


The Effectiveness of Fable-Based Picture Book in Teaching Reading Comprehension of Narrative Text to Junior High School

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to improve students' reading comprehension skills in narrative text using a fable-based picture book. The participants of the study were seventh-grade students at MTs. Unwanul Falah NW Paok Lombok in the 2025-2026 academic year. Sample consisted of two classes divided into experimental and control groups. This study used a quasi-experimental method with non-equivalent control group design. Data were collected through pre-test and post-test. The results of the data analysis showed that the average post-test score of the experimental class reached 77.35, while the average post-test score of the control class was 68.82. The independent sample t-test analysis showed a significance value (2-tailed) of $0.036 < 0.05$, indicating that H_0 was rejected and H_a was accepted. Therefore, it can be concluded that fable-based picture book improved the reading comprehension skill of seventh-grade students at MTs. Unwanul Falah Nahdatul Wathan Paok Lombok.

Keywords: *Fable, Picture Book, Reading Comprehension, Narrative Text.*

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INTRODUCTION

Reading is one of the fundamental skills that students should be taught in language learning. It allows students to recognize words, comprehend sentence meanings, and understand the message conveyed by the writer (Mantiri et al., 2021). Through reading, students can understand the meaning and the content of a text (Erya & Pustika, 2021). Putri and Tiarina (2021), emphasized that reading is an essential skill for understanding the information, ideas, and nuances contained in text. Therefore, reading material must be well understood well by the students to achieve the goals of teaching and learning process (Pahamzah et al., 2021).

Reading comprehension is one of the most important aspects in reading. It is a complex process that involves the interaction between reader and text to understand the meaning of the text (Yapp et al., 2023). Reading Comprehension involved both perception and thought to help students understand a text (Pahamzah et al., 2021). It refers to the ability to process information, and understand significant meaning in reading, so as to assess how well students process information in a text (Alqy & Zuhriyah, 2023). This ability is essential for students to succeed in various subjects. On the other hand, reading comprehension helps student to develop knowledge, skills, and memory in the learning process (Rizqon et al., 2021).

Reading comprehension consists of several levels that show how deeply students understands the text. According to Burns et al. (1984: 177-199) as cited in (Situmorang, 2017) reading comprehension is divided into literal reading, interpretive reading, critical reading, and creative reading. First, literal comprehension involves understanding basic meanings, such as identifying facts and details. Second, interpretive comprehension helps readers understand the implied meaning and understand the author's intent. Next, critical reading allows readers to evaluate and analyze texts to form opinions and critique arguments. Then, creative comprehension invites readers to use the text as a basis for creating new ideas or

applying the content to real life. By recognizing these levels, readers can develop more effective and deeper reading skills.

However, in reality, many students still experience difficulties in comprehending what they read, especially in junior high school. These difficulties can hinder their ability to really understand the content of the reading well. According to Ningsih et al. (2024), one of the difficulties that students often experience in reading comprehension is a lack of vocabulary. When vocabulary knowledge is lacking, students will find it difficult to capture the overall meaning of the text. In addition, lack of motivation is also an important factor that can cause students to be uninterested in reading activities, thus negatively affecting their comprehension. The third factor is difficulty in understanding the structure of the text, such as the sequence of events or cause and effect relationships, which is often a challenge for many students in organizing and interpreting the content.

Based on the researchers' experience in teaching training at MTs. Unwanul Falah NW Paok Lombok, many students read without understanding the overall meaning of the text. This made it difficult for them to answer comprehension questions. In addition, low interest in reading and a lack of interesting learning media are usually factors that influence students' reading comprehension. This condition is in line with the statement by Pahamzah et al., (2021), who stated that students' difficulties in reading comprehension are difficulty in answering main ide a questions, making inference and locating reference question. These difficulties become even more apparent when students are faced with some text such as, descriptive text, recount text or narrative text.

To overcome the difficulties, students need a more interesting and interactive strategy and media to reading. One alternative media that can be used is a fable-based picture book. According to Nurgiyantoro (2005), fable is short stories in which animals are personified to act, speak, and behave like human. Fables have a simple structure and are easy to understand, making them suitable for junior high school students. Khairunnisak (2018) noted that students enjoy reading fable because the stories are easier to follow and often use vocabulary that students can use in speaking or writing. Next, Picture book combine text and illustrations to support the delivery of a complete and meaningful story (Masithah, 2022). Picture book not only clarify the story in the text, but also expand the meaning of the text. Most students agreed that learning using picture book help them understand the moral value of the story (Sari & Fitriasia, 2022). Illustrations in picture book provide additional context about characters, settings, and storylines, which can increase students' imagination and engagement while reading. Therefore, fable-based picture book can be an ideal media to improve students' reading comprehension in junior high school.

Previous studies such as those conducted by Mislaini (2015), Hidayani (2020) and Khairunnisak (2018) focused on using fables as teaching materials in reading learning. Meanwhile, the current research tries to combine element of fable text with picture through the media of fable-based picture book to improve students' reading comprehension. Therefore, this study aimed to find out how this media can be used effectively to improve the reading comprehension of narrative text among 7th grade students at MTs. Unwanul Falah NW Paok Lombok.

METHOD

This study employed a quantitative method in collet the data. Quantitative method refers to a way of obtaining and collecting data in the form of numbers. (Mantiri et al., 2021). This method involved subject selection, data collection techniques, methods of gathering data, and the implementation of treatment. On the other hand, this research used quasi experimental with non-equivalent control group design. This type of design involves two sample groups, namely experimental group and control group, which compares the results of the pre-test and post-test after treatment (Surayya et al., 2024)

Respondents

Sample is a small part of the population chosen for study (Wajdi et al., 2024). The population in this study consisted of 107 students which divided into 6 classes. To choose the samples in this study, purposive sampling was used to select two classes as the samples. VIIC class was the experiment group and VIID class was the control group. Each class consist of 17 students. These classes were selected based on the same grade level, and a balanced number of students had never used fable-based picture book in their learning process.

Instruments

Instrument of the study is used to measure the values of the variables under study. In this study, the instrument that was used is a test. There are two tests were used in this study, namely pre-test and post-test. In addition, learning media in the form of fable-based picture book was used as tool in the learning process. This media adopted from Jusminis' (2017) study. Furthermore, the test instrument used in this study had been tested for validity and reliability. The validity test was conducted on students and English teachers. The valid test items consisted of 20 questions for the pre-test and 20 questions for the post-test, selected from an initial pool of 30 questions for each test. These questions were declared valid after passing the item analysis process. The reliability of the test was also ensured to guarantee consistent measurement results. The reliability of the test showed sufficiently high values, with 0.779 for the pre-test and 0.784 for the post-test.

Data Analysis

The data analysis technique in this study used descriptive statistic. Descriptive statistic is used to provide an overview and initial characteristics of the data obtained as a whole. This analysis includes the mean, standard deviation, minimum and maximum values. After that, the normality test and homogeneity test were carried out to find out that the data were normally distributed and homogeneous. Furthermore, paired sample test, independent sample test, and N-Gain test were used to determine the effectiveness of using fable-based picture book in narrative text learning in class VII MTs Unwanul Falah Nahdlatul Wathan Paok Lombok.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Researchers collected data through pre-test and post-test on two groups, namely the experimental group and the control group. The data obtained was then analyzed using descriptive analysis, normality tests, homogeneity tests, paired sample t-tests, independent sample t-tests, and N-Gain analysis. The results of this analysis were used to compare the effectiveness of the tasks given to the experimental class with those given to the control class.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistic of Pre Test Experimental and Control Classes

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pre-Test Experiment	17	35	20	55	40.00	11.456
Pre-Test Control	17	35	20	55	39.71	10.528
Valid N (listwise)	17					

Based on the table above, it can be seen that the mean pre-test scores of both classes did not show a significant difference. The experimental class had a mean pre-test score of 40 and standard deviation of 11.456, while the control class had a mean score of 39.71 and a standard deviation of 10.528. The minimum and maximum scores for both classes were the same, ranging from 20 to 55. This indicated that the student's initial reading comprehension abilities in both classes before treatment were relatively equivalent. Furthermore, the frequency distribution of the pre-test data from the experimental and control classes is presented in the following table.

Table 2. Distribution Table Pre Test of Experiment and Control Classes

No	Score	Classification	Frequency		Percentage	
			Experiment	Control	Experiment	Control
1	95 - 100	Excellent	-	-	-	-
2	85 - 94	Very Good	-	-	-	-
3	75 - 84	Good	-	-	-	-
4	65 - 74	Fairly Good	-	-	-	-
5	55 - 64	Fair	3	2	17.6%	12%

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6	45 - 54	Poor	3	5	17.6%	29%
7	0 - 44	Very Poor	11	10	64.7%	59%
Total			17	17	100%	100%

Based on the table above, it presents the frequency and percentage of student scores from 17 students. Most of 64% students in experimental class were classified as having a very poor score, and most of 59% students in the control class were classified as having a very poor score.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistic of Post Test Experimental and Control Classes

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Post-Test Experiment	17	40	60	100	77.35	10.326
Post-Test Control	17	35	50	85	68.82	12.315
Valid N (listwise)	17					

Based on the table above, the experimental class achieved a mean score of 77.35 and a standard deviation of 10.33, while the control class had a mean score of 68.82 and a standard deviation of 12.32. In the experimental class, scores ranged from 60 to 100, while in the control class, scores ranged from 50 to 85. Compared to the pre-test results, both classes showed improvement in reading comprehension skills, but the experimental class experienced a greater average increase in scores. This improvement indicated that the treatment given to the experimental class using fable-based picture book had a more positive effect on students' reading comprehension skills compared to the traditional method used in the control class. Furthermore, the frequency distribution of the pre-test data from the experimental and control classes is presented in the following table.

Table 4. Distribution Table Post Test of Experiment and Control Classes

No	Score	Classification	Frequency		Percentage	
			Experiment	Control	Experiment	Control
1	95 - 100	Excellent	2	-	12%	-
2	85 - 94	Very Good	1	2	6%	12%
3	75 - 84	Good	11	6	64%	35%
4	65 - 74	Fairly Good	1	4	6%	24%
5	55 - 64	Fair	2	3	12%	17%
6	45 - 54	Poor	-	2	-	12%
7	0 - 44	Very Poor	-	-	-	-
Total			17	17	100%	100%

Based on the table above, it presents the frequency and percentage scores from 17 students. Most of 64% students in the experimental class were classified as having a good score, and most of 35% the control class were classified having a good score.

Table 5. Normality Test

Class	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Results						
Pretest Experimental Class	.147	17	.200*	.930	17	.217
Posttest Experimental Class	.233	17	.015	.904	17	.078
Pretest Control Class	.130	17	.200*	.955	17	.533
Posttest Control Class	.171	17	.200*	.900	17	.067

*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Based on the normality test results indicating that the significance values for both the experimental and control classes were greater than **0.05**, it can be concluded that the data are normally distributed.

Table 6. Homogeneity Test

Value	Levene Statistic				
	Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.	
Based on Mean	.012	1	32	.912	
Based on Median	.018	1	32	.894	
Based on Median and with adjusted df	.018	1	30.983	.894	
Based on trimmed mean	.023	1	32	.879	

Based on the results of the homogeneity analysis presented above, it was found that the significance value was **0.912 > 0.05**. Therefore, it can be concluded that the data have homogeneous variance.

Table 7. Paired Sample Test of Experimental Class

		Paired Differences					Significance			
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	One-Sided p	Two-Sided p
					Lower	Upper				
Pair 1	Pretest-Posttest	-37.353	12.005	2.912	-43.525	-31.181	-12.829	16	<.001	<.001

The table above showed that the significance value (2-tailed) between the results of the pre-test and post-test of the experimental class was $0.001 < 0.05$. So it can be concluded that there is a significant difference between student' comprehension abilities before and after using fable-based picture book media.

Table 8. Paired Sample Test of Control Class

		Paired Differences					Significance			
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	One-Sided p	Two-Sided p
					Lower	Upper				
Pair 1	Pretest-Posttest	-29.118	16.031	3.888	-37.360	-20.875	-7.489	16	<.001	<.001

The result above showed that the significance value (2-tailed) between the results of the pre-test and post-test of the experimental class was $0.001 < 0.05$. So it can be concluded that there is a significant difference between students' comprehension abilities before and after using fable without picture.

Table 9. Independent Sample Test

	t	df	Significance		Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
			One-Sided p	Two-Sided p			Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	2.188	32	.018	.036	8.529	3.898	.590	16.469
Equal variances not assumed	2.188	31.056	.018	.036	8.529	3.898	.580	16.478

Based on the results of the independent sample t-test, the significance value (2-tailed) was $0.036 < 0.05$. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected and the alternative hypothesis (H_a) is accepted. This indicates that there is a significant difference in learning outcomes between students in the experimental class and those in the control class. These findings indicate that the use of Fable-Based Picture Book has a significant effect on students' reading comprehension skill.

Table 10. N-Gain Test

		Descriptives		
Class		Statistic	Std. Error	
N_Gain Percentage	Experiment	Mean	62.19	
		95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound Upper Bound	
		5% Trimmed Mean	62.31	
		Median	64.29	
		Variance	328.974	
		Std. Deviation	18.138	
		Minimum	22	
		Maximum	100	
		Range	78	
		Interquartile Range	15	
		Skewness	-.178	
		Kurtosis	1.270	
		Control	Mean	46.70
			95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound Upper Bound
	34.76 58.64			

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5% Trimmed Mean	47.52
Median	50.00
Variance	539.476
Std. Deviation	23.227
Minimum	0
Maximum	79
Range	79
Interquartile Range	42
Skewness	-.421
	.550

The mean N-Gain score of the experimental class, which used the Fable-Based Picture Book, was 62.19, categorized as moderately effective. Meanwhile, the control class, which was taught without the use of visual media, obtained a mean N-Gain score of 46.70, also categorized as moderately effective. These findings indicated that the use of Fable-Based Picture Book is more effective in enhancing student's reading comprehension skill compared to teaching without visual media in fable text.

The findings revealed that the use of fable-based picture book was effective in helping students comprehend reading materials. The post-test score of the experimental class increased to 77.35, which was significantly higher than the control class, which scored 68.82. This indicated that the combination of text and picture made students more easily to understand the storyline, character, and moral message when the story is presented with a picture. According to Matulka (2008), the pictures in the story often reflect the storyline. So it can help students understand the text through visual observation of the story. This also supports the theory from Masithah (2022) and Sukniasih et al. (2024), which stated that picture book helps students understand information more quickly and enjoyably, especially for students with low reading interest. Moreover, this aligns with the concept of visual learning style, that students tend to understand and retain information better when it is presented in visual formats such as picture, chart, or illustration (Fikni et al., 2024). It can be concluded that the findings of this study support previous research, which stated that the use of pictures and text can improve students' reading comprehension.

The results of data analysis using the t-test showed a significant difference between the experimental class and the control class in terms of reading comprehension ability. The significance value (2-tailed) obtained was $p = 0.036 < 0.05$. This indicated that there was a significant effect on students' reading comprehension after using fable-based picture book. In other hand, the use of fable-based picture book has proven to be effective in improving students' reading comprehension compared to conventional method, fable without picture. In addition to improving learning outcomes, fable-based picture book also has a positive impact on the classroom atmosphere. This is evident from the increased student activity during the learning process.

In the learning process and group discussions, the experimental class was more active than the control class. Researcher found that students were more enthusiastic and active in discussions when reading a fable with picture. Students were more interested in asking questions to the teacher or to their group discussion about the pictures in the stories such as characters, places, or activities that occurred in the story, making it easier for them to identify the content of the story more quickly than the control class. In the control class, researchers found that learning using fable text only was also quite effective, consistent with Hidayani's (2020) research, which stated that students' reading comprehension improved after using fable text. However, in this study, students in the control class tended to get bored more quickly because they were only reading texts without visual support. This finding is supported by Dwiyani et al. (2024), who stated that students are less interested in traditional textbooks when studying narrative text.

On the other hand, N-Gain analysis showed that the use of fable-based picture book and conventional method falls into the moderately effective category. However, the effectiveness score was higher in the experimental class. The experimental class obtained a mean N-Gain score of 62.19, while the control class obtained a mean score of 46.70. There were several factors that may cause experimental and control classes have nearly the same level of

effectiveness, such as relatively balanced basic student abilities in English, and the way teacher delivered material well also influence learning outcomes. Although the final learning outcomes in both classes were quite effective, the learning experiences perceived by experimental class and control class were different.

Although the results of this study are positive, there are several limitations. The study was conducted over a short period of time with a limited sample, so the generalizability of the results was limited. In addition, the limited time, teaching method and research method may have influenced the learning outcomes. Therefore, further research is recommended to use a longer duration, a larger sample, and more varied teaching methods.

In conclusion, the use of Fable-Based Picture Book has proven to be effective in improving reading comprehension and encouraging greater student engagement in the learning process. These findings are in line with the statements of Sari and Fitriisa (2022), who suggested that the use of picture stories in teaching reading comprehension is beneficial for students' reading abilities. In addition to visual media, fable can also be combined with other media, such as video, audio recording or interactive application, to maximize learning outcomes. The use of new and interactive learning media can increase student participation in monotonous learning processes (Surayya et al., 2023).

CONCLUSIONS

The findings of this study indicate that the use of fable-based picture book contributes significantly to improving students' reading comprehension of narrative text. The combination of fable and picture help students understand plot structure, character development, and the moral value of the story more effectively. It has important implications for English language teaching practices, as teachers can utilize this medium to increase students' interest in reading, motivation to learn, and participation in reading activities. In addition, this strategy supports a more interactive and student-centered learning approach. Therefore, it is recommended that English teachers consider the use of fable-based picture book in the learning process and develop similar learning media for other materials to improve students' reading comprehension.

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