentive, as the learning process is supported by clear and engaging images. This condition enables children to establish strong associations between words and the objects depicted.

The enhancement in children's abilities is increasingly evidenced by the disparity between pretest and posttest scores, which typically show an improvement of two to three points. All participants demonstrated a consistent upward trend, suggesting that the drawing card medium can effectively engage children with diverse learning needs and personalities. Visual media has been demonstrated to facilitate vocabulary comprehension, as children can better see, observe, and retain information through visual stimuli. Prior research also indicates that images can augment the process of word recognition and reinforce children's memory (Hapsari, 2021). Consequently, the utilisation of picture cards is appropriate for enriching the language acquisition experience in kindergarten settings. Beyond improving academic performance, learning activities involving drawing cards also positively impact children's motivation and engagement during the educational process. Activities such as show and say, memory games, and flashcard drills foster a more enjoyable and interactive learning environment for children. The game-based approach

has been proven to enhance children's attention and participation in acquiring foreign language vocabulary (Putri & Rahmawati, 2021). Through games, children not only memorize words but also undergo the learning process via interaction, repetition, and hands-on experiences. Overall, this activity significantly contributes to the enhancement of understanding English vocabulary.

Overall, the increase in scores among all participants demonstrates that picture cards constitute an effective pedagogical tool for the acquisition of English vocabulary. This approach not only facilitates memorisation for young learners but also fosters an engaging, active, and supportive learning environment consistent with early childhood developmental principles. The findings of the study corroborate existing research underscoring the significance of visual media in language acquisition among preschool children (Mayer, 2020). Furthermore, the utilisation of drawing cards affords educators opportunities to employ more innovative and varied teaching methodologies. Therefore, it is recommended that picture cards be adopted as the primary resource for instructing English vocabulary at Tunas Jaya Kindergarten.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that picture cards positively influence the improvement of English vocabulary mastery among children in Group B at Tunas Jaya Kindergarten. After participating in learning activities using visual media, children are better able to recognize, name, and understand the meanings of vocabulary related to colors, animals, fruits, and objects. The notable increase in average scores from pretest to posttest reflects a significant enhancement in students' abilities. The process of drawing cards effectively created an engaging learning environment that aligns with early childhood development characteristics. Interactive activities such as show and tell, memory games, and flashcard drills support learning through repetition, observation, and play. With visual media, children find it easier to link objects with English terms, speeding up and enriching the vocabulary acquisition process. Overall, this study confirms that picture cards are a valuable and effective tool for teaching English vocabulary at the kindergarten level. These media not only improve language skills but also boost children's active participation, motivation, and interest in learning. Thus, using picture cards is recommended as a primary method for vocabulary instruction at Tunas Jaya Kindergarten and other early childhood education centres.

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