

Analysis Of Visual Media Use On The Reading Comprehension Ability Of Grade II Students At SDN 1 Selengen

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Abstract

Reading comprehension ability is a crucial fundamental skill for elementary school students, especially in the lower grades. However, the reality on the ground shows that many second-grade students are able to read technically but fail to comprehend the reading content properly. This study aims to analyze the use of visual media on the reading comprehension abilities of second-grade students at SDN 1 Selengen, examine its impacts, and identify the supporting and inhibiting factors in its implementation. This study employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive research design. The research subjects included 20 second-grade students, the class teacher, and the school principal of SDN 1 Selengen. Data collection techniques were conducted through participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation studies. The collected data were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman interactive model, which includes data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. The validity of the data was verified using source triangulation, technique triangulation, and member checking. The results showed that the use of visual media in reading learning was carried out through systematic stages starting from preparation, integrated presentation with texts, to learning evaluation. The use of visual media was proven to have a significant positive impact on students' reading comprehension abilities, including an improved ability to deeply understand reading content, find main ideas, retell the text, and stimulate an increase in students' interest, motivation, and active participation in class. Supporting factors for this implementation include teacher creativity, high student enthusiasm, adequate availability of facilities, a conducive learning environment, and principal support. Meanwhile, inhibiting factors include time constraints, a limited collection of visual media, and the heterogeneity of students' individual abilities

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1. INTRODUCTION

Education is a conscious and planned effort undertaken to develop students' potential so that they possess the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and character necessary for everyday life (Ahmad et al., 2024). Elementary education serves as the primary foundation for developing students' academic abilities, as it is at this level that students begin to acquire essential skills that will be used in subsequent levels of education. One of the most important basic skills for elementary school students to master is reading. Reading is a language skill that plays a central role in the learning process. Through reading, students can obtain information, broaden their

horizons, and understand various subject matter taught in school (Abdullah & Agustini, 2025). Therefore, reading ability is key to student success in academic and social activities.

Reading ability is not merely limited to the mechanical ability to recognize letters, words, and sentences, but also encompasses a higher cognitive competency, namely the ability to understand the meaning contained in the reading (Damayanti & Hartatik, 2025). This ability to understand the content of the reading is conceptually known as reading comprehension. Reading comprehension is a reading activity that aims to understand the content of the text comprehensively, so that readers are able to grasp the explicit and implicit messages conveyed (Nuryani et al., 2024). This ability is very important because almost all curriculum structures and subjects in schools require students to process and analyze information presented in textual form.

At the elementary school level, particularly in the lower grades (grades I to III), reading comprehension skills need to be intervened in and developed early. Students with optimal reading comprehension will find it easier to identify important information, find main ideas, draw logical conclusions, and re-explain the content of the reading using their own language structure (Saputro et al., 2021). Conversely, students with reading comprehension deficits tend to fall behind in the learning process because they fail to decode information, which is a prerequisite for understanding other learning materials.

A frequently encountered problem in the elementary education ecosystem is the gap between technical reading skills and comprehension. This phenomenon was also identified at Selengen 1 Elementary School, Kayangan District, North Lombok Regency. A preliminary study and initial observations conducted in the 2025/2026 academic year revealed that several second-grade students still experienced cognitive impasses when asked to comprehend reading material. Of the 20 second-grade students, a preliminary reading comprehension check found that 12 students (60%) were unable to correctly answer at least three out of five simple comprehension questions after reading a short text aloud, and only 5 students (25%) were able to retell the main content of the text in their own words without teacher prompting. Although some students were technically fluent in pronouncing each word, when assessed with simple cognitive questions related to the text's content, they displayed passive responses, confusion, and difficulty retelling the essence of the story. These difficulties also manifested in low student enthusiasm and concentration during literacy sessions (Nurfadhillah et al., 2021).

Students' low reading comprehension is heavily influenced by the pedagogical environment within the classroom, one of which is the lack of variety in the learning media used by educators. Textbook-centered learning and the dominance of verbal explanations tend to trigger boredom in students (Permata et al., 2024). Based on Piaget's stages of cognitive development, second-grade elementary school students (aged 7-8 years) are still in the concrete operational phase. In this phase, they rely heavily on concrete representations to process information (Zahroh et al., 2024).

One potential methodological solution to bridge this gap is optimizing the use of visual media. Visual media acts as a conveyor of information through visual stimulation, enabling students to concretely visualize objects or events (Kustandi & Darmawan, 2021). Referring to Mayer's (2021) Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning and Paivio's Dual Coding Theory, new information will be acquired much more effectively if the brain receives stimuli through two processing channels (verbal and visual) simultaneously. The presence of visual media such as picture books, flashcards, and presentations on Smart TVs allows students to link abstract descriptions with concrete illustrations, reducing cognitive load and, in turn, facilitating the comprehension process (Lutfiah et al., 2024).

Several previous studies have confirmed the effectiveness of visual interventions. Widada (2025) reported that visual media significantly improved early reading skills in elementary school students. Rianti (2023) also demonstrated in her experimental research that visual storytelling had a strong influence on improving reading comprehension scores. However, in-depth qualitative exploration of the dynamics of the implementation process, descriptive specific impacts, and

analysis of environmental and situational factors (supporting and inhibiting) in specific rural areas is still rare.

Based on the urgency and gap (research gap), this research was conducted with the main objectives to: (1) Analyze in depth the process of using visual media in reading learning in class II of SDN 1 Selengen; and (2) Analyze the impact of using this media on reading comprehension competency, as well as identify the supporting and inhibiting factors that accompany it.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

The design adopted in this study is a qualitative approach with a descriptive research type. A qualitative approach was used because the researcher intended to explore, analyze, and describe social and pedagogical phenomena holistically and in-depth, and in their natural setting without any manipulation of experimental variables (Creswell & Poth, 2021). The qualitative descriptive design allows the researcher to analyze how the interaction between visual media, teachers, and students occurs dynamically during the learning process.

This research took place at SD Negeri 1 Selengen, located in Dampo Indah Hamlet, Selengen Village, Kayangan District, North Lombok Regency, West Nusa Tenggara Province. The research implementation time was focused on the second semester of the 2025/2026 Academic Year (March to June 2026). The research subjects were determined by a purposive sampling technique, which involved the main key elements, namely 20 second-grade students, the second-grade homeroom teacher (Mr. Rian Kasmadi, S.Pd.), and the principal (Mr. M. Ahyar, S.Pd.) as secondary informants.

The data used includes primary and secondary data. Primary data was obtained directly from the field through three main techniques: (1) Participatory Observation, conducted over an eight-week period from March to April 2026, with two observation sessions per week, each session lasting approximately 35-40 minutes and coinciding with one full reading lesson period, during which researchers were directly present in the classroom to observe student behavior, teacher strategies, and the dynamics of visual media utilization; (2) In-depth Interviews with semi-structured instruments involving a total of 7 informants, namely the class teacher, the principal, and 5 student representatives selected purposively to represent variation in reading ability (high, moderate, and low); and (3) Documentation Studies, to collect authentic data in the form of teacher teaching modules, photographs of learning activities (classroom visual artifacts), and student academic assessment track records (Sugiyono, 2022).

To analyze the data, the researchers applied the interactive data analysis procedure model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, which consists of three continuous flows of activities. The first stage is Data Condensation, which is the process of selecting, simplifying, and focusing raw data from field notes and interview transcripts into key themes (process, impact, supporting/inhibiting factors). The second stage is Data Display in the form of narrative descriptions and systematic direct quotations. The third stage is Conclusion Drawing and Verification, where the researchers construct theoretical meaning based on patterns found in the field.

The validity of the data (trustworthiness) in this qualitative research was rigorously tested using triangulation and member checking techniques. Source triangulation was conducted by confirming teacher interview data with interviews with principals and students. Technical triangulation was conducted by combining and comparing interview results with classroom observations and syllabus documents. Furthermore, member checking was conducted by presenting a draft of the preliminary findings to informants (teachers and principals) to confirm that the researcher's interpretations were accurate and consistent with their intentions.

3. RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To provide a concise overview of the main findings obtained from each data source before they are discussed in depth, a summary is presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Summary of Main Findings by Data Source

Data Source	Technique	Main Findings
Class teacher (Mr. Rian Kasmadi, S.Pd.)	In-depth interview	Visual media was used systematically, from compiling a teaching module and preparing pictures/picture cards to guiding students to refer to illustrations while reading and during oral evaluation.
Principal (Mr. M. Ahyar, S.Pd.)	In-depth interview	Reported increased student attendance and more frequent library visits, and confirmed the school's support for the teacher's media innovation.
Student representatives (e.g., Nichola, AR)	In-depth interview	Students reported enjoying picture-based learning and feeling more confident retelling stories without looking at the text; a previously shy student (AR) became willing to speak up after seeing a relevant illustration.
Classroom activities	Participatory observation	Interactive apperception using visual stimuli increased students' focus at the start of the lesson; students' retelling confidence increased over the observation period, although 3-4 students with slower literacy still required one-on-one assistance.
Teaching modules, activity photographs, and academic records	Documentation study	Teaching modules explicitly integrated visual media into lesson planning; photographic documentation showed consistent use of visual media across sessions; academic records indicated an improving trend in reading assessment scores across the semester.

The Process of Using Visual Media in Learning

Based on field findings through continuous observation and interviews with second-grade teachers, the process of implementing visual media in reading learning at SDN 1 Selengen was not done incidentally, but rather planned and executed through systematic stages. Mr. Rian Kasmadi, S.Pd., as the class teacher, began this process by compiling a teaching module that explicitly integrated the use of visual media (picture storybooks, picture cards, and occasional projector/Smart TV presentations) with the goal of learning to read.

Classroom learning begins with an interactive apperception session. The teacher opens the class by displaying a visual stimulus at the front of the class and asking a prompting question (e.g., "Students, what do you see in the picture above?") to capture students' focus and activate their cognitive schemas (Sari & Lestari, 2021). Next, in the main activity, the teacher distributes a simple reading text along with relevant visual media. While reading, the teacher guides students to refer to the visualization when they encounter difficult vocabulary.

Interviews with teachers confirmed this: 'Before the lesson was implemented, I compiled a teaching module, determined the material, and prepared visual media appropriate to the objectives so that students could more easily understand the reading' (Interview Results, June 10, 2026). After the reading activity was completed, formative evaluation was conducted orally in which students were asked to re-describe the event by referring to the illustrations posted on the board.

The Impact of Using Visual Media on Reading Comprehension

Data exploration indicates that the use of visual media provides significant cognitive and affective transformation in second-grade students, which is manifested in the following indicators:

1. Improved Reading Comprehension Skills: Before the massive visual media intervention, the majority of students responded passively or remained silent when asked about the essence of the text. However, after being integrated with visual illustrations, students' semantic decoding improved drastically. A teacher stated, "Previously, many were silent or only repeated the first sentence. Now, with the help of pictures, they can immediately state the content of the story

- in their own words. For example, when they see a picture of an apple, they say it tastes sweet, is red, and contains vitamins" (Teacher Interview, June 13, 2026).
2. Improved Accuracy in Finding Main Ideas: Visual media acts as an anchor or memory anchor. When presented with the fable 'The Mouse Deer and the Crocodile', students spontaneously articulated that the story contains the value of ingenuity before they analyzed the text further. The ability to abstract the main idea improved because visualization helped filter the dominant information in the story (Afril et al., 2025).
 3. Improved Retelling Skills: Observations show that students who previously hesitated when asked to repeat a story now confidently come to the front of the class. This is evidenced by the confession of a student, Nichola: 'I like learning using pictures, Ma'am. If I use pictures, I can tell the story to my friends without looking at the book... I tell the story of the mouse deer wanting to cross the river, then the crocodiles are told to line up' (Student Interview, June 12, 2026).
 4. Accelerated Interest, Motivation, and Active Participation: The affective state of the class experienced a positive surge. Students arrived early with high expectations. The principal validated this: 'The attendance of second-grade students has increased. They are motivated and visit the library more often' (Principal Interview, June 14, 2026). The most emotional evidence of participation was recorded when a shy student with the initials AR dared to speak and express his aspirations after seeing an illustration of the police profession (Field Notes, June 12, 2026).

Supporting and Inhibiting Factors

The successful implementation of this pedagogical innovation is influenced by the dynamics of the school environment. Data analysis identified several crucial supporting factors. First, Teacher Creativity and Competence; teachers proactively and innovatively recycled used materials into illustrated cardboard media and presented attractive visual portfolios (Wulandari & Pratama, 2023). Second, Student Enthusiasm; positive cognitive responses sparked a dynamic classroom climate. Third, Facilities and Learning Environment; SDN 1 Selengen has a library collection, good classroom lighting, and teaching aids, although the quantity is limited. Fourth, Full Support from School Leadership and Parents; the principal granted innovation autonomy, while parents reported an increase in children's reading time at home.

On the other hand, this implementation is not free from various obstacles. The main inhibiting factors include: (1) Limited Learning Allocation Time; intense interaction with media often takes longer than the duration of the lesson plan, so teachers must compress time on other activities (Idelia et al., 2024); (2) Media Quantity Deficit; with the ratio of picture book collections (around 30 copies) to the student population, media use is forced to be done alternately; (3) Cognitive Heterogeneity; there are still around 3-4 students with very slow literacy skills who require differentiated instruction and one-on-one assistance; and (4) Student Physical Condition; factors of fatigue or being unwell occasionally disrupt individual concentration (Nuryani et al., 2024).

Critical Discussion

The empirical findings in this study strongly resonate with the theoretical foundations of cognitive psychology. The increased comprehension, memory retention, and retelling skills of students thanks to visual media confirm Allan Paivio's Dual Coding Theory (Paivio in Lutfiah et al., 2024). When teachers at SDN 1 Selengen presented written text (verbal channel) alongside relevant images (visual channel), students' working memory activated two mental representations in parallel. This cross-referencing is what causes information to be more deeply embedded in long-term memory.

Furthermore, the effectiveness of this visual media also serves as concrete evidence for the application of Mayer's (2021) Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning. Mayer asserts that the human brain has a limited processing capacity. For second-grade children in the concrete operational phase (aged around 7-8 years), reading long texts places a very high cognitive load (extra cognitive load). The presence of visuals plays a crucial role in reducing this load by

providing an interpretive anchor. Children no longer exhaust their cognitive energy 'imagining' fictional situations, allowing their energy to be channeled into understanding the meaning or moral message of the story (Zahroh et al., 2024).

In the context of Schema Theory pioneered by Anderson (Carrell & Eisterhold in Damayanti & Hartatik, 2025), images act as triggers to activate students' background knowledge schemas. Findings where students can immediately argue about the benefits of apples or the cleverness of mouse deer solely because of image stimuli indicate that visuals bridge their world knowledge with text content.

These findings corroborate previous research by Widada (2025) and Rianti (2023) regarding the significance of increased cognitive literacy scores thanks to visual media. However, this research provides an epistemological extension by qualitatively mapping how the transition process occurs, the emotions that arise in students, and how rural school infrastructure adapts to learning innovations (Natali, Rahman, & Siswanto, 2025). The collaboration between teacher determination in developing alternative media and school institutional support demonstrates that limited resources are not an absolute barrier if managed with flexible and innovative pedagogical strategies.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis of observational data, interviews, and documentation at SDN 1 Selengen, it can be concluded that the use of visual media in second-grade reading learning has been implemented with a structured pedagogical approach, starting from planning, implementation with interactive visual apperception, to evaluation. Within the scope of this qualitative case study, this media integration appears to be associated with a meaningful impact on students' cognitive and affective development, as reflected in the perceptions and experiences reported by teachers, the principal, and students themselves. This is represented by the escalation of students' abilities in retelling the contents of the text, precision in extracting main ideas, and the development of awareness to read with a high level of participation and self-confidence. As this study relies on a qualitative descriptive design without a comparison group or statistical measurement, these findings should be understood as context-specific insights into the process and perceived impact of visual media use at this particular school, rather than as generalizable proof of a causal effect; further studies using experimental or mixed-methods designs are needed to statistically verify the extent of this effectiveness.

The strategy's success was catalyzed by teachers' instructional competence and creativity, students' high intrinsic motivation, the availability of basic teaching aids, and the support of the school ecosystem. Despite limitations such as limited time, a low number of picture books, and disparities in some students' innate literacy skills, these obstacles were mitigated through adaptive teacher interventions.

Based on this conclusion, it is recommended that: (1) Teachers continue to enrich visual literacy by utilizing local materials as an alternative innovation; (2) Schools allocate a percentage of the routine budget to facilitate the addition of a variety of picture story books (leveled readers) to reduce the media deficit; and (3) For advanced researchers, there is room to explore experiments in visual media design based on local wisdom or the integration of multimedia elements that have been proven to be massively capable of training critical reasoning in literacy at the elementary level.

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