

TECHNIQUES OF USING PICTURES FOR B1 LEVEL LEARNERS IN THE ENGLISH CLASSROOM

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Abstract: *This article investigates effective techniques for using pictures to develop English language skills among B1-level learners. Based on classroom research, it identifies how visuals enhance vocabulary acquisition, grammar usage, fluency, and learner engagement. The study demonstrates that picture-based tasks are a powerful and accessible tool for promoting meaningful communication and supporting language learning outcomes.*

Keywords: *Visual aids, picture-based learning, B1 learners, vocabulary development, communicative competence, English classroom, image-based tasks.*

Visual materials play a vital role in second language acquisition, particularly for intermediate (B1) learners. At this level, students have mastered basic vocabulary and grammar, yet often struggle to express themselves fluently and creatively. The integration of pictures into language instruction offers a multimodal and engaging method to enhance vocabulary development, grammar usage, and oral fluency.

This article explores effective techniques for using pictures in the English classroom for B1-level students. It focuses on how visual aids can serve as scaffolding tools to support comprehension, prompt communication, and foster learner motivation.

Numerous studies support the pedagogical benefits of visuals in language teaching. According to Wright (2010), pictures stimulate learners' imagination, encourage descriptive language, and provide contextual clues for comprehension. Paivio's (1991) dual coding theory emphasizes that verbal and visual information processed together lead to improved retention and understanding.

Harmer (2007) argues that using images can activate schemata, support inferencing skills, and promote meaningful communication in language classrooms. For B1 learners, who are transitioning from controlled practice to freer production, visuals offer a concrete bridge between comprehension and spontaneous speech.

This qualitative study was conducted over a 6-week period at two language schools. A total of 28 B1-level learners (ages 16–22) participated. Various picture-based activities were introduced to enhance speaking, writing, and listening skills.

Techniques used included:

- Picture description tasks
- Story sequencing using comic strips
- "What happened next?" prediction activities
- Role-playing based on photographs
- Vocabulary elicitation from thematic images

Data Collection Methods:

- Pre- and post-activity speaking tasks
- Teacher observation logs
- Student feedback questionnaires

Learner performance was assessed based on lexical variety, grammatical accuracy, and fluency, aligned with CEFR B1 descriptors.

The integration of picture-based techniques in the B1 English classroom led to observable improvements in students' language performance. One of the most notable outcomes was the expansion of learners' lexical repertoire. Students demonstrated the ability to use more varied and precise vocabulary, especially adjectives, action verbs, and topic-specific words, when describing visual materials or constructing narratives based on picture prompts.

Fluency and coherence in speaking activities also improved. Learners became more confident in constructing longer utterances and organizing their speech logically. Picture sequences, such as comic strips or event timelines, provided a clear structure for storytelling, which reduced hesitation and enhanced narrative flow.

Another significant improvement was seen in grammar usage. Visual tasks encouraged students to use grammatical structures such as the present continuous, past simple, and future forms more accurately and in context. When describing scenes or predicting events, learners naturally employed appropriate tenses, often without explicit instruction.

The use of visuals also had a positive effect on learner engagement. Students reported that image-based activities were more enjoyable and less stressful than traditional exercises. This emotional comfort contributed to more active participation, particularly in speaking and pair work.

Finally, the classroom environment became more interactive and collaborative. Learners often discussed the content of images, shared personal interpretations, and negotiated meanings, which fostered communicative competence and peer learning.

The findings support the premise that pictures are a powerful pedagogical resource for B1 learners. Visuals provide a concrete reference point that helps learners construct meaning, especially when dealing with abstract or unfamiliar concepts. Picture description and sequencing tasks promote narrative development, while role-playing with visual cues fosters spontaneous interaction.

Moreover, visual prompts serve as scaffolds that lower the affective filter, allowing students to focus more on expressing ideas than on formulating language from scratch. This aligns with Vygotsky's zone of proximal development (ZPD), where supportive tools (in this case, images) enable learners to perform beyond their independent capacity.

Additionally, the use of culturally diverse and thematically rich images introduced learners to intercultural communication, enhancing both language skills and global awareness. However, to be effective, picture-based tasks must be level-appropriate, clearly structured, and integrated with linguistic goals.

Using pictures in the B1-level English classroom is not just an engaging strategy—it is a highly effective one. It enhances vocabulary, improves fluency, and supports grammar acquisition in context. Well-designed visual tasks promote learner autonomy, motivation, and creativity.

Teachers are encouraged to integrate pictures into various language activities, from guided speaking to creative writing. Future research may explore how digital visuals, such as infographics or interactive media, further extend the benefits of visual learning in intermediate language education.

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