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EFFECTS OF SIMPLE ENGLISH NARRATIVE TEXTS ON READING  
COMPREHENSION AND VOCABULARY ACQUISITION IN THIRD-GRADE  
LEARNERS.

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**Abstract:** This study investigates the effects of using simple English narrative texts on reading comprehension and vocabulary acquisition among third-grade learners. The main purpose of the research is to determine whether short and easy-to-understand stories can help young learners improve their reading skills and learn new words more effectively. The study was conducted over a period of two months with 16 third-grade students at a local primary school. The participants were beginner-level learners (A1–A2), and many of them initially had difficulties in understanding texts and remembering new vocabulary.

A mixed-method approach was used to collect and analyze data. Quantitative data were gathered through pre-tests and post-tests that measured students' reading comprehension and vocabulary knowledge. Qualitative data were collected through classroom observations and a simple student survey designed with child-friendly questions. During the intervention, students were taught using simple narrative texts such as short stories with clear plots, familiar topics, and basic vocabulary. In addition, interactive activities like group work, reading aloud, and vocabulary games were used to support engagement and understanding.

The results of the study showed a noticeable improvement in both reading comprehension and vocabulary acquisition. Specifically, 13 out of 16 students (approximately 81%) demonstrated better performance in post-test results compared to pre-test scores. Students were able to understand the main ideas of texts more easily and use newly learned words in simple sentences. Furthermore, survey results indicated that most students found the lessons enjoyable and motivating, which increased their participation in classroom activities.

The use of simple English narrative texts can be considered an effective teaching strategy for improving reading comprehension and vocabulary learning in young learners. The findings suggest that when texts are adapted to students' language level and combined with engaging classroom activities, they can significantly enhance language learning outcomes. This study provides useful insights for primary school English teachers who aim to create more effective and enjoyable learning environments.

**Keywords:** simple narrative texts, reading comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, young learners, primary education, English language teaching, A1–A2 learners.

### Introduction

In recent years, improving young learners' reading comprehension and vocabulary acquisition has become an important focus in English language teaching, especially at the



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primary school level. Reading is a fundamental skill that supports overall language development, while vocabulary plays a key role in understanding texts and expressing ideas. For third-grade learners, who are usually at the beginner level (A1–A2), learning English can be challenging due to limited vocabulary and lack of exposure to meaningful texts. One effective way to support their learning is through the use of simple English narrative texts, such as short stories with clear structure, familiar topics, and basic language.

Previous research highlights the benefits of using narrative texts in language learning. For example, Pardede (2011) states that reading stories helps learners improve comprehension skills and increases motivation. Similarly, Haddad (2015) found that storytelling can enhance vocabulary retention by providing context and repetition. Solis et al. (2018) emphasize that structured reading activities can significantly improve students' understanding of texts. In addition, Van den Berg and Klapwijk (2017) suggest that young learners benefit more from engaging and meaningful reading materials than from isolated vocabulary instruction. These studies show that narrative texts can be a powerful tool in language classrooms.

However, despite these findings, there is still a gap in research focusing specifically on the use of simple narrative texts for beginner-level third-grade learners in real classroom contexts. Many studies focus on older students or more advanced learners, while younger learners with limited English proficiency are often underrepresented. Furthermore, there is limited research combining both reading comprehension and vocabulary development within a short-term classroom intervention.

Therefore, this study aims to investigate the effects of simple English narrative texts on reading comprehension and vocabulary acquisition among third-grade learners. It seeks to determine whether using short, easy-to-understand stories, combined with interactive classroom activities, can improve students' reading skills and help them learn new vocabulary more effectively.

Research Questions:

1. How do simple English narrative texts affect third-grade learners' reading comprehension?
2. To what extent do these texts improve students' vocabulary acquisition?
3. How do students respond to the use of narrative texts in English lessons?

### **Materials and Methods**

This study was conducted using a mixed-method research design that combined both quantitative and qualitative approaches in order to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the effects of simple English narrative texts on students' learning. The quantitative aspect focused on measuring improvements in reading comprehension and vocabulary through pre-tests and post-tests, while the qualitative aspect aimed to explore students' engagement and attitudes through classroom observations and a short survey. This approach was selected because it allowed the researcher not only to measure learning outcomes but also to understand how students experienced the learning process.



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The participants of the study were 16 third-grade students from a primary school, all of whom were beginner-level learners (A1–A2). The sample was selected based on convenience, as the students were part of the researcher's own teaching group. Prior to the study, permission was obtained from the school administration, and participation was voluntary.

A variety of instructional and assessment materials were used throughout the research. The main teaching materials consisted of simple English narrative texts, including short stories with clear plots, familiar themes, and basic vocabulary suitable for young learners. These texts were chosen because they provide meaningful context, which supports both comprehension and vocabulary learning. In addition, worksheets were developed to reinforce key vocabulary and check students' understanding of the texts. For data collection, pre-tests and post-tests were designed to assess students' reading comprehension and vocabulary knowledge. A short, child-friendly questionnaire was also used to gather students' opinions about the lessons, and an observation checklist was used to record students' participation and engagement during classroom activities. Basic classroom tools such as a whiteboard, flashcards, and printed handouts supported the teaching process.

The study was carried out over a period of two months. At the beginning, students completed a pre-test to determine their initial level of reading comprehension and vocabulary knowledge. During the intervention phase, lessons were structured around simple narrative texts and included pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading stages. In the pre-reading stage, key vocabulary was introduced to prepare students for the text. During the while-reading stage, students engaged in guided reading and comprehension tasks. In the post-reading stage, they participated in discussions, group activities, and vocabulary exercises to reinforce learning. Interactive techniques such as reading aloud and games were regularly used to maintain students' interest and motivation. At the end of the intervention, a post-test was administered to measure students' progress. Additionally, students completed the questionnaire, and observations were conducted throughout the study to monitor their engagement.

The collected data were analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative methods. Test scores from the pre-test and post-test were compared to identify changes in students' performance, and simple descriptive statistics, such as percentages, were used to present the results. Meanwhile, qualitative data from observations and surveys were analyzed by identifying common patterns related to students' participation, motivation, and overall response to the use of narrative texts.

The selected methodology was considered appropriate for this study because it provided reliable and detailed information about both learning outcomes and classroom dynamics. The use of simple narrative texts was particularly suitable for young learners, as it made the learning process more meaningful and engaging. Furthermore, the two-month duration of the study allowed sufficient time to observe measurable improvements in students' reading comprehension and vocabulary acquisition.

## **Results**



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The findings of this study demonstrate a clear and measurable improvement in third-grade learners' reading comprehension and vocabulary acquisition after the two-month intervention using simple English narrative texts. The results are based on quantitative data from pre-tests and post-tests, as well as qualitative data from classroom observations and student feedback.

As presented in Table 1, the average reading comprehension score increased from 52% in the pre-test to 74% in the post-test, showing a 22% improvement. This indicates that students developed a better ability to understand written texts, identify key ideas, and respond to comprehension questions. Similarly, vocabulary scores improved from 48% to 72%, reflecting a 24% increase. This suggests that students not only recognized more words but were also able to remember and use them more effectively.

A closer look at individual performance shows that 13 out of 16 students (approximately 81%) demonstrated noticeable progress in both reading comprehension and vocabulary acquisition. These students showed consistent improvement across different types of tasks, including identifying the main idea, answering short questions, and matching words with meanings or pictures. On the other hand, 3 students (19%) showed little or no improvement. This may be due to individual differences such as learning pace, attendance, or initial language level.

Results stable:

Category	Pre-test (Before)	Post-test (After)	Improvement
Average Reading Score (%)	52%	74%	+22%
Average Vocabulary Score (%)	48%	72%	+24%
Students Showing Improvement	-	13 students	81%
Students with No Improvement	-	3 students	19%

In terms of reading comprehension, students showed the greatest improvement in understanding the general meaning of texts and following the sequence of events in a story. At the beginning of the study, many students struggled to grasp the main idea or answer basic comprehension questions. However, by the end of the intervention, most students were able to read short texts with more confidence and accuracy. They were also better at connecting ideas within the text, which indicates a deeper level of understanding.

Regarding vocabulary acquisition, students demonstrated significant progress in both receptive and productive vocabulary. Receptively, they were able to recognize and understand more words when reading texts. Productively, some students began to use newly learned vocabulary in simple sentences during speaking and writing activities. Repetition of vocabulary through stories, along with supportive activities such as games and group tasks, appeared to play an important role in this improvement.

Qualitative findings further support the quantitative results. Classroom observations revealed that students became more active and engaged during lessons. They showed



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increased interest in reading activities, especially when stories included familiar topics and visual support. Participation in group work and reading aloud activities also improved over time, indicating greater confidence and willingness to use English.

The student survey results reflected a positive attitude toward the use of narrative texts. Most students reported that they enjoyed reading stories in English and found them easier to understand compared to other types of texts. They also indicated that stories helped them learn new words more easily and made lessons more interesting. This positive emotional response likely contributed to their improved performance.

Overall, the results suggest that the use of simple English narrative texts, combined with interactive classroom activities, had a strong positive effect on both reading comprehension and vocabulary acquisition among third-grade learners.

### **Discussion**

The results of this study showed that third-grade learners significantly improved their reading comprehension and vocabulary acquisition after being taught through simple English narrative texts. The majority of students demonstrated better understanding of texts, increased vocabulary knowledge, and more active participation in classroom activities.

This improvement may be explained by the nature of narrative texts. Simple stories provide meaningful context, which helps students understand new words more easily and remember them longer. In addition, stories follow a clear structure (beginning, middle, end), which makes it easier for young learners to follow and understand the content. Another possible reason is that interactive activities such as group work, reading aloud, and games encouraged active learning and increased student engagement. As a result, students had more opportunities to practice and use the language.

These findings are consistent with previous research. For example, Pardede (2011) stated that narrative texts improve reading comprehension and increase learner motivation. Similarly, Haddad (2015) found that storytelling helps learners retain vocabulary more effectively through context and repetition. The results also support the idea presented by Van den Berg and Klapwijk (2017), who emphasized the importance of meaningful and engaging materials in language learning. Therefore, this study confirms that simple narrative texts are an effective tool for young learners.

However, not all students showed improvement. A small number of learners (3 students) made little or no progress. This may be due to individual differences such as lower motivation, limited participation, or slower learning pace. It is also possible that these students needed more time or additional support to benefit fully from the activities.

One limitation of this study is the small sample size, as only 16 students participated. This means the results may not be generalizable to all primary school learners. In addition, the duration of the study was relatively short (two months), which may not be enough to observe long-term effects. Another limitation is that the study was conducted in only one classroom, without a control group for comparison.

Despite these limitations, the study has important practical implications. It suggests that teachers should consider using simple English narrative texts in primary classrooms to



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improve reading and vocabulary skills. Teachers are also encouraged to include interactive activities such as storytelling, group work, and games to increase student motivation and participation. Furthermore, adapting texts to students' level is essential for effective learning.

### **Conclusion**

This study investigated the effects of simple English narrative texts on reading comprehension and vocabulary acquisition among third-grade learners. The results showed that students made noticeable progress after the intervention, especially in understanding short texts and learning new vocabulary. Most learners improved their ability to identify main ideas, answer comprehension questions, and use new words in simple sentences.

The improvement can be explained by the fact that narrative texts provide meaningful and familiar contexts, which help young learners understand language more easily. The clear structure of stories (beginning, middle, and end) also supports comprehension. In addition, interactive activities such as reading aloud, group work, and vocabulary games increased students' motivation and participation, which contributed to better learning outcomes.

However, the study had some limitations, including a small sample size and a short duration of two months. Therefore, the results cannot be generalized to all learners without further research.

Simple English narrative texts are an effective teaching tool for improving both reading comprehension and vocabulary acquisition in young learners. Teachers are recommended to use level-appropriate stories combined with interactive activities to create a more engaging and effective learning environment.

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