

# The Effectiveness of Using Picture Book to Motivate Students Especially Young Learners in Reading

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## ABSTRACT

This journal aims to investigate the effectiveness of PICTUREBOOK in resolve the problem of low interest in reading, especially for young learners. Reading is something that is learned. Reading means gaining an understanding of the written symbols represented by the sounds of oral language. This is an important skill to learn as it opens the doors to further studying, better job opportunities and to a whole other world that happens in print. There are many strategies that can be used to teach reading for young learners one of them is by using a picture book. A picture book is a book contained illustrations on each page accompanied by texts which tell about the same story told by the illustrations. In this journal, the authors use a qualitative research method, by reviewing some journals from other researchers. The result of this research proves that picture books can improve and motivate young learners to enhance and also motivate young learners to prefer reading. Picture books can visualization literacy skills and train children to comprehend the story from multiple perspectives.

**Key words:** Reading, Young learners, Picture book.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Reading is one of the language skills that must be studied as early as possible. Reading is an activity of receiving, analyzing, and interpreting which is made by the reader to obtain the message to be conveyed by the writer in the written media. Finochiaro (1973) state reading is understanding the meaning and its meaning contained in written language. Lado (1976) state reading understands some patterns or grammar from a written description. Donald(1996) states reading is a series of completes a response, which includes attitude, cognitive, and manipulative responses. Hazzard

(2016) states that reading makes a significant contribution to the success of the learner in completing their studies.

Reading is important for anyone because through reading we can get knowledge, by reading we can get a lot of information around the world. By reading also our views become more open to new things that we did not know before. The influence of reading is very large in improving the way a student thinks, especially for young learners because it can improve children's language and communication skills. According to Short (2017) state why reading is

important for kids, first, it expands their vocabulary, it makes them better at it, it helps build independence and self-confidence, it helps them make sense of the world around them, it leads to their future academic success, and it enhances their imagination.

However, in fact, the reading interest of Indonesian people is still low compared to other countries. UNDP issued the Indonesia Human Development Index in 2016 that it was considerably low at the point of 0.689, this fact consequently places Indonesia as the 113th of 188 countries around the world (Human Development Report 2016). The reading interest of Indonesia, especially children are still very low. In terms of learning and education, reading ability is very important for improving language skills. Data from UNESCO pointed out that the percentages of children who like to read are only 0.001%. That means, only 1 out of 10,000 children in Indonesia like to read (kompas.com, 2017). The low interest in reading in student does not just happen, however, caused many factors. In addition the family environment and social environment, the thing that really determines the literacy ability of children is the school environment. Therefore the role of the teacher is very important in increasing the reading interest of young learners. Additionally, the facilities of each school become a problem in the learning process. For example books in the library are inadequate.

To resolve the problem of young learners in reading, there are many strategies that can be used; one of them is through using "PICTUREBOOK". Wolfenbarger and Sipe (2007) in Weeks (2003) define a picture book as a book in which the picture is as important as the text. The texts and illustrations are fused together to provide more than either can do alone. A picture book is a book, typically for children, in which the illustrations are as important as or more important than the words in telling the story. Picture Book has traditionally been 32 pages long, although Little Golden Books are 24 pages. In picture books, there are illustrations on every page or on one page of every pair of facing pages. (Kennedy 2019).

This journal aims to investigate the effectiveness of PICTUREBOOK in resolve the problem of low interest in reading, especially for young learners.

## **II. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Important Reading for Young Learners**

Reading skills are important to young learners because if they love to read starting at a very early age it is very possible to help ensure the child's success. Here are some of the top reasons that reading for young learners is beneficial to them in the long run. First, Supported cognitive development, Reading is proven to improve and help young learners along the process of cognitive development. Cognitive development

is the emergence of the ability to think and understand the construction of thought processes, including remembering, problem-solving, and decision-making, from childhood through adolescence to adulthood” (HealthofChildren.com). Second, Improved language skills, Daily reading for young learners, starting from an early age, can help with language acquisition and literacy skills. This is because reading for young learners in the earliest months stimulates the part of the brain that allows them to understand the meaning of language and helps build key language, literacy, and social skills. Indeed, a recent brain scan study found that “reading at home with children from an early age was strongly correlated with brain activation in areas connected with visual imagery and understanding the meaning of language” (TIME.com)

## 2.2 Picture books

Picture books gained acceptance in 1937 when The Caldecott Medal was created to honor the artist who created the images in the most distinguished picture book of that year. Maria Popova, (n.d.) a writer at the Atlantic and an MIT Futures of Entertainment Fellow, is the creator/author of the online newsletter Brain Pickings. In her article entitled “A Brief History of Children’s Pictures Books and the Art of Visual Storytelling” Popova explains:

Though pictorial storytelling dates back to the earliest cave wall

paintings, the true picture book harks back to a mere 130 years ago, when artist and illustrator Randolph Caldecott (1846-1886) first began to elevate the image into a storytelling vehicle rather than a more decoration for text. (n.d., par. 2)

Picture books did not become popular until the late nineteenth and early twentieth century when new developments in printing technology evolved and changing attitudes toward young children emerged. A new class of exceptional artists also propelled the picture book into modern culture. It was during the first part of the twentieth century that such timeless classics as *Curious George* (1941) and *Babar* (1937)<sup>1</sup> was created.

Picture books support literacy in so many ways. Through such activities as looking through new books, rereading (or pretend reading), stories that the teacher has read, imagining new endings for popular stories, or creating artistic renderings of favorite stories, young children can interact with text in meaningful ways (Seplocha & Strasser, 2007). Picture books should be a part of every day in the early childhood years (Seplocha & Strasser, 2007). Reading to children and engaging them in activities that encourage the use of expressive language, phonological awareness, and high-level thinking is critical for the development of the skills and dispositions that are necessary for reading and writing (Seplocha & Strasser, 2007).

### III. METHOD

The study employed a qualitative research method. In this research describe the use of picture book in helping young learners to improve their reading interest. Qualitative research finds the information about someone's perspective, belief, or attitude towards past events or present circumstances (Best, 1970 cited in Cohen et al (2019).

The data were collected by reviewing seven Journals about reading, picture books, and young learners. The journals and books came from Indonesia, Florida, Kenya, New York, and Saudi Arabia.

#### 3.1 Research Findings and Discussions

##### The Concept of Reading

Unlike speaking, reading is something that is learned. Reading means gaining an understanding of the written symbols represented by the sounds of oral language. This is an important skill to learn as it opens the doors to further studying, better job opportunities and to a whole other world that happens in print. Reading is the most important skill that is learned in schools. Students who do not learn to read may later on face problems when they have to use reading to learn (National Center to Improve the Tools of Educators, 1996).

Before children learn to read they have established skill in the spoken language that serves as a foundation for the growth of later

reading proficiency. Understanding the spoken word is not the same as getting the meaning from a print, and talent in the spoken language does not mean that the same person will have success in the printed language. Children need to learn how to read written words (Cain, 2010).

Reading is a skill that is often taken for granted. Successful reading requires many different skills to work together. The reader needs to be able to make sense out of texts as a whole and that entails a collection of different factors such as reading techniques, cognitive factors and appropriate background knowledge (Cain, 2010). Reading is the most important activity in any class, not only as a source of information but also as a means of consolidating and extending one's idea and knowledge of the language. So, reading is an activity that can open your mind and improve your knowledge (River 1968:24).

Getting used to reading from an early age has many benefits, in addition to adding insight and knowledge of children, reading it can also affect the development of children's character. Reading is considered an essential skill by all types of people and perceived as being vital for people's job prospects. Parents feel that reading with their children is very important a vital part of their children's development (The National Literacy Trust, 1998) in Khaled (2011).

### 3.2 The Concept of Picture Books

Many strategies that can be used to attract children in reading and there is one strategy which, according to the authors, is very effective in attracting children's interest in reading, namely through picture books. The picture book is a multimodal text (Kress, 2003), it is dependent upon pictures and words together to create meaning and it is the interdependence of what the pictures show and the words tell (Lewis 2001b) that makes a picture book so special – for example, a picture book 'could not be read over the radio and be understood fully' (Shulevitz, 1985:15). Picture books are not just authentic texts because of the words they contain, for they enable language use through the learners' interpretation of the pictures, words, and design, as these elements come together to produce a visual-verbal narrative which is disregarded when there is a focus on the words only. Taking the stance that picture books provide authentic opportunities for learners to interpret and respond to in English, it is important to acknowledge the different responses to be encouraged in EFL classes with pre-primary and primary children.

### 3.3 Supporting Data of Picture Books

From several journals and books that have been read by the authors, most of them state that picture books can increase children's motivation in reading. This statement is supported by three research sources conducted by several researchers,

namely: According to Hsiu-Chih (2008) investigated the effectiveness of children's picture books in Taiwanese classrooms where English is taught as a foreign language. The study emphasized on the teacher's perceptions of using children's picture books in the English language classrooms. Teachers' perceptions in the study revealed some fundamental educational values of using children's picture books in English language learning classrooms. Findings indicated that children's picture books had linguistic benefits in which learners could improve their vocabulary learning, reading, and critical thinking. Along the same line, illustrations of picture books could help to trigger student's motivation in learning. Finally, using picture books was helpful to assist pupils to actively engage in the classroom when they learn from them.

In another study conducted by Ho (2000), English language learners were taught literacy and language courses using picture books for three years. The learners who participated in the study were divided into three groups of 20 students each. The students were observed and interviewed at the end of the course period. The results showed that generally, students participated positively in most language, literacy tasks, and activities that included pronunciation, developing literacy competence, critical reading, and multicultural awareness. The results of this study are a demonstration that picture books pedagogically sound

for instructional purposes for different learning needs.

Moreover, a considerable number of studies were conducted to investigate the role of children's picture books in developing different language and literacy abilities of English language learners (Gooch, Saito & Lyster, 2016; Strasser & Seplocha, 2007).

In addition, Picture books create a way for pupils to interconnect and have a better understanding of the world. According to Nisbet and Shucksmith (2017), when children explore illustrations in picture books, they acquire abilities to read images and this helps them achieve a deeper understanding of literature. This kind of understanding where learners are able to understand images in a confined space and context is very vital for the learning process. As such picture books bring into context shared messages that define the schooling process (Pinter, 2017).

From the explanation above, it can be concluded that picture books can improve and motivate young learners to enhance and also motivate young learners to prefer reading. A picture book can visualization literacy skills and train children to comprehend the story from multiple perspectives.

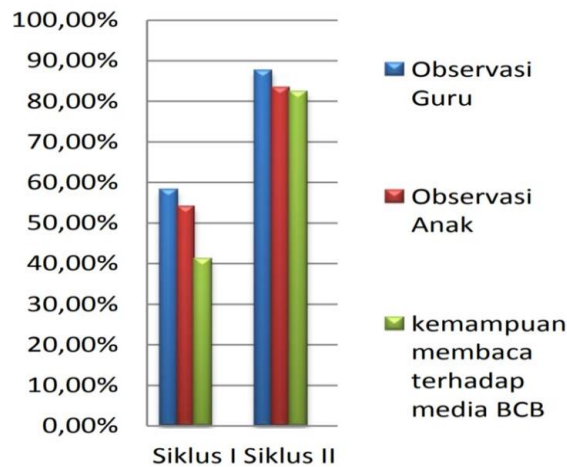
### 3.4 Adopted Data of Picture Books

picture books were capable improve the ability to read children in kindergarten PERTIWI 1

As a reference data, the author also adopts from observational data in a journal with the title *Penggunaan Buku Cerita Bergambar Dalam Menumbuhkan Kemampuan Membaca Anak Kelompok B Di Tk Pertiwi 1 Tirtobinangun Kabupaten Nganjuk*, put out the data as follows:

From the results of data processing and analysis both from observations made cycle I and cycle II as a whole it has been said that it has a very positive change occurred. This can be observed from the results of the analysis in the first cycle, the results of teacher observation analysis 58.3%, analysis results in child observation of about 54% and the results of improving reading ability by 41.17% due to many shortcomings at the beginning of learning so the child has not enjoyed. Whereas in the second cycle an increase can be observed in the results teacher observation analysis of 87.5% and at the results of the analysis of children's observations of 83.3% as well for the result of increased reading ability by 82.35%. Enough increase This is significant due to a shortage in the cycle I updated and the teacher used a new strategy that is not the first picture but the first letter until children learn vocabulary better understand and a lot of fun. From the explanation above, it can be it was concluded that

Tirtobinangun. This can be seen in the diagram below:



According to the data above the authors concluded that picture books can increase young learners reading ability and reading interest in kindergarten PERTIWI 1 Tirtobinangun. Therefore, overall the used strategy of picture books are

#### IV. CONCLUSION

Reading is one of the activities that are very useful in human life. By reading we can know what is in this world and our views become more open to new things that we did not know before. Reading is a very important skill in learning the language. Many benefits we can get when we read, such as we can improve our knowledge and we can open our minds by reading. However, reading interest in our country still low, especially of young learners. Teachers of reading must have good techniques to teach reading for students especially young learners and help them get good results. Strategies for teaching reading are the processes used for transferring knowledge in order to get good results in the learning process. Teacher has to implement a strategy

effectively in the learning process especially in reading skill because picture books make the teaching-learning process more fun, enjoyable and attractive.

so that the teacher can use picture books that quality picture books would have a rightful place in teaching English to young learners. The use of picture books in the English language classroom has appeared to have several merits. Based on the result of research studied by the authors, states that picture books are very effective for learning media especially in reading for young learners.

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