# IMPROVING STUDENTS' LEVELS OF VOCABULARY COMPREHENSION BY USING PHOTO CARDS

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#### Abstract

The purpose of this study is to determine whether or not picture cards are effective in enhancing the vocabulary mastery of seventh-grade students at SMPN Kota Baru Kefamenanu, East Nusa Tenggara Province, to identify their difficulties in learning picture types and vocabulary, and to classify their level of mastery. This study used a qualitative approach and a quasi-experimental research methodology to answer the questions posed by the three examples. To collect the necessary data, 20 seventh-grade kids were used as samples. They were instructed and tested twice (pretest and posttest). This study compared the mean score to the degree of freedom at a significance level of 5% to determine the efficacy of using picture cards. To determine their average score, their total number of scores was divided by the total number of students multiplied by the entire number of test items multiplied by 100%. In addition, to identify the challenging types of picture and word, the total number of correct/incorrect answers was divided by the total number of students and the total number of test questions and multiplied by 100 percent. Finally, in order to classify their level of expertise, the total number of students whose scores varied from 0 to 100 was tallied. The analysis of the data indicates that there is a substantial difference between the pre-test and the post-test. It indicates that the mean score on the pre-test was 45.5 (extremely low), but the mean score on the post-test was 81 (excellent) (good). Moreover, the degree of freedom at a significance level of 5% was 1.61. It was greater than the result of the post-significant test's difference, 2.28>1.61. The seventh-grade pupils of SMP Negeri Kota Baru Kefamenanu benefit significantly from the use of picture cards to enhance their vocabulary comprehension.

Keywords: using picture card, to improve, students' vocabulary mastery

#### Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui efektif atau tidaknya kartu bergambar untuk meningkatkan penguasaan kosakata siswa kelas VII SMPN Kota Baru Kefamenanu Provinsi Nusa Tenggara Timur, mengetahui permasalahan mereka dalam pembelajaran jenis gambar dan kosakata serta mengkategorikan tingkat penguasaannya. . Untuk mendapatkan jawaban atas ketiga kasus tersebut, penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dan desain penelitian eksperimen semu. Untuk mendapatkan data yang dibutuhkan, sampel yang diambil adalah 20 siswa kelas VII berdiri. Mereka diajari dan diberikan tes (pretest dan posttest) sebanyak dua kali. Untuk mengetahui keefektifan penggunaan kartu bergambar, penelitian ini membandingkan rerata skor dengan derajat bebas pada signifikansi 5%. Untuk menunjukkan skor rata-rata mereka, dihitung jumlah skor mereka dibagi dengan jumlah siswa dikalikan jumlah item tes dikalikan 100%. Selanjutnya, untuk mengidentifikasi jenis gambar dan kosakata yang sulit, dihitung jumlah jawaban benar/salah dibagi dengan jumlah siswa dan jumlah waktu butir soal 100%. Terakhir, untuk mengkategorikan tingkat ketuntasannya, dihitung jumlah siswa yang nilainya berkisar antara 0-100. Hasil analisis data menunjukkan bahwa terdapat perbedaan yang signifikan antara pretest dan posttest. Hal ini menunjukkan bahwa nilai rata-rata pretest adalah 45,5 (sangat buruk) sedangkan post test adalah 81 (baik). Selain itu, derajat kebebasan pada signifikansi 5% adalah 1,61. itu lebih tinggi dari hasil perbedaan signifikansi posttest, yaitu 2,28>1,61. Jadi, penggunaan kartu bergambar efektif untuk meningkatkan penguasaan kosakata siswa kelas VII SMP Negeri Kota Baru Kefamenanu.

Kata kunci: kartu bergambar, meningkatkan, penguasaan kosakata siswa

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Mastering vocabulary is a must. It is one of the most important components of language because it enables us as its speakers, including students learning a certain language to express and understand each other. The importance of vocabulary has been underlined by Thornbury (2002) in Turnip, Rumapea & Sari (2020) stating that without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed. Learning English vocabulary therefore signifies knowledge of words or word meaning conveying not only a single word but also a nuance that creates meaningful context.

To master English as one of the international languages requires us to understand the context that will facilitate us to involve in the global communication. Indonesia as one of the world countries, has long adopted English not as a second language. It introduces English as the first foreign language taught from junior high school up to university students. The final goal of teaching and learning English is to help the students to use it in their international communication.

Seen from the length of time, Indonesian students have learnt English for more than six years. However, they still face difficulties to get vocabulary as the basis of their communication in English. Salam & Nurnisa (2021) and Susanto (2021) agree that without sufficient vocabulary, people cannot communicate and express their feeling both in form of 70 spoken and written effectively. In addition, Indonesian students are difficult to master English vocabulary because both languages bring different words and meanings that result in different pronunciation and spelling, meaning and the word use.

The same problems as mentioned above were almost the same with the researchers' results of observation at SMP Negeri Kota Baru Kefamenanu. We found that most of the seventh grade students assumed English as a difficult subject to learn. It is realized in their low motivation and vocabulary repertoire. When we asked them to translate some Indonesian into English sentences and conversely, they could not do it. The same fact happened when we asked them to speak English, they could not speak anymore. They acknowledged that it was influenced by the fact that they did not have any vocabularies. According to Suardi & Sakti (2019), the students' problems might also be influenced by the teacher's difficulties in selecting the right techniques to help their students to get vocabulary.

The students' problem above is caused by the fact that the teachers of English at the given junior high school did not use pictures as media during the teaching and learning process of English. Using pictures should be an obligation to teachers in order to attract their students' interest to learn English. In a study, Sholeha, Sofian & Salam (2017) found that picture card media or card games are effective to improve the students' vocabulary mastery.

To facilitate the students' mastery on vocabulary, there are many kinds of teaching media used. One of them is picture. Turnip, Rumapea & Sari (2020) explain that picture is one of media which is relatively cheaper than the other media and easy to find. They add that pictures can be drawn on the board or on posters and have been used as a starting point for mastering vocabulary and motivating the students to get ideas and/or information in studying English.

Ransom in Turnip, Rumapea & Sari (2020) mentions that picture provides settings for understanding and using new words. It represents an important step in concept and vocabulary development. It can broaden observation, opportunities and knowledge of students to enlarge and enrich theirvocabulary repertoire. Luruk & Semiun (2021) add that using pictures makes explanation easyin the classroom. It can save an item or object and displaythe image. It can help students to memorize the meaning of words and encourage them to involve n English.

Using picture is suitable for teaching English, for it can stimulatestudents' imaginationand creation in learning English. Moreover, picture media can motivate the students to learn vocabulary easily and to rememberthe words, meaning and the form of objects. Wright (1989: 2) in Turnip, Rumapea & Sari (2020) states that pictures are media that can be applied in teaching and learningEnglish. They can motivate the students to get ideas and information. They can increase the students' interest to study English.

Pictures as teaching media may appear in different types. According to Yunus (1981: 49) in Astuti (2014), pictures are two-dimensional visual representation of person, place or thing. Moreover, he divided pictures into four types: a) composite picture which is a large single picture showing a scene (hospital, beach, canteen, rail way station, house, market), b) a picture series which is a number of related composite pictures linked to form a series orsequences of events, c) individual picture which are single pictures of objects, person or activities, and d) specialized pictures such as posters, advertisements, or brochures which are not designed specifically for teaching, but they can not bedismissed from the ESL classroom for discussion.

The use of media in teaching and learning process can help the teacher in explaining the materials and help the students in understanding the materials. Pictures as one of the media in teaching and learning process have some advantages both for the teacher and the students.

Therefore, we dare to declare that picture cards are very helpful media to avoid misunderstanding of the questions since the students can relate the questions to the pictures given. Picture cards have also an important role to encourage the students to get meaning, give illustration of something and comprehend it clearly and easily.

## METHOD OF RESEARCH

develop our research, То we applied a quasi-experimental research design to detect the effectiveness of picture cards as compares to conventional teaching strategy in vocabulary and to help students gain higher scores. According to Thomas (2022), like a true experiment, a quasi-experimental design aims to establish a cause-and-effect relationship between an independent and dependent variable. However. unlike а true experiment, a quasi-experiment does not on random assignment. rely Instead, subjects are assigned to groups based on non-random criteria. Quasi-experimental design is a useful tool in situations where true experiments cannot be used for ethical or practical reasons.

Therefore, this research applied an experiment method by involving pretest and posttest method. The students scores in both pretest and posttest are then analyzed using the following formula: treatment (x) is pretest (01) times posttest (02).

To get the data, we applied our research at SMP Negeri Kota Baru, Kefamenanu. It involved the 7<sup>th</sup> graders students in the academic year of 2021/2022. We chose the seventh grade students because we know well the condition of the school and it is also easy to reach.

Before doing the field research, we met three teachers of English and came to class, made a tossing coin to make sure the experimental and control groups. To collect the data, we used a type of instrument, namely a test. First, we gave them a test of English vocabulary before (pretest) and after treatment (posttest). Then, the pre-test aims to know the knowledge students' prior about vocabulary mastery while the posttest aims to measure their mastery by using 20 test items. The pretest spent 60 minutes. It dealt with a test of picture and contained a vocabulary and their meanings. The pictures are sea, animals, vocabularies of fruits and vegetables and object picture in the picture cards. Furthermore, after giving them the treatment, we gave them a posttest.

To analysis the data, we used the following formula, that is: scoring= p/nx 100%. To classify their scores, we used the following scale: 86-100 is very good, 61-85 is good, 47-60 is fair and 0-46 is very poor (*Depdiknas, 2004*). To calculate the percentage of their scores, we used the following formula: percentage (p) is frequency (f) per total number of the students (n) times 100 %. To get their mean score, we applied the following

formula: mean score is the sum of all score per total number of samples (N). To calculate standard deviation by using the formula: standard deviation (SD) is sum of all scores minus sum of all score quadrate per test of significance minus (n) minus 1 per total number of samples (N) minus 1.

### **RESEARCH FINDINGS**

After getting the data, we analyze them. The results of the data analysis will be seen in the following figures.

### 1. Students' Score on Pre-Test

To know the results of the student's pre-test and post-test, the writers will present them in the following figures.

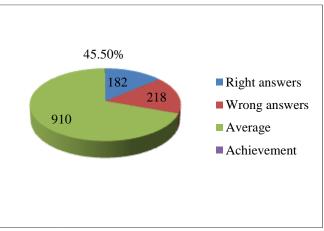


Figure 1. Student Score on Pre-test

Figure 1 shows that the total number of the right answers is 182 (or: 45.5%), the wrong answers is 218 (or: 54.5%) and their average score is 910 (or: 45.5%). It means that they have not yet passed and mastered the vocabulary test dealing with the use of picture card.

The whole total number of the right and wrong answers is distributed as follows: student numbers 1, 5, 14 and 18 made 13 right and 7 wrong answers and got 65 (failed the vocabulary test). Student numbers 2, 4, 11, 15 and 17 made 7 right and 13 wrong answers and got 35 (failed the test). Student numbers 3 and 8 made 9 wrong and 11 wrong answers and got 45 (failed the test). Student number 6 made 6 right and 14 wrong answers and got 30 (failed the test). Student number 7 made 11 right and 9 wrong answers and got 55 (failed the test). Student numbers 9, 10, 13, 16 and 19 made 8 right and 12 wrong answers and got 40 (failed the test). Student numbers 12 and 20 made 10 right and 10 wrong answers and got 50 (failed the test).

As seen in Figure 1, the students' average score in the pre-test is 45.5. It can be asserted that theyhave not yet mastered the vocabulary. It means that their ability in mastering vocabulary before the treatment was very poor. The same figure above also shows that the total number of

the students' right answer is 182 (45.5%) while their wrong answer is 218 (54.5%).

A week after the pre-test was given, the writers met the students to give them post-test. It applied pictures. It covers 20 test items. The result of their answers on the test given during the posttest will be presented in the following figures.

### 2. Percentage of Level of Mastery of Pre-Test

In this part, the writer will present the students' level of mastery on pre-test as seen in the following figure.

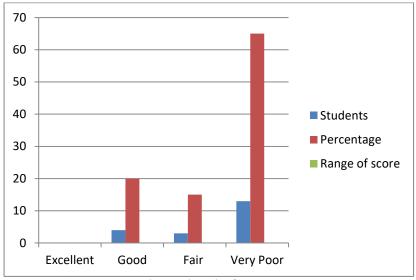


Figure 2. Students' level of mastery on pretest

Figure 2 shows that none of the students' score is on excellent. 4 (20%) students (numbers 1, 5, 14 and 18)are good, 3 (15%) students 3 (7, 18 and 20) are fair and 13 (65%) students (2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 15, 16, 17, and 19)are very

poor. It means that the students' mastery on vocabulary is still low.

#### 3. Students' Score on Post-Test

In the following figure, the writers will present the students'scores on posttest. It consists of 20 items

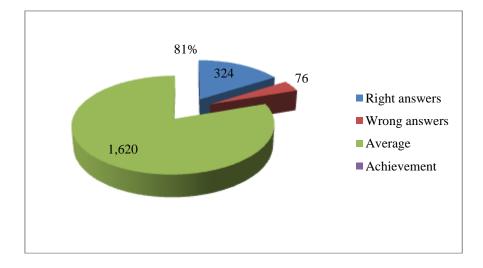


Figure 3. Students Scores on Post-Test

Figure 3 shows that the total number of the right answers is 324 (or: 81%), the wrong answers is 76 (or: 19%) and their average score is 1,620 (or: 81%). It means that they have passed and mastered the vocabulary test dealing with the use of picture card.

The whole total number of the right and wrong answers is distributed as follows: student numbers 1, 2, 3and 9 made 18 right and 2 wrong answers and got 90 (and passed the vocabulary test). Student number 4 made 13 right and 7 wrong answers and got 65 (did not pass the test). Student numbers 5, 6, 8, 10, 16, 18 and 19 made 16 right and 4 wrong answers and got 80 (passed the test). Student numbers 7, 13, 14 and 17 made 17 right and 3 wrong answers and got 85 (passed the test). Student numbers 11, 15 and 20 made 15 right and 5 wrong answers and got 75 (passed the test). And student number 12 made 14 right and 6 wrong answers and got 70 (passed the test).

Based on the table above, the students' average score in the pre-test is 81. It can be asserted that the students have mastered the vocabulary. It means that their ability in mastering vocabulary before the treatment was excellent.

Figure 1 above also shows that the total number of the students' right answer

is 324 (81%) while their wrong answer is 76 (19%). So, pictures are effective to improve the students' vocabulary mastery.

#### 4. Students' Difficulties on Picture Card

To know their ability on the parts of picture card, we analyzed their answers. The data in the following figure is adapted from figure 2. It means that we just took the data from the results of posttest. We know this data inform us about the students' improvement on learning the use of picture card as the main concern of this present study.

Based on the picture cards used in the instrument of posttest, we can classify them into some types. They are an elephant (1), pictures of doll (2, 4, 9, 12, 13, 14, 16, and 19) and 20), ship (3), woman (10), color (7), coconut tree (8), animations of family (11 and 15), fruit (5 and 6), clock (17) and goodbye card (18). So, the instrument applies ten types of picture cards. namely: animal (an elephant), pictures of doll, ship, woman, color, coconut tree, animations of family, fruit, clock and goodbye card.

The results of data analysis related to the use of picture card types will be presented in the following figure.

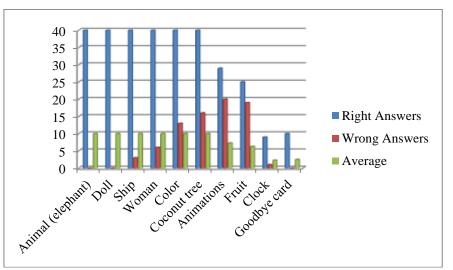


Figure 4.. Students Scores on Post-Test

Figure 4 presents the data of the students' right and wrong answers found almost in all types of picture card used. In animal (an elephant), they made 40 right and 0 wrong answers. They made 40 right and 0 wrong answers in picture card of dolls. They made 40 right and 3 wrong answers in ship. They made 40 right and 6 wrong answers on a picture card of woman. They made 40 right and 13 wrong answers on picture card of color. They made 40 right and 16 wrong answers on a coconut tree. They made 29 right and 20 wrong answers on animations of family. They made 25 right and 19 wrong answers on fruit. They made 9 right and 1 wrong answers on clock and made 10 right and 0 wrong answers on a picture card of goodbye card. So, they still found difficulties in mastering picture cards of animation, fruit, clock and goodbye cards.

### 5. Students' Problems on Types of Vocabulary

Vocabulary consists of two types, productive and receptive namely vocabularies. Productive vocabularies are those that are effectively applied in speaking and writing. Conversely, receptive vocabularies are those that are clearly realized in listening and reading. However, for the purpose of this study, we have constructed 20 posttest items accompanied by simple reading passage and conversation. By using reading passage and conversation test items accompanied by nine types of picture card, this study applied a valid test to measure the students' mastery on vocabulary. Therefore, from 20 test items provided, there are ten productive and 10 receptive vocabularies respectively. The results of data analysis will be presented in the following figure.

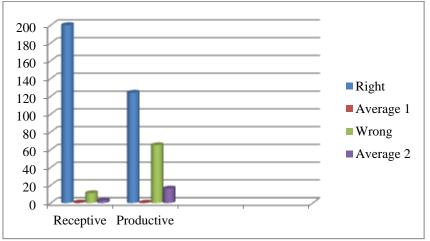


Figure 5. Students' Difficulties in types of vocabulary

Figure 5 shows that the students made 200 (or: 50%) right and 11 (or: 2.75%) wrong answers on receptive vocabulary. They also made 124 (31%) right and 65 (or: 16.25%) wrong answers on productive vocabulary. So, productive vocabulary is the difficult part of vocabulary which made them unable to answer the test correctly.

### 6. Percentage of Level of Mastery of Post-Test

In this table shows that there was significant between percentage classification of pre-test and post-test. In this table there was no percentage of very poor and only25% got Excellent and 75% got good and fair, so the writers found that there was improvement.

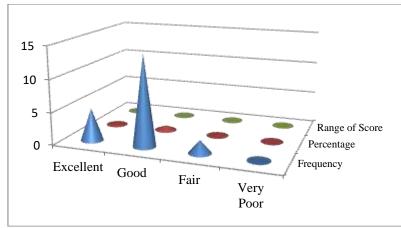


Figure 6. Students' level of mastery on posttest

Figure 5shows that none of students got very poor classification, 5 (25%) students (1, 2, 3, 4 and 9)got excellent classification and 13 (75%) students(5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16 and 19) got good and 2 (10%)students (18 and 20)got fair. The data indicate that 13 of 20 students are categorized very good. It signals that using picture card as the treatment applied in the posttest has significantly improved the students' vocabulary mastery.

### 7. Comparison of Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores

Based on the data presented in figures 3 and 4, the standard deviation of pre-test was 47.37. It is lower than the standard deviation of the post-test, namely 84.76. So, picture card effectively improve the students' ability in the vocabulary mastery. It is due to the treatment given.

According to the data above, the significant difference of post-test was 2.28 and the degree of freedom for 20 students at significance 5% was 1.61. It can be asserted that the significance difference was higher than the degree of freedom, namely 2.28 > 1.61. It indicates that the hypothesis of the research is accepted, or there is a significant difference between the result of using picture card to the seventh-grade students of SMP Negeri Kota Baru, Kefamenanu.

### DISCUSSION

From the results of data analysis on the posttest, the writers found that picture card could effectively improve the vocabulary mastery of the seventh-grade students of SMP Negeri Kota Baru. The improvement is caused by giving them a treatment, namely, picture card in the posttest. The treatment could increase their mastery on the pretest from very poor level of mastery to good one.

The improvement is also seen from the mean score they got in both pretest and posttest. In pretest, their mean score is just 45.5. It means that their average ability was very low. However, when the treatment was given, their average score on posttest is 81. It indicates that their ability was changed and therefore, their level of mastery on vocabulary is categorized good. In addition, picture cards of animation, fruit, clock and goodbye cards are still the difficult types of picture cards in mastering vocabulary. At last, they found productive as the difficult type of vocabulary.

The results of the present study as shown above are almost the same with some previous studies in two findings. They are the improvements of students' average score and level of mastery got from data of pretest and posttest. Turnip, Rumapea& Sari (2020) who applied classrrom action research (CAR) to get the data neededreveal that the students'vocabulary mastery is improved by using pictures media. It is based on the increase of the means scoreof pretest from 65 to 78 in the posttest. Furthermore, Luruk & Semiun (2021) who conducted their research by using pictures showed that the students' achievement and their motivation in the learning processwere improved significantly. Moreover, Fitria, Ali & Rafsanjani (2020) reported that using wall chart significantly improves and increases the students' vocabulary mastery. Finally, Aji (2021) who tried to research the use of domino cards in teaching descriptive text to the students revealed that it could improve heir vocabulary mastery and increase their enthusiastic in learning vocabulary.

However, the results of this study are different from the previous one in the sense that the present has tried to point out the types of picture card and vocabulary which are still difficult for the students to master vocabulary. As has previously been reported that the students still faced difficulties in mastering five types of picture card used, namely addition, picture cards of animation, fruit, clock and goodbye cards. They are also difficult to master productive vocabulary.

To adjust the different results between the present and the previous studies, we took two studies which have the same titles but different on the aims, the total number of the subjects and places of their studies done. The first, Apriasi (2014) who conducted a study about the use of picture card media to improve the seventh students' grade vocabulary mastery proposed three problems, namely to find out how picture card media can improve vocabulary mastery. To get the data, it applied the classroom action research (CAR) design, test method and test items. The implementation of picture card media was combined with translation technique in cycle one and made the group race game as a competitive game in cycle two. The result of cycle two was successfull because there was an improvement of the students' vocabulary

mastery. So, picture card media is able to improve the students' vocabulary mastery using small group discussion and implementing the game as competitive game. However, this study did not get clear result on the improvement. It just reported the effectiveness of using picture card without finding out the parts of vocabulary and the types of picture which are still difficult for the students to master.

The last study done by Depari & Syahrial (2017) on the effect of picture card games to students of elementary school's vocabulary mastery aimed to investigate the effect of picture card games technique toward students' vocabulary mastery. It involved 68 students divided into two groups, that is, experimental and control. To the experimental group of students, it used card games as its treatment while conventional techniqueto the control one. After giving the treatment, there was a significant difference between the two groups. It reveals that card game technique gave positive effect toward the students' English vocabulary mastery. However, this second study only evaluated the effectiveness of using card games on experimental group and conventional technique in control group. It did not measure the students' mastery on the parts of vocabulary and types of picture card games used. Therefore, we would like restate that our study succeeded in finding out the students' mastery and problems on parts of vocabulary and types of picture cards. It means that our study manages to find out a novelty.

Therefore, we should state that our study only provided 20 test items. Those items cannot represent all types of picture card. In addition, the form of the test used did not represent the parts of vocabulary, that is, receptive and productive. We just constructed the items on the basis of simple passages and pictures. We hope, the next researchers will study more on the best quality of vocabulary test items which represent both parts of vocabulary and types of picture to increase the students' vocabulary mastery.

Makaruku (2021) has researched about the use of picture cards to improve the 24 VII grade students of SMP Negeri 4 Taniwel, West Seram, Mollucas, through a classroom action research. To collect the data, it applied observation and interview and test. It applied qualitative and quantitative designs. The result indicates that the use of picture cards can improve the students' vocabulary mastery. It can be seen from the improvement of the students' achievements from 74.15 in cycle one to 91.6% in cycle two.

Rombepajung Sabanari, & Kumayas (2022) researched about the use of pictures to improve the students' English vocabulary. It involved 21 seventh grade students of SMP Negeri 1 Siau Timur Selatan. The writer used quantitative method in analyzing while the data was collected through pretest and postest. The writer used mean score formula in analysis the data. The type of test was a multiple choice consisting of 20 questions. The students are taught using pictures and there was about things in the classroom. Result of this study indicated a significant improvement in students' English vocabulary after using media in form of pictures in teaching the vocabulary. This can be proven by the average value of the pretest was 3.67 while the posttest was 7.81. It means that pictures is effective considered to be used in improving students' English vocabulary.

Astuti (2014) investigated whether or not the use of pictures improves the students' mastery of vocabulary of the second year students of SMPN 1 Embaloh Hilir Kapuas Hulu in academic year 2007/2008. It applied a pre-experimental study design. It is employed and designed with measurement of the students "pre-test and post-test total scores", the students mean score of each test (pre-test and postest), and the test of significance. The result of data analysis of pretest and posttest indicated that the score of posttest is high than the score of pretest. The students' total score of pretest is 99.32 with mean score 4. 97. Based on the Harris' criteria, the score of pretest is classified as "Poor". On the other hand, after giving the treatment, the students' total score of posttest is 142.99 with mean score 7.15. it is classified as "Good to Excellent". Moreover, the students' interval score of pretest and posttest is 2.18. It shows that there is different score of pretest and posttest after treatment. In order to prove whether or not the different score was significant, the writer needed to compare the result of t-test with t-critical value. In this research, the t-critical value with the level of significance 0.5 and the degree of freedom (df) = N - 1 (20 - 1) is 2.093. Since the result of t-test (8.07) is bigger than t- critical value, the students' score of pretest and posttest differ significantly. In summary, the alternative hypothesis that said "the use of pictures improves the vocabulary mastery of the second year students of SMP N1 Embaloh Hilir Kapuas Hulu in academic year 2007/2008" is accepted. So, the use of pictures as the teaching media can improve the ability in mastering the vocabulary.

## CONCLUSION

After analyzing the data as seen in figures 1-5, the writers would like to conclude that applying picture card has significantly improved students' vocabulary mastery. Their mastery is realized in the changes of mean score from pretest (45.5) to 81 in posttest. Their changes were in accordance with their performance during the teaching and learning process of picture card and test answers.

Their improvement is also clearly seen in the changes of their level of mastery. If in pretest, their level of mastery is very poor and all failed the test given, but in posttest, their level of mastery is good and 13 of 20 students are categorized in this level of mastery. The improvement is caused by the use of picture card as its main treatment in posttest. However, some of them still find difficulties in mastering nine types of picture and productive part of vocabulary. Therefore, we recommend the teachers and/or lecturers of English apply suitable activities and provide conducive learning condition, give their students high motivation to learn English, and force their students to practice English in the classroom.

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