

The Effect of Using Picture Word Card Media on the Expressive Language Skills of Children Aged 5-6 Years

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Abstract

This study aimed to analyze the effect of using Picture Word Card media on the expressive language skills of children aged 5-6 years. Expressive language skills are an essential aspect of language development that supports children's ability to express ideas, feelings, and thoughts verbally. This study employed a quantitative approach using a quasi-experimental method with a Nonequivalent Control Group Design. The independent variable was Picture Word Card media, while the dependent variable was children's expressive language skills. The population consisted of 28 children, with a sample of 20 children selected through purposive sampling and divided into an experimental group and a control group, with 10 children in each group. Data were collected through observation, tests, and documentation. Data analysis involved descriptive and inferential statistics, including normality and homogeneity tests, N-Gain analysis, and an Independent Samples t-Test. The results showed that the experimental group demonstrated greater improvement in expressive language skills than the control group. The N-Gain results indicated that the improvement in the experimental group was categorized as high, while the control group was categorized as moderate. Furthermore, the Independent Samples t-Test showed a significant difference between the two groups ($t = 4.459$, $p = 0.001 < 0.05$), indicating a significant effect of Picture Word Card media on children's expressive language skills. These findings imply that Picture Word Card media can serve as an effective alternative instructional medium for supporting the development of expressive language skills in early childhood education.

Keywords: *Picture Word Card; expressive language skills; early childhood education; vocabulary; language development.*

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INTRODUCTION

Early Childhood Education (PAUD) is an educational level that plays a crucial role in stimulating various aspects of children's development, including language development. Early childhood, often referred to as the "golden age," is characterized by rapid growth and development, making appropriate stimulation essential to support children's ability to communicate and interact with their social environment. One aspect of development that requires particular attention from an early age is language ability. According to Lismayani et al., (2023), language development is essential for children to express their thoughts accurately and communicate effectively with others. One important component of language development is expressive language ability, which refers to children's capacity to convey ideas, thoughts, needs, and feelings verbally through meaningful vocabulary and sentences, Yusirianti, et. al (2026). This ability provides an important foundation for children to establish social relationships, participate in classroom interactions, and engage effectively in learning activities.

The development of expressive language is also reflected in the expected learning outcomes for children aged 5-6 years, particularly in their ability to communicate orally, express opinions, use vocabulary appropriately, and construct simple and coherent sentences. However, young children's expressive language development may still encounter various challenges, including limited vocabulary, low confidence in speaking, and difficulty expressing ideas independently, Anita et. al (2024). One important indicator of expressive language ability among children aged 5-6 years is the ability to communicate desires, feelings, and opinions using simple sentences Rimang et al., 2024. These challenges indicate the importance of providing learning experiences that offer meaningful, engaging, and developmentally appropriate language stimulation.

The need for such stimulation is also evident from the preliminary observations conducted from August 25 to 29, 2025, at TK Negeri Pembina 3 Tomia, Wakatobi Regency. The observations focused on children in Group B aged 5-6 years and were conducted using an observation sheet covering three aspects of expressive language ability: constructing simple oral sentences, expressing opinions orally, and mastering and using vocabulary. The observations showed that children's expressive language skills had not yet developed optimally. Some children had difficulty expressing ideas verbally, responding to the teacher's questions using complete sentences, expressing opinions, and retelling simple experiences coherently. Most children tended to provide short responses consisting of only one or two words rather than developing their responses into complete sentences. In addition, the learning process still relied considerably on conventional learning media, such as textbooks and blackboards, which provided relatively limited opportunities for children to actively practice expressive language. This condition demonstrates the need for learning media that can provide concrete visual stimuli and encourage children to participate actively in oral communication. Lismayani et al., (2023) emphasize that early childhood development can be stimulated

through engaging educational activities that encourage children to participate actively in the learning process.

One learning medium that has the potential to address this problem is Picture Word Card media. Picture Word Card is a visual learning medium that combines pictures with written words on cards, enabling children to associate concrete visual representations with vocabulary. The combination of images and words can help children understand the meaning of vocabulary more easily while providing stimuli for children to describe objects, construct sentences, and express their ideas orally. In early childhood education, visual media can support children's active participation, enrich vocabulary, and facilitate verbal communication during learning activities (Amini & Suyadi, 2020). Therefore, Picture Word Card media is relevant to the characteristics of young children, who generally learn more effectively through concrete, attractive, and visually stimulating learning experiences.

Previous studies have provided evidence that picture-based media can support children's language development. (Amal et al., 2025) found that picture cards can improve children's expressive language skills through dialogic learning activities that encourage children to communicate and respond verbally. Fadillah et al. (2025) also found that the use of serial image-based Augmented Reality significantly improved the storytelling abilities of children aged 5-6 years, demonstrating the potential of visual media to stimulate children's oral language production. Fauziah, et.al 2026) also found that picture story media can support expressive language development in children aged 5-6 years, particularly in active speaking, answering questions, and retelling stories. Kusumaningtyas et al. (2022) reported that Picture Word Cards were effective in improving children's early reading skills. Furthermore, Wiharyanti and Mulyono (2023) found that the use of Picture Word Cards could enrich children's vocabulary and increase their confidence in communication. These findings demonstrate the potential of picture-based and picture-word media in supporting different aspects of children's language development. However, the existing evidence also indicates that research on Picture Word Cards has predominantly focused on vocabulary acquisition, early reading, or general language development rather than examining expressive language ability as a multidimensional outcome.

A gap therefore remains in research specifically examining the effect of Picture Word Card media on the expressive language skills of children aged 5-6 years, particularly in relation to the ability to construct simple subject-predicate-object (SPO) sentences, express opinions orally, and use vocabulary appropriately in sentences. In addition, previous studies have not sufficiently examined these aspects through a quasi-experimental comparison between children receiving Picture Word Card-based learning and those receiving conventional learning media. This gap is important because expressive language development requires not only vocabulary knowledge but also the ability to use vocabulary meaningfully, organize words into simple sentences, and communicate ideas orally. Examining these aspects simultaneously can provide a more comprehensive understanding of how visual word-based media may support children's expressive language development.

The present study addresses this gap by examining the effect of Picture Word Card media on the expressive language skills of children aged 5-6 years. Theoretically, this study contributes to the literature on early childhood language development by providing further evidence concerning the role of visual learning media in facilitating children's oral expression, sentence construction, and vocabulary use. Methodologically, the study contributes empirical evidence through a quantitative quasi-experimental approach using a Nonequivalent Control Group Design, with an experimental group receiving Picture Word Card-based learning and a control group receiving conventional learning activities. The study therefore provides a basis for comparing changes in expressive language skills between the two groups and determining whether the use of Picture Word Cards produces a significant effect.

Based on the identified problem and research gap, this study aims to analyze the effect of using Picture Word Card media on the expressive language skills of children aged 5-6 years. Specifically, the study examines children's ability to construct simple SPO sentences, express opinions orally, and master and use vocabulary. The findings are expected to provide empirical support for the use of Picture Word Cards as an alternative learning medium for stimulating expressive language development in early childhood education and to provide practical considerations for teachers in designing more engaging and developmentally appropriate language learning activities.

METHOD

This study employed a quantitative approach using a quasi-experimental method with a nonequivalent control group design. According to (Creswell & Creswell, 2018), quasi-experimental research is used when researchers are unable to fully randomize participants but can still provide an intervention to examine the effect of an independent variable on a dependent variable.

This design was selected because the participants were not randomly assigned but were drawn from two pre-existing groups, namely an experimental group and a control group. Both groups were administered a pre-test to assess the children's initial expressive language abilities. Subsequently, the experimental group received learning activities using Picture Word Card media, while the control group received instruction using the media commonly used by the teacher, namely single images aligned with the learning theme. After the treatment sessions were completed, both groups were administered a post-test to assess changes in the children's expressive language abilities.

The study was conducted at Pembina 3 Tomia Public Kindergarten in Wakatobi Regency. The population consisted of 28 children in Group B aged 5-6 years. The sample consisted of 20 children selected using purposive sampling, with 10 children assigned to the experimental group and 10 children to the control group. Purposive sampling was used based on predetermined inclusion criteria. These criteria included children aged 5-6 years, actively participating in learning activities throughout the research period, having parental consent, and attending the pre-test, treatment sessions, and post-test completely. The remaining eight children were not included in the sample.

because they did not meet the predetermined criteria, primarily due to incomplete attendance during the research process.

The independent variable in this study was the use of Picture Word Card media, while the dependent variable was the expressive language ability of children aged 5-6 years. The Picture Word Card media was implemented through six learning sessions based on kindergarten learning themes. In each session, the teacher introduced picture cards accompanied by corresponding words. The children were then encouraged to observe the pictures, identify and pronounce the vocabulary, answer questions, construct simple Subject-Predicate-Object (SPO) sentences, and express their opinions orally based on the pictures presented.

Data were collected through tests, observations, and documentation. The test instrument was administered in the form of a Student Worksheet (Lembar Kerja Peserta Didik/LKPD) consisting of six tasks covering three indicators of expressive language ability: (1) the ability to construct simple Subject-Predicate-Object (SPO) sentences, (2) the ability to express opinions orally, and (3) vocabulary mastery and use. Each task was assessed using a four-point scale corresponding to the categories of Poor (K), Fair (C), Good (B), and Very Good (SB). Higher scores indicated better expressive language abilities. The same instrument was used for both the pre-test and post-test. Observation was used to monitor the implementation of the learning activities during the research, while documentation was used as supporting data, including photographs of activities, attendance records, and other relevant research documents.

Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics with the assistance of IBM SPSS Statistics 23. Descriptive statistics were used to describe the children's expressive language abilities before and after the intervention. The improvement in expressive language ability was analyzed using the N-Gain test. Inferential analysis consisted of the Shapiro-Wilk normality test and Levene's test for homogeneity. Hypothesis testing was conducted using an independent samples t-test at a significance level of 0.05 to determine whether there was a significant difference in expressive language ability between the experimental and control groups after the intervention.

RESULTS

Children's Expressive Language Skills Before and After the Intervention

The children's expressive language skills were assessed before and after the intervention using the same test instrument in both the experimental and control groups. The assessment covered three indicators of expressive language ability: the ability to construct simple Subject-Predicate-Object (SPO) sentences, the ability to express opinions orally, and vocabulary mastery and use. The pre-test was administered to identify the children's initial expressive language abilities, while the post-test was administered after the intervention to determine the changes in their expressive language abilities. The average scores obtained by the two groups are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Average Expressive Language Skills of Children.

<i>Group</i>	<i>Pre-test</i>	<i>Post-test</i>
Experimental Group	9,7	21,3
Control Group	11.0	17,4

Based on the average expressive language ability scores of children in the experimental group, the score before the intervention was 9.7 and after the intervention was 21.3. In the control group, the average score before the intervention was 11.0 and after the intervention was 17.4.

N-Gain Analysis

The improvement in children's expressive language skills was analyzed using N-Gain. The results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Level of Children's Expressive Language Ability N-Gain Analysis was conducted

<i>Group</i>	<i>N-Gain</i>	<i>Category</i>
Experimental Group	0.8127	High
Control Group	0.4988	Medium

Based on the N-Gain value of the experimental group, which was 0.8127 and falls into the high category, while the control group obtained an N-Gain value of 0.4988, which falls into the moderate category.

Hypothesis Test Results

The hypothesis test was conducted using an independent samples t-test on the N-Gain scores of the experimental and control groups. The results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Independent Samples t-Test Results for N-Gain Scores

<i>Statistic</i>	<i>Score</i>
Levene' Test Sig	0.028
T	4,459
Df	10,366
Sig.(2-tailed)	0,001
Mean Difference	0,31391

Based on Table 3, the Mean Difference value of 0.31391 indicates the difference in the average N-Gain scores between the experimental group and the control group, not the difference in the average post-test scores. This value indicates that the improvement in expressive language ability in the experimental group was higher than that in the control group.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study indicate that the use of Picture Word Card media

contributes to the development of expressive language skills among children aged 5-6 years. The statistically significant difference between the experimental and control groups indicates that learning activities using Picture Word Cards were associated with greater improvement in expressive language ability than learning activities using the media commonly used in the classroom. This finding provides evidence that visual media combining pictures and words can support children's active use of language during learning activities. The findings are consistent with (Desfitri et al., 2026), who found that picture and word card media can increase children's participation, confidence, and engagement during learning activities.

The effect of Picture Word Card media can be understood through the way the media provides children with concrete visual representations accompanied by written words. The pictures provide children with an immediate reference for identifying objects, activities, and situations, while the accompanying words help children associate the visual representation with the appropriate vocabulary. This combination provides children with a clearer basis for verbal expression. (Cahyati et al., 2022) explain that Picture Word Cards can help children understand the relationship between pictures and words, making it easier for them to recognize and use vocabulary in communication. Thus, the media does not merely present vocabulary but provides visual stimuli that children can use as a starting point for producing oral language.

The improvement was particularly relevant to the children's ability to construct simple Subject-Predicate-Object (SPO) sentences. During the learning activities, children were not only asked to name objects shown on the cards but were also encouraged to combine the vocabulary into simple sentences. The pictures provided contextual information that helped children identify who was performing an activity, what activity was being performed, and what object was involved. This made it easier for children to organize individual words into meaningful sentences. The finding is consistent with (Nurmalia, 2024), who found that Picture Word Cards can support children's language development by encouraging active participation in learning activities. The active use of vocabulary in response to visual stimuli can provide children with opportunities to practice sentence construction rather than merely memorizing words.

Picture Word Cards also supported children's ability to express opinions orally. The visual stimuli provided concrete topics that children could talk about, reducing the difficulty of determining what to say. When children were asked questions about the pictures or invited to describe their experiences related to the images, the cards served as prompts for expressing ideas and opinions. (Rika et al., 2023) reported that the use of Picture Word Cards can increase children's confidence in expressing their opinions and encourage more active participation in learning activities. This finding suggests that visual prompts can create opportunities for children to participate in oral communication and gradually become more willing to express their thoughts.

In addition, the use of Picture Word Cards supported vocabulary mastery and use. The repeated association between pictures and words allowed children to recognize vocabulary through concrete visual representations and

subsequently use the vocabulary in oral responses and simple sentences. (Amal et al., 2025) reported that Picture Word Cards can improve young children's expressive language skills through the development of vocabulary mastery and speaking confidence. The present finding is consistent with this view because vocabulary development in this study was not limited to recognizing or naming words; children were also encouraged to use the vocabulary in meaningful oral communication.

From a theoretical perspective, these findings are consistent with the sociocultural perspective of Vygotsky, which views children's learning and development as processes that occur through interaction and participation in meaningful social activities. In the context of this study, Picture Word Cards provided concrete stimuli that supported interaction between teachers and children as well as among children during question-and-answer activities and oral expression tasks. The children were given opportunities to respond to questions, use newly introduced vocabulary, construct sentences, and communicate their ideas. Therefore, the effectiveness of the media can be understood not only from the visual characteristics of the cards but also from their use as a stimulus for children's active participation in language-based interactions.

Overall, the findings provide a new understanding that Picture Word Cards can be used not only to introduce or reinforce vocabulary but also as a learning stimulus for broader expressive language development. The combination of visual representations, words, and opportunities for oral interaction enables children to move from identifying vocabulary to using it in sentences and expressing their ideas. Therefore, Picture Word Card media can be considered an alternative learning medium for supporting the development of expressive language skills in children aged 5-6 years.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that the use of Picture Word Card media has a significant effect on the expressive language skills of children aged 5-6 years at Pembina 3 Tomia Public Kindergarten. The use of Picture Word Cards supported children's ability to construct simple Subject-Predicate-Object (SPO) sentences, express opinions orally, and master and use vocabulary in accordance with the learning context. The independent samples t-test conducted on the N-Gain scores produced a significance value of 0.001 ($p < 0.05$), indicating a statistically significant difference between the experimental and control groups. Therefore, the research hypothesis was accepted, and Picture Word Card media can be considered an alternative learning medium for supporting the development of expressive language skills in young children.

This study has several limitations. First, the sample consisted of only 20 children from a single early childhood education institution, which limits the generalizability of the findings to a broader population. Second, the study focused specifically on expressive language skills among children aged 5-6 years and did not examine other aspects of language development, such as

receptive language or early literacy. Third, the intervention was conducted over a relatively short period, so the long-term effectiveness of Picture Word Card media could not be fully assessed.

Based on these findings, early childhood education teachers are encouraged to consider Picture Word Cards as an alternative learning medium for supporting children's expressive language development. The media can be integrated into varied and interactive learning activities that provide children with opportunities to use vocabulary, construct simple sentences, and express their ideas orally.

Future research is recommended to involve larger samples and multiple early childhood education institutions to increase the generalizability of the findings. Further studies could also examine the use of Picture Word Cards in developing other aspects of language development, such as receptive language, storytelling skills, and early literacy. In addition, a longer intervention period is recommended to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the sustained effects of Picture Word Card media on children's language development.

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