

The Use of Picture and Sentence Matching to Assess Reading for Students at The Early Stage: A Single Case Study

Noviatul Rochmah
Universitas Muhammadiyah Gresik Indonesia
noviatul_rochmah@umg.ac.id

Ribeh Najib Muhammad
Universitas Muhammadiyah Gresik Indonesia
ribeh@umg.ac.id

Slamet Asari
Universitas Muhammadiyah Gresik Indonesia
asari70@umg.ac.id

Received: 4th February 2025

Accepted: 24th February 2025

Published: 10th March 2025

Abstract

Reading assessment is assessing the students' competence in understanding ideas in the written form. Reading ability is very difficult to access accurately. The students' reading level will reflect the level at which that student is able to use reading to accomplish goal. The specific skill in reading should be match in any level of learners. In the beginner level usually the learners responding words and their associating graphic symbol. Assessing reading at the beginner level can be done through picture and sentence matching. In this type of reading test the learners will ask to match the sentence with the picture or match the picture with the sentence. The combination between sentence and pictures arouses the students' comprehension in recognizing words and words groups, phrase, and simple text. This paper discusses about the use of picture and sentence matching for assessing reading at the beginner level to create the students' interest in reading skill.

I. Introduction

The use of picture and sentence matching to assess reading for students at the early stage is a multifaceted approach that leverages visual aids to enhance comprehension and engagement. This method is particularly beneficial for young learners who are developing their reading skills, as it integrates visual elements with textual information to facilitate understanding. The approach is supported by various studies that highlight its effectiveness in improving reading comprehension and motivation among students.

Picture and sentence matching helps students better understand the content by providing visual context, which aids in the interpretation of text (Aulia et al., 2025). The integration of pictures with text allows students to draw connections between visual and written information, enhancing their ability to comprehend and retain information (Denburg, 1976).

The use of pictures in reading instruction has been found to increase students' interest and motivation to learn, making the reading process more engaging and enjoyable (Aulia et al., 2025). Classroom action research has demonstrated that methods incorporating picture matching can significantly improve learning achievements and engagement in subjects like social science (Mu'arifah, 2022). While picture and sentence matching is a



powerful tool for early-stage reading assessment, it is important to consider the challenges associated with visual-semantic discrepancies. Images often contain unstructured content that may not directly align with the structured nature of sentences, posing a challenge in ensuring semantic coherence (Huang et al., 2020). Despite these challenges, the method remains a valuable strategy for enhancing reading skills in young learners.

Assessment

Assessment is a part of teaching activities to monitor the students' progress throughout the process of instruction and to get feedback for the instructional improvement. According to Brown, assessment is a part of the test. We can take the students' assessment throughout the process of instruction. There are many ways in taking the assessment, through the interview, portfolio, and daily assignment. The purpose in doing the test is (1) tell both teachers and students how much materials the student doesn't know or has not yet mastered, (2) help the teachers make decision about their students' achievement regarding the course goals and mastery of course content, (3) identify the students' strengths and weaknesses with a view to carrying out revision or remedial activities, and (4) determine whether students have sufficient language proficiency to complete the exam. There are some steps that we have to do before we are going to create an assessment/ test. The first is defining what the approach of language testing is. The essay translation approach, structuralize approach and integrated approach can be used to create the reading test.

After knowing what kind of approaches used, the next step, knows the objective of the test to define what to be assessed and what sort of language feature to be measured. The third step is selecting the format of the test that suitable with the language skill and the various competencies to be tested. The next one is the selection of the tasks and the arrangement of the item of the test. The test should fill the criteria of practicality, validity, reliability and authenticity. The last step is scoring, grading and feedback. Each type of tests will construct different form, feedback, grading and scoring. Scoring is to weight the score item and indicate how far the students give the response in particular item test. Grading is to label the success of the students in doing the test. Feedback is necessary to recognize the students' strength and weaknesses and find out the way to work with them.

Reading Assessment

One of the important thing that the educators should do before applying good reading instruction to define the students basic performance. Students has various background, reading interest and skill of literacy, in case that some of the students are still need a review basic skills in reading. On the other hand for the students who have higher skill in reading, the educator should have a technique to cover them. Because the students have different level of skills, so that the educator have to design the teaching technique and method to full fill the students' need. In order to know the students' need the educator can give the ongoing reading assessment. Rhodes and Shanklin, 1993 said that assessments provide teachers with the information needed to develop appropriate lessons and improve instruction for all students. Wren, 2004, mentioned that assessment is an essential element of education use to inform instruction. In order to have an enjoyable implementation in doing the assessment the educators should have an appropriate strategies and supporting evidence to collect the students' reading skill information. The reading assessment cant stand alone, since another language skill (listening, writing and speaking) will also being assessed. There are some basic principles that the teacher should do in creating the reading assessment. The first, teacher should create reading assessment that help students learn more effectively, the second is help teacher teach effectively and articulate their understandings of learners and learning to external audience and the last, the assessment made by the teacher should be efficient. There are some assessment that can be done to collect the data, Rhode and Shanklin, 1993 pointed that educators can assess the students by analyzing students' work, observing students performing literacy tasks, or interviewing students on their reading skills. DeBruinParecki, 2004 said that research bring evidence that distinct early literacy concepts that can anticipate the young students' later reading achievement. These reading concepts include letter knowledge, phonemic awareness, decoding, fluency, and comprehension. The concept result some purposes, such as; identify the students' skill that need to review, monitoring students' progress, the third is as the guidance of teacher's instruction, the fourth demonstrating the effectiveness of instruction and the fifth providing teachers with information on how instruction can be improved.

Before conducting reading test in the second language can be successfully constructed, the first language reading skills of the students must be ascertained (Heaton, 1998). The students who had not mastered reading skill in their first language well, they will face difficulties in understanding reading in another language. At this stage, our examination of reading difficulties, it would be helpful to attempt to identify some of the specific

skills involved in reading. It can be clearly explain that those are the ability to; recognize word and group word and graphic symbol, deduce the meaning of words, understanding explicitly stated information, understanding the relation of each sentence, understanding the relation between parts of a text, understanding the conceptual meaning, anticipate and predict what come next to the text, identify the main idea, generalize and draw conclusion, understanding the implicit statement, skimming and scanning, the ability to read critically

There are many ways in testing reading, like multiple choice, true false, matching and open ended questions (a question that allow the students to write the answer using their own sentence). Most of the test makers are using multiple choices to assess reading, because they can limit the questions that related with the text and also have to the point answer. Indeed, sometimes the same text will demand at least two or three different types of text.

The way how to test the reading skill can be based on the level or stages of the learners. Here are some stages of reading assessment and the way how to assess; the first is initial stages: word matching, sentence matching and picture sentence matching, the second is intermediate and advanced stages: matching tests, true false, multiple choice (for longer text), completion items, rearrangement items, cloze procedure, open ended and miscellaneous items, and cursory reading.

There are many types of reading test that we can use to assess the student's comprehension. The type and the way how to assess reading based on the student's level of education (novice, intermediate or advance). The result of reading assessment can be used by the teacher to make an evaluation, giving feedback to the students and rearrange the future plan for reading assessment.

Assessment for Children

Teaching the second language for young learners is not the same with the adult learner. The children will be more active in the class, so that teachers still have a big role in teaching and assessing them. Katz, 1997:1 said that the young learners are notoriously poor test taker, the younger child is being evaluated, assessed, or tested, the more error are made and the greater risk of assigning false labels to them. Assessment at the primary level can be described as an attempt to analyze the learning data that a child has achieved over a period of time as the result of classroom teaching/ learning situation (Brewster et.al. 200,244). Assessment includes all method used to gather information about children's knowledge, motivation, attitude, ability, participation and cognitive development. Assessment can be carried out through a number of instruments (for example tests, self-assessment, peer-assessment). A teacher needs to be constantly aware of what the children know, what difficulties they are experiencing, and how best to help them. On the basis of assessment outcomes teachers are able to give individualize help to each student. Assessment results also give student tangible evidence of their progress or achievement. The traditional classroom testing procedures can cause children a great deal of anxiety that affect their language learning as well as their self-image (Smith, 1996). Brown and Hudson (1998) identified that there are three important points that the teacher should pay attention in order to require the classroom assessment; selected – response (true false, matching, multiple choice), constructed response (fill-in, short answer, performance) and personal-response (conference, portfolios, self and peer assessment). At the primary level, assessment should be begin with the use of personal response. As the students' proficiency level increase, teachers can move gradually into constructed response assessment and later into selected response assessment.

Before the teacher conducting the assessment for their young students, the teachers should notice that students have different level in comprehending the lesson, every assessment will not be appropriate for all students; so that young learners still need the teachers interfere to give them instruction. The instruction should be clear and understandable so that the learners will know what they should do. Reading as one of the language skills is also necessary to be learn by the young learners. The way how to assess reading in young learners should concern with the clear instruction with variety model of assessment and interesting. Furthermore, the thematic assessment will make the children easily to recall the material and it will also arouse their motivation in doing the assessment. Based on the theory of child development (including an appreciation of multiple intelligence) and from a desire to focus on individual learners, the test maker should create the assessment that are enjoyable and achievable and motivate learners, because they enable them to be successful according to their individual abilities. Through the creative assessment, we aim the children to think and to communicate in English, so that

as they acquire new language, they develop strategies to communicate, and then children are able to learn how the language is organized.

II. Method

Research design

This study employs a qualitative research design to explore the experiences and perceptions of young learners regarding picture and sentence matching assessments in early reading (Cresswell, 2015). By focusing on the subjective insights of students, the research aims to uncover how these assessment methods influence their engagement, motivation, and comprehension skills. Through a combination of semi-structured interviews, focus groups, and classroom observations, the study seeks to gather rich, descriptive data that reflects the voices of young learners. Additionally, interviews with teachers will provide a broader context, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness and challenges associated with implementing these assessments. This qualitative approach not only highlights individual experiences but also contributes valuable insights to enhance literacy assessments tailored for early learners.

Participant

The participant in this study will be a young learner aged 5-7 years from an early primary education setting. This individual will be selected to ensure a diverse range of experiences and backgrounds, providing valuable insights into the use of picture and sentence matching assessments. Prior to participation, informed consent will be obtained from the parent or guardian, ensuring they understand the study's purpose and procedures. This ethical approach is essential for creating a supportive environment for the learner to share their experiences.

Data Collection

The data collection methods for this study will involve several qualitative approaches to gather comprehensive insights into the experiences of young learners with picture and sentence matching assessments. Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with 10-15 students individually, using open-ended questions designed to explore their feelings about the assessments, perceived challenges, and suggestions for improvement. Additionally, 2-3 focus group discussions with 5-8 students each will encourage interaction and allow participants to express their thoughts in a collaborative setting. Classroom observations will take place in 3-4 classrooms during assessment activities to document student behaviors, engagement levels, and interactions with peers and teachers, employing an observation checklist for accuracy. Furthermore, interviews with 5-7 teachers will provide insights into their experiences with implementing these assessments, focusing on student engagement and any challenges encountered. All interviews and focus group discussions will be transcribed verbatim to ensure accuracy and will undergo thematic analysis to identify key themes and patterns. Ethical considerations will include obtaining informed consent from parents or guardians, ensuring confidentiality, and being sensitive to the developmental stage of participants. Through this methodology, the study aims to capture rich, descriptive data that will enhance understanding of how these assessment methods influence young learners' literacy development.

III. DISCUSSION

A. Primary reading Skill

The performance of reading assessment is derived more from the multiplicity of types of text than the variety of performance. (Brown, 2002) stated that there are several types of reading performance that will serve as organizers of various assessment tasks; perceptive, selective, interactive, and extensive. The tasks of reading at the beginning level are fundamental and basic; recognition of alphabetic symbols, capitalized and lowercase letters, punctuation, words, and grapheme-phoneme correspondence, that commonly called as literary task. Assessment of basic reading skills can be carried out in a number of different ways; (1) reading aloud, the testee sees separate letters, words, and short sentences and reads them aloud. (2) Multiple choice, choosing the possible answer, it can also in the form of true – false and matching. (3) picture-cued items, show the picture along with the text and are given one of a number of possible tasks to perform. (Brown, 2002)

B. Initial stages of reading

Heaton on his book stated that the way how to test reading on the primary level is testing the students' ability to discriminate visually between words which are spelt in fairly similar ways and assist in word recognition speed. In the very early stages, word and sentence matching items should be covered by the students as quickly as possible. When the students feel familiarize and comfort with this type of test, it will gained the students' confidence and arousing their intention to read under some pressure. It is better to confine the words used in the items to those already encountered orally; later a number of words not encountered orally should be introduced. The classification of reading assessment for the early stages can be described as follow

1. matching tests

❖ *Word matching*

The testers are required to draw a line under the world which is the same as the word on the left.

Example:

1. now
bow/not/how/now/mow
2. shee
shop/shape/sleep/heap/sheep
3. ever
never/over/ever/fewer/even

❖ *Sentence matching*

The testers are required to recognize as quickly as possible sentences which consist of the same words in the same order. They read a sentence, followed by four similar sentences, only one of which is exactly the same as the previous one.

Example:

1. Tom is not going to your school.
 - a. Tom is not going to your pool
 - b. Tom is going to your school.
 - c. Tom is not coming to your school.
 - d. Tom is not going to your school.
2. The man is standing under the tree
 - a. The man is sitting under the tree
 - b. The man is standing under the tree
 - c. The man is cutting under the tree
 - d. The man is sleeping under the tree

❖ *Pictures and sentence matching*

Type 1

The testees look at four pictures and then read a sentence about one of the pictures. They are required to identify the correct picture.

Example:

1. The boy is driving a toy car

A.	B.	C.	D.
----	----	----	----



2. Two people are riding the same horse

A.



B.



C.



D.



Type 2

The testers look at a picture and read four sentences, only one of which is about the picture. They then have to select the correct sentence.

1.



- A. Dimas has breakfast
- B. Dimas has lunch
- C. Dimas has dinner
- D. Dimas has some cookies

2.



- A. Tono is going to the market
- B. Tono is going to the yard
- C. Tono is going to the Mall
- D. Tono is going to school

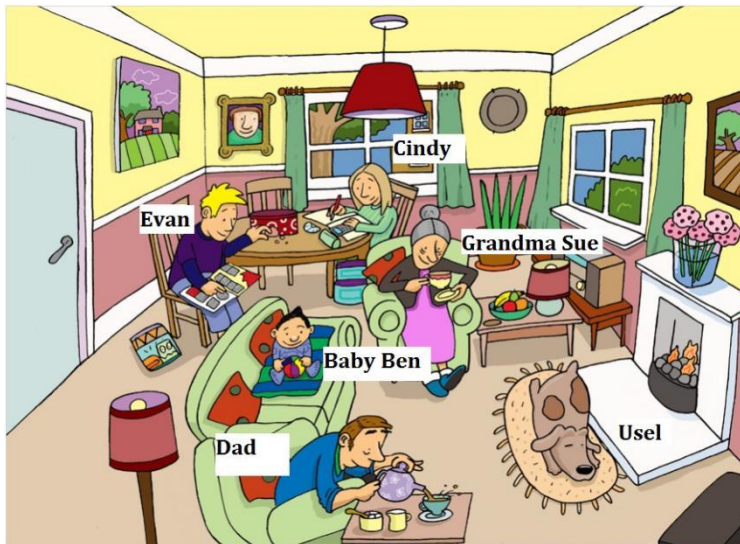
Type III

In this particular instance, testers have to select the (three) sentences which match the picture.



Three of the following sentences agree with the picture. Put a circle round the letter of each of the three sentences

- A. The books are on the floor
- B. The girl has brown hair
- C. The pencils are under the table
- D. There is a ball on the shelf
- E. The doll has a blue dress
- F. There is a picture beside the window



Look at the following picture carefully and circle the suitable statement based on the picture.

- A. Cindy is studying on the table
- B. The dog is running around the room
- C. The flowers are on the fire place
- D. Dad is pouring the tea into the cup
- E. Evan is eating some foods
- F. The baby is on the couch
- G. Grandma Sue is drinking a cup of tea
- H. The lamp is in front of the couch
- I. There are two magazines near the chair.
- J. The picture is hanging on the wall.

Beside the type of the reading assessment above, the teacher should be more creative in developing the reading assessment. Here are some others example of reading assessment for the primary level

Task 1

In this part the students are asking to match the word with the picture. It assesses the students to recognize the word and adding new vocabulary for them.

Read these words. Draw the line from each word to the matching picture.

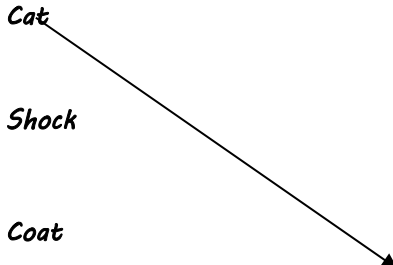
Hands

curtain

Cat

Shock

Coat



Task II

Here the students are asking to recognize the picture, match it with the sentence, and arrange the sentences provide based on the picture.

The picture shows Anna daily activity. Look at the 6 pictures and read the sentences. Re – arrange the sentences in to the correct order based on the picture by giving the number in available box



After school, she cooks some food with dad

- Then she eat her breakfast
- When she feels tired, she goes to bed and has some sleep
- Anna Usually gets up early and brushes her teeth
- After school, she cooks some food with dad
- Anna always has dinner with her dad, mom and sister.

Task III

This task forces the students to get the complete story of text by asking them to replace the picture on the text with the suitable word.

Read the story and give the correct word based on the picture given.

Last week my cousin Lila came to my (1) . She came with her parents by (2) . I really excited to meet her. At 9 o'clock my mother ask us to ate (3) . After that, Lila and I were going around by(4) . We are very happy. We saw some beautiful (5)  and (6) . It was a (7)  day, my mom give us two (8)  to protect us from the sun shines. We continued our journey to grandfather's (9) . There, we met my uncle and he asked us to fed (10) . After feeding the chicken we picked some (11) . Before we went home, lila and I put the (12)  on the grass to eat our picnic. We had (13) , apples and a bottle of milk for lunch. We sang a song together. When the sun almost down, we back home. It was a beautiful day.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.
- 11.

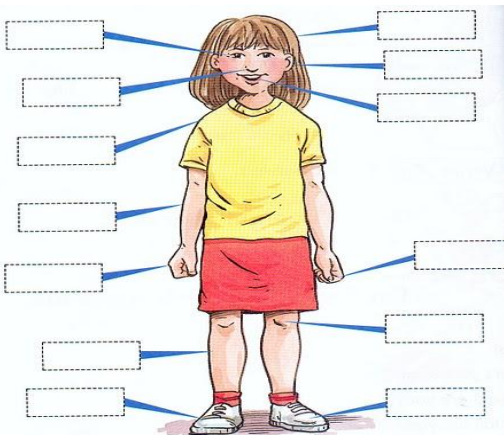
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.

- 12.
- 13.

Task IV

In this part, the students are asking to recognize the part of something through the available picture and vocabulary in the box.

Look at the picture below. Use the words in the box to help you the different parts of the body.



Eye	hair	Right foot	ear	Left hand	mouth	Nose
shoulder	leg	Right hand	knee	Left foot	arm	

In the classroom there are many opportunities for assessment through language use tasks. When the children are able to engage language use in games, information oral tasks, story writing, and question – answer tasks related to literature, project work and so on. The reading tasks above can be used to assess reading at the early stage. Here the students are asking to recognize the new vocabulary, the word spelling through pictures. The colorful and interesting pictures will make the students to do the assessment eagerly.

IV. Conclusion

Assessing reading at the early stage of language development plays a crucial role in shaping young learners' literacy skills. The integration of picture and sentence matching into reading assessment provides an effective and engaging way to evaluate comprehension, vocabulary recognition, and sentence structure understanding. This method not only aids in the development of early literacy but also aligns with children's cognitive characteristics by leveraging visual stimuli that support memory retention and conceptual understanding. The article has outlined how early reading assessments must be tailored to the developmental stage of the learners. Young children, with their active and curious nature, benefit most from assessment strategies that are interactive, visually stimulating, and linguistically appropriate. Tasks such as word and sentence matching, picture-sentence correlation, and context-based image interpretation provide teachers with clear insights into students' reading proficiency without causing undue stress or anxiety.

There are a variety of measures that can be used to gather data for each area of reading. Assessment is a central element for any teacher and should be implemented regularly. Through its implementation, teachers will be able to help students access the skills and content they need from the general education curriculum. This will allow all students to achieve to their highest potential. The assessment for young learners in both foreign language and second language situations begin by considering that we need a special treatment in creating the assessment. The assessment approach is task based and centered on tasks and technique suitable for young learners. The type of test that commonly use for testing the young learner is norm-referenced tests, it gives the information on how a child has achievement of the larger group of learners. Assessing reading using sentence and picture matching for young learners, will make them interest to do the test. it also encourages them to read more. The early stages of reading perform how the children recognizing the syllable, words, and simple

sentence. The interesting test can support the students' performance; motivate them to do the assessment without the feeling of burden. There some types of picture and sentence matching test, such as; (1) match the pictures and then read a sentence about one of the picture, (2) match the picture with for sentences and choose one of the sentence that suitable with the picture, (3) match some sentences that available with the pictures, recognize the possible sentences which consist of the same words in the same order, (4) match the word with the picture (5) re – arrange the sentences based on the picture (6) complete story of text by asking them to replace the picture on the text with the suitable word, and recognize the part of something through the available picture and vocabulary in the box.

Furthermore, it is also help them to add a new vocabulary (syllable, words, phrase and simple sentence) and make reading as their habit. The discussion highlighted the necessity for reading assessments to be dynamic and multifaceted, involving various types of performance tasks from perceptual to interactive levels. This ensures that students with differing literacy levels are assessed fairly and meaningfully. It also enables teachers to identify specific areas where students need support, adjust instructional strategies, and provide personalized feedback that fosters language development.

The creativity embedded in designing picture and sentence matching tasks contributes to maintaining students' motivation and participation. When assessment tools are engaging and connected to students' real-life experiences or familiar contexts, the likelihood of meaningful learning increases significantly. Importantly, assessments for young learners must be both reliable and enjoyable, allowing them to demonstrate their abilities in a stress-free and encouraging environment.

In conclusion, picture and sentence matching is a valuable approach in early-stage reading assessment. It addresses both pedagogical needs and learners' developmental stages, enabling educators to support students more effectively in their journey toward reading fluency. Future practice should continue to explore innovative ways to integrate visual literacy and language skills, ensuring assessments not only measure learning outcomes but also contribute to the joy of learning itself.

REFERENCES

- Heaton, J.B. 1998. *Writing English Language Tests*. New York: Longman, Inc.
- Mohammad, Akmar. 1999. *What Do We Test When We Test Reading Comprehension*.
<http://iteslj.org/>
- Serafini, Frank. 2010. *Classrom Reading Assessments*. Portsmouth: Heinemann.
- Swerling, Louise Spear. 2006. *Assessment of Reading Comprehension*.
http://www.ldonline.org/spearswerling/Assessment_of_Reading_Comprehension
<http://www.readingrockets.org/article/early-reading-assessment-guiding-tool-instruction>
- Anderson, J. Charles (2000). *Assessing reading*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ruth Schoenbach, Cynthia Greenleaf< Christine Cziko and Lori Hurwitz, *What is Reading? An Excerpt from Reading for Understanding*, 2015
- Sainsbury Marian, *Assesing Reading from theories to Classroom*, National Foundation for Educational research, 2008
- Stiggins, Richard, J 1994 *Student-Centered Classroom Assessment*: New York: Macmillan College Publishing Company
- Brown Douglas, *Language Assessment, principles and Classroom practices*, Cambridge university Press.