

## DIGITAL PICTURES OF THE LOSS BOARD GAME TO IMPROVE STUDENTS' UNDERSTANDING OF ARTICLES

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**Abstract:** Digital medium needed for this situation because of COVID-19. Providing a digital medium for students to practice their English at home is a challenge for some teachers who cannot design the digital medium from scratch. Looking at the text without any pictures appears to make the students are not interested in doing the exercises. The LOSS Board Game is one of the games that created to address the issue. The game is applied for online learning to expand students' English proficiency in pronunciation and other skills. Digital pictures of the LOSS Board Game is used to develop students' ability to understand the article of *a*, *an*, and *the*. Thus, this study was conducted to improve students' mastery of English articles. The research design uses Classroom Action Research (CAR). The LOSS Board Game's pictures were predicted to provide students' mastery in English articles for junior high school students.

**Keywords:** *Digital pictures of the LOSS Board Game, article of a, an, and the, junior high school students*

### INTRODUCTION

Before the pandemic, coming to the classrooms and meeting the teachers personally is common for students worldwide, including in the Indonesian teaching and learning context. Due to COVID 19 (Corona Virus Disease 19), the Indonesian Minister of Education and Culture, *Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan (Kemdikbud 2020a)*, instructed schools to do online learning to replace face-to-face learning. Online learning is not an easy task for both students and teachers who were unprepared for the condition. Some students do not have their own smartphone, unlimited internet quota, and a stable internet connection, so they can only afford the applications which do not need much internet quota. Thus, teachers need to spend more time to prepare digital media to provide students with instructional materials that do not spend much students' quota (Krish, 2008). Teachers are forced to shift from offline meetings to the online meeting where they are also forced to adjust their media from hard copy to digitalized materials.

Digital media are seen to be more useful than traditional media for this situation. Digital media can be in the form of software (PowerPoint, Hot Potatoes) and internet access (for videos in YouTube) (Rachmajanti, Laksmi, & Muniroh., 2016). The digital media have to be engaging because learners can feel bored with a text or PowerPoint every day (Plaisance, 2018). Teachers must carefully select their medium because not every medium can be applied for students' objectives and materials, and they must be reflective, creative, and adaptive to dynamic changes (Atmojo & Nugroho, 2020). Furthermore, some media can also be modified to achieve students' objectives.

One of the media that can be adjusted is the LOSS Board Game. The LOSS Board Game is developed to improve students' pronunciation (Rachmadhany, Wulyani, & Astuti, 2020) and has digital pictures. The digital pictures of the LOSS Board Game are suitable, meaningful, and interesting for students' age, junior high school students. The LOSS Board Game is a printed board game, but it has digital pictures sent to students. Due to this condition, printed photos can be used by showing the images to students during online learning, but students cannot have pictures. They cannot see them clearly through video communications. Also, teachers can share digital images with students, and students can recheck it later. Moreover, the instructions can be changed to fit the students' needs, so the pictures can be used for teaching grammar in an easy way to understand.

Grammar is how to construct a sentence (word order, verb, and noun systems, modifiers, phrases, clauses, etc.) (Brown, 2000). In Indonesia, seven grade students of junior high school learn articles of *a*, *an*, and *the* in their first semester (Permendikbud, 2018). Seven grade students of junior high school are aged about 12-13. According to Sood (2015), young learners aged 14-18 and 18-20 had difficulties in choosing the appropriate form of the article (*a/an*), and most of them learned the form by choosing the written word and not by sound. In addition, seven grade students have not learned the sound, so they might not understand enough to choose

articles based on the sound. Thus, they can learn by using pictures first to help them choose the appropriate articles before they can choose articles based on sound.

Pictures can be used to enhance language learning and practice related vocabulary to improve their ability to use a foreign language (Wright, 1989). The appropriate pictures can be meaningful and authentic for students' activity, and pictures can make the lessons become interesting, attractive, and engaging (Wasilewska, 2017). Furthermore, pictures do not only increase vocabulary (Handayani, 2018), but also pictures help students in improving students' motivation and interest (Asrifan, 2015).

From the preliminary study, eleven students of Cla's Room English Private Course were asking about teacher's media. The answers to the preliminary study showed that their teachers rarely use pictures for learning processes and exercises. Teachers sometimes utilize videos, texts, printed books, and PowerPoint as their media for online learning and exercises. Moreover, a video sometimes has a longer duration, consumes much quota, and makes students bored to watch the video till the end (Atmojo & Nugroho, 2020). Thus, students also wanted to learn English using interesting pictures and do not consume much of their quota.

The digital pictures of the LOSS Board Game are applicable to teach articles of *a*, *an*, and *the* for junior high school students in online learning. We argue that the LOSS Board Game's digital pictures can improve student's understanding of articles (namely: *a*, *an*, and *the*). Two reasons encourage us to modify the digital pictures of the LOSS Board Game. First, it gives teachers a medium that can be shared with the students with exciting colors, saved to be looked at again, and can save students' quota. Second, the digital pictures of the LOSS Board Game are used in different ways of teaching articles: by omitting the first letter of the words, students become aware of the use of articles *a* and *an*, and by giving them a general statement and specific statement for the use of article *the*.

With regard to that issue, we decided to apply the digital pictures of the LOSS Board Game for teaching articles *a*, *an*, and *the*, because pictures are easy to modify, and they are needed for teaching the articles online.

## METHOD

This study uses Classroom Action Research (CAR) to investigate the use of digital pictures of the LOSS Board Game to improve students' ability for an article of *a*, *an*, and *the*. According to Latief (2016), CAR aims to improve the quality of the classroom practices that is aligned with the researchers' goal. This method is done by analyzing, planning, implementing, and reflecting (see Figure 1: Class Action Research cycle adapted from Kemmis and Mc. Taggart, 2005).

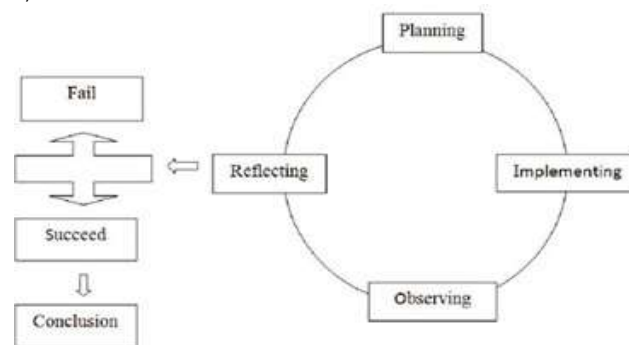


Figure 1: Class Action Research cycle, adapted from Kemmis & Mc. Taggart (2005)

Eleven junior high school students (7<sup>th</sup> graders) from Cla's Room English private course participate in this research. In the preliminary study, they were asked about their problems during online classes and ways to solve their problems. They filled an online questionnaire and answered an online test to confirm the data. After knowing the students' problems, a medium is selected to help their understanding of using an article of *a*, *an*, and *the*. The adapted medium used is the digital pictures of the LOSS Board Game because students need online material to learn from home and understand the material. Sentences are changed to fit the students' material of articles *a*, *an*, and *the*. Furthermore, there are exercises in which the first letter of the word is omitted. By omitting the first letter, students need to guess it and fill it by themselves. After filling it, they are aware of the first letter and answer correctly.



Figure 2. The changes of V-Cards (Before – left, after - right)

Then, the criteria of success is decided based on the minimum score of school, which is 75 (0-100 score). If 70% of students achieve above 75 in their achievement test, the digital pictures are successful in improving their skills to use articles for online learning.

In the implementation step, this study is conducted in four online meetings. The implementation from meeting one to three is the same. The students are given a picture that has a summary how to use the articles and explains in a simple way to be understood by students of seven graders. Next, they are asked if they have a question about the material. If they have a question, we give different words as examples. When they have understood the material, they do the exercises. The exercises are about the articles of *a/an/the*, and the digital pictures help the students to understand the context. They chose the appropriate articles of *a/an/the* from different pictures. They only need to download digital pictures that contain words, and the pictures are sent to their WhatsApp application in every meeting. After finishing the exercise, they submit their work. Then, the feedback is given to make them understand better. In the last meeting, the students received the achievement test to be done. In the observation, the students' first test, practices from the first meeting to the last meeting, and the achievement test are collected during online learning. The last step is analyzing where the results are analyzed to the criteria of success.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In the preliminary study, the students were asked to answer an online questionnaire. The results showed that they wanted to learn using different media because they sometimes learn from video and text and rarely learn from digital pictures. Moreover, they were also asked to fill a test to confirm the data if they had a problem in understanding articles of *a*, *an*, and *the*. The first test that has ten questions; the questions are about the use of articles of *a*, *an*, and *the*. They were not allowed to open their dictionary or check *Google* to answer the questions. The duration is 15 minutes.

After doing the test, the results of their test showed that most of them made 4 to 7 mistakes out of 10 questions. Thus, no students achieved above 75 scores. They did not know the use of articles for a general statement or specific thing which they already knew. Moreover, they were confused when they needed to use *a* before words that begin with a vowel sound for a consonant and *a* before words that begin with a consonant sound. Based on the preliminary study, the researchers focused on the improvement of articles of *a*, *an*, and *the*.

Criteria	Number of students
Students who get below 50	9
Students who get above 50-60	2
Students who get 75-100	-

Table 1. The results of the first test

During the online learning process, the students read the examples (see Appendix 1) and discussed when they needed to use *a/an* before practicing the exercises. Before doing exercise 1, one of them asked, "*the word book has double o, so can I use an?*" The student was asked only to look at the beginning of the words to decide when he needed to use *a/an*. After discussing, they received one exercise. In the following exercises (Exercise 2 and 3), they received some feedbacks from the previous exercise and did not ask many questions anymore. Here are the results of all three exercises:

Criteria	Number of students		
	Exercise 1	Exercise 2	Exercise 3
Students who get below 50	7	5	2
Students who get 51-74	3	3	3
Students who get 75-100	1	3	6

Table 2. The results of Students' Practices

The total of students who achieved above 75 goes up in every exercise (see Table 2.). Inactivity 1, they still made a mistake in choosing the appropriate articles. For example, *a* cloud becomes *a* cloud. In the following exercises, they completed exercises better than before.

At the end of the meeting, the test was given to the students. They showed improvement after the online learning process. The modification can be observed from the results of the achievement test that achieved better scores. In the end, eight of the students achieved above 75. In the first test, nobody achieved a score above 75, but 8 students achieved above 75 in the achievement test.

Criteria	Number of students	
	First test	Achievement test
Students who get below 50	9	-
Students who get 50-74	2	3
Students who get 75-100	-	8

Table 3. The Increasing Students in test

Here is the students' score of the test in Figure 3. The results show increasing scores.

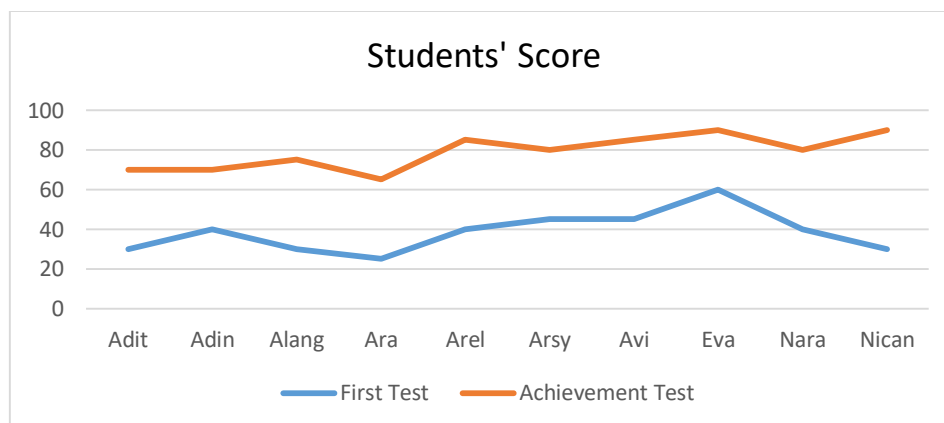


Figure 3. Students' Score first test and achievement test

To sum up, most students can achieve scores above 75 in the achievement test (see Figure 3.). Nara and Nican were careful to do the exercises, so they did not make many mistakes and achieved better scores in their achievement test. They also stated that the omitting first letter made them aware of answering and looked at the pictures to guess the first letter. It means that they are helped to know the use of articles using digital images of the LOSS Board Game.

This study aims to investigate the use of digital pictures of the LOSS Board Game. The medium used to teach and practice the articles of *a*, *an*, and *the* for junior high school students. The results show that the LOSS Board Game's digital pictures for teaching essays can help them understand the articles of *a*, *an*, and *the* in online learning to increase their scores in every exercise.

After applying the digital pictures, the improvement can be seen that eight students achieved 75 above, and only three students achieved good enough in the achievement test. In a nutshell, the LOSS Board Game's digital pictures meet the criteria to help students for learning articles in online learning.

In this study, the researchers chose digital pictures to achieve the objectives of learning. Students enjoy using images and understand better. The findings are comparable to the previous research conducted by Styati (2016). The results showed that students achieve better scores using pictures than videos.

During this condition, online media needed to deliver material or exercises to the students. The digital pictures of the LOSS Board Game focus on the articles of *a*, *an*, and *the*. The digital images require students to choose the items based on the first letter because they have not learned the silent sound like in the word *hour*. Furthermore, students can recheck them later to practice the articles in the future. The digital pictures of the LOSS Board Game were successful in improving students' understanding of items of *a*, *an*, and *the*.

## CONCLUSION

The digital pictures of the LOSS Board Game can be used to teach articles. Rather than looking at a textbook or watching a video, the digital images increase their ability to understand the items of a, an, and the by looking at the first letter and filling the first letter in an exciting way. Besides, the medium helps students to believe in themselves to choose appropriate articles.

Through the changeable pictures, the sentences can be adapted for their materials. Students were interested in learning using digital pictures because they can learn English using a different medium. They know not only the articles but also new words. Digital photos do not spend much of their quota downloading the images, then watching videos (Atmojo & Nugroho, 2020).

In this research, their scores increase after understanding the easy explanation and doing the exercises. They said that they could look again if they wanted to check it without wasting their quota. Finally, the digital pictures of the LOSS Board Game encourage students to choose appropriate articles.

Some suggestions can be used as consideration for English teachers who are interested in using digital pictures for online learning. Teachers can use photos as an alternative way of teaching English. Also, they can find many pictures through the internet for their online materials. Moreover, the images should be appropriate and exciting for junior high school students. Some photos can be used for different materials, but teachers need to revise if it is needed. Utilizing pictures can help students to understand the articles. By using pictures, teachers can have interesting material for their students, and students do not need to spend much their quota.

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