

Implementation of Differentiated Instruction Using Picture Cards for Fourth Grade Students at SD Eksperimental Mangunan

Cicilia Fergina Ika Pramudyawati *¹

¹ Sekolah Dasar Eksperimental Mangunan

*e-mail: ciciliafergina22@gmail.com¹

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan implementasi *Differentiated Instruction* (pembelajaran terdiferensiasi) dengan menggunakan media kartu bergambar pada siswa kelas IVB SD Eksperimental Mangunan. Fokus penelitian ini adalah bagaimana guru merancang, melaksanakan, dan mengevaluasi pembelajaran yang disesuaikan dengan kebutuhan dan tingkat kemampuan siswa melalui penggunaan media kartu bergambar. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode deskriptif. Subjek penelitian terdiri atas guru kelas IVB dan 25 siswa. Data dikumpulkan melalui *diagnostic assessment*, kegiatan latihan, serta penilaian yang dirancang untuk mengevaluasi hasil belajar siswa. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa penerapan *Differentiated Instruction* dengan media kartu bergambar efektif membantu guru dalam mengkategorikan tingkat penguasaan materi masing-masing siswa serta menentukan jenis soal dan tingkat kesulitan yang sesuai. Media kartu bergambar juga memfasilitasi siswa dalam memahami konsep secara visual dan interaktif, meningkatkan partisipasi aktif, serta memperkuat motivasi belajar. Selain itu, pendekatan ini terbukti efektif dalam memetakan kemampuan siswa dan menyesuaikan cara penyampaian materi sesuai dengan kebutuhan belajar yang beragam di kelas. Dengan demikian, *Differentiated Instruction* melalui media kartu bergambar mampu menciptakan proses pembelajaran yang inklusif, adaptif, dan berpusat pada siswa.

Kata kunci: *differentiated instruction*; kartu bergambar; penguasaan materi.

Abstract

This study aims to describe the implementation of *Differentiated Instruction* using picture card media for students of Class IVB at SD Eksperimental Mangunan. The focus of this research is on how the teacher designs, implements, and evaluates learning activities that are adjusted to students' needs and levels of ability through the use of picture cards. This study employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive method. The subjects consisted of one classroom teacher and 25 students. Data were collected through *diagnostic assessments*, practice activities, and assessments designed to evaluate students' learning outcomes. The results showed that the implementation of *Differentiated Instruction* using picture card media effectively helped the teacher categorize each student's level of mastery and determine the appropriate types and levels of task difficulty. The picture cards also facilitated students' understanding of concepts in a visual and interactive way, encouraged active participation, and strengthened learning motivation. Moreover, this approach proved effective in mapping students' abilities and adjusting the way materials were delivered according to their diverse learning needs. Therefore, *Differentiated Instruction*

Keywords: *differentiated instruction*; mastery of learning material; pictures card.

INTRODUCTION

In classroom learning, it is common to find that students have different levels of understanding and mastery of a subject, even though they are in the same grade. This situation was also observed among the students of Class IVB at SD Eksperimental Mangunan, where their ability to understand and use the *simple present tense* varied considerably. Some students were able to recognize sentence patterns easily, while others struggled to identify the correct verb forms or construct grammatically correct sentences. These differences highlight the need for a learning approach that accommodates the diverse abilities and learning needs of students.

This article is the result of an action research study focusing on the implementation of the *Differentiated Instruction* method in English language learning. *Differentiated Instruction* is a teaching approach that adapts the process, content, and product of learning according to each student's readiness, ability level, and learning style. (Wijaya et al., 2022). This approach recognizes student diversity as the foundation for designing learning activities, ensuring that every learner

has an equal opportunity to achieve learning goals (Bulan A et al., 2023). Through this method, the teacher does not deliver lessons in the same way to all students but adjusts strategies, materials, and media to fit their individual needs (Ayuningtyas et al., 2023). Thus, *Differentiated Instruction* serves as an effective means to create inclusive and student-centered learning.

To map students' levels of understanding, the teacher first conducted a diagnostic assessment on the *simple present tense*. The diagnostic assessment results were used to group students according to their mastery levels, ranging from those who had already understood basic sentence structures to those who still struggled to form correct sentences. Based on this mapping, the teacher then designed learning activities using *Differentiated Instruction* principles so that each student received tasks and support appropriate to their ability level.

In this approach, picture card media were used as learning aids to help students construct sentences through a *fill-in-the-blank* activity. The cards were designed with graded levels of difficulty: beginning with cards where only the verb was missing, progressing to cards where both the subject and verb were missing, and finally to cards showing only pictures with no textual clues. This gradation allowed students to build their understanding step by step according to their readiness and level of mastery.

Through this differentiated and visually engaging activity, students were encouraged to actively construct sentences and strengthen their comprehension of the *simple present tense*. In this process, the teacher acted as a facilitator, guiding students according to their progress so that all learners could participate meaningfully and demonstrate improvement in their mastery of the material.

METHOD

This research employed a qualitative approach using the *action research* method, which aims to improve teaching practices through a continuous cycle of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. The study was conducted in Class IVB of SD Eksperimental Mangunan during the second semester of the academic year. The participants consisted of one classroom teacher and 25 students. The focus of the research was the implementation of *Differentiated Instruction* using picture card media to enhance students' understanding of the *simple present tense*.

In the planning stage, the teacher identified the learning difficulties experienced by students in constructing sentences using the *simple present tense* and designed differentiated learning activities based on the results of the diagnostic assessment. The students were categorized into groups according to their mastery levels. Picture cards were then created with varying levels of difficulty, ranging from cards with missing verbs, cards with missing subjects and verbs, to picture-only cards.

During the action stage, the teacher implemented learning activities using the picture cards as instructional media. Students were asked to complete or construct sentences based on the given cards. The tasks were designed to encourage gradual progress according to each student's readiness and ability.

In the observation stage, data were collected through classroom observation, student work analysis, and performance assessment. The researcher recorded how students interacted with the picture cards, their participation levels, and their accuracy in constructing sentences.

Finally, in the reflection stage, the teacher and researcher analyzed the outcomes to evaluate the effectiveness of the *Differentiated Instruction* approach and identify aspects for improvement in the next cycle. The collected data were analyzed descriptively to describe patterns of student progress, levels of engagement, and mastery improvement throughout the intervention.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Research Results

The implementation of Differentiated Instruction using picture cards for Grade IV-B students at SD Eksperimental Mangunan was carried out through two cycles of classroom action

research. Each cycle consisted of the stages of planning, implementation, observation, and reflection.

The results of the diagnostic assessment showed that students' ability to construct sentences using the simple present tense varied widely. Out of 25 students, there were 18 students with a high level of advance, 3 students with a moderate level of medium, and 4 students with a low level of basic.

Most students had difficulty recognizing the correct verb forms and understanding the complete sentence structure, which includes subject, predicate, object, and adverb. The results of the diagnostic assessment were divided into three categories: students with low knowledge were classified as basic, those with moderate knowledge as medium, and those with high knowledge as advance.

The following are the assessment results of Grade 4-B students at SD Eksperimental Mangunan:

No.	Category	Quantity (Student)	Percentage
1	Basic	5	20%
2	Medium	3	12%
3	Advance	17	68%

Table 1. Results of the Diagnostic Assessment

In the first cycle, the teacher introduced picture card media with intentionally omitted parts of sentences to help students complete them. The first set of cards contained pictures with one missing part—the verb. The second set of cards had two missing parts—the subject and the verb. The third set of cards contained only pictures without any written sentences.

Through this activity, students were guided to gradually recognize simple sentence patterns. The observation results showed that students were more motivated to participate when learning activities used visual media and hands-on activities. However, some students still needed teacher guidance, and others were not yet consistent in using the correct verb forms in declarative sentences.

The following are three examples of picture cards representing each category:



Figure 1. Picture card for the basic category.



Figure 2. Picture card for the medium category.

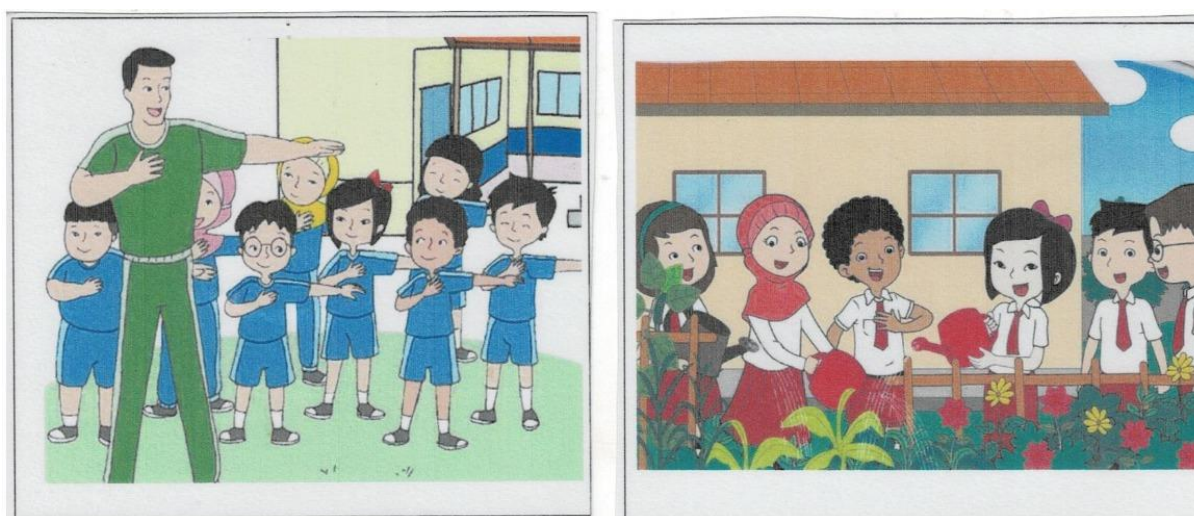


Figure 3. Picture card for the advance category.

Based on the reflection results from the first cycle, improvements were made in the second cycle by increasing students' level of independence in learning. In this cycle, students were asked to construct sentences with complete and coherent structures that were relevant to school activities. In the second cycle, there was an observable improvement in students' confidence and accuracy in constructing sentences.

The results of the students' worksheets completed at the end of the second cycle showed an improvement in their mastery of the simple present tense. The results of the students' work are as follows: three students who were previously in the basic category improved to the medium level, and three students from the medium category advanced to the advance level. Mathematically, the results can be seen in the following table:

No.	Category	Quantity (Student)	Percentage
1	Basic	2	8%
2	Medium	3	12%
3	Advance	20	80%

Table 2. The results of the implementation of Differentiated Instruction using picture card media.

Thus, the results of this classroom action research show that the implementation of Differentiated Instruction on the simple present tense material for Grade 4-B students through

the use of picture card media proved effective in accommodating students' different levels of learning readiness and helping them gradually achieve mastery of language structure.

Discussion

The simple present tense material for fourth-grade elementary students represents the introductory stage of understanding basic sentence structures in English. At this level, students begin to recognize that every English sentence follows a pattern consisting of a subject and a predicate that must agree with each other (subject-verb agreement) (Dinata & Evelyn, 2022). The learning focuses on simple sentences that describe routine activities at school, such as *I greet friends, I have a meal, or I study English*.

This stage belongs to the elementary level of learning, where the main goal is not merely to memorize verb forms but to develop an awareness of the relationship between the subject and the verb form. Students are introduced to the singular subject "I" and the appropriate verb forms used with it in simple present tense sentences." (Azizah & Purwanti, 2023). In addition, students also learn to recognize the function of the simple present tense in expressing routine activities through concrete examples that are closely related to their daily lives.

In the context of fourth-grade students at SD Eksperimental Mangunan, the teaching of the simple present tense is not only aimed at mastering grammatical aspects but also at building contextual understanding through visual and interactive activities. This approach aligns with the principles of communicative learning, in which language is acquired through meaningful experiences. Thus, mastering the simple present tense at this level becomes an essential foundation for developing English language skills in the future, particularly in constructing sentences and engaging in basic communication.

This view aligns with Y.B. Mangunwijaya's educational philosophy in *Pengantar Filsafat Pendidikan Humaniora* (1988), which emphasizes that the learning process should begin from the child's own life experiences and nurture their natural curiosity. Romo Mangun regards education as a process of humanization helping children to discover themselves and understand their world through active engagement rather than mere memorization or mechanical repetition. (Y.B. Mangunwijaya, 1988) In the context of learning the simple present tense, this principle means that students are encouraged to understand English as part of everyday life, not merely as a set of rigid grammatical rules. Through visual activities such as picture cards that depict concrete situations, for example, a person eating, playing, or going to school, students learn to connect language structures with real-life contexts. Thus, language learning becomes a means of fostering self-awareness, creativity, and social connectedness, in accordance with the humanistic educational ideals promoted by Romo Mangun.

Differentiated Instruction is a teaching method designed to adapt the learning process to each student's needs, abilities, and learning styles. This approach places students at the center of learning by varying the content, process, and learning outcomes so that every child can achieve the learning goals optimally (Puluhulawa, 2023). The teacher acts as a facilitator who maps students' readiness levels and interests, then adjusts the most appropriate learning strategies for each group or individual. Through this method, differences in ability within the classroom are not seen as obstacles but as opportunities to enrich the collective learning experience. Thus, *Differentiated Instruction* supports the principles of humanistic education, which emphasize respect for each learner's uniqueness and developmental growth.

The use of picture cards in learning is a method to help students understand concepts or materials concretely through visual representation (Cristilia, 2022). This medium serves as a bridge between words and meaning, allowing students to connect language forms with real objects or situations (Priyastuti, 2021). In the context of English language learning, picture cards help students recognize vocabulary, understand sentence structures, and develop associative thinking skills. Moreover, using picture cards increases students' interest and active participation, as learning activities become more interactive and engaging. Thus, this method is effective in developing both conceptual understanding and language skills naturally, in accordance with children's cognitive development.

The implementation of *Differentiated Instruction* using picture cards in Grade IVB of SD Eksperimental Mangunan revealed that students' varied abilities in understanding the *simple present tense* could be effectively addressed through adaptive teaching methods. The diagnostic assessment, which mapped the students' initial competencies, enabled the teacher to classify learners according to their readiness and design appropriate levels of support. This approach reflects the essential principle of *Differentiated Instruction* recognizing and responding to learner diversity rather than imposing uniformity in learning (Tomlinson, 2014). By modifying the level of difficulty and providing gradual scaffolding, the teacher created an inclusive learning environment where every student could engage according to their capacity and progress meaningfully through the learning stages.

In accordance with Tomlinson's (2014) framework, *Differentiated Instruction* involves adapting content, process, and product to accommodate diverse learning needs. In this study, picture cards functioned as the differentiated material that guided students through progressively challenging tasks. The use of graded picture cards—from those with missing verbs, to those with missing subjects and verbs, and finally to cards showing only images—supported students' gradual transition from guided to independent learning. This sequencing resonates with Vygotsky's (1978) theory of the *Zone of Proximal Development* (ZPD), which asserts that learning is most effective when students are challenged just beyond their current ability, with support from teachers or peers.

The results also align with Y. B. Mangunwijaya's (1988) philosophy of *pendidikan humaniora*, which emphasizes that learning should emerge from the child's real-life experiences and cultivate their sense of curiosity. The use of visual and contextual materials allowed students to connect grammatical forms with familiar everyday actions such as eating, playing, or going to school. Rather than memorizing rigid grammatical rules, students experienced language as a living tool for communication. This humanistic perspective is further reinforced by Mangunwijaya's (1994) reflections in *Sastra dan Religiositas*, where he viewed education as an encounter between creativity, meaning, and the development of human dignity. In this sense, the use of *Differentiated Instruction* and picture cards embodies the spirit of humanistic education—helping students discover themselves and the world through meaningful engagement.

Additionally, the incorporation of *Differentiated Instruction* with visual learning media encouraged collaboration and mutual learning, especially when students worked in small groups during the second cycle of the study. Peer collaboration allowed students with higher mastery levels to assist their peers, fostering both linguistic and social-emotional development. This cooperative dynamic echoes Mangunwijaya's (1994) vision of education as a communal and dialogical process, in which learning is not an individual competition but a shared journey toward understanding and humanity.

Overall, the findings indicate that the integration of *Differentiated Instruction* and picture card media is an effective and human-centered pedagogical approach for teaching the *simple present tense* to elementary students. It accommodates individual differences, enhances engagement, and strengthens mastery through meaningful, contextual experiences. When language learning is grounded in the learners' realities as envisioned by constructivist theorists (Vygotsky, 1978) and humanist educators (Mangunwijaya, 1988, 1994) it becomes not merely a technical exercise but a transformative process of personal and social growth.

CONCLUSION

This study highlights that the implementation of *Differentiated Instruction* supported by the use of picture cards offers a transformative approach to teaching the *simple present tense* among Grade IVB students at SD Eksperimental Mangunan. The method allows for flexibility in addressing students' varying levels of readiness, interests, and learning profiles, turning grammar instruction into a dynamic and inclusive process. Rather than focusing solely on rote memorization or repetitive drills, the approach engages students through meaningful activities that connect language to their lived experiences. Picture cards, in particular, serve as an effective

visual medium to bridge abstract grammatical structures with concrete, familiar situations such as eating, playing, or going to school making the learning process more relatable and memorable.

Furthermore, the humanistic philosophy underlying this instructional design reflects the educational ideals of Y. B. Mangunwijaya, who emphasized that learning should be rooted in the human experience and the development of the whole person. Language learning, therefore, becomes not only a cognitive exercise but also a moral and existential journey in which students discover themselves and their world through creative and reflective engagement. The learning environment shaped by *Differentiated Instruction* nurtures empathy, cooperation, and autonomy, enabling students to grow both linguistically and personally.

Ultimately, the integration of *Differentiated Instruction* and visual media like picture cards exemplifies a holistic model of education one that values diversity, encourages curiosity, and promotes self-expression. Such a human-centered approach ensures that the mastery of language aligns with the broader goal of education: to cultivate individuals who think critically, communicate meaningfully, and participate responsibly in their community.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Ayuningtyas, L. P. S., Suwastini, N. K. A., & Dantes, G. R. (2023). DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION IN ONLINE LEARNING: ITS BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES IN EFL CONTEXTS. *Jurnal Pendidikan Teknologi Dan Kejuruan*, 20(1). <https://doi.org/10.23887/jptkuniksha.v20i1.54512>
- Azizah, W., & Purwanti, R. (2023). Meningkatkan Aktivitas , Motivasi Dan Keterampilan Menulis Simple Present Tense Menggunakan Model Lecture Pada Sekolah Dasar. *Jurnal Pendidikan Sosial Dan Konseling*, 1(3).
- Bulan A, Ismail, Imansyah M N, Hasan, & Supriyaddin. (2023). Persepsi Guru Bahasa Inggris Terhadap Multimedia Pembelajaran Interaktif dan Pembelajaran Terdiferensiasi. *BULLET : Jurnal Multidisiplin Ilmu*, 2.
- Cameron, L. (2001). *Teaching languages to young learners*. Cambridge University Press.
- Cristilia, L. (2022). Pembelajaran Berbicara Bahasa Inggris Untuk Siswa Kelas V SD Menggunakan Model Pembelajaran Kontekstual Berbantuan Media Gambar (Flash Card). *Jurnal Profesi Pendidikan*, 1(1). <https://doi.org/10.22460/jpp.v1i1.10362>
- Dinata, H., & Evelyn, E. (2022). Rancangan Aplikasi Pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris Berbasis Multimedia Untuk Siswa Kelas 4 Sekolah Dasar. *BINA INSANI ICT JOURNAL*, 9(1). <https://doi.org/10.51211/biict.v9i1.1789>
- Mangunwijaya, Y. B. (1988). *Pengantar filsafat pendidikan humaniora*. Kanisius.
- Mangunwijaya, Y. B. (1994). *Sastra dan religiositas*. Penerbit Kanisius.
- Harmer, J. (2015). *The practice of English language teaching* (5th ed.). Pearson Education.
- Priyastuti, M. T. (2021). Pelatihan Peningkatan Kosakata Bahasa Inggris dengan Media Permainan Kartu Domino bagi Siswa SD. *Jurnal Peduli Masyarakat*, 3(4).
- Puluhulawa, A. (2023). Meningkatkan Kemampuan Guru Dalam Mengimplementasikan Pembelajaran Berdiferensiasi Melalui Pendampingan Di Smp Negeri 1 Bongomeme Kabupaten Gorontalo. *Jurnal Normalita*, 11(2).
- Tomlinson, C. A. (2014). *The differentiated classroom: Responding to the needs of all learners* (2nd ed.). ASCD.
- Wijaya, S., Syarif Sumantri, M., & Nurhasanah, N. (2022). IMPLEMENTASI MERDEKA BELAJAR MELALUI STRATEGI PEMBELAJARAN TERDIFERENSIASI DI SEKOLAH DASAR. *Didaktik : Jurnal Ilmiah PGSD STKIP Subang*, 8(2). <https://doi.org/10.36989/didaktik.v8i2.450>
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes* (M. Cole, V. John-Steiner, S. Scribner, & E. Souberman, Eds.). Harvard University Press.