



การสอนคำพทโดยใช้การเล่าเรื่องจากภาพเพื่อพัฒนาความรู้คำพทภาษาอังกฤษของนักเรียนชาวไทย  
ชั้นมัธยมศึกษาปีที่ 1

TEACHING VOCABULARY: USING PICTURE STORYTELLING TO IMPROVE THE ENGLISH  
VOCABULARY KNOWLEDGE OF GRADE 7 THAI STUDENTS

นายชวง เชี่ยวเฟย \*

Huang Xiaofei

ผู้ช่วยศาสตราจารย์ ดร. ปราณภา โมเดหิราน \*\*

Assistant Professor Prannapha Modehiran, Ph.D.

บทคัดย่อ

การพัฒนาความรู้ทางคำพทสำหรับผู้เรียนภาษาอังกฤษที่เป็นภาษาต่างประเทศนั้นเป็นเรื่องที่ท้าทาย หนึ่งในกลวิธีที่จะสามารถช่วยให้นักเรียนมีความเพลิดเพลินขณะที่ได้เพิ่มพูนคำพทไปพร้อมกันนั้นคือการสอนคำพทโดยการเล่าเรื่องจากภาพ วัตถุประสงค์ของงานวิจัยสารนิพนธ์นี้คือ 1) เพื่อศึกษาการพัฒนาความรู้คำพทของนักเรียนชาวไทยชั้นมัธยมศึกษาปีที่ 1 เมื่อได้รับการสอนคำพทโดยการเล่าเรื่องจากภาพ และ 2) เพื่อสำรวจความคิดเห็นของนักเรียนที่มีต่อการสอนคำพทโดยการเล่าเรื่องจากภาพ กลุ่มตัวอย่างประกอบด้วยนักเรียนชั้นมัธยมศึกษาปีที่ 1 ที่กำลังศึกษาอยู่ในโรงเรียนรัฐบาลในประเทศไทย เครื่องมือวิจัย คือ แบบทดสอบความรู้คำพทก่อนและหลังเรียน และแบบสอบถามความคิดเห็นของนักเรียนที่มีต่อการสอนคำพทโดยการเล่าเรื่องจากภาพ สถิติที่ใช้ในการวิจัยคือ T-test, Mean และ Standard Deviation ผลการวิจัยพบว่า 1) ค่าคะแนนเฉลี่ยของความรู้คำพทภาษาอังกฤษของการทดสอบหลังเรียนสูงขึ้นอย่างมีนัยสำคัญทางสถิติที่ 0.05 และ 2) ผลของแบบสอบถามแสดงให้เห็นว่า นักเรียนมีความคิดเห็นเชิงบวกต่อการสอนคำพทด้วยการเล่าเรื่องจากภาพ

\*Graduate Student of Teaching English as a Foreign Language Division, Department of Curriculum and Instruction,  
Faculty of Education, Chulalongkorn University

E-mail Address: [xiaofei.michael@gmail.com](mailto:xiaofei.michael@gmail.com)

\*\*Lecturer of Teaching English as a Foreign Language Division, Department of Curriculum and Instruction,  
Faculty of Education, Chulalongkorn University

E-mail Address: [prannapha@gmail.com](mailto:prannapha@gmail.com)

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## Abstract

Developing vocabulary knowledge of EFL learners is a challenging task. One of the strategies that can entertain students potentially as well as transfer vocabulary knowledge is picture storytelling. The objectives of this study were 1) to investigate to what extent the vocabulary knowledge of Grade 7 Thai students improved after attending vocabulary teaching using picture storytelling, and 2) to explore the students' opinions toward vocabulary teaching using picture storytelling. The sample included 40 Grade 7 students studying in a public Thai school. The instruments were English vocabulary knowledge pre-test and post-test, and a questionnaire about the students' opinions towards vocabulary teaching using picture storytelling. The data analysis used the statistics of paired-sample t-test, means and standard deviation. The results indicated that: 1) the post-test mean score was higher than the pre-test mean score at a 0.05 level of significance, and 2) the result of the questionnaire indicated that students had positive opinions towards vocabulary teaching using picture storytelling.

**คำสำคัญ:** การสอนคำศัพท์ / การเล่าเรื่องจากภาพ / ความรู้คำศัพท์ / นักเรียนชั้นมัธยมศึกษาปีที่ 1

**KEYWORDS:** VOCABULARY TEACHING / PICTURE STORYTELLING / VOCABULARY KNOWLEDGE / GRADE 7 STUDENTS

## Introduction

Vocabulary learning plays a fundamental role in second language learning and teaching because a limited vocabulary in a second language hinders all four skills of speaking, reading, listening, and writing (Alqahtani, 2015). For the L2 learners, knowledge of vocabulary is the central tool for the effective acquisition of the target language (Nation, 2001). The more vocabulary the learners know, the more effectively they speak, read, listen or write the target language. Therefore, vocabulary learning or vocabulary teaching is the most important part of a lesson in an L2 classroom.

However, learning vocabulary knowledge is more difficult in a second language than in the first language (Esteve, 2014). Vocabulary knowledge includes the size and depth of vocabulary known to an individual (Nation, 2001). The size of vocabulary knowledge refers to the number of words that learners can recognize. The depth of vocabulary knowledge includes pronunciation, spelling, meaning, part of speech, morphological structure, syntactic behavior, frequent collocates, and appropriate usage in context. Saengpakdeejit (2014) reported that the main problem for Thai students to learn well English is the lack of vocabulary knowledge.

The students in the context of the school, where this study had been conducted, have been exposed to English as a fundamental course from both Thai and foreign teachers at school. They spent a great deal of time to learn the new words from teachers' direct translation or

dictionary, but not to get enough practice in English on their own. Consequently, students are prone to forget the new words easily or to know rigidly the definition or translation of the words, but fail to recognize other vocabulary knowledge.

Nowadays many research studies have proposed vocabulary-teaching strategies in order to help students with the problem of learning vocabulary knowledge. For example, Hidayat (2016) proposed that word games is an effective methods to help seven grade students to memorize the vocabulary items ungrammatically. Moreover, Kindle (2010) stated that reading aloud to the learners is a helpful method to enhance their vocabulary knowledge. In addition, Mediha & Enisa (2014) indicated that literary texts had a positive effect on the enhancement of learners' vocabulary knowledge in the EFL classroom.

Another recommended strategy on vocabulary teaching is storytelling. Kalantari & Hashemian (2015) recommended storytelling is an effective method that facilitates teaching and learning vocabulary for young EFL learners. The study was conducted in both control and experimental groups. The results showed that the experimental students experienced a significantly meaningful increase in their vocabulary knowledge learning, even in their motivation of learning vocabulary. Similarly, Abasi & Soori (2014) has shown the effectiveness of storytelling on vocabulary learning of Iranian EFL learners. The results revealed that storytelling is effective in improving vocabulary learning among twenty young EFL learners. Moreover, Kirsch (2016) examined whether the students learned vocabulary knowledge through storytelling. The results showed that the students eagerly engaged in the storytelling activities and recalled the vocabulary knowledge after the activities and retained them over a period of time. However, this strategy is more beneficial by using visual media.

Picture story is highly recommended as a visual media to teach language in EFL context (Fariyatul & Bandono, 2017). Picture story have positive conditions on learners' self-development of knowledge and social interaction. Similarly, Indrasari, Novita & Megawati (2018) recommended big book with short story is an attractive media to motivate young learners to develop their vocabulary knowledge in the EFL context. Moreover, Hidayat (2017) compared the effectiveness of flash card and picture story in vocabulary learning among the seventh grade students. The results showed that the picture story is more effective to use in vocabulary instruction. This media will support students not only to learn about how stories operate, but also provide opportunities for them to develop their vocabulary knowledge.

Picture storytelling has become an instructional method used in classroom because it offers the same benefits as storytelling plus the advantage of picture story. Picture storytelling, which is the use of language and gesture with pictures to create sequential scenes in a story, is used for vocabulary teaching in the current study, following three steps: pre-picture storytelling,

picture storytelling and post-picture storytelling (Abasi, & Soori, 2014; Fariyatul & Bandono, 2017; Hidayat, 2017; Kalantari & Hashemian, 2015). In the step of pre-picture storytelling, teachers explain the key vocabulary via pictures and gestures. In the step of picture storytelling, teachers tell a story through pictures using the learned words, and, in the step of post-picture storytelling, students retell the picture story and share their own experiences.

Several research studies have reported the benefits of picture storytelling to language teaching, in that the students, who are exposed to picture story, improve their language skills and vocabulary. For example, Purwatiningsih (2015) stated that picture storytelling is successful improving students' speaking skills as well helping students understand the hard vocabulary in the picture storytelling effectively. Aminafshar & Mojavezi (2017) compared the effectiveness between aural storytelling and visual storytelling on vocabulary retention in Iranian EFL learners. In this study, aural storytelling without picture was used for the control group and visual storytelling with picture was used for the experimental group. The results revealed that visual storytelling has more impressive impact on the learning and retention of vocabulary knowledge.

The purpose of this study, therefore, was to propose a way to apply picture storytelling to vocabulary teaching, and investigate to what extent Grade 7 students' vocabulary knowledge could be improved in a Thai public school. There were two research questions in this study:

1. To what extent did the vocabulary knowledge of the Grade 7 Thai students improve after attending vocabulary teaching using picture storytelling?
2. What were the students' opinions toward vocabulary teaching using picture storytelling?

### **Research Objectives**

1. To investigate to what extent vocabulary knowledge of Grade 7 Thai students improved after attending vocabulary teaching using picture storytelling.
2. To explore the students' opinions toward vocabulary teaching using picture storytelling.

### **Research Methodology**

#### **Research Participants**

The setting chosen for this study was Ayutthaya Witthayalai School, which is a public school in Ayutthaya. There were 16 classes, 40 students per class, at the Grade 7 level of the school. The participants, of this research were from one of the 16 classes, and enrolled in a Fundamental English course in the 2018 academic year. They were arranged in one class with different English achievement: high achievement and low achievement.

## Research Instruments

### Instructional instrument

Instructional instruments for the current study included “Vocabulary teaching using picture storytelling” which comprised three 100-minute lessons, which included vocabulary teaching using the three steps: pre-picture storytelling, picture storytelling, and post-picture storytelling.

In pre – picture storytelling, researcher taught the key vocabulary via pictures to students and provided interesting and comprehensible input for students, like games, to help students become familiar with the new vocabulary.

In while – picture storytelling, researcher told stories through pictures to students. Researcher made comments, gestures and asked questions to assess students’ prior knowledge while introducing stories using pictures with newly learned vocabulary. Researcher asked students to point to the new words and make connection between picture story and illustrations while telling story.

In post – picture storytelling, students used new words in vocabulary games, role-playing the picture story using phrases or dialogues heard. Students transferred the picture story to students’ real life experience.

The three lessons, with three picture stories, in this study included ‘*Let’s go to night market*,’ ‘*I’m a detective*,’ and ‘*Mike’s Saturday*,’ which were adapted from two Grade 7 English textbooks, *New World 1* and *Speak up 1*.

## Research Instruments

### Pre-test and Post-test

The pre-test and post-test in this research were designed to evaluate the students’ vocabulary knowledge learned from the lessons. There were two parts: Part A and Part B. Part A comprised 10 multiple-choice items, which were adapted from Nation (2008), to test the size of vocabulary. Part B comprised 20 items to test the depth of vocabulary, which included 5 matching items to test understanding of meaning and spelling, 5 multiple-choice items to test knowledge of frequent collocates and usage, and 10 cloze items to test the part of speech, morphological structure and syntactic behavior.

### Questionnaire

The researcher used a questionnaire adapted from Jitpaisarnwattana (2018), to survey what opinions the participants had towards vocabulary teaching using picture storytelling. The items of the questionnaire were divided into 5 aspects: language development, intrinsic motivation, engagement, task value, and self-efficacy. The first part consisted of nine 5-likert-scale questions for the students to rate the degree of agreement on a scale of 1–5 (1= strongly disagree,

2= disagree, 3= neutral, 4= agree, 5= strongly agree). The second part consisted of one open-ended question that the students answered voluntarily.

Three experts in Teaching English as a Foreign Language validated the congruence of these instruments. The IOC results for each instrument were: lesson plan=0.95, pre- and post-test=0.93 and questionnaire =0.96, which were above 0.5, showing that all research instruments were acceptable and reliable to use in collecting the data.

### **Research Procedures**

There were 3 phases in the research procedures: Preparation phase, implementation phase, and data analysis and report-writing phase.

In the preparation phase, the main activity was the selection of stories with pictures and vocabulary, and preparation of instructional materials, including slide presentations, handouts, and worksheets. The vocabulary test used for both pre-test and post-test was subsequently constructed. Also, nine items of the student opinion questionnaire and one open-ended item were then created. The instructional materials were then validated by three experts in the field of Teaching English as a Foreign Language.

In the implementation phase, the participants took the vocabulary pre-test one week before the instruction. The three lessons of the vocabulary teaching using picture storytelling were implemented. One week after completing the instruction, the participants took the vocabulary post-test. Finally, students completed the questionnaire, expressing their opinions towards the vocabulary teaching using picture storytelling.

In the data analysis and report-writing phase, the results of the pre-test and post-test scores were compared in order to answer Research Question 1. The statistics of the paired-sample t-test were then used. The administration of questionnaire data collection was performed after all three lessons had been completed in order to answer Research Question 2. Finally, the results were presented in a report.

### **Data Analysis**

First, the gathered data from the pre-test and post-test were statistically compared using a Paired-sample t-test, which was used to test whether there was a significant difference between the post-test and pre-test mean scores at the 0.05 level. Second, the statistical data from the questionnaire were also reviewed using descriptive statistics: means and standard deviation. In addition, the information from the open-ended question was looked at to identify support or negation with respect to the statistical results from the questionnaire.

## Findings

### Research question 1

Regarding the first research question, which was to investigate to what extent vocabulary knowledge of Grade 7 students improved after attending vocabulary teaching using picture storytelling, the overall findings are shown in Table 1.

Table 1

*Paired-sample t-test between the total score of pre-test and post-test*

Test	N	Mean	SD	Paired-difference mean	Sig. (2- tailed)
Pre	40	14.6	3.4		
Post	40	24.4	3.9	-9.8	.000

From Table 1, the post-test total mean score, 24.4, is higher than that of the pre-test, 14.6. The difference between the total mean scores of the pre-test and the post-test is -9.8. In addition, the standard deviation of the post-test, 3.9, is bigger than that of the pre-test, 3.4. These findings indicate that there were significant differences between the pre-test and post-test mean scores at a significant level ( $p<.05$ ). In other words, the vocabulary knowledge of the Grade 7 students was improved significantly after attending vocabulary teaching using picture storytelling.

In addition to the overall significant increase of the test scores, the scores from the vocabulary size part and depth part are shown in Tables 2 and 3 below.

Table 2

*Paired-sample t-test between pre-test and post-test for vocabulary size*

Part A	N	Mean	SD	Paired-difference mean	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pre	40	5.2	2.4		
Post	40	8.3	1.6	-3.1	.000

From Table 2, the post-test mean score, 8.3, is higher than that of the pre-test, 5.2. The difference between the mean scores of the pre-test and the post-test is -3.1. In addition, the standard deviation of the post-test, 1.6, is smaller than that of the pre-test, 2.4. There were, therefore, significant differences between the pre-test and post-test mean scores at a significant level ( $p<.05$ ). It can be concluded that the vocabulary size of the learners was significantly increased after attending vocabulary teaching using picture storytelling.

Table 3

*Paired-sample t-test between pre-test and post-test for vocabulary depth*

Part B	N	Mean	SD	Paired-difference mean	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pre	40	9.4	1.8		
Post	40	16.1	2.7	-6.7	.000

From Table 3, the post-test mean score, 16.1, is higher than that of the pre-test, 9.4. The difference between the mean scores of the pre-test and the post-test is -6.7. In addition, the standard deviation of the post-test, 2.7, is bigger than that of the pre-test, 1.8. There were, therefore, significant differences between the vocabulary depth pre-test and post-test mean scores at the significant level ( $p < .05$ ). The result reveals that their vocabulary depth post-test mean score was significantly higher than their pre-test mean score.

#### *Research question 2*

The question items in the questionnaire and the results are shown in table 4.

Table 4

*Students' Opinions towards Vocabulary Teaching Using Picture Storytelling*

	Item	Statement	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Language development	1	I think learning English vocabulary using picture storytelling improved my vocabulary knowledge.	4.1	.73	Agree
	2	I think the use of picture storytelling in the classroom helped my speaking skill.	4.4	.67	Agree
Intrinsic Motivation	3	I think learning English vocabulary using picture storytelling is very enjoyable in the classroom.	4.1	.66	Agree
	4	When teachers use picture storytelling in the classroom, I felt much motivated to learn the vocabulary.	4.2	.64	Agree
Engagement	5	Using picture storytelling in the classroom made the experience of learning English vocabulary more interesting.	3.9	.68	Agree
	6	The use of picture storytelling in the classroom engaged me to use the vocabulary knowledge that I have learnt.	4.0	.62	Agree
Task value	7	When teachers use picture storytelling in the classroom, I actively interacted more with other students with the new vocabulary.	4.1	.76	Agree
	8	The use of picture storytelling in the classroom was very useful to improve my vocabulary knowledge.	4.3	.69	Agree
Self-efficacy	9	I think the use of picture storytelling in the classroom increased my confidence of learning new vocabulary.	4.2	.80	Agree
	Total		4.1	.69	Agree

*Note.* (1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neutral, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree)

Reviewing Table 4, the ratings obviously indicate that the students' opinions towards vocabulary teaching using picture storytelling were positive, with a total grand mean score of 4.1.

Questionnaire item 7, with a mean of 4.1, reveals that the students had an active role in learning vocabulary through picture storytelling. Correspondingly, item 6, with a mean of 4.0, indicates that the students were able to engage in the learning. Moreover, item 3, with a mean of 4.1, shows that the students enjoyed the teaching, while item 4, with a mean of 4.2, shows that the students were motivated to learn vocabulary during the lessons. Additionally, item 5, with a mean of 3.9, shows that it was interesting for the students to learn vocabulary through picture storytelling.

With regard to the question of whether the treatment was effective, questionnaire item 1, with a mean of 4.1, shows that the students felt that vocabulary teaching using picture storytelling improved their English vocabulary knowledge. Correspondingly, item 8, with a mean of 4.3, indicates that the students thought that improvement of their vocabulary knowledge through picture storytelling was useful.

In addition, item 2, with a mean of 4.4, shows that the students viewed picture storytelling as a way to improve their speaking skills. This was also supported by the result of item 7, which indicated that the students interacted more actively while learning vocabulary through picture storytelling. Moreover, item 9, with a mean of 4.2, indicates that the students became more confident in the use the target vocabulary as a result of the picture storytelling.

The results from the open-ended question were obtained by counting the frequency of word occurrences written by the participants. The students expressed many positive words: 'like/enjoy' (17 times), 'fun/interesting/lively' (16 times), 'useful/good' (10 times), and 'creating story/ making new story' 3 times. The total of use of positive words included 46 occurrences (See Table 6). For negative responses, words like 'difficult/not easy/hard' were used 7 times and 'cannot remember/forget' were used 6 times, amounting to 13 total occurrences of negative word use (See Table 5). The results from the open-ended question, therefore, showed more use of positive words than negative ones.

Table 5

*Frequency of positive and negative words towards Vocabulary Teaching Using Picture Storytelling*

	Positive words	Times
Like/enjoy		17
Fun/interesting/lively		16
Useful/good		10
Creating story/making new story		3
	Total	46

Table 5 (Cont.)

Frequency of positive and negative words towards Vocabulary Teaching Using Picture Storytelling

Negative words	Times
Difficult/not easy/hard	7
Cannot remember/forget	6
Total	13

The results of the questionnaire, therefore, revealed positive opinions of the participants toward vocabulary teaching using picture storytelling. Research objective 2, regarding investigating the participants' opinions toward the instruction, was, then, answered with very positive results.

## Discussions

The findings of this study highlight the positive results of vocabulary teaching using picture storytelling in improving students' vocabulary knowledge. It suggests that using picture storytelling in teaching vocabulary has a positive effect on students' achievement.

Where vocabulary *size* is concerned, the standard deviations of the pre-test and post-test were more closely distributed, which indicates that picture storytelling is meaningful for both the high-achievement students and the low-achievement students to recognize the word meaning in the pre-picture storytelling. This finding is consistent with Hidayat (2017), who found that a picture story was effective tool for helping all students to recognize vocabulary meaning, even where there was a difference in achievement between students.

However, when it came to the vocabulary *depth*, students were required to recognize, not only the vocabulary meaning, but also its part of speech, morphological structure, syntactic behavior, frequent collocates or appropriate usage in the context in the picture storytelling and post-picture storytelling portions of the lesson. Therefore, acquiring knowledge depth tended to be more complicated than vocabulary size. Background knowledge appeared to support the already high-achievement students and allowed them to do better in this part. Consistent with the thoughts proposed by Priebe, Keenan & Miller (2010), the students' prior knowledge or background knowledge appears to lead them to more accurate and faster vocabulary knowledge identification. In addition, prior knowledge also affects students' motivation (Perkins & Salomon, 2012). Students' prior knowledge about vocabulary can be leveraged to help students build up the desire to learn more. Therefore, teachers can enhance students' motivation of learning vocabulary knowledge by setting up opportunities for them to activate and connect their prior knowledge to the lessons.

Furthermore, students' positive opinions towards teaching vocabulary using picture storytelling also benefited their acquisition of vocabulary knowledge, especially vocabulary depth. In the post-picture storytelling, the students' positive opinions evoked their active engagement,

which led them to recognize or expand the vocabulary knowledge through retelling the picture story or creating a new version. This is also the reason why most of them gave high score on the agreement that picture storytelling improved their speaking skill. According to Bhakti & Marwanto (2018), students' positive emotions improve their vocabulary learning effectiveness because vocabulary-learning experiences associated with positive emotions are more easily stored and recalled.

### **Recommendation for Future Research**

Since this research is a small-scale master's degree project, there were only three lessons, which lasted 100 minutes each. It is obvious that the study time might not be sufficient to effect meaningful change. However, the results showed significant and positive findings. Therefore, a larger-scale study over a longer period of time, such as a semester, or more lessons on a wider variety of vocabulary topics would offer even more benefits to the students and, perhaps, provide different results and feedback. Moreover, students' performance during post – picture storytelling should be assessed for pronunciation or speaking-skill development.

Picture storytelling was found to be a fun and meaningful activity to teach vocabulary. However, it might lead to enhancement, not only of vocabulary, but also some other areas of language learning. For example, picture storytelling may offer benefits for teaching grammar and also the four skills of reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Therefore, future research can go beyond vocabulary to investigate other areas of language learning.

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