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## PICTURES AS MEDIA IN ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE (EFL) CLASSROOM TO IMPROVE STUDENTS' SPEAKING SKILL

Yona Pramela Eransya<sup>1(\*)</sup>, Dewi Rochsantiningsih<sup>2</sup>, Sri Haryati<sup>3</sup>  
Universitas Sebelas Maret, Surakarta, Indonesia<sup>123</sup>  
[yonapramelaeransya@student.uns.ac.id](mailto:yonapramelaeransya@student.uns.ac.id)<sup>1</sup>

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### Abstract

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This is a case study research and examines the use of pictures as media to improve students' speaking skill. This research limits the discussion by stating problem "What are the students' perceptions toward the use of pictures in EFL classroom?" The aim of this research is to explain the students' perceptions toward the use of pictures as media in EFL classroom. This research held in one of Vocational High School in Pematang, Central Java, Indonesia. This research has three steps. The observation came first, the second step gave students questionnaires about pictures as media, and the last step gave interview to the students and English Teacher. The outcomes of this research is about pictures as media significantly useful to help students in EFL classroom especially to improve speaking skill. This is in line when the students agree that pictures help them increase their speaking skill in EFL class. The teacher also said the same thing about the pictures that it helps students in teaching and learning processes.

**Keywords:** EFL Classroom; Pictures; Speaking Skill

(\*) Corresponding Author: [Eransya, yonapramelaeransya@student.uns.ac.id](mailto:Eransya, yonapramelaeransya@student.uns.ac.id)

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### INTRODUCTION

There are so many kinds of teaching media that used in the English classes, for examples printed media, audio media, visual media, digital media, multimedia, experiential media, etc. This research focused on the use the visual media, especially pictures. English teacher have to make the students enjoy and happy to join the activity in class. Because of that reason, teacher have to think how to make the class be engaging. The teaching media can help teacher in teaching and learning process to make the lively classroom and the students enjoy in class. Through the use of media, teachers can easily communicate the material. Carolina (2019) said media is tool for teaching and learning process, everything that can be used to stimulate the mind, feeling, attention and ability or skill of students in order to encourage the learning process. It helps the teacher to teach more effectively improve teacher's knowledge about the media in presenting materials and enable the students to learn more readily, specifically to fulfill objectives in a teaching-learning situation. It means, the media as a tool to facilitate teachers in teaching, and the teacher have to choose the right learning media when teaching. Learning media is a tool that can facilitate the process of teaching and learning activities. The importance of using media in teaching is to help students in their learning to make the teaching process

more effective and efficient by making the material more interesting, specific and understandable through the use of media.

Speaking is a fundamental aspect of human communication and plays a crucial role in social interaction, learning, and cognitive development. As a skill that is both cognitive and interactive, speaking involves several layers of processes, such as fluency, accuracy, and complexity. Research into speaking has evolved, with various scholars contributing to our understanding of its nature, teaching methods, and assessment techniques. One of the earliest and most significant contributions to the study of speaking was made by Brown (2007), who explored the relationship between speaking and language proficiency, emphasizing the importance of fluency in second language acquisition. Brown posited that speaking, as an active skill, requires learners to simultaneously manage a range of cognitive functions, such as memory, attention, and processing speed. His work laid the foundation for subsequent studies on how speaking skills can be developed and evaluated. In addition, Ellis (2003) focused on task-based language teaching and its implications for speaking development, highlighting that interaction during tasks allows learners to practice speaking in context. Ellis's research showed that speaking tasks should aim to simulate real-life communication scenarios, where learners can produce language spontaneously.

A great number of research has been done on the use of teaching media. Sari et al. (2021) conducted a research on the use of pictures as media in the teaching of writing skill. In this study, the researchers found that the results of this study indicate that the majority of students like the use of media picture, they have the perception that the use of media picture is very helpful in writing English text. As for some students, they dislike media picture because it is less attractive. They prefer to use moving media. Most of students like using picture as media in teaching English text.

There are also differences between other studies and this research, such as another research only focused on writing skills, but in this research, the researchers focused on the students' speaking skills. The difference lies in the location, data collection method, the data analysis of the research and obtaining the data to solve the problem. The study provides a localized, context-rich insight into English language learning in a specific educational and geographic context (Pemalang, Indonesia). Such focused studies are often lacking in broader ELT (English Language Teaching) literature. The research explores the specific use of pictures to aid in oral recount text learning. While pictures have been used in speaking tasks before, combining them specifically with recount text structures (past events, experiences) for vocational students is a more tailored approach. Many vocational curricula emphasize practical and job-related skills, but speaking in English is often underdeveloped. This specific study needed in Pemalang vocational setting because in this setting there are lots teacher did not implemented the teaching media. The study contributes to bridging this gap using an accessible media (pictures) to boost oral fluency, confidence, and coherence in recounting experiences—skills useful in job interviews and workplace communication.

## **METHODS**

This research is a case study research and type of this research is qualitative research. The purpose of this research is to explain the students' perceptions toward the use of pictures as media in EFL classroom. This research needed authentic and rich data also deep and detailed analysis. For collecting the data, the researcher collect through classroom observation, questionnaires and interview both to the students and English

teacher. To analyze the data, this research used content data analysis that the purpose is to analyze the presence of certain words, themes, or concepts within the data and use narrative analysis to quantify the frequency and nature of comments related to learning outcomes influenced by the use of pictures. The process of the data analysis are preparation, coding and analysis the data

## RESULTS & DISCUSSION

The aim of this research is to explain the students' perceptions toward the use of pictures as media in EFL classroom. The first thing is giving the students questionnaires. The theory of perception used in this research is from Piaget (1950) and the indicators of students perceptions are cognitive, affective and behavioral. For the interview the researcher chose 3 (three) students with the different category (high, intermediate, and low) proficiency based on the proficiency to represents all students in the class 30 (thirty) students.

### Students' perceptions from cognitive aspect

Cognitive is students' ability to explain or apply what they (students) have learned, Bloom (1956). In this research the research focused on the students cognitive skill and gather the data by doing observation before the media applied, give questionnaires to the students about the teaching and learning process and the last step is interview after the media applied to the students.

**Table 1.**  
 Students' Questionnaires Answer from Cognitive Aspect

Cognitive	Responses							
	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
I can recall the events in a recount text better when using pictures.	30	100						
I think pictures help me understand new English vocabulary better.	30	100						
I easier to recall the meaning of a word when use a picture in learning process.	30	100						
Pictures help me remember and use English vocabulary more effectively during speaking.			30	100				
I can use appropriate words more easily in recount texts after practicing with pictures.			30	100				
Pictures help me in constructing grammatically correct sentences when speaking English.	30	100						
I notice the correct use of grammar in my speaking tasks when pictures are used.	5	15	25	75				
Total	125	59.5	85	40.5				

From the first to the seventh statement of the questionnaires, the conclusion is that the pictures enhanced the vocabulary understanding. Students consistently indicated that pictures help them understand new English vocabulary better, the visual context provided by the pictures supports the retention and comprehension of unfamiliar words, making

abstract vocabulary more concrete and relatable. Pictures also help students to improve memory and recall, most students agreed that pictures assist them in recalling information, especially in remembering events in recount texts or the meaning of specific vocabulary. Visual stimuli serve as memory triggers, aiding in better long-term retention. The pictures also support for sentence construction and grammar, students expressed that pictures provide contextual clues that make it easier to form sentences. The summary is the use of pictures in English lessons positively impacts students' cognitive development by enhancing vocabulary acquisition, supporting memory and recall, improving sentence construction and grammar awareness and increasing focus and engagement in learning task. Most students strongly agreed that visual make abstract language more understandable and help them perform better in speaking and comprehension activities.

**Table 2.**  
 Students' Interview Answer from Cognitive Aspect

<b>Interview Question</b>	<b>S 7 High Proficiency</b>	<b>S 11 Intermediate Proficiency</b>	<b>S 18 Low Proficiency</b>
In what way the use of picture as a media help you remember what you've learned?	Help organize information in my mind.	Help recall faster.	Reading is hard, pictures make it easier.

Findings from the interview with the students shows that pictures enhance understanding and memory by helping organize and connect complex ideas. They (students) use pictures to visualize and structure information, aiding in deep learning and recall during exams. Pictures also make abstract or detailed context more concrete and memorable. For example S 7 said that "Using pictures helps me organize information in my mind. For example, when I see a diagram or a chart, I can visualize the topic better during a test. It makes abstract ideas clearer and easier to remember".

The conclusion is that pictures act as memory triggers and support comprehension when the text is not enough. They use visual to clarify confusing topics and improve retention, especially in content-heavy subject. The key benefit is visual reinforce what they have read and help during review or test. For example S 11 said "Pictures help me understand the lesson better, especially if the topic is confusing. When I see something visually, it's easier to remember during tests or discussions".

Pictures are essential for understanding because they struggle with reading or processing text alone. They rely on visuals to grasp the general idea and remember basic information. The pictures also provide simple, direct clues that make learning more accessible. For example S 18 said "I find reading hard sometimes, so pictures make it easier. I remember what I saw in the picture even if I forget the words".

For the interview question, all students agree that pictures help them remember what they have learned, but the way they benefit varies by ability level. The high scoring students use pictures to organize, visualize, and connect complex ideas, helping deepen understanding and enhance memory. The intermediate scoring student find that pictures clarify confusing topic and act as helpful reminders, especially when reading alone is not enough. The low scoring students rely heavily on visuals to understand basic concepts, especially when they struggle with reading or remembering written information. Overall, pictures serve as a valuable learning tool or media by making information clearer, more engaging and easier to recall for students at all levels. Pictures serve as a helpful tool to boost understanding, reduce anxiety and improve speaking confidence for learners at every level.

**Students' perception from affective aspect**

Affective is how interested and motivated students feel toward the subject matter or learning activity. The affective domain relates to feelings, emotions, attitudes, values, and motivations. It concerns how individuals deal with things emotionally (that is, feelings, attitudes, appreciations) and how they value, organize, internalize values and beliefs, Krathwohl (1964). The first activity is giving students questionnaires. For affective there are 7 (seven) domain statements in the questionnaires.

**Table 3.**  
 Students' Questionnaires Answer from Affective Aspect

Affective	Responses							
	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
I very interested when English lessons use pictures as teaching media.	30	100						
Pictures make me feel more comfortable in speaking English in front of my classmates	25	75	5	15				
I motivated to participate in English lessons that involve pictures.			30	100				
Guided pictures make the learning process more interesting and less stressful.			30	100				
I more confident to speak English during group activities when pictures are involved.	30	100						
Using pictures during lessons helps me speak more fluently in English.			30	100				
My speaking becomes more natural with guided picture support.	30	100						
<b>Total</b>	115	54.8	95	45.2				

The students responses clearly indicated that the use of pictures influences the affective domain. The results clearly indicate that students respond very positively to the use of pictures as a teaching media in English lessons. The students feel that pictures make learning more engaging, comfortable and motivating. Visual aids not only reduce stress and build confidence but also enhance speaking fluency and natural expression, especially during the group activity. Overall, use guided pictures in teaching and learning English significantly supports students' participation, comprehension and communication skills, making the speaking process more effective and enjoyable for all students.

**Table 4.**  
 Students' Interview Answer from Affective Aspect

Interview Question	S 7	S 11	S 18
	High Proficiency	Intermediate Proficiency	Low Proficiency
Do you feel that pictures help reduce your fear and nervousness when speak in English?	Easier to explain ideas, confident to speak.	Give ideas, help remember words and speak easier.	Less afraid to speak.

Based on the interview above the conclusion is that students enjoy speaking English more when pictures are involved because visuals help them quickly understand the topic and organize their ideas. Pictures enhance their ability to speak fluently, clearly and with confidence, allowing them to express more complex thoughts. The high-level students generally have less dependence on pictures, though some still find them helpful for organizing thought and improving fluency. Their nervousness tends to come more from grammar accuracy, fluency, or pronunciation rather than idea generation. Some students use pictures as visual supports for better expression, others feel confident without pictures and focus more on language accuracy. For example S 7 said “Tidak juga. Menurut saya lebih mengandalkan pengetahuan kosakata dan tata bahasa. Meskipun gambar memang berguna, saya tidak lagi merasa perlu untuk mengurangi rasa gugup. Saya merasa lebih gugup jika membuat kesalahan dalam tata bahasa atau pengucapan yang rumit”. (Not really. I think, I rely more on vocabulary and grammar knowledge. While pictures are useful, I do not find them necessary to reduce nervousness anymore. I feel more nervous about making mistakes in complex grammar or pronunciation.)

The intermediate level students find pictures fairly helpful in reducing nervousness. Pictures assist with idea generation and vocabulary recall, which boost their confidence in speaking. However, they may still feel nervous about grammar mistakes or pronunciation. Pictures help them think and speak more easily and they still experience some nervousness but visual support reduces it. For example S 11 said “Sometimes, yes. Pictures help me think faster and make sentences more easily. But I still get nervous about grammar and pronunciation, even with pictures”. (Terkadang, ya. Gambar membantu saya berpikir lebih cepat dan menyusun kalimat dengan lebih mudah. Tapi saya masih merasa gugup soal tata bahasa dan pengucapan, bahkan dengan gambar.)

The low level students find pictures very helpful and necessary. They rely on pictures to understand context and get vocabulary support. This reduces their fear of speaking, as pictures give them a starting point and guide. Pictures help them to understand and say basic words. They think visual aids greatly reduce anxiety and encourage participation. For example S 18 said “Ya, gambar sangat membantu saya. Saya tidak tahu banyak kata, jadi gambar menunjukkan apa yang harus saya katakan. Saya merasa tidak takut untuk berbicara ketika melihat gambar”. (Yes, pictures help me a lot. I don't know many words, so pictures show me what to say. I feel less afraid to speak when I see a picture.)

Across all levels, pictures are generally seen as a helpful tool, but the degree of reliance and the reason for their usefulness varies by the proficiency. The low level students feel strongly supported by pictures. They depend on them to understand meaning and produce basic vocabulary, which significantly reduces their fear of speaking. The intermediate level students find pictures useful for generating ideas and recalling vocabulary. This moderately reduces their nervousness, although they may still worry about grammar and pronunciation. The high level students show a mixed response. Some still use pictures to help structure their thoughts, while others feel confident speaking without visual aids. For them, nervousness is more related to accuracy than idea generation. Because of that, the researcher think that pictures are most helpful for reducing fear in lower proficiency learners because they offer clear visual support. As language proficiency increases, students rely less on pictures for confidence and more on their language skills.

### **Students' perception from behavioral aspect**

Behavioral is about how interested and motivated students feel toward the subject matter or learning activity. For this, the researcher think that the high participation

indicates that students have positive perceptions of the learning process. Before gave interview to the students, the researcher gave the students the observation sheet.

**Table 5.**  
 Students' Questionnaires Answer from Behavioral Aspect

Behavioral	Responses							
	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
I actively engage in discussions or speaking activities when pictures are used.	30	100						
I more confident to speak English during group activities when pictures are involved.	30	100						
I try to improve my speaking skills more seriously when guided pictures are used	30	100						
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100</b>						

For each statement all students answer strongly agree so the researcher concluded that using pictures in speaking activity is highly effective for this class. It increases engagement, confidence and motivation, making it a valuable strategy to support language learning across all proficiency levels. Behavioral engagement reverts to students' actions in learning activities. It is includes how actively they take part in discussion, engage in group work, make efforts to improve skills, and show persistence and motivation through observable behaviour.

**Table 6.**  
 Students' Interview Answer from Behavioral Aspect

Interview Question	S 7	S 11	S 18
Do you participate more actively in class when pictures are used?	Participate more especially in discussion.	More active in class.	Help to talk.

The high level students participate more deeply for example they giving detailed responses or expressing more ideas. They think pictures make activities more engaging and idea-rich, even if they already participate regularly. They do not need pictures to participate, but visuals enhance quality and depth of contributions. The example is from S 7 said "Ya, saya rasa saya lebih berpartisipasi ketika gambar digunakan, terutama dalam diskusi. Gambar membuat topik lebih jelas dan membantu saya menghasilkan lebih banyak ide untuk dibagikan". (Yes, I think I do participate more when pictures are used, especially in discussions. They make the topic clearer and help me come up with more ideas to share.)

The intermediate level students show clear increase in participation when pictures are used. Pictures help them understand better and speak more confidently, leading to more frequently involvement. They think that visual help bridge the gap between understanding and expression, boosting both participation and confidence. For example S 11 said "Ya, saya merasa lebih aktif di kelas ketika gambar ditampilkan. Gambar membantu saya berpikir lebih cepat dan membuat saya lebih percaya diri untuk berbicara

atau menjawab pertanyaan”. (Yes, I feel more active in class when pictures are shown. They help me think faster and make me more confident to speak or answer questions.)

The low level students said that pictures are essential for participation in the class. They rely on visuals to understand context, recall vocabulary, and overcome fear of speaking. For them, pictures are a critical tool that enables them to engage at all. Without pictures, participation would be much lower. S 18 said “Ya, saya merasa malu untuk berbicara, tetapi gambar membantu saya mengetahui apa yang harus dikatakan. Jadi, saya berbicara lebih banyak ketika guru menggunakan gambar”. (Yes, I feel shy to speak, but pictures help me know what to say. So I speak more when teacher uses pictures.)

The conclusion is pictures increased classroom participation when pictures are used as a media in teaching and learning processes. Pictures strongly enhance behavioral engagement across all proficiency levels, but especially for intermediate and low level students who depend on media for comprehension and confidence. High level students also using pictures to enrich their contribution.

The conclusion is using pictures in recount text lessons effectively supports students across all proficiency levels in teaching and learning process. For low level students, visual boost confidence and help them recall personal experiences, enabling them to form simple past tense sentences. Intermediate level students benefit from the structure pictures provide, allowing them to sequence events more clearly and use richer language. High level students use pictures as prompts to produce detailed, reflective and well organized recounts, enhancing both content and language quality. Overall, incorporating pictures encourages students participation, supports comprehension and improves speaking performance aligned with recount text features.

## CONCLUSION

Pictures greatly increase students participation. Students are more likely to take part in speaking tasks when visuals are involved, suggesting that pictures help lower barriers to engagement. Pictures significantly boost confidence, visuals appear to make group speaking activities feel less intimidating, encouraging students to express themselves more freely. The guided pictures also enhance motivation and effort, students are more motivated to improve their speaking skills when pictures are used as structured support tools. All students strongly agree with these statements, it indicates high behavioral engagement in speaking activities that involve pictures. Students are not only more involved but also put in more effort and take initiative to improve when visual aids are present. Overall, from the students perception toward pictures as media significantly useful to help students in EFL classroom especially to improve speaking skill.

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