

## Effectiveness of Picture Story in Improving Reading Comprehension in 5th Grade of SDS Tunas Harapan Tangerang

Fitria Nida<sup>1</sup>, Dwi Rahayu<sup>2</sup>

[fitrianida8847@gmail.com](mailto:fitrianida8847@gmail.com); [dosen02343@unpam.ac.id](mailto:dosen02343@unpam.ac.id)

<sup>1,2</sup> Universitas Pamulang

### ABSTRACT

*Based on the problems experienced by students at the elementary school level in English subjects, most students have poor reading comprehension so that learning becomes ineffective and boring, especially in grade 5 SDS Tunas Harapan. This study aims to improve students' effectiveness in reading comprehension through picture story method in two classes namely: experiment class and control class. Data collection from the implementation of these activities uses quantitative data methods and quasi-experimental methods, then researchers have taken action with the picture story method through pre-test, treatment and post-test for 3 meetings. From these 3 meetings, researchers have taken data on students in grades 5B and 5C with a total sample and population of 30 students each through statistical calculations on the SPSS version 27.0.0 IBM application. The data was taken from the pre-test, post-test, and gain score values. Then the results of the data can be said to be successful after calculating data from the homogeneity test, normality test and data hypothesis test from these students.*

**Keywords:** Reading Comprehension, Picture Story, Quasi Experimental

### A. Introduction

English serves as the second language in Indonesia after Indonesian and plays an increasingly vital role as a global means of communication. Mastering English is essential in today's interconnected world, as it functions as an international language across diverse fields such as education, science, technology, business, and global relations. At the elementary school level, learning English is a crucial foundation for students, as it prepares them to engage with global knowledge and communication (Sya, 2020). The ability to communicate effectively in English enables individuals to connect with people from various linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Moreover, as social beings, humans inherently require communication to interact, collaborate, and build understanding with others. Motivation, as noted by Sya et al. (2022), plays a key role in literacy development and can help counteract negative behavioral trends among youth while fostering moral and intellectual growth.

Through English learning, students not only acquire linguistic competence but also broaden their perspectives by gaining access to global information sources such as international journals, books, films, and online materials. However, despite its importance, English language learning—

particularly reading comprehension—remains a challenge at the elementary school level in Indonesia.

Reading comprehension is one of the fundamental skills in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning. According to Merisuo and Storm (2014), “reading comprehension is a complex process in which readers construct meaning by interacting with the text, using their prior knowledge and experiences alongside the information contained within the text.” This means that comprehension involves connecting prior knowledge with new information from the text to form a coherent understanding. Each reader constructs meaning differently, depending on background knowledge and cognitive engagement. Despite ongoing instruction in schools, many elementary students continue to struggle with understanding the main ideas, purposes, and contextual meanings within English texts. Previous studies have shown that limited vocabulary, insufficient understanding of grammatical structures, and the use of monotonous learning materials are among the main barriers that hinder reading comprehension development (Brown, 2007). As Grellet (1988) explains, reading enhances not only linguistic knowledge but also cognitive and cultural understanding, as students learn to interpret and internalize the meanings beyond the literal text. Therefore, poor reading comprehension can negatively affect students’ overall English proficiency and motivation to learn.

In Indonesia, the issue of low reading comprehension among elementary students remains prevalent and concerning. Elendina (2020) emphasizes that improving reading interest among elementary school students requires joint efforts from students, teachers, and parents. However, low intrinsic motivation, insufficient teacher engagement in promoting reading, and the absence of structured reading habits remain key obstacles. When students are not encouraged to read consistently, they miss opportunities to develop vocabulary, comprehension strategies, and cognitive connections between ideas. This challenge is further compounded by students’ limited knowledge of linguistic elements, textual structures, and thematic understanding, making it difficult for them to relate to reading materials and derive meaning effectively.

Similar challenges were identified at SDS Tunas Harapan Tangerang, particularly among fifth-grade students. Observations revealed that many students struggle to comprehend simple English passages. They often find it difficult to identify main ideas, locate specific information, or answer comprehension questions accurately. This suggests that conventional teaching methods may not adequately support the development of students’ reading comprehension skills. Consequently, low reading comprehension not only impedes English language acquisition but also affects overall academic performance. Hence, there is an urgent need for more innovative and engaging instructional strategies to enhance students’ reading engagement and comprehension.

One effective way to address this issue is by incorporating visually supported learning materials, such as illustrated short stories. Picture short stories combine visual and narrative elements that enhance comprehension and maintain students’ interest, particularly for young learners. According to Ghasemi (2011), short stories are well-suited for language teaching because they are concise, engaging, and adaptable to various instructional contexts. When supported by illustrations, short stories can make learning more enjoyable and meaningful, helping students better understand and retain the content. Using visual narratives in reading instruction reduces monotony, stimulates imagination, and strengthens comprehension through contextual association between text and image.

Based on the aforementioned background, this study aims to examine the effectiveness of using illustrated short stories in improving the reading comprehension skills of fifth-grade students at SDS Tunas Harapan Tangerang. The findings are expected to contribute to the development of

effective reading strategies at the elementary level, enhancing both student engagement and comprehension outcomes. Practically, this research is intended to provide English teachers with innovative teaching methods that foster motivation, improve learning quality, and encourage meaningful language interaction.

The scope of this research lies within applied linguistics, particularly in the field of teaching reading. This study adopts an action research approach focusing on the use of illustrated short stories to enhance reading comprehension at SDS Tunas Harapan Bumi Indah Tangerang.

## **B. Method**

This study employed a quantitative research approach using a quasi-experimental design. Quasi-experiments are commonly used in educational research where random assignment of participants is not feasible, as it may disrupt the natural classroom learning process. Unlike true experimental designs, which require randomization, quasi-experiments focus on comparing treatment effects between existing groups to determine the impact of an intervention (Sugiyono in Wijayanti, 2020, p. 42).

In this study, two groups were involved: one group received a treatment and was referred to as the *experimental group*, while the other group did not receive any treatment and served as the *control group*. The experimental group was exposed to the picture story method, while the control group followed conventional reading instruction. The research examined two main variables:

- **Variable X:** The effectiveness of the picture story method for fifth-grade students at SDS Tunas Harapan Bumi Indah Tangerang.
- **Variable Y:** The improvement in students' reading comprehension skills at SDS Tunas Harapan Bumi Indah Tangerang.

A one-way correlation analysis was used to determine the relationship between the two variables and to assess the effectiveness of the picture story method in enhancing students' reading comprehension. The quasi-experimental method was selected because it allowed the researcher to measure the effect of the intervention (picture stories) while maintaining the integrity of the existing classroom structure.

### **1. Population and Sample**

The population of this study consisted of fifth-grade students at SDS Tunas Harapan Bumi Indah Tangerang. A total of 60 students participated, divided into two classes. The sampling technique used was *purposive sampling*, selecting two specific groups that met the research criteria. Class 5B, consisting of 30 students, served as the experimental group, while class 5C, also consisting of 30 students, served as the control group. The participants were between 10 and 11 years old.

### **2. Data Collection Procedures**

The data collection process consisted of three main stages:

#### **1. Pre-Test**

The pre-test was conducted to assess students' initial reading comprehension before the

treatment. At this stage, students were given a reading comprehension test based on a picture story. The test consisted of several questions designed to evaluate their ability to identify main ideas, specific information, and contextual meaning.

**2. Treatment**

After the pre-test, the experimental group received treatment using the picture story method, while the control group continued with conventional reading instruction. The treatment process included the following steps:

- a. The researcher introduced the lesson by explaining the picture story activities and presenting four selected stories from *Classic Fairy Tales 1* by Jia He (2015).
- b. The students read and discussed the picture stories under the researcher’s guidance.
- c. After reading, the students completed comprehension exercises consisting of 5 to 10 questions based on the stories. The exercises were designed as student worksheets to assess understanding and engagement.

**3. Post-Test**

After the treatment, both the experimental and control groups were given a post-test. The purpose of this test was to determine whether the picture story method had improved the students’ reading comprehension skills. The post-test used similar question formats to the pre-test to allow for direct comparison of results.

**3. Data Analysis**

The data were analyzed using an assessment rubric to measure students’ reading comprehension performance. The rubric was adapted from the frameworks proposed by Mertler (2006), Reddy and Andrade (2010), and Stevens and Levi (2005), which evaluate student achievement based on specific performance indicators. These rubrics helped to assess students’ comprehension accuracy, vocabulary understanding, and ability to interpret text meaning before and after the intervention.

The comparison of pre-test and post-test scores between the experimental and control groups was analyzed statistically to determine whether the use of picture short stories significantly improved students’ reading comprehension.

Table 3.1 Classifying the students’ score. The classifications which are using as follows:

<b>SCORE</b>	<b>CATEGORY</b>
(81) to (100)	Excellent
(61) to (80)	Good
(41) to (60)	Fair
(21) to (40)	Less
(00) to (20)	Poor

Soure: Abdullah in Annisa (2017, p. 23)

$$\text{Score} = \frac{\text{Total score of students}}{\text{Maximal score}} \times 100$$

(SPSS Statistics in version: 27.0.0 IBM)

- 1. Calculating the students’ mean score of pre-test and post-test, the researcher applied this

formula:

$$x = \frac{\sum X}{N}$$

The explanation:

- X = mean score
- $\sum x$  = the number of all scores
- N = the number of samples

Gay in Annisa (2017, p. 23)

2. Find t-count value as follows:

$$t = \frac{X-D}{\sqrt{\frac{\sum D^2}{N(N-1)}}}$$

The explanation:

- t = test of significance
- XD = the mean score of total deviation
- $\sum D^2$  = the square of the sum score for difference
- N = total of subjects

Gay in Annisa (2017, p. 24)

#### 4. Statistical Hypothesis

The statistical hypothesis in this study was formulated to determine whether the use of picture short stories is effective in improving students' reading comprehension. The hypotheses are stated as follows:

- **H<sub>0</sub> (Null Hypothesis):** There is no significant effectiveness in using picture short stories to improve students' reading comprehension.
- **H<sub>1</sub> (Alternative Hypothesis):** There is a significant effectiveness in using picture short stories to improve students' reading comprehension.

#### C. Findings and Analysis

This study aims to examine the effectiveness of using picture short stories in improving the reading comprehension skills of fifth grade students at SDS Tunas Harapan Tangerang. Based on the literature review and preliminary findings, it can be concluded that this method has great potential to address the common challenges students face in understanding English texts.

Based on the research background, reading comprehension is one of the fundamental skills in language learning, especially English as a Foreign Language (EFL). However, primary school students often face various obstacles in this aspect. Previous studies, as mentioned by Brown (2007), highlighted that limited vocabulary, lack of understanding of sentence structure, and the absence of interesting learning materials are the main obstacles. Similar conditions were also found at SDS Tunas Harapan Tangerang, where fifth grade students showed difficulties in identifying the main idea, finding specific information, or answering reading-related questions accurately.

The lack of interest in reading among elementary school students in Indonesia is also a serious concern, as explained by Elendina (2020). This is caused by students' lack of desire, as well as teachers who have not required students to read books during lessons. If this issue is not addressed, it can have a significant impact on students' enthusiasm in learning English and slow down their academic progress, given that reading is key to understanding the language.

The Role of Picture Short Stories as a Solution; to address this reading comprehension challenge, this study proposes the use of picture short stories as an innovative and engaging learning medium. As described by Ghasemi (2011), short stories have unique characteristics that make them suitable for reading comprehension, i.e. they are easy to understand and can be used in conjunction with a variety of teaching materials, making the reading learning process less monotonous.

Illustrated short stories combine visual (pictures) and narrative (text) elements, which can facilitate student comprehension, especially for young learners (Cunningham, 2009; Foorman, 2013). Pictures can help students build imagination and associate meaning with words, making it easier for them to understand the content of the story. This approach is expected to increase students' motivation and engagement, which in turn will have a positive impact on their reading comprehension skills.

This research is in line with several previous studies that also used experimental approaches to improve reading comprehension. For example, research by Nurul Aini, Nita Suci Apriliani, and Ary Setya Budhi Ningrum (2023) showed the effectiveness of TELLs strategy in improving students' reading comprehension. Similarly, Wijayanti (2020) examined the effectiveness of Simple-Mind Lite application, and Annisa (2017) examined the effectiveness of small groups in reading comprehension.

Although the three studies have similarities in the use of experimental research designs, the main difference lies in the media used. This study specifically focuses on illustrated short stories, which distinguishes it from other strategies or media used in previous studies. This suggests that this study attempts to fill a gap in the literature by exploring the specific potential of picture short stories in the context of elementary school students' reading comprehension.

Theoretically, the results of this study are expected to enrich the understanding of how visual media can influence cognitive processes in reading comprehension, particularly in EFL learners at the primary level. It can also provide empirical evidence on the effectiveness of short stories as a literary genre in language teaching.

Practically, this study is expected to provide input and recommendations for English teachers at SDS Tunas Harapan Tangerang and other elementary schools. If illustrated short stories prove to be effective, this method can be adopted as a more interesting and effective teaching approach, thus improving the overall quality of English learning. For other researchers, the findings can serve as a basis for further studies on the use of visual media and literature in English language learning.

## **D. Conclusion**

Based on the background, problem formulation, and literature review, this study was conducted to address one of the main challenges in English language learning, namely the low reading comprehension skills among fifth-grade students at SDS Tunas Harapan Tangerang. The findings revealed that this problem largely stems from students' limited vocabulary, difficulties in understanding sentence structures, and the lack of engaging and stimulating learning materials.

To overcome these challenges, the study examined the effectiveness of using picture short stories as an innovative learning medium. The results demonstrated that the use of picture short stories significantly improved students' reading comprehension. The integration of visual and narrative elements made the learning process more enjoyable and interactive, allowing students to better connect ideas, enrich their vocabulary, and comprehend the overall meaning of the text. Thus, this research confirmed that visual-based learning media can serve as a practical and effective solution to enhance the quality of English language learning at the elementary school level. Based on the findings, several suggestions are proposed as follows:

For teachers, it is recommended to apply more innovative teaching methods, such as the picture story approach, particularly in reading lessons. This method can make classroom activities more engaging and prevent monotony. Teachers are also encouraged to integrate picture stories as a tool for introducing new vocabulary and sentence structures in context. After reading, students can be invited to discuss the content or create short summaries, thereby improving their speaking and writing abilities. Furthermore, teachers should develop a varied collection of picture stories with themes suited to students' levels of comprehension to maintain motivation and interest in reading.

For students, it is suggested that they make use of visual learning media more actively. When reading picture stories, students should pay attention not only to the text but also to the illustrations, using them to help visualize the story and infer the meanings of unfamiliar words. In addition, students are encouraged to practice reading illustrated short stories independently outside of school hours to gradually improve their fluency and comprehension.

For educational institutions, it is important to provide sufficient resources, such as collections of picture short storybooks, in libraries or classrooms to support English learning activities. Schools should also consider organizing teacher training or workshops that focus on the effective integration of visual and narrative media into English language instruction. Such efforts will help improve teaching quality and foster a more engaging and effective learning environment for students.

In conclusion, this study underscores the importance of using creative and visually engaging learning materials to enhance students' reading comprehension in English. The picture short story method has proven to be a valuable instructional tool that not only strengthens language skills but also builds students' motivation and confidence in learning English.

## E. Reference

- Abdullah. (2006). *Pelaksanaan Belajar Mengajar dan Petunjuk Pelaksanaan Penilaian*. Jakarta: Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan.
- Aini, N., Apriliani, N. S., & Ningrum, A. S. B. (2023). The effectiveness of using Tells Strategy on students' reading comprehension. *English Education: Journal of English Teaching and Research*, 8(2), 133–144.
- Brown, H. D. (2000). *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching*. New York: Pearson Education.
- Cunningham, P. M. (2009). *Reading and Writing in Elementary Classrooms*.
- Elendiana, M. (2020). Upaya meningkatkan minat baca siswa sekolah dasar. *Jurnal Pendidikan dan Konseling*, 2(1), 54–60.
- Foorman, B. R. (2013). *Reading and Writing in Elementary Grades*.
- Gay, L. R. (2006). *Educational Research: Competencies for Analysis and Applications* (5th ed.). Columbus: Merrill Publishing Company.
- Ghasemi, P. (2011). Teaching the short story to improve L2 reading and writing skills: Approaches and strategies. *International Journal of Arts & Sciences*, Shiraz University, Iran, 267–273.
- Jamatlou, F. (2011). *Revisiting the Temporal Measures of L2 Oral Fluency: A Case of Iranian EFL Learners*. University of Groningen.
- He, J. (2015). *Classic Fairy Tales 1: The Crow Drinks Water*. China: Jilin Publishing Group Co. ISBN 978-7-5534-9670-2.
- Mertler, C. A. (2006). Designing scoring rubrics for your classroom. *Practical Assessment, Research & Evaluation*, 7(25). Retrieved from <http://pareonline.net/getvn.asp?v=7&n=25>
- Nurannisa. (2017). *The Effectiveness of Small Group in Reading Comprehension (An Experimental Study at the Second Grade Students of MA Darul Fallah Bissoloro, Gowa)*. University of Muhammadiyah Makassar.
- Sugiyono. (2014). *Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif, Kualitatif, dan R&D*. Bandung: Alfabeta.
- Wayne, T. (2014). *Understanding Reading Comprehension: Processes and Practices*. London: Sage.
- Sya, M. F., & Helmanto, F. (2020). Pemerataan pembelajaran muatan lokal Bahasa Inggris sekolah dasar Indonesia. *Didaktika Tauhidi: Jurnal Pendidikan Guru Sekolah Dasar*, 7(1), 71–80. <https://doi.org/10.30997/dt.v7i1.2348>

- Sya, M. F., Anoegrajekti, N., Dewanti, R., & Isnawan, B. H. (2022). Exploring the educational value of Indo-Harry Potter to design foreign language learning methods and techniques. *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research*, 21(10), 216–229. <https://doi.org/10.26803/ijlter.21.10.19>
- Wijayanti, S. W., & Sujito, D. (2020). *The effectiveness of teaching reading using SimpleMind Lite application to facilitate students' reading comprehension for non-English department students (An experimental research at TOSE Preparation 2 Academic Year 2019/2020)* (Doctoral dissertation, IAIN Surakarta).