

The influence of using picture story books on the mastery of English vocabulary in early childhood

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Received:
07 June 2025

Revised:
25 July 2025

Accepted:
31 July 2025

Published:
04 August 2025

Abstract

The low mastery of English language comprehension in early childhood is a problem that has an impact on the development of children's language skills later. One of the contributing factors is the minimal use of interesting learning media that is in accordance with children's characteristics. This study aims to analyze the impact of the use of picture story books on the mastery of English vocabulary in early childhood. This study used a quasi-experimental method with a one-group pretest-posttest design. The research sample consisted of 15 children aged 5-6 years. The sample was selected by purposive sampling based on the consideration that children aged 5-6 years are likely to be actively involved in English vocabulary learning activities. Data were collected through a comprehension mastery test in the form of word recognition and pronunciation based on pictures. The data analysis technique used a paired t-test. The results showed a significant increase in the average score from 2.07 in the pretest to 3.67 in the posttest, with a significance value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$). The conclusion of this study is that picture story books have a positive effect on improving early childhood English comprehension. These findings imply the importance of using picture story books as a fun, interactive, and contextual learning medium in language learning in early childhood education. Future scholars are encouraged to build on these findings by further exploring culturally contextualized story content, integrating family involvement, and longitudinal studies examining the long-term impact of storybook-based learning.

Keywords: Early childhood; English vocabulary; language; learning Media; picture story book

INTRODUCTION

Effective second language acquisition, particularly English, must be pursued from an early age, starting with vocabulary mastery using a variety of relevant learning media. This is crucial because early childhood is in a developmental period often referred to as the "golden age," a time when children exhibit extraordinary neuroplasticity, allowing them to naturally and fluently absorb new languages. In addition to improving language proficiency, early English language training promotes wider cognitive advantages like increased memory, mental flexibility, and problem-solving abilities. Understanding

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Sirjon, S., Setyaningsih, D., Sulle, NM. (2025). The influence of using picture story books on the mastery of English vocabulary in early childhood. *EduLite: Journal of English Education, Literature, and Culture*, 10 (2), 305-320. <http://dx.doi.org/10.30659/e.10.2.305-320>

vocabulary development during childhood is essential for creating effective learning strategies that align with children's cognitive development (Bruce et al., 2023). In a globally interconnected world, early exposure to English also opens the door to cross-cultural understanding and access to international educational resources. Building a strong foundation in English from childhood is considered a critical aspect of preparing children for future academic and professional success. Ideally, English vocabulary instruction during childhood should be integrated into educational practices in a way that is engaging, developmentally appropriate, and meaningful to learners.

All language skills, including reading, writing, , listening, and speaking are built on vocabulary. Without adequate vocabulary knowledge, children will have difficulty communicating, understanding, and developing literacy. Vocabulary mastery in early childhood is highly correlated with future academic achievement, as it affects reading comprehension and overall language development (Palimbunga' et al., 2023). Vocabulary mastery can be stimulated through the use of learning media such as picture books. Picture books play a crucial role in supporting vocabulary learning in early childhood. Through a combination of text and images, these storybooks provide a visual context that helps children understand and internalize new words. Research shows that reading experiences involving images can enrich children's language learning experiences, which in turn supports their vocabulary development (Cholis et al., 2024; Chencheng & Sharudin, 2023). Picture books serve as an engaging learning medium, where children not only read the text but also analyze the accompanying images, thereby fostering a deeper understanding of the meaning (Sukenti, 2023).

A large body of research suggests that introducing English at the preschool level can provide children with long-term advantages in language acquisition and academic achievement. For example, Chen et al. highlighted the positive correlation between early childhood English learning experiences and subsequent performance in both English and mother tongue contexts, stressing the need to build an effective educational framework for English as a foreign language (S. Chen et al., 2020). The integration of a well-structured curriculum, qualified instructors, and learning materials tailored to children's cognitive developmental stages is crucial. This aligns with the independent curriculum, which requires teachers to design learning (including language skills) that is tailored to students' needs and characteristics. This is reinforced by Chan et al., (2022), who underscore the crucial role of trained educators in developing language skills, particularly in bilingual contexts. Furthermore, research reveals that early exposure to English enhances linguistic competence, akin to a foundational investment for future academic success. Parents perceive early English education as a winning strategy, equipping their children for enhanced opportunities for wider global communication and engagement (Vicontie & Santosa, 2023). This perspective acknowledges the potential challenges inherent to bilingualism that some parents acknowledge, such as code preservation and cognitive strain (Vicontie & Santosa, 2023). Furthermore, existing evidence suggests that bilingualism can strengthen executive function skills, ultimately benefiting English language learning among preschoolers (Huang et al., 2023). The integration of engaging methods, such as 'shadowing'

or drama, has also been shown to significantly increase vocabulary acquisition among young learners, enhancing their overall language experience (Jingnan, 2024; Brachaczek & Polok, 2023).

The development of basic English language skills in many early childhood education environments, especially in developing countries such as Indonesia, is still far from optimal. The results of initial observations conducted by researchers revealed that English vocabulary mastery among early childhood learners was still low. Many children showed limited vocabulary recall, poor pronunciation, and difficulty understanding the meaning of words. These results can be attributed to several factors, namely the lack of interesting learning media, teacher unpreparedness, minimal family involvement, and limited use of contextual and interactive pedagogical strategies.

This gap between ideal and actual conditions is a clear challenge that, if not addressed, can delay language development and affect future academic readiness. To bridge this gap, it is important to explore pedagogically sound and engaging learning media for young children. One promising solution is the use of picture books. Picture books offer a rich blend of visual, textual, and narrative elements that are highly engaging for young children. Unlike isolated vocabulary exercises, story books introduce new words in meaningful contexts, allowing children to infer meaning from the illustrations and narrative structure. This contextual learning enhances vocabulary retention and comprehension. Furthermore, story books are aligned with children's cognitive and emotional development. The repetition, rhythm, and flow of story books stimulate imagination and support memory formation. Research consistently demonstrates the effectiveness of story books in improving vocabulary acquisition. Silva et al. (2023) found that storytelling activities using children's literature significantly improved English language acquisition by embedding vocabulary in meaningful contexts. Similarly, Khayati (2024) explained that storytelling strengthens speaking skills and lays a strong foundation for language development.

The evolution of educational technology has further expanded the potential of storytelling through digital picture books. Digital storytelling platforms incorporate multimedia features of audio, animation, interactive elements that cater to different learning styles and promote multisensory learning experiences. A study by Belda-Medina & Goddard (2024) underlines the inclusive nature of digital storytelling, particularly its ability to engage diverse learners in collaborative and interactive vocabulary learning.

Moreover, empirical studies suggest that parental involvement further amplifies the effectiveness of storybooks in developing vocabulary. Efrizah et al. note that parents play a crucial role in children's vocabulary enhancement by engaging in shared reading activities, which are often enriched by storybook content (Efrizah et al., 2024). This sentiment is echoed by findings from Bowers et al., which indicate that environments rich in literacy experiences, such as those fostered through parent-child reading activities, can predict vocabulary growth in children (Bowers et al., 2023). Incorporating visual elements in storybooks, such as lift-the-flap designs, can further stimulate vocabulary development. Kusumaningtyas and Sihombing's research on designing a picture

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book with a lift-the-flap approach demonstrates how interactive elements can facilitate vocabulary learning among young children (Kusumaningtyas & Sihombing, 2021). The use of the media mentioned above, if implemented accompanied by teacher readiness and sensitivity to children's cognitive development, can significantly improve language mastery from an early age and pave the way for future academic success (Otoluwa et al., 2022; Naimah, 2022; Eskarina & Indriani, 2021; Zaharani, 2023; Hafidah et al., 2022; Warmansyah et al., 2024). To date, various studies have demonstrated that the use of media such as picture storybooks is effective in supporting early childhood knowledge acquisition, particularly through contextual visual and narrative approaches. However, most of these studies have focused on first language development, the use of digital media, or were conducted in high-resource learning contexts. What remains understudied is how printed picture storybooks can be systematically activated in English as a foreign language (EFL) learning for early childhood in Indonesia, particularly considering teacher readiness, parental involvement, and local cultural relevance. Therefore, this research is crucial to fill this gap and make a tangible contribution to developing strategies for English learning that are more contextual, applicable, and appropriate to children's developmental characteristics

In the context of early childhood education in Indonesia, English is increasingly being included in PAUD (Early Childhood Education) programs, especially in urban areas and private institutions. However, the integration of English vocabulary learning still faces several challenges, such as a lack of developmentally appropriate resources, inadequate teacher training, and limited family involvement in language exposure at home. These limitations can hinder optimal English vocabulary acquisition during the most formative years of a child's development.

Despite these challenges, the potential for vocabulary development through engaging, contextualized, and culturally responsive materials such as picture books offers a promising solution. Storybooks are relatively accessible, familiar, and can be adapted to meet children's cognitive and emotional needs. The narratives, illustrations, and repetitive structures embedded in storybooks help reinforce vocabulary while stimulating imagination and curiosity. In recent years, there has also been a shift towards integrating local cultural elements into English language learning, recognizing the importance of children connecting with their own identities while learning a global language. Culturally contextualized storybooks not only help preserve local wisdom but also provide meaningful and relevant content that bridges the gap between home and school environments.

Given the importance of early vocabulary acquisition and the strong evidence supporting storybook-based pedagogy, it is important to further investigate how picture books can be regularly integrated into early English language learning. Previous research in this area has generally focused on the use of storybooks for first language development or on digital storytelling for older learners. There is a significant gap in empirical studies that specifically examine the effects of picture books, especially print-based picture books, on early childhood English vocabulary acquisition in the Indonesian context. Most existing studies have not addressed how these books function within the holistic

framework of early childhood learning, including the role of teacher interaction, cognitive readiness, and cultural relevance.

The novelty of this study lies in its focus on integrating picture books into early English vocabulary instruction in a structured and purposeful manner. Unlike many previous studies that discuss storytelling in general or concentrate on digital formats, this study explores the pedagogical impact of traditional print picture books in an experimental setting. This study examines not only vocabulary acquisition outcomes but also aspects of reading interaction. Furthermore, this study combines current curriculum challenges, teacher perspectives, and cultural considerations, making it timely and relevant to the development of early childhood education in Indonesia.

This study is particularly important given the growing need to improve early childhood English instruction. As the world becomes increasingly interconnected, English literacy is no longer a luxury but a necessity. Children in Indonesia who do not receive adequate early English instruction are at risk of falling behind in academic and global communication skills. This research is critical to inform early childhood education policy and practice, especially in areas where English is integrated into the curriculum but lacks effective implementation strategies. Based on field observations, many ECE teachers in Indonesia are unsure about how to effectively introduce English vocabulary. They often rely on flashcards or songs, which while useful, lack the contextual richness needed for deep vocabulary learning. Furthermore, parents do not fully understand their role in supporting language development at home. Therefore, this research can fill this gap by offering practical strategies that are engaging, effective, and culturally appropriate.

This study addresses the growing need for effective English vocabulary instruction in early childhood education, particularly in contexts where English is taught as a foreign language. Despite the proven benefits of picture books in language development, limited empirical research has explored their specific role in supporting English vocabulary acquisition among preschool-aged children in Indonesia. Therefore, the main objective of this study is to critically examine the influence of print-based picture books on young children's English vocabulary acquisition. Specifically, the study investigates how picture books support vocabulary retention, pronunciation accuracy, and contextual comprehension, while also fostering active engagement and cognitive involvement during reading activities. Employing a quasi-experimental design, this study offers empirical evidence on the pedagogical value of picture books, contributing to curriculum enrichment and teacher training practices. The findings are expected to inform educators, curriculum developers, and policymakers in designing storybook-based English learning strategies that are developmentally appropriate, culturally relevant, and pedagogically effective for early childhood settings in Indonesia.

METHOD

Type and Design of Research

This study used a quantitative approach with a quasi-experimental research type with a one-group pretest-posttest design. This design was chosen to

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measure the effect of using picture story books on children's English vocabulary mastery by comparing scores before and after treatment, without involving a control group (Sugiyono, 2017).

Population and Sample

The population in this study were all students at YPK Marthen Luther Abepura Kindergarten. The sample in this study was 15 children from group B at YPK Marthen Luther Abepura Kindergarten. The sample was selected by purposive sampling based on the consideration that children in group B had reached a stage of development that allowed them to be actively involved in English vocabulary learning activities. In addition to children, this study also involved class teachers as facilitators during the treatment process.

Research Instrument

The main instrument in this study was an English vocabulary mastery test given in two stages, namely pretest and posttest. The assessment was based on the accuracy of recognition and pronunciation. This instrument was developed by referring to basic English vocabulary themes that are relevant to early childhood, including animals, colors, body parts, and common objects. The validity of the test instrument was ensured through expert assessment involving two lecturers from the early childhood education and English study programs, who assessed the validity of the content and the appropriateness of the development of the test items.

Research Procedure

This study followed three main stages that were systematically conducted. First, the children were given a pre-test to assess their initial English vocabulary mastery. Second, the children underwent a treatment phase where they participated in a series of learning activities using picture storybooks that had been selected and adapted to the learning theme and the children's developmental level. These activities were conducted in several sessions over two weeks. The storybooks used in this phase contained basic English vocabulary, including the names of animals, surrounding objects, colors, and body parts. Finally, after the learning sessions, the children were given a post-test to evaluate changes and improvements in their English vocabulary mastery.

Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis involved descriptive and inferential techniques. Descriptive statistics were used to calculate the mean score, score difference, and percentage increase in vocabulary mastery between the pre-test and post-test. Inferential analysis was conducted using a paired sample t-test to determine whether there was a significant difference in vocabulary mastery before and after the use of picture story books. The analysis was conducted using SPSS

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**Findings**

This study aims to determine the effect of using picture story books on English vocabulary mastery in early childhood at YPK Marthen Luther Kindergarten Abepura. The subjects of this study were 15 children in group B who participated in learning using picture story books. Data collection was carried

out by giving a pretest before treatment and a posttest after treatment. The results of the pretest and posttest are summarized in Table 1, which shows the changes in each child's score and the average score of the group as a whole.

Table 1. Pretest and Posttest Result

No	Child Initials	Pretest Score	Posttest Score	Difference
1	THMS	2	4	2
2	AGT	1	4	3
3	SKA	1	4	3
4	JNR	2	4	2
5	ANJ	2	4	2
6	SLA	2	3	1
7	CCI	2	4	2
8	MRL	1	3	2
9	RGN	2	3	1
10	WLY	3	4	1
11	ADT	2	4	2
12	UE	2	3	1
13	JE	2	4	2
14	RA	2	4	2
15	MCL	2	4	2
Average		2,07	3,67	1,60

Based on the data in Table 1, the average pretest score was 2.07 and increased to 3.67 in the posttest. This represents an average score increase of 1.60 points. The findings of this study indicate that the use of picture storybooks has a statistically significant impact on improving children's English vocabulary comprehension and retention, as evidenced by the consistent increase in posttest scores across participants. All study subjects experienced an increase in scores, although the amount varied. This indicates that picture storybooks have a positive impact in helping children understand and remember the English vocabulary taught.

The improvements were not only evident in the average scores but also in the individual scores of the children. For example, children with the initials AGT and SKA experienced the most significant improvement, with a 3-point difference between the pre- and post-test scores. On the other hand, some children, such as SLA, RGN, WLY, and UE, only experienced a 1-point increase, while others experienced a 2-point increase. These results indicate that all children benefit from using picture books, but these benefits are not evenly distributed or varied. This variation in improvement can be caused by several factors, such as differences in learning readiness levels, individual learning styles, and motivation and attention during the learning process.

To ensure that the increase was statistically significant and not just a coincidence, a hypothesis test was conducted using a paired sample t-test. But before that, a prerequisite test was carried out first in the form of a normality test and a data homogeneity test. The normality test aims to determine whether the data has a normal distribution, while the homogeneity test is used to determine whether the data variance between the pretest and posttest is

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uniform or not. The results of the normality and homogeneity tests can be seen in tables 2 and 3.

Table 2. Normality Tests Result

Class		Kolmogorov-Smirnova			Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
English	Pretest	.192	15	.141	.907	15	.122
Vocabulary	Posttest	.156	15	.200*	.962	15	.724

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

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

The results of the normality test presented in Table 2 show a significance value (Sig.) on Shapiro-Wilk of 0.122 for the pretest and 0.724 for the posttest. Since all Sig. values are greater than 0.05, it can be concluded that the data is normally distributed. This means that the use of parametric statistical analysis such as the t-test can be applied.

Table 3. Homogeneity Tests Result

		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
English Vocabulary Mastery	Based on Mean	1.522	1	28	.228
	Based on Median	1.453	1	28	.238
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	1.453	1	20.672	.242
	Based on trimmed mean	1.560	1	28	.222

The homogeneity test results shown in Table 3 also show that the significance value of Levene's Test is 0.228 (> 0.05), which indicates that the data has a homogeneous variance. Thus, both prerequisites have been met, and hypothesis testing is continued using the paired sample t-test and the results can be seen in Table 4.

Table 4. Hypothesis Test Results (Paired Samples Test)

		Paired Differences				t	df	Sig.
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference			(2-tailed)
					Lower	Upper		
Pair 1	Pretest - Posttest	-1.600	.507	.131	-1.881	-1.319	-12.220	14 .000

The results of the paired sample t-test are shown in Table 4. The t-value is -12.220 with a degree of freedom (df) of 14 and a significance value (p-value) of 0.000 (< 0.05). These results indicate a significant difference between the pretest and posttest scores. This means that the use of picture story books has a real influence on increasing the mastery of English comprehension of early childhood children at YPK Marthen Luther Abepura Kindergarten.

DISCUSSION

The results of the study showed that the use of picture story books had a significant effect on improving English vocabulary mastery in early childhood. A significant increase in scores from pretest to posttest showed that this media was able to attract attention and improve children's understanding of the vocabulary taught. Children who previously had limitations in recognizing or remembering certain English vocabulary, after being given learning through picture story books, showed much better understanding. The main advantage of picture story books lies in their ability to provide visualization and contextualization of word meanings. The pictures presented in the story help children connect words with concrete objects, making it easier to understand and remember. In the context of early childhood who are still in the early stages of cognitive development, visual-based learning is very effective in stimulating their memory and meaning. This is in line with the results of previous research conducted by Niland, which emphasized that picture books play an important role in building a positive reading identity and facilitating communication and meaning creation through play activities—two things that are very important in early literacy development (Niland, 2023; Müller-Brauers et al., 2020; Choi et al., 2020).

In addition, empirical evidence also shows that interactive reading sessions using picture books can improve children's receptive and expressive language skills through the development of their speaking skills (Lestari & Slamet, 2023). When children are involved in stories, they not only listen but also try to imitate, ask questions, and retell stories. This is a form of language practice that greatly supports the growth of their oral language skills. This finding is in line with the findings of Chen et al., which showed that relevant themes in picture books are in accordance with children's life experiences, thus increasing their motivation to learn English and actively participate in the reading process (Chen et al., 2023; Seçim & Gönen, 2022).

Furthermore, interesting storylines in picture books have also been shown to increase children's motivation and involvement in learning activities. When children feel interested in the characters or stories, they will be more focused and enthusiastic about participating in learning. This is supported by the results of Prasetya's research which states that the use of picture story books, both in print and digital formats, facilitates the understanding of complex concepts while making the learning process fun for children. This overall increases their involvement in educational activities (Prasetya, 2023; Anggraeni et al., 2022; Sari et al., 2021; Wu & Amzah, 2024). Previous studies have also shown that storytelling activities through picture story books facilitate language development and emotional relationships among preschoolers. In a study conducted by Ratnasari, it was found that storytelling activities involving peers can stimulate reasoning and improve the language skills of children aged 4.5 to 6 years (Ratnasari, 2020). In addition, Tisnawijaya and Kurniati emphasized that picture books play an important role in improving social-emotional literacy, because the narratives contained in the book expand literacy lessons while building children's cognitive and affective engagement (Tisnawijaya & Kurniati, 2024). Building social awareness and developing understanding through storybooks can be achieved by selecting stories that realistically depict social situations and characters' emotions. Through the

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narrative and dialogue in books, children learn to recognize feelings, understand others' perspectives, and expand their vocabulary. Reflective discussions after reading stories also help children understand social values such as empathy, mutual assistance, and cooperation. Thus, learning through picture books not only improves language skills but also supports children's overall social and emotional development.

Furthermore, emotional engagement with characters in picture books is also recognized as important in children's discussions about social issues. This is as shown by Papen and Peach in their analysis of children's interactions with stories about war and refugees. This kind of narrative allows children to engage in critical thinking and reflection, encouraging them to participate in discussions that go beyond academic content alone (Papen & Peach, 2021). In this context, picture books function not only as language aids, but also as a means of character education and in-depth social awareness. Another factor that supports the success of learning using picture books is a communicative and participatory learning approach. In practice, teachers act as facilitators who not only read stories, but also express the storyline with emotion, ask questions, and encourage children to repeat the words they have just learned. This process creates an interactive and dynamic learning atmosphere, where children feel actively involved. This finding is supported by the results of research by Hidayatullah et al. which shows that dialogic reading not only improves vocabulary skills, but also builds an environment of trust and communication between children and educators, thereby improving overall literacy development (Hidayatullah et al., 2023; Bondt et al., 2020; Triyanita & Mulyono, 2023; Wackerle-Hollman et al., 2024).

Dialogic reading or reading dialogically creates space for children to ask questions, give opinions, and build meaning together with teachers and friends. This approach is very suitable for use in the context of early childhood education, because it emphasizes social interaction as an integral part of the learning process. By getting children used to having dialogues while reading, they not only learn new vocabulary, but also learn how to use language to communicate effectively in real social situations.

Overall, the use of picture story books in learning English for early childhood has been proven to be effective not only from a cognitive perspective, but also from an affective and social perspective. Storybooks that are packaged attractively can stimulate all aspects of children's development, from language comprehension, speaking skills, to empathy and critical thinking skills. Fun, visual, and contextual learning are the main keys to the success of this intervention. Therefore, the use of picture storybooks can be recommended as part of an integrated learning strategy in the PAUD curriculum, especially in introducing English from an early age. The findings of this study provide a significant contribution to the practice of English education at the PAUD level. Intervention through the use of picture storybooks can be an effective solution in improving English vocabulary mastery in a natural and enjoyable way. This study's key advantages lie in its practical application, measurable outcomes, and contextual appropriateness. The integration of picturebooks into a real classroom setting, supported by empirical data collected through pretest-posttest design, allows for a clearer understanding of their impact. Moreover,

the picturebooks used were adapted to the children's developmental level and thematic interests, which enhanced engagement and vocabulary retention.

The novelty of this study is evident in its focus on the use of print-based picture storybooks as a medium for teaching English vocabulary in the context of Indonesian early childhood education, an area that has been under-explored in previous research. While many studies have concentrated on digital storytelling or general literacy development, this study investigates vocabulary acquisition through traditional picture books in a structured and measurable manner. In addition, this study provides new insights into the integration of dialogic reading strategies in the use of storybooks in teaching English to early childhood learners.

In terms of contribution, this study provides evidence-based support for educators and curriculum developers to consider picture storybooks as a reliable and developmentally appropriate teaching tool. The findings can be used to inform teacher training, especially regarding the use of interactive and child-centered media in foreign language learning. Furthermore, this study contributes to early childhood English education by offering an approach that is aligned with children's cognitive and emotional needs while strengthening teacher-child interactions. The implications of this study extend to several areas. Pedagogically, this study encourages teachers to incorporate more story-based and dialogic approaches in their English language teaching practices. For curriculum developers, this study suggests the integration of culturally relevant and visually engaging materials. More broadly, this study highlights the importance of early English language instruction that is based on practices that reflect children's learning styles and developmental stages.

Despite these strengths, this study also has limitations. The sample size was relatively small (15 children), and the study was conducted in a single setting, which may limit the generalizability of the results. In addition, this study focused only on vocabulary outcomes, without exploring other related aspects such as comprehension, fluency, or writing skills. Future research could expand on this study to include larger, more diverse samples from different schools and regions. It is also recommended to examine the comparative effectiveness of digital versus print storybooks, or investigate how picture storybooks can support other language components such as grammar and sentence construction. Furthermore, further research could examine the role of parental involvement and the home literacy environment in maximizing the benefits of storybook-based learning.

This study reaffirms that picture storybooks, when used interactively and contextually, are an effective tool in improving English vocabulary acquisition among early childhood learners. Through their visual appeal, narrative structure, and emotional resonance, picture books encourage deeper engagement and lasting learning. Incorporating such media into early English instruction is not only pedagogically sound but also necessary for building foundational language skills in a meaningful and enjoyable way for young children.

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CONCLUSION

Referring to the findings of this study, it can be concluded that the use of picture storybooks has a positive effect on early childhood English vocabulary acquisition by providing natural and meaningful language exposure through visual narratives and contextual language input. This study offers a novel approach by integrating print-based storybooks with dialogic reading strategies, distinguishing it from previous studies that predominantly emphasize digital or descriptive methods. This empirical evidence highlights not only linguistic development but also the cognitive, affective, and social dimensions of vocabulary learning through the use of picture storybooks. The difference from previous studies lies in the interactive and print-based nature of the intervention, which has proven effective in fostering deeper engagement. Conceptually, this study positions picture storybooks as a comprehensive learning tool that encourages critical thinking, emotional engagement, and communication skills. Implications for educators and curriculum developers point to the adoption of child-centered, story-driven language teaching models. Future research should explore the use of culturally relevant stories, incorporate family participation, and conduct longitudinal studies to assess the sustained impact of storybook-based learning, thereby strengthening storytelling as a crucial component of holistic and inclusive early childhood language education.

AUTHOR STATEMENTS

In addition to acting as corresponding author, **Sirjon** conceptualized and designed the study, assisted in data analysis, wrote the main body of the manuscript and developed the theoretical framework, and interpreted the findings. **Diana Setyaningsih** created figures and graphs, and assisted in interpreting the findings. **Naomi Mersi Sulle** conducted the experiments and collected field data. The final paper was reviewed and approved by all authors prior to submission.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The researchers would like to thank the principal and all teachers at YPK Marthen Luther Abepura Kindergarten who have supported the implementation of this research. This research was conducted independently so the researcher did not receive any financial assistance from anyone.

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How to Cite (APA Style):

Sirjon, S., Setyaningsih, D., Sulle, NM. (2025). The influence of using picture story books on the mastery of English vocabulary in early childhood. *EduLite: Journal of English Education, Literature, and Culture*, 10 (2), 305-320. <http://dx.doi.org/10.30659/e.10.2.305-320>

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Conflict of Interest Statement: The authors declare that the research was conducted without any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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