



## PICTURES, OBJECTS AND CARDS AS LEARNING RESOURCES IN ESL / EFL CLASSROOM

**DR. KOTTACHERUVU NAGENDRA**

M.A.(Litt), M.Phil(L&P), Ph.D, PGDTE, B.Ed,

Assistant Professor

Maulana Azad National Urdu University

(MANUU), Hyderabad (TEL) INDIA

### ABSTRACT

*The present research article aims at teaching language skills through popular pictures, objects from real life examples and use of cards to the learners. As Jeremy Harmer rightly says in his book, 'The Practice of English Language Teaching'; By far the most useful resources in the classroom are the learners themselves. Though their thoughts and experiences they bring the outside world into the classroom, and this a powerful resource for the most of the ESL / EFL teachers to draw on. We can get them to write or talk about things they like or things they have personally experienced. We can ask them what they would do in certain situations or get them to act out scenes from their lives. In multilingual classes we can get them to share information about their different countries (p-176).*

**Key Words:** Language Skills, EFL, ESL, Pictures, Objects, Cards

### INTRODUCTION

*“Pictures speak louder than words”*

Learners are very good resources for explaining and practicing meaning. For example, in young learners' classes and college students' classes we can use some popular pictures, real life objects and cards to create interest among the learners and to break the monotony. Pictures can be taken from old news papers, magazines and old calendars, whereas objects can be used such as smart phones, colorful pouches, bags and water bottles etc. Finally, cards can be drawn, or to stick on thick sheets in order to save time and to have interesting classroom. Learners have to describe pictures, objects and cards even they can also observe

**DR. KOTTACHERUVU NAGENDRA**

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and discuss with peer members and write small paragraphs on given pictures, objects and cards etc. At the end, we can ask them to come forward and say something about given pictures, objects and cards.

### **Pictures, Objects and Cards**

It is always effective if we make use of pictures, objects and cards which are familiar, and which are used in learners' real life. Pictures of well known personalities can be used in order to teach and improve language skills. For example, ask students to write something about his/her famous politician, after few minutes ask them come forward and explain or speak about chosen politician. Most of the learners would love to do these kind of activities through which we can develop their language skills. They will even get rid of fear, hesitation and nervousness. Moreover, it also gives us an opportunity to break the monotony from the traditional classroom setting. Let us discuss one by one in detail how pictures, objects and cards can be used effectively in ESL / EFL classrooms.

### **Use of Pictures in EFL/ESL Classroom**

As Jeremy Harmer, a famous English language teacher says, teachers often use pictures whether drawn, taken from books, newspapers and magazines, or photographed to facilitate learning. Pictures can be in the form of flashcards, large wall pictures, cue cards, photographs or illustrations. Teachers can also make use of projected slides, images from an overhead projector or projected computer images. Apart from all these, we can even draw pictures on the board to help with explanation and language work.

Drills with young learners, an appropriate use for pictures, especially flashcards is in cue response drills. We hold up a flashcards nominating a learner and getting a response. Then we hold up a flashcard before different student, and so on. Flash cards are particularly useful for drilling grammar items, for cueing different sentences and practising vocabulary.

Sometimes teachers use large wall pictures, where pointing to a detail of a picture will elicit a response, such as there's some milk in the fridge or he's just been swimming, etc. we can show large street maps to practise shop vocabulary or to get students giving and understanding directions.

Popular pictures are extremely useful for a diversity of communication activities, especially where these have a game-like feel, such as 'describe and draw' activities, where one student describes a picture and a fellow partner has to draw the same picture without looking at the original. We can also divide a class into groups and give each group a different picture that



shows a separate stage in a story. Once the members of the group have studied their picture, we take it away. For example, new groups are formed with four members each –one from group A, one from group B, one from group C and one from group D. By sharing the information they saw in their pictures, they have to work out what story the pictures together are telling.

We sometimes can use pictures for creative writing. We can instruct students to invent a story using at least three or four of the images in front of them. They can tell them to have a conversation about a specified topic and, at various stages during the conversation, to pick a card and bring whatever the card shows into the conversation. One of the most appropriate uses of pictures is for the presenting and checking of meaning. Pictures of various kinds are often used to make work more appealing. They are useful for getting learners to predict what is coming next in a lesson. Apart from all these, we can also use pictures to develop their communication skills, questioning skill in a group etc.

One idea is to get learners to become judges of photographic competition. After being given the category of photographs they are going to judge, the students decide on four or five characteristics their winning photograph should have. They then apply these characteristics to the finalists that we provide for them, before explaining why they made their choice.

Pictures can also be used creative language use, whether they are in a book or on cue cards, flashcards or wall pictures. We might ask learners to write a description of a picture, to invent the conversation taking place between two people in a picture or, in one particular role-play activity, ask them to answer questions as if they were the characters in a famous painting.

#### **Use of Objects in EFL/ESL Classroom:**

Real life objects can be used very effectively both among young learners and college students, using real life objects are helpful for teaching the meanings of words or for stimulating learner activity; teachers and learners sometimes come to class with plastic fruits, cardboard clock faces, or two telephones to help mock phone conversations.

Objects that are intrinsically interesting can provide a good starting-point for a variety of language work and communication activities. As Jeremy Harmer explains in his book, *'The Practice of English Language Teaching'*, we can use a soft ball to make learning more interesting. When teachers want a student to say something, ask a question or give an answer, they throw a ball to the learner, who then has to respond. The learner can then throw the ball to someone else. Not all learners find this appealing, however, and there is a limit to how often the ball can be thrown before people get fed up with it.



The only limitations on the things which we bring to class are the size and quantity of the objects themselves and students' tolerance, especially with adults who may think they are being treated childishly. As with so many other things, this is something we will have to assess on the basis of our students' reactions.

### Use of Cards in EFL/ESL Classroom:

Apart from flash cards with pictures and real life objects, cards of all shapes and sizes can be used in a different ways. Cards, in this sense, can range from carefully prepared pieces of thick paper which have been laminated to make them into a reusable resource to small strips of paper which the teacher brings in for one lesson only.

Of the many uses for cards, three are especially worth mentioning. Cards are especially good for matching questions and answers or two halves of a sentence. Learners can either match them on the desk in front of them or they can move around the classroom looking for their partners. This matching can be on the basis of topic, lexis or grammatical construction. We can also use cards to order words into sentences or to put the lines of a poem in order. Using cards in this way is especially good for special learners, of course. But it is good for everyone else, too, especially if we can get students walking around the classroom for at least a brief period.

Selecting cards work really well if we want students to speak on the spot or use particular words or phrases in a conversation or in sentences. We can write words on separate cards and then after shuffling them, place them in a pile face down. When a student picks up the next card in the pack, he or she has to use the word in a sentence. Alternatively, students can choose three or four cards and then have to incorporate what is on the cards into a story. Students can also pick up a card and try to describe what the word on it feels, tastes or smells like so that the other students can guess it.

Card games are another interesting activity through which we can develop learners' language skills; there are as many card game possibilities in language learning as there are in real life. We can turn the card selection into a game by introducing a competitive element –having students in pairs play against each other or against other pairs.

A simple vocabulary game can be played in which learners have cards with pictures on one side and words on the other. If they pick picture side, they have to produce the word. If they pick the word side, they have to draw it and then compare it with the original picture. The old game of Snap can be adapted so that two players have a set of cards, with the same objects,



etc., but whereas one player has only pictures, the other has only words. The cards are shuffled and then the players put down the cards one at a time. If a picture and word card match, the player who shouts Snap! First wins all the cards on the table. The object of the game is for one player to end up with all the cards.

## CONCLUSION

We can make pictures, objects and cards in a number of ways. We collect pictures from news papers and magazines and stick them thick sheets. We can even draw them and buy reproductions, photographs and posters from shops or we can photocopy them from a variety of sources. It is possible to find pictures of almost anything on the internet and print them off. The choice and use of pictures, objects and cards is very much a matter of individual interest, but we should bear in mind three qualities that pictures, objects and cards need to possess if they are to engage learners and be linguistically useful. In the first place, they need to be appropriate not only for the purpose in hand but also for the classes they are being used for. The most important thing is that pictures, objects and cards should be visible. At last, we will not spend hours collecting pictures, objects and cards only to have them destroyed the first time they are used! Thought should be given to how to make them durable.

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