

Improving the Ability to Story Daily Activities Through Picture Media in Grade 1 Students at St. Yohanes Tomohon 1 Catholic Elementary School

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This study aims to improve the ability of first-grade students at St. Yohanes Tomohon Catholic Elementary School 1 to recount daily activities through pictures. The study used the Kemmis and McTaggart Classroom Action Research (CAR) model, implemented in one cycle. Twenty-eight students participated in the odd semester of the 2025/2026 academic year. Data were collected through observations of teacher and student activities, storytelling performance tests, short interviews, and documentation. The results showed an improvement in students' storytelling abilities, particularly in the aspects of speaking confidence, fluency, coherence, and vocabulary use for daily activities. Picture media is effective because it aligns with the concrete thinking developmental stage of lower-grade students and supports information processing through visual and verbal channels, as described in Dual Coding Theory. These findings align with several other studies that conclude that picture series can improve elementary school students' storytelling abilities.

Keywords: Picture Media, Storytelling, Daily Activities, CAR, First Grade Elementary School

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1. Introduction

The ability to recount daily activities is a fundamental oral language skill that is crucial for first-grade elementary school children. Through storytelling, children learn to convey experiences coherently, choose appropriate words, and develop confidence in speaking in front of others. According to Nunan (2003), speaking is one of the most vital communication skills in language learning, as it allows children to naturally develop comprehension, vocabulary, and language structure. This skill also lays the foundation for higher literacy skills, such as reading comprehension and writing simple narratives in later grades, as explained by Snow (2010), who emphasized the close relationship between speaking and reading skills in early childhood.

However, storytelling skills do not always develop automatically. In first-grade students at St. John Catholic Elementary School 1, Tomohon, initial observations indicated that many students still struggled when asked to describe their daily routines. Some students appeared shy and hesitant, some only spoke one or two sentences, and many stories lacked coherence because they often jumped from one event to another. Vygotsky (1978) emphasized that children's language skills develop through social interaction, so teacher support or appropriate media are essential for children to express ideas more systematically. This situation indicates that students need concrete assistance to generate ideas and organize story sequences.

Visual media was chosen as a solution because it was considered most appropriate to the learning characteristics of lower-grade children. In Piaget's theory, early elementary school students are in the concrete operational stage (around 7–11 years of age). At this stage, children more easily understand

something that is tangible, visual, and close to their experience, while abstract concepts are still difficult to process. Santrock (2011) also stated that learning involving visual media helps children grasp concepts more quickly and connect them to real-life experiences. Images help children "see the scene," making story ideas more easily emerge before they can translate them into spoken sentences.

Furthermore, Paivio's (1986) Dual Coding Theory explains that humans process information through two main pathways: the visual pathway (images) and the verbal pathway (language). When students see images of daily routines, their visual pathway is activated. When they describe them, their verbal pathway is also activated. These two channels reinforce each other, making it easier for children to understand the content of the images, remember the sequence of events, and structure the story smoothly. Mayer (2005) also emphasized that combining visual and verbal cues can improve students' comprehension and memory, as information is processed through two mutually supportive channels.

Therefore, the use of visual media is expected to help first-grade students become more confident in speaking, more fluent in telling stories, and more able to organize daily activities in a coherent manner. This aligns with the opinion of Alessi and Trollip (2001), who stated that visual media can increase children's motivation to learn, concentration, and critical thinking skills, making storytelling experiences more effective and meaningful.

2. Method

This study used the Classroom Action Research (CAR) approach modeled after Kemmis and McTaggart. CAR is a reflective research conducted by teachers in their own classrooms to improve the learning process. This model follows a spiral of action encompassing four stages: planning, implementation, observation, and reflection.

The study was conducted in the odd semester of the 2025/2026 academic year at St. Yohanes Tomohon 1 Catholic Elementary School, located in Tomohon City, North Sulawesi. The subjects were all 28 first-grade students. Students had varying abilities; some were already quite fluent in speaking, but most were still hesitant and unable to construct coherent stories.

Data collection instruments included observation sheets for teacher and student activities, as well as a rubric for assessing storytelling performance. The rubric covered several aspects: confidence in performing, fluency in speaking, accuracy of story sequence, appropriateness of content to images, and richness of vocabulary. Data were also supplemented by brief interviews to assess student responses to the learning process, as well as documentation in the form of field notes and photographs of the activities.

In the planning stage, the teacher prepares a series of pictures themed around daily activities, such as waking up, bathing, having breakfast, going to school, studying in class, playing in the afternoon, and helping parents around the house. The teacher also prepares simple guiding questions and vocabulary exercises.

The action stage is carried out through the following steps. First, the teacher conducts apperception by asking students about their daily routines to direct their attention to the topic. Second, students observe the series of pictures together. Third, students name the activities they see in each picture, and then the teacher reinforces the correct vocabulary. Fourth, students practice telling stories in pairs following the sequence of pictures. Fifth, several students are asked to come forward to tell their stories in front of the class. At the end of the lesson, the teacher provides reinforcement, minor corrections, and praise to increase students' confidence.

Observations are conducted throughout the action to record student engagement, courage to come forward, and the quality of the stories. The results are analyzed in the reflection stage to determine student improvement compared to before the action.

3. Results and Discussion

After implementing the action in one cycle, students' storytelling skills significantly improved. The most noticeable improvement was their confidence to speak. While initially, some students were reluctant to come forward due to shyness, after using the pictures, more students were willing to speak. They felt helped because the pictures provided a "handle" for the story, preventing them from running out of ideas.

Their fluency also improved. Before the action, students tended to pause for long periods in the middle of their stories, contemplating what to say. After the action, these long pauses decreased, and students were able to tell their stories more fluidly.

In terms of plot coherence, the series of pictures made it easier for students to follow the sequence of events. The story, which initially jumped around, began to structure logically following the picture's flow from beginning to end. Furthermore, students' vocabulary expanded as they received examples and reinforcement of daily activities during the picture discussions.

In terms of speaking confidence, initially, most students displayed a passive attitude and were reluctant to speak in front of the class. Shyness, fear of making mistakes, and limited ideas were the main factors that hindered students from expressing their stories. After using the picture media, significant progress was seen. Students began to raise their hands to speak and express their opinions verbally. The images presented provided students with clarity about what they were going to tell, eliminating the confusion of choosing a topic. Visual media served as a "handle" that minimized speaking anxiety and boosted students' confidence.

Significant changes were also seen in fluency. Before the intervention, students' stories often stopped midway because they had difficulty putting words together or forgot the sequence of events. Sentences were often fragmented and interrupted with long pauses. After learning to use picture series, the storytelling process became more fluid. Students were able to tell stories with shorter pauses, aided by the sequence of images they had previously observed. Visualizing daily activities made it easier for them to predict future events, resulting in a smoother flow of speech.

Their ability to structure their story also showed improvement. During initial observations, students often told stories randomly and did not follow a logical chronological order, for example, describing playtime before going to school. With the help of picture series, students gained a structured narrative framework from beginning to end. The pictures helped them structure their stories coherently, starting with waking up in the morning, bathing, eating breakfast, going to school, studying in class, playing in the afternoon, and helping their parents around the house. The coherence of this story indicates that students are beginning to understand the concept of sequence of events and are able to organize experiences into simple, organized narratives.

In terms of the appropriateness of the story content, students have seen an increase in focus on the learning topic. Previously, the stories often diverged into other experiences irrelevant to the theme, and some students even presented sentences without a clear narrative direction. After using images, the stories became more focused because students described activities based on the visuals they had observed. Furthermore, students were able to connect the images to their personal experiences, making the resulting stories feel more realistic and contextual.

Students' vocabulary mastery also gradually developed. At the beginning of the lesson, vocabulary was limited and tended to be repetitive. Through observing images and reinforcing verbs related to daily routines, students began to utilize new vocabulary such as "wake up," "take a shower," "have breakfast," "go to school," "do homework," and "help parents." This increased vocabulary resulted in more varied and descriptive sentences, improving the overall quality of the students' oral narratives.

The results of this study align with Piaget's theory of cognitive development, which asserts that early elementary school-aged children are in the concrete operational stage. At this stage, children need the help of tangible or visual media to understand concepts and express ideas. Images, as a concrete medium, help students organize ideas before expressing them verbally. Furthermore, these findings align with Dual Coding Theory, which states that information processing is more effective when visual and verbal pathways work simultaneously. Visualizing images activates students' imaginations, while storytelling optimizes their verbal abilities, thus reinforcing both pathways in supporting speaking skills.

Discussion and Comparison with Other Articles

The results of this study align with several previous studies. Research at SD Negeri 22 Mataram found that storytelling media increased the motivation and courage of first-grade students in storytelling. This means that the effects of storytelling media are not limited to improving narrative skills but also influence students' psychological readiness to speak. This aligns with the findings of Nuraeni (2018), who showed that visual media helps children become more confident in telling stories because they have a "visual guide" that facilitates verbal expression.

Another study on storytelling media also showed an increase in storytelling skills, reaching over 80% completion in cycle I. A similar pattern to this study shows that storytelling media facilitates students' idea generation and coherent story development. This finding is consistent with the results of research by Sari (2019), which emphasized that storytelling media can be an effective stimulus for structuring storylines in lower-grade elementary school children.

Furthermore, a Classroom Action Research (CAR) report at SD Negeri 1 Sragen confirmed that the use of storytelling media can improve elementary school students' storytelling skills. Although school contexts differ, similar findings reinforce the effectiveness of visual media as a strategy for stimulating spoken language at the elementary level. According to Putri (2020), visual media facilitates children's vocabulary development and sequence of events, making stories more coherent, while also providing concrete visual support for those still at the concrete operational stage of thinking, as described by Piaget.

A slight difference from other studies lies in the grade level and local context. In higher grades, visual media serve more to enrich story content and stimulate more complex imagination. Meanwhile, in first grade, as in Tomohon, visual media play a more dominant role as a support for ideas and a plot framework, as children's abstract thinking skills are still developing. This also aligns with Paivio's (1986) Dual Coding theory, which states that visual and verbal pathways mutually reinforce the understanding and retention of information. Therefore, in early elementary school, visual media becomes the primary tool for sparking ideas before they are translated into spoken language.

Thus, the findings of this study not only support the results of previous studies but also emphasize the role of visual media as a primary tool in developing first-grade children's storytelling skills, particularly in developing story ideas, organizing event sequences, and increasing their confidence and motivation to speak.

4. Conclusion

The use of visual media in one PTK cycle has been proven to improve the ability of first-grade students at St. Yohanes Tomohon 1 Catholic Elementary School in describing daily activities. Students become more confident in speaking, the story is more fluent, the plot is more coherent, and the vocabulary of daily activities is richer. Theoretically, the effectiveness of visual media is supported by the concrete operational thinking stage according to Piaget and by Dual Coding Theory which emphasizes that visual-verbal combinations strengthen understanding and oral expression skills. Visual media is suitable for routine use in lower grades to strengthen children's speaking literacy.

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