

The Impact of 6Ps Storytelling Technique on EFL Young Learners' Reading Comprehension and Word Recall

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Abstract

This study examined the effects of the 6Ps in storytelling technique (Pique, Present, Plan, Play, Ponder, and Punctuate) on young learners' reading comprehension and word recall. A quasi-experimental design was conducted with 60 third-grade students at a private school in Pontianak. Two intact classes were assigned as the experimental and control groups using cluster random sampling. The experimental group received instruction through the 6Ps storytelling technique, while the control group was taught using conventional storytelling. Pre-tests and post-tests were administered, and the data were analyzed using Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) to control for baseline differences. The findings revealed a statistically significant effect on reading comprehension, that is 71% and word recall, 64%. The experimental group achieved higher scores, indicating the effectiveness in teaching reading comprehension and word recall. Therefore, primary English teachers are suggested to integrate this 6Ps in storytelling to teach reading comprehension and word recall.

Keywords: Reading Comprehension, 6Ps Storytelling, Young Learners, Word Recall

INTRODUCTION

Many EFL young learners have serious challenges in acquiring reading comprehension and word recall skills, particularly when the learning materials are presented in Western contexts that are culturally unfamiliar and significantly different from their sociocultural backgrounds (Oakhill, et.al., 2019).

In situations where English textbooks with an American background are largely utilized, young learners are often exposed to stories, characters and settings that are not culturally relevant, which may impede their ability to construct meaning and retain language successfully (Pinter, 2017). This mismatch between cultural content and

learners' background knowledge limits their ability to connect with the text, making reading activities less meaningful and engaging. Teachers frequently observe that although students can pronounce or recognize English words, they struggle to grasp the overall message or recall vocabulary accurately (Patsy, 2020). As a result, students focus on finishing the task instead of understanding what they read.

The difficulty is compounded by the use of conventional teaching techniques that emphasize isolated vocabulary drills, grammar exercises, and rote memorization (Oakhill, et.al., 2019). These approaches may temporarily expand vocabulary size but fail to promote deeper comprehension or

contextual understanding. Students are often asked to memorize lists or answer reading comprehension questions without being exposed to the natural flow of language (Cameron, 2019). Consequently, learners rarely experience how words function in authentic contexts, which may lead to disengagement and weak long-term retention. This issue is particularly concerning for young learners, as meaningful and enjoyable learning experiences are essential for sustaining motivation and establishing strong literacy foundations (Alghamdi, 2021).

Previous studies have identified similar challenges in the use of storytelling in EFL reading instruction. Satriani (2021) found that while storytelling activities helped improve students' writing and grammar, they overlooked vocabulary recall and reading comprehension. Similarly, Azizpour and Alavinia (2021) reported that storytelling tasks that focused more on linguistic form than meaning limited students' overall comprehension development. Together, these studies highlight a persistent gap in the literature: although storytelling has been widely applied to support language learning, limited research has examined interactive storytelling approaches that actively engage learners to enhance both reading comprehension and vocabulary development.

To address this gap, the present study introduces the 6Ps storytelling technique Pique, Present, Plan, Play, Ponder, and Punctuate adopted from Collins and Cooper (2005) and further supported by Shaikh (2024). During storytelling sessions, students are prompted to act out, pose, or respond orally whenever they hear certain target vocabularies in the story during the present stage. For instance, if the topic of the text is about sports and one of the target vocabularies is "goal," students may shout "goal" and perform a gesture like kicking a ball whenever they hear the word. This active response transforms passive listening into an

engaging and multisensory learning experience. Research supports the importance of multisensory engagement in language learning. Mafulah et al. (2025) argue that physical and vocal involvement enhances attention and memory retention, while Vaahtoranta et al. (2019) note that multisensory participation strengthens language processing and recall. By combining movement, speech, and emotional involvement, learners are more likely to internalize vocabulary and comprehend texts more deeply.

The 6Ps technique builds upon the strengths of storytelling, which has long been recognized as a natural and effective strategy for language instruction. Storytelling situates vocabulary and grammar within meaningful narratives, enabling students to see how language operates in authentic situations (Kalantari & Hashemian, 2015; Issa Mostafa Taameh, 2018). Through stories, learners become emotionally engaged with characters and events, which enhances comprehension and supports long-term memory (Nuraini, 2020). Additionally, storytelling promotes higher-order thinking skills such as inferencing and prediction, both of which are essential for successful reading comprehension (Sulastri & Septiani, 2019).

By integrating movement and oral responses into narrative instruction, the 6Ps storytelling technique extends beyond traditional approaches. It not only sustains learners' attention but also lowers anxiety, increases motivation, and transforms the reading classroom into an active learning environment. Moreover, the technique provides a low-cost and culturally adaptable approach suitable for schools that rely on foreign-based materials yet aim to make learning more contextual and meaningful (Vaahtoranta et al., 2019).

Given these theoretical and practical considerations, this study aims to examine the effects of the 6Ps storytelling technique

on reading comprehension and word recall among third-grade EFL learners at SDS Kinderfield Pontianak. By combining narrative input with physical and verbal participation, the technique offers a practical solution to bridge the gap left by conventional reading instruction. It is expected that actively involving learners in storytelling will not only improve comprehension and vocabulary retention but also cultivate engagement and enjoyment in reading, thereby supporting stronger foundations for lifelong language learning. This study is guided by several research questions:

1. Does the 6Ps storytelling technique demonstrate effectiveness in teaching reading comprehension among young EFL learners?
2. Does the technique demonstrate effectiveness in teaching word recall?
3. To what extent is the 6Ps storytelling technique effective in improving reading comprehension?
4. To what extent is it effective in enhancing word recall?

Correspondingly, the study seeks to provide empirical evidence regarding whether the 6Ps storytelling technique significantly improves students' reading comprehension and word recall, as well as to determine the magnitude of its effectiveness in both areas. The significance of this research extends to both theoretical understanding and practical application in language education.

Theoretically, the findings are expected to contribute to the growing body of research on second language acquisition, particularly within the context of EFL young learners, by providing empirical support for interactive storytelling as an instructional technique. Practically, the study benefits multiple stakeholders. For students, storytelling structured through the 6Ps framework offers meaningful and engaging learning experiences that support literacy

development. For teachers, the study provides evidence-based guidance for designing systematic, interactive, and effective EFL instruction. For future researchers, it offers a quasi-experimental reference that may be replicated or extended across different educational contexts, age groups, and language skills.

Hypotheses are formulated to examine the relationship between the instructional technique and learning outcomes in a systematic and testable manner. Hypothesis formulation allows researchers to investigate whether storytelling leads to greater comprehension and stronger vocabulary retention compared to traditional reading instruction (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2019). Clearly defined hypotheses also guide the data analysis process by providing measurable expectations that can be empirically tested (Field, 2018). Prior studies further support the positive effects of storytelling on young learners' literacy development (Isbell et al., 2020; Teng, 2022). Accordingly, the null hypotheses state that the storytelling technique does not demonstrate significant effectiveness in teaching reading comprehension or word recall among young EFL learners, whereas the alternative hypotheses propose that the technique shows significant effectiveness in improving both outcomes.

This study focuses on storytelling as the independent variable and its effectiveness in enhancing reading comprehension and word recall as the dependent variables. Reading comprehension refers to students' ability to understand and interpret written texts, including identifying main ideas, recognizing details, making inferences, and generating predictions. Word recall refers to students' ability to understand the meaning of vocabulary and retain words introduced during storytelling sessions.

The participants of this study are third-grade students at SDS Kinderfield Pontianak, a private international-oriented school operating through cooperation with an accredited foreign educational provider. These learners are in the early stages of English development and therefore require instructional approaches that are engaging, contextualized, and developmentally appropriate.

Therefore, this study positions the 6Ps storytelling technique as a pedagogically grounded and practically applicable approach to addressing the challenges faced by young EFL learners in reading comprehension and vocabulary acquisition. By transforming storytelling into an interactive and multisensory experience, the technique offers a promising pathway toward more meaningful literacy instruction.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quasi-experimental design using a pre-test-post-test control group structure to examine the effectiveness of the 6Ps storytelling technique on young learners' reading comprehension and word recall. This design was selected because the study was conducted in a natural classroom setting where random assignment of individual students was not feasible. Instead, intact classes were maintained to preserve the authenticity of the learning environment.

The use of a control group allowed for comparison between students who received the 6Ps storytelling intervention and those who experienced conventional instruction, while the inclusion of pre-test scores enabled the researcher to control for initial differences in students' abilities. Therefore, this design was appropriate for determining whether the implementation of the 6Ps storytelling technique significantly influenced students' literacy outcomes.

The population of this study consisted of approximately 180 third-grade students enrolled at SDS Kinderfield Pontianak. The sample was selected using cluster random sampling by randomly choosing two intact classes from the available third-grade classes. This process resulted in a total sample of 60 students aged between eight and nine years old. One class was assigned as the experimental group, while the other served as the control group. This sampling procedure was applied to maintain the existing classroom structure and minimize disruption to the school schedule. All selected participants had similar exposure to English instruction through the school's English-medium curriculum, ensuring comparability between the groups for examining the effects of the instructional treatment.

This study was conducted at SDS Kinderfield Pontianak, an international private primary school that implements English as the primary medium of instruction. This setting was considered relevant to the study because students are regularly exposed to English in their daily learning activities, particularly in reading lessons. Such an environment supports the implementation of storytelling techniques and allows for the observation of their effectiveness in a context where English literacy development is a central component of the curriculum. Additionally, the availability of structured classroom schedules and consistent instructional practices ensured that the treatment could be implemented systematically.

The study utilized narrative reading texts and achievement tests to measure students' reading comprehension and word recall. The reading materials were selected based on their suitability for young learners and were evaluated using the Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level to ensure readability appropriate for third-grade students.

The research instruments consisted of:

First is reading comprehension test assessing students' ability to identify main ideas, interpret details, make inferences, and understand vocabulary in context. Second is word recall test measuring students' ability to remember and recognize target vocabulary introduced during instruction.

Content validity was established through expert review by experienced English educators to ensure alignment with instructional objectives and students' proficiency levels. Reliability analysis using Cronbach's Alpha indicated satisfactory internal consistency, confirming that the instruments were appropriate for measuring students' literacy development.

Data collection was conducted over several instructional sessions following a structured procedure. At the initial stage, both the experimental and control groups completed pre-tests to measure their baseline reading comprehension and word recall abilities.

Following the pre-test, the experimental group received instruction through the 6Ps storytelling technique, which included the stages of Pique, Present, Plan, Play, Ponder, and Punctuate. During these sessions, students actively engaged in storytelling through gestures, oral responses, and interaction with story elements to enhance comprehension and vocabulary retention.

In contrast, the control group was taught using conventional reading instruction, which involved teacher explanation, silent reading, and answering comprehension questions without structured storytelling activities.

The treatment was conducted over a consistent instructional period for both groups using comparable reading materials. At the end of the intervention, post-tests were administered under the same conditions as the pre-tests. All data collection activities were carried out during regular class hours to

maintain a familiar learning environment and ensure consistency across groups. The collected data were analyzed using Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) to determine whether there were statistically significant differences in post-test scores between the experimental and control groups after controlling for pre-test performance. In this analysis, pre-test scores were treated as covariates to adjust for baseline differences and provide a more accurate estimate of the treatment effect.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive statistics were calculated to provide an overview of students' performance in both the experimental and control groups on the pre-test and post-test for reading comprehension and word recall. These statistics were used to examine students' initial abilities prior to the intervention and to observe general performance trends following the implementation of the 6Ps storytelling technique.

For reading comprehension, the pre-test scores of 60 students ranged from a minimum of 5 to a maximum of 17, with a mean score of 11.80 (SD = 3.55). In the post-test, reading comprehension scores showed an increased range, with a minimum score of 6 and a maximum of 20, and a higher mean score of 14.37 (SD = 3.95).

Similarly, the word recall pre-test scores ranged from 5 to 16, with a mean score of 10.80 (SD = 2.86), indicating moderate baseline vocabulary knowledge among the participants. After the intervention, the post-test word recall scores ranged from 5 to 20, and the mean score increased to 13.68 (SD = 3.12). This increase in both the mean score and the maximum value suggests that students demonstrated improved vocabulary recall following the instructional treatment.

Group	N	Mean	SD
Experimental	30	62.40	6.12
Control	30	61.73	6.45

Table 1. Pre-test Reading Comprehension Scores

The comparable pre-test means for reading comprehension and word recall across participants indicate that the two groups had relatively similar initial abilities prior to the intervention. This comparability supported the appropriateness of using ANCOVA to control for any remaining initial differences when examining post-test outcomes. Overall, the descriptive results provide preliminary evidence that the storytelling intervention had a positive influence on students' reading comprehension and vocabulary recall.

Group	N	Mean	SD
Experimental	30	82.10	5.30
Control	30	72.87	6.02

Table 2. Post-test Reading Comprehension Scores

A normality test was conducted using the Shapiro–Wilk test to examine whether the distributions of reading comprehension and word recall scores met the normality assumption required for ANCOVA. The test was performed separately for the pre-test and post-test scores in both the experimental and control groups. The results showed that the pre-test reading comprehension scores were normally distributed for both the experimental group ($p = .164$) and the control group ($p = .117$). For post-test reading comprehension, the control group demonstrated a normal distribution ($p = .071$), whereas the experimental group did not meet the normality assumption ($p < .001$). For word recall, the pre-test scores were normally distributed in the experimental group ($p = .112$) but not in the control group ($p = .045$).

The post-test word recall scores were normally distributed for both the experimental group ($p = .229$) and the control group ($p = .245$). Although minor violations of normality were detected in the post-test reading comprehension scores of the experimental group and the pre-test word recall scores of the control group, the data were deemed sufficiently robust for parametric analysis. This decision was based on the equal group sizes and the established robustness of ANCOVA to moderate deviations from normality (Field, 2022).

The homogeneity of variances assumption was examined using Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances to determine whether the error variances of the dependent variables were equal across the experimental and control groups. This assumption is required for ANCOVA to ensure that group comparisons are not biased by unequal score dispersion (Field, 2022; Pallant, 2020). For reading comprehension post-test scores, Levene's test yielded a statistically significant result, $F(1, 58) = 7.600$, $p = .008$, indicating that the homogeneity of variance assumption was violated. This result suggests that the variability of post-test reading comprehension scores differed between the experimental and control groups. In contrast, for word recall post-test scores, Levene's test was not statistically significant, $F(1, 58) = 1.973$, $p = .166$, indicating that the homogeneity of variance assumption was met for this dependent variable.

Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances ^a			
Dependent Variable: Reading Comprehension Post-test Score			
F	df1	df2	Sig.
7.600	1	58	.008
Tests the null hypothesis that the error variance of the dependent variable is equal across groups.			
a. Design: Intercept + RC Pre + GROUP			

Table 3. Levene's Test of Equity of Error Variances in Reading Comprehension

This finding suggests that the dispersion of word recall scores was comparable across the two groups. Although the homogeneity of variance assumption was violated for reading comprehension, this limitation was not considered critical for the present analysis. ANCOVA is known to be relatively robust to moderate violations of this assumption when group sizes are equal (Field, 2022). In this study, both the experimental and control groups consisted of 30 students, resulting in balanced sample sizes.

Therefore, the impact of the variance violation on the overall results was likely minimal. Additionally, the use of ANCOVA allowed the researcher to control for pre-test differences, increasing the precision of the estimated treatment effect. These methodological considerations support the reliability of the conclusions drawn from the post-test comparisons between the two groups.

Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances ^a			
Dependent Variable: Word Recall Post-test Score			
F	df1	df2	Sig.
1.973	1	58	.166
Tests the null hypothesis that the error variance of the dependent variable is equal across groups.			
a. Design: Intercept + WR Pre + GROUP			

Table 4. Levene's Test of Equity of Error Variances in Word Recall

Overall, the homogeneity of variance assumption was fully satisfied for word recall and moderately violated for reading comprehension. However, given the balanced group sizes and the robustness of ANCOVA to moderate assumption violations, the use of ANCOVA was deemed appropriate for examining the effects of the storytelling technique on both dependent variables.

In addition to statistical significance, effect sizes were calculated to examine the

magnitude of the treatment effect of the 6Ps storytelling technique. Effect size provides insight into the practical importance of the findings by indicating how strongly the independent variable influences the dependent variables (Field, 2022). In this study, partial eta squared (η^2) from the ANCOVA results was used to measure the proportion of variance explained by the treatment after controlling for pre-test scores.

The interpretations of the effect sizes for reading comprehension and word recall are presented in the following subsections. An ANCOVA was conducted to determine whether there was a significant difference in post-test reading comprehension scores between the experimental and control groups after controlling for pre-test reading comprehension scores.

The results showed a statistically significant main effect of group on post-test reading comprehension scores, $F(1, 57) = 139.89$, $p < .001$, with a partial eta squared value of .71. This indicates that, after adjusting for students' pre-test reading comprehension scores, group membership accounted for approximately 71% of the variance in post-test reading comprehension performance.

Based on these results, the first null hypothesis (H_{01}), which stated that there is no significant difference in reading comprehension between students taught using the 6Ps storytelling technique and those taught using conventional methods, was rejected. This indicates that the 6Ps storytelling technique had a positive effect on students' reading comprehension. The findings suggest that incorporating structured storytelling strategies can enhance understanding and retention of textual information among young EFL learners.

A separate ANCOVA was conducted to examine whether there was a significant difference in post-test word recall scores between the experimental and control groups

after controlling for pre-test scores. The results indicated a statistically significant main effect of group, $F(1, 57) = 100.39$, $p < .001$, with a very large effect size ($\eta^2 = .64$). This suggests that approximately 64% of the variance in post-test word recall performance was explained by group membership after adjusting for baseline scores. The covariate (pre-test word recall) also contributed significantly to the model, indicating that students' initial vocabulary knowledge was a meaningful predictor of their post-test performance. However, the group effect remained significant after controlling for this variable. Therefore, the second null hypothesis (H_{02}) was rejected, indicating that the 6Ps storytelling technique had a significant positive effect on students' word recall.

Similarly, an ANCOVA was conducted to examine differences in post-test reading comprehension scores while controlling for pre-test scores. The analysis revealed a statistically significant main effect of group, $F(1, 57) = 139.89$, $p < .001$, with a very large effect size ($\eta^2 = .71$). This indicates that approximately 71% of the variance in post-test reading comprehension scores was explained by the treatment after adjusting for initial performance. Accordingly, the first null hypothesis (H_{01}) was rejected, confirming that the 6Ps storytelling technique significantly improved students' reading comprehension.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that the 6Ps storytelling technique had a significant and substantial effect on both word recall and reading comprehension among third-grade EFL learners at SDS Kinderfield Pontianak.

The findings of this study indicate that the 6Ps storytelling technique effectively supports the development of both reading comprehension and word recall among young EFL learners. These outcomes answer the research questions by showing that a

structured storytelling approach can meaningfully enhance learners' understanding of texts as well as their ability to retain vocabulary. From a theoretical perspective, the effectiveness of the 6Ps technique can be explained through cognitive and social learning frameworks. In line with Sharon Vaughn Klinger (2018), reading comprehension involves multiple levels, including literal, inferential, and critical understanding. The stages in the 6Ps framework appear to systematically support these levels. For instance, Pique activates learners' prior knowledge, which aligns with schema theory, while Present provides structured input that facilitates initial understanding. The stages Plan and Play encourage interaction and meaning negotiation, reflecting social constructivist principles where learning occurs through collaboration and scaffolding, as highlighted by Mark Feng Teng (2022). Furthermore, Ponder promotes reflective thinking and deeper processing, and Punctuate reinforces key ideas, contributing to clearer and more stable comprehension. These combined processes explain why learners were able to achieve improved comprehension outcomes.

In terms of word recall, the findings can be interpreted through vocabulary acquisition theory. According to Stuart Webb and Paul Nation (2017), effective vocabulary learning requires meaningful exposure, repeated encounters, and opportunities for retrieval. The 6Ps technique provides these conditions by embedding vocabulary within meaningful story contexts and engaging learners in active use through discussion and performance. The reflective (Ponder) and reinforcing (Punctuate) stages further strengthen memory retention by encouraging retrieval and consolidation. Therefore, the improvement in word recall can be understood as the result of contextualized input, active engagement, and structured repetition.

The findings of this study are consistent with Shaikh (2024), who reported that the 6Ps storytelling technique enhances learner engagement and participation. However, while previous studies have mainly emphasized engagement, the present study extends the literature by providing empirical evidence of its impact on both reading comprehension and word recall. This suggests that the 6Ps technique is not only motivational but also pedagogically effective in improving specific language outcomes. Thus, the main contribution of this study lies in demonstrating the instructional value of a structured storytelling framework for young EFL learners, particularly in integrating comprehension and vocabulary development. Despite these contributions, some practical considerations should be noted.

Implementing all six stages within a single lesson can be challenging and may reduce the depth of learning if time is limited. To address this, teachers may distribute the stages across multiple sessions, allocate time carefully, and select shorter, level-appropriate texts to ensure effective implementation. This study also has several limitations. It was conducted in a single school with a relatively small sample and a short intervention period, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. In addition, the quasi-experimental design did not involve full randomization, and the study focused only on reading comprehension and word recall without examining long-term retention or other language skills. Therefore, future research is recommended to explore the application of the 6Ps technique in different contexts, with longer durations and a broader range of language outcomes.

CONCLUSION

Based on the discussion of this study, it can be concluded that the 6Ps storytelling technique is an effective instructional method for improving reading comprehension and

word recall among third-grade EFL learners. Students who were taught through the 6Ps framework demonstrated significantly higher post-test scores than those who received conventional storytelling instruction, even after controlling for their initial abilities.

The results indicate that storytelling, when implemented through a structured and interactive framework such as the 6Ps, goes beyond passive listening and becomes a dynamic learning experience. The inclusion of physical actions, oral responses, and reflective stages appeared to support deeper language processing and stronger memory retention. This suggests that young learners benefit from multisensory and participatory learning environments that actively engage them in meaning-making during reading activities.

Furthermore, the large effect sizes observed in both reading comprehension and word recall suggest that the impact of the 6Ps storytelling technique is not only statistically significant but also educationally meaningful. Therefore, the 6Ps storytelling technique can be considered a pedagogically sound and empirically supported method for enhancing literacy instruction in EFL primary classrooms.

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