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Improving Elementary School Students' Reading Skills Using Picture Word Cards: How is This Possible?

Yunisa , Universitas Terbuka, Indonesia

Azmil Hasan Lubis, Universitas Islam Negeri Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh, Indonesia

 yunisa0629@gmail.com

Abstract: Reading ability is one of the abilities that students must master at elementary school level. This research aims to improve students' reading skills by using picture cards as media. This research is a mixed research type of classroom action research. The design used is the Kemmis & Mc Taggart design with four steps, namely planning, action, observation and reflection. The focus of this research was on 12 male and 11 female students who were in class 1 of SDN 017 Petung, Penajam Paser Utara. Data was collected using interview, observation and test techniques. The data obtained were analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques. The results of classroom actions show that using picture cards can help students read better. The results of the first cycle test show this: 15 out of 23 students achieved individual completion with a classical acceptance rate of 63.75% and a classical pass rate of 55.00% at the initial stage. However, in the second cycle, the test results showed that 20 out of 23 students succeeded in achieving individual completeness, with an average score of 9.95 and achieving classical completeness of 95%. Grade 1 students at SDN 017 Petung Penajam Paser Utara can use picture cards to improve their reading skills. The research results showed that the activities of teachers and students during learning activities showed an increase in the category from adequate in cycle I to very good in cycle II. Based on these results, it can be concluded that the use of picture cards is effective in improving students' reading skills.

Keywords: reading skills, elementary school students, picture word card media.

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INTRODUCTION

Learning is one of the efforts made by every individual to achieve self-existence in life (Santrock, 2011). The learning process provides behavioral changes from cognitive, affective and psychomotor aspects (Dasopang et al., 2022). Furthermore, Lubis (2019) stated that the development of knowledge, attitudes and skills is part of the learning outcomes that must be obtained by every individual who takes part in the learning process. One part of cognitive development is language development (Fatimah & Maryani, 2018). There are several skills that must be mastered in language development, one of which is reading skills (Iswara, 2016).

Reading is a very complex matter (Khoiruddin et al., 2016). reading does not only include written pronunciation, but also involves visual and thinking activities (Wulanjani & Anggraeni, 2019). As a visual process, reading can be interpreted as the conversion of

written symbols into information that is communicated verbally (Lubis & Lubis, 2024). Furthermore, Pratiwi (2021) states that reading is a series of steps taken by readers to communicate a certain message (Jatnika, 2019). The message or meaning contained in the reading text is a reciprocal interaction, active interaction and dynamic interaction between the basic information the reader has with the sentences, facts and information contained therein (Lubis & Dasopang, 2020; Purwani, 2020). A child's maturity in learning to read is reflected in certain skills that the child has. for example vision, hearing, comprehension and attention span (Abidin, 2012). In essence, reading is understanding and reconstructing the meaning of reading material. The message or meaning contained in the reading text is a reciprocal interaction (Harianto, 2020). Active interaction and dynamic interaction between the basic knowledge possessed by the reader and the sentences, facts and information contained in the reading text (Saputro et al., 2021).

The knowledge possessed by the reader forms the meaning of the text, and reading is a process intended to explore its meaning (Bungsu & Dafit, 2021). Reading can also be considered as an effective strategy for forming meaning. Reading strategies vary greatly, depending on the type of text encountered and the reading goals to be achieved (Pratiwi, 2020). Reading is a significant interactive activity because it actively connects the reader and the text, which really depends on the particular situation (Lubis & Wangid, 2019; Ningsih et al., 2023). To achieve effective interaction between the reader and the text, it is important that the text being read is easy to understand, because someone who enjoys reading texts that provide benefits will try to achieve various goals through this reading activity.

To maximize the potential of each student, efforts need to be made to suit each student's situation (Dasopang et al., 2023; Nurliza et al., 2024; I. Silvia et al., 2023). One way to achieve this goal is to learn to read at first (Rahayu & Daud, 2024). To start reading, mental, social and emotional preparation is needed in addition to more than just cognitive abilities (Khoiruddin et al., 2016). The results need to be interesting, diverse and enjoyable (Lubis & Wangid, 2019; Pasaribu et al., 2023; Putra et al., 2023). Starting the learning process by using picture word cards is a crucial element that is expected to provide motivation for students to learn. The importance of this is felt in improving reading skills at an early stage, which has a significant role in everyday life. This success is relevant because reading comprehension plays a key role in the formation of skills and preparation for continuing education (Rosvita & Anugraheni, 2021). One of the problems at state elementary school 017 Petung Penajam Paser Utara is that students often use regional languages, which causes their ability to read to be poor and not good and correct when learning Indonesian. To overcome this problem, researchers will use picture word cards at state elementary school 017 Petung Penajam Paser Utara to improve students' ability to read well and correctly.

Sari et al. (2021) stated that reading is an activity to accurately interpret the meaning of written text. One of the requirements for understanding the content of messages contained in reading material is understanding the meaning of words according to the context. Meanwhile, according to Suparlan (2021), the first chapter taught to children in grades I and II is initial reading, which becomes the foundation for further learning. Furthermore, Purba et al. (2023) also said that reading is a process of developing language skills (linguistics) which includes biological and psychological components that are influenced by the environment, such as reading letters, syllables, words and sentences as learning objects.

The goals of beginning reading cannot be separated from the goals of general education and teaching. The main aim of teaching beginning reading is to increase students' knowledge and ability to master reading techniques and capture reading content accurately (Debataraja, 2023). According to Prawiyogi (2022), the aim of teaching beginning reading is so that students can read simple words and sentences fluently and accurately. Beginning reading is adjusted to the student's abilities and psychological development. Reading is an effort to use text and information needed by readers to form

meaning (S. Silvia et al., 2021). Reading is also useful as a strategy for constructing meaning when reading, effective readers use various reading strategies that are appropriate to the text and context (Loliyana et al., 2022; Lubis, 2023). These strategies vary depending on the type of text and the purpose of reading. Reading is interactive. Reader engagement and text vary. People who enjoy reading useful texts will have several goals to achieve. To do so, the text must be easy to understand so that readers can interact with it.

According to Daulay (2021), the steps to start the reading process involve understanding the elements of sentences, words and letters. This process involves understanding sentence elements, understanding word elements, understanding letter elements, combining letters into syllables, and combining words from syllables. Furthermore, Islami et al. (2024) stated that the initial reading rooting steps involve the following process, (1) Determine the main objective of the discussion that will be given which can be taken from the GBPP; (2) Create learning materials; (3) After the material and exercises have been created, focus on the method of delivery, including the order in which the material is presented and how students are activated. In the practice phase, the teacher can combine words, syllables and letters into new combinations. Children can play using existing cards and combine them to form words, syllables or sentences. Teachers can conduct formative tests to see whether children have achieved goals. In these situations, instructors know how to use different approaches that are considered most useful in terms of continuity of learning. Therefore, teachers must carry out these steps several times so that the goals of teaching reading can be achieved optimally.

METHODS

This research is a classroom action study consisting of two cycles. Each cycle involves phases of planning, action, observation, and reflection. The following diagram illustrates the research steps based on the Kemmis and McTaggart model. This research was conducted at the state elementary school 017 Petung North Penajam Paser which consisted of 23 grade 1 students with details of 12 boys and 11 girls. The study begins with preliminary actions. Preliminary tests are given to students during pre-active activities. The purpose of this trial is to assess students' basic abilities and form groups. This process is structured in a series of steps, with each step consisting of four stages which include planning, implementation, observation and reflection. The following research design is presented in Figure 1.

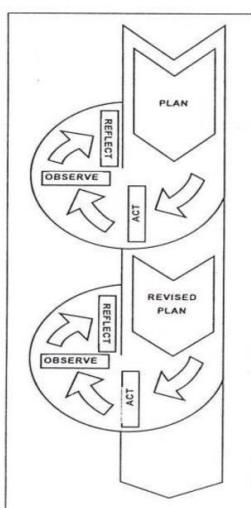


FIGURE 1. Research Design

The types of data collected in this research include qualitative and quantitative data. Qualitative data includes the results of observations of teacher performance, student performance, and interview results during educational activities. Evaluation of teacher performance in implementing learning scenarios, including delivery of material, is part of the teacher's activities. Assessment of students' ability to observe the learning process led by the teacher is also included in student performance. This includes four aspects, namely attendance, respect for teachers in the group, active participation in the learning process and educational activities, and serious commitment to completing student worksheets.

Additionally, continuity in teacher and student engagement is also a significant aspect to measure. The quantitative data collected in this study comes from Indonesian language teachers at the state elementary school 017 Petung Penajam Paser Utara during the 2022/2023 academic year. Indicators of learning success or increasing student learning achievement include:

1. Teacher activities, which involve teacher skills when implementing learning scenario plans, including delivering material;
2. Student participation in teaching and learning activities involves their ability to follow the learning implemented by the teacher. This student attitude includes four main aspects: attendance, respect for the teacher in the group, active involvement in the teaching and learning process, and the level of commitment in completing student worksheets.

In the context of evaluation, quantitative data from this research is measured based on indicators of learning success, including individual assimilation ability of at least 65%, classical achievement of at least 80%, and classical assimilation ability of at least 65% (in accordance with curriculum targets). Furthermore, the quality of learning in this research was evaluated through two perspectives, namely monitoring student activities and teacher learning outcomes. Research brilliance is considered achieved if both aspects are assessed as good or very good.

This reading evaluation adopts a process assessment approach, especially for grade 1 which is at the initial stage of reading. The focus is on natural pronunciation and intonation, with the main emphasis on rationality rather than intelligence. In this research, researchers refer to the evaluation guide proposed by Zuchdi (2012). The following are the test instruments used in this research.

TABLE 1. Research Instrument Test

No.	Rated aspect	Amount
1.	Reasonable pronunciation	2
2.	Reasonable intonation	3
3.	Reading fluency	3
4.	Voice clarity	2
Total Amount		10

After the evaluation, the examiner takes the average of the reading test and the written test, and the average results can be used to classify integrity points according to the table below. The following is a table of criteria for reading completion.

TABLE 2. Reading Completion Criteria

Criteria	Score	Information
Very good	90 – 100	Complete
Good	78 – 89	Complete
Middle	70 – 77	Complete
Bad	60 – 69	Not Completed
Very Bad	< 60	Not Completed

Parjono et al. (2007: 53) states that the main goal of data analysis is to increase the value of information both from a quantitative and qualitative perspective. In this study, quantitative imaging techniques were used for data analysis, using descriptive statistics to interpret the data and identify average values. According to Anas Sudijoni (2011:81), value analysis is carried out using descriptive statistical methods, where the average is calculated using the following formula:

$M_x = \frac{\sum x}{N}$	<p>Keterangan:</p> <p>M_x : rerata</p> <p>$\sum x$ jumlah total nilai</p> <p>siswa N : jumlah siswa</p>
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Student learning completeness can be found using the following formula:

$$\frac{\sum \text{number of students who completed}}{\sum \text{number of students}} \times 100\%$$

RESULTS

FIRST CYCLE

The results of Activity Monitoring and Affective Assessment of students in the first cycle of action were that one student and study field educator made observations of student and teacher activities during the learning process. Filling out an observation sheet is a way to measure teacher activity.

Observations about teacher activities related to learning management can be based on qualitative assessment guidelines. The results at the first meeting were considered sufficient, and at the second meeting, the teacher obtained 18 points out of the maximum 28 points, increasing the percentage of achievement to 64%.

The research results also showed that the percentage of student activity scores in the first cycle was 43.75%, still below average. But this percentage increased to 68.75% in the second cycle. Therefore, from all forms of assessment of student activities observed during the learning process, they are generally at a satisfactory assessment level. As a result of group learning, the next step is to take an exam via card media which will be held on May 3 2023. Taking the test is a form of exam given. Table 3 shows the results of the first cycle test analysis.

TABLE 3. First Cycle Results

No	Acquisition Aspect	Result
1	Maximum score	16
2	Highest score	15 (1 student)
3	Lowest score	8 (1 student)
4	Many students have not yet completed (<65)	15
5	Classical completion percentage	35,00 %
6	Percentage of classical absorption capacity	62,00 %
7	Average score	10

Analysis of the data from the first cycle in Table 3 shows that there are research objectives that have not yet been achieved because classical receptive skills still do not meet the specified performance indicators, such as students' ability to read aloud and understand syllables.

By paying attention to the results of the final behavioral tests, interviews, and observations of teacher and student activities, as well as students' emotional assessments, strengths and weaknesses can be identified, as well as analysis of the causes of behavioral performance in the first cycle. This is expressed as a reflection for improvement in the next cycle.

One way to find out the level of success of the first cycle is to carry out reflective activities. The purpose of this activity is to assess the supporting factors for success in the first cycle and the factors that cause learning failure. The results of this evaluation are used as a basis for thinking about how to make improvements to the actions taken in the second cycle.

In the first cycle, the assessment of success was based on findings made during the learning process, both for teachers and students. These findings indicate that teachers have carried out their duties well according to the predetermined scenario. Apart from that, students participate well in the learning process, including taking the designated place, participating in small group discussions, reacting to criticism. Teachers feel satisfied with the teaching carried out and feel successful in the learning process. This achievement was supported by several factors, including students' enthusiasm in becoming group members, close relationships between group members, and responsibility shown towards the group. Active participation in processing material and cooperation in implementing student worksheets using picture words.

Determining the failure of the first cycle and the success of the first cycle is also based on observations made during the learning process, student reactions, and the students' own learning outcomes. Teachers are considered bad at explaining all the material provided. Apart from that, students seem to pay less attention and respond to learning objectives and teacher encouragement. They also seem to have not maximized their ability to listen to the material. Students have extraordinary learning outcomes, but they are still below the criteria for classical learning completeness, and most cannot solve problems related to the concept of population. The following factors contributed to the failure of the first cycle, including the teacher not assigning students to record important information, students not giving them the opportunity to ask questions, students not listening clearly to the teacher's instructions, and students not responding to the teacher's motivation and learning objectives, preventing students from recording important information, not ask about topics they understand, and do not give other groups the opportunity to talk about those topics.

The interview results showed that the teacher delivered the material too quickly and did not pay enough attention to the students, and gave the impression of playing around. The teacher also indicated that some students felt hesitant to ask questions and provide responses to the material being discussed. Apart from that, teachers are considered less effective in supervising and directing all students in student worksheets. Students are also less active in exchanging opinions and making disclosures in front of the whole class.

To improve actions in the second cycle, researchers are expected to use simpler words so that students can better understand them and convey the material more casually. They are also expected to create a friendly atmosphere with students, continuously motivating them, increasing their self-confidence and allowing them to ask more questions. The results of observations of teacher performance and assessments of students' emotional skills during the second cycle are available in observation activities. Observations of student and teacher activities are carried out during the teaching and learning process. Researchers also include learning objectives in the classroom. and the observation involved the participation of the teacher and one student. The assessment is carried out by filling out an observation questionnaire to evaluate teacher performance.

SECOND CYCLE

The results of the analysis of teacher activities in the second cycle showed that the management of learning by the teacher was assessed as an activity that was carried out well. At the first meeting, the teacher achieved 18 points out of a total of 28 points possible, resulting in an average percentage score at the first meeting of 71.43%, in the good category. At the second meeting, the teacher's assessment increased by 25 points from the maximum score of 28 points, so that the average percentage reached 89.29%. In accordance with the standards of good qualitative assessment at the meeting.

Furthermore, the results of the analysis show that the results of student observations regarding how student activities were assessed were good during the three meetings. Results showed that it increased their confidence and allowed them to ask more questions. Researchers also aim to monitor and assess teacher performance and evaluate students' affective skills during the second cycle of activities in class. Observations of student and teacher activities are carried out during the teaching and learning process.

The observation process involves the participation of the teacher and one student as the observation subject. To evaluate the performance of teachers (who also act as researchers), this is done using an observation questionnaire as an assessment tool. The results of the second cycle test analysis are presented in the form of test performance options. Table 4 shows the complete results of the second cycle test analysis.

TABLE 4. Second Cycle Results

No	Acquisition Aspect	Result
1	Maximum score	16
2	Highest score	18 (4 student)
3	Lowest score	7 (1 student)
4	Many students have not yet completed (<65)	1
5	Classical completion percentage	95,00 %
6	Percentage of classical absorption capacity	85,31 %
7	Average score	13,65

From the results of the analysis of the second cycle of work tests presented in Table 4 above, the indicators for achieving the research results were achieved. Therefore, this Topic is considered complete. By referring to research activity data, student participation, test results, and evaluation of the effectiveness of student activities, it can be concluded that student responses and motivation towards learning have increased. The indicators for achieving the learning pass level have been met, so this research is ended. Learning with picture cards is usually an alternative way to handle students' reading problems both in class and outside of class.

DISCUSSION

In improving student and teacher performance, the results of observations show that there is an increase in student and teacher performance from the first learning cycle to the second cycle. Students demonstrated better abilities in understanding material and participating in learning activities, while teachers improved their teaching approaches. The learning process using picture word cards as a learning method has proven successful in increasing students' motivation to learn to read. This method allows students to identify syllables in sentences or animal names more effectively.

The students' average scores increased significantly from the first cycle to the second cycle. This shows that the use of picture word cards has helped improve student learning achievement, especially in Indonesian. Challenges and Obstacles: Although there was an increase in learning achievement, several learning objectives were not achieved in the first period. Several obstacles, such as limited opportunities to ask questions during the classroom learning process, were also identified.

Student emotional assessment is also important in determining the extent to which students participate in classroom learning activities. Evaluation of the affective aspect shows quite satisfactory results, although there are still some high percentages in several aspects. This is in accordance with the findings of Dasopang et al. (2023) which states that students must be in good emotional condition when participating in the learning process so that learning objectives can be achieved easily. Furthermore, Lubis (2019) in his findings stated that high student participation during the learning process is an indicator of the effectiveness of the learning process undertaken.

CONCLUSION

From the results of the research and discussion, it can be concluded that the use of picture card media can improve the academic achievement of grade 1 students at SDN 017 Petung Penajam Paser Utara. Indicators observed during the learning process show that almost all aspects are in the very good category. Students' affective evaluation also indicated that these four aspects reached the very good category. This research was conducted because of students' difficulties in reading and actively participating in class. Before using picture word card media, only 25% of students were active. Therefore, the use of flash cards can be considered as an effective solution to increase student participation in the learning process.

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