

Story-Based English Exposure and Reading Motivation Among Grade 5 Learners

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ABSTRACT

This study examines how story-based English exposure shaped the reading motivation of Grade 5 learners at Masipi Elementary School in Cabagan, Isabela. Employing a predictive reading engagement mapping design, it assessed learners' exposure to English stories and their level of motivation toward reading. Data were collected through a validated researcher-made questionnaire with excellent reliability, reflected in a Cronbach's alpha of 0.91. The data were treated using weighted mean, standard deviation, Kendall's tau-b correlation, and dominance-based ordinal regression. The findings revealed that learners experienced a high level of story-based English exposure, particularly through teacher read-aloud sessions and guided story

discussions. Reading motivation was likewise high, especially in terms of enjoyment of stories and willingness to participate in reading activities. However, independent story reading, confidence in reading English, and persistence in reading tasks remained at a moderate level, pointing to existing difficulties in sustaining learner engagement without teacher support. The results further showed a moderate positive significant relationship between story-based English exposure and reading motivation. Guided story discussion emerged as the strongest predictor of reading motivation, followed by teacher read-aloud sessions and vocabulary encounter through stories. The study concluded that story-based English exposure contributed meaningfully to learners' motivation to read when classroom reading experiences were interactive, supportive, and engaging.

Keywords: *story-based English exposure, reading motivation, Grade 5 learners, guided story discussion, English reading, elementary education*

INTRODUCTION

Reading remains one of the most important foundations of meaningful learning because it enables learners to understand ideas, expand vocabulary, interpret experiences, and participate more confidently in classroom activities. In the elementary level, reading is not only a technical skill but also an affective experience shaped by interest, confidence, exposure, and motivation. International assessments have repeatedly shown that reading engagement is closely connected with reading performance, since learners who enjoy reading and encounter meaningful texts tend to develop stronger comprehension habits and greater persistence in learning (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2021). This suggests that reading improvement should not focus only on drills and assessment, but also on creating enjoyable and purposeful reading experiences that help children see reading as personally valuable.

Concerns about reading proficiency have become more urgent. The World Bank reported that reading is a gateway skill for continued learning and that children who struggle to read with understanding

are likely to experience difficulty in other subject areas (World Bank, 2022). Similarly, the PISA 2022 results showed that Filipino learners continued to perform below the OECD average in reading, mathematics, and science, indicating the need for sustained classroom-based interventions that strengthen foundational literacy (OECD, 2023). These findings support the need to examine school-level practices that may help learners become more motivated and confident readers.

Story-based English exposure offers a promising way to address reading motivation among elementary learners because stories present language in a natural, meaningful, and emotionally engaging form. Through stories, learners are exposed to vocabulary, sentence patterns, characters, events, conflicts, and values in ways that are easier to remember and relate to. Storytelling and story reading have been recognized as helpful approaches in English language learning because they place language within familiar and imaginative contexts, allowing learners to listen, predict, respond, and make meaning actively (Kamilia, 2026). In this sense, stories do not merely teach words; they invite learners to enter situations where English becomes useful, enjoyable, and connected to experience.

Reading motivation is also influenced by the kind of reading environment learners experience. When learners are exposed to stories that are age-appropriate, culturally relatable, and emotionally engaging, they are more likely to participate in reading activities, ask questions, share interpretations, and develop positive attitudes toward English texts. Recent literature emphasizes that motivation contributes to reading comprehension because interested and confident readers are more willing to sustain attention, use strategies, and complete reading tasks (Ma, 2025). Thus, story-based exposure may serve as a bridge between language input and learner engagement, especially for Grade 5 pupils who are expected to move from basic reading toward deeper comprehension and independent reading.

In Masipi Elementary School in Cabagan, Isabela, Grade 5 learners may benefit from reading experiences that go beyond mechanical oral reading and answer-based comprehension activities. Story-based English exposure may provide a more learner-centered way of strengthening reading motivation by allowing pupils to encounter English through narratives that are enjoyable, meaningful, and developmentally appropriate. This study determine how exposure to English stories relates to the reading motivation of learners in the local school context. This also provide teachers with evidence-based insights for designing reading activities that do not only improve skill acquisition but also nurture interest, confidence, and sustained engagement in reading.

Literature Review

Story-Based English Exposure

Story-based English exposure refers to the use of stories, storytelling, read-aloud activities, shared reading, picture books, short narratives, and guided story discussions to help learners encounter English in meaningful contexts. In elementary classrooms, stories provide language input that is easier for children to understand because words and sentences are connected to characters, events, emotions, and familiar situations. Unlike isolated vocabulary drills, story-based exposure allows learners to hear and read English as a living language used to express ideas, feelings, problems, and solutions. Santoso et al. (2023) found that storytelling helped elementary learners improve reading comprehension because it supported understanding of sequence, meaning, and story structure. This suggests that stories can serve as both a literacy tool and a language exposure strategy for young learners.

Storytelling as a Motivational Strategy in English Learning

Storytelling is important in English learning because it naturally attracts children's attention. When learners listen to or read stories, they become involved in the lives of characters and are encouraged to predict, imagine, ask questions, and respond emotionally. Storytelling and story reading have also been

associated with learners' positive attitudes toward English activities because stories reduce the pressure often attached to formal language learning. Omidbakhsh (2021) emphasized that storytelling and story reading may improve learners' interest in English because stories create enjoyable learning situations where learners can connect language with meaning. In this way, story-based English exposure may encourage learners to participate more willingly in reading tasks.

Reading Motivation Among Elementary Learners

Reading motivation refers to the learner's willingness, interest, confidence, and persistence in engaging with reading materials. It includes both intrinsic motivations, such as reading because the story is enjoyable, and extrinsic motivation, such as reading to receive praise, scores, or recognition. Dakhi and Damanik (2018) explained that students' motivation in reading English texts is shaped by personal interest, teacher support, text difficulty, and the perceived usefulness of reading. When motivation is weak, learners may avoid reading, read only when required, or show limited effort in understanding English texts.

Reading Engagement and Positive Attitude Toward Reading

Reading motivation is closely related to reading engagement because motivated learners are more likely to spend time reading, participate in discussions, and complete reading activities. PIRLS 2021 highlighted that learners' attitudes toward reading are important contexts for understanding reading performance, since enjoyment, confidence, and home or school reading opportunities influence how children approach reading tasks. The Ministry of Education of New Zealand, using PIRLS 2021 data, also emphasized that positive reading attitudes among Year 5 learners can be supported through teacher practices that promote choice, access to interesting texts, and meaningful reading experiences.

Stories, Vocabulary Development, and Comprehension

Stories support vocabulary development because new words are presented within meaningful situations rather than as separate items for memorization. When learners encounter words through characters, settings, actions, and repeated story patterns, they are more likely to infer meanings and remember vocabulary. Recent studies on English literacy learning among young learners noted that English instruction becomes more effective when language is introduced through meaningful, age-appropriate, and engaging activities (Razimona et al., 2024). Story-based English exposure may therefore help learners develop vocabulary and comprehension at the same time because they are not only identifying words but also connecting them to events and ideas.

Teacher Support in Story-Based Reading Activities

Teachers play a central role in making story-based English exposure effective. The impact of stories depends not only on the text itself but also on how the teacher introduces, reads, explains, questions, and extends the story. A teacher may use pre-reading questions, vocabulary previews, expressive reading, guided discussion, group retelling, drawing, role play, and reflection to deepen learners' understanding. Carter (2024) emphasized in a systematic review that reading comprehension interventions in multilingual contexts require structured and responsive teaching practices. This implies that story-based exposure should not be treated as simple entertainment. It should be planned as a purposeful reading experience that supports comprehension, participation, and motivation.

Story-Based Exposure in the Context of Grade 5 Learners

Grade 5 learners are at an essential stage in reading development because they are expected to move from basic decoding toward more independent comprehension, interpretation, and subject-based reading. At this level, learners may already recognize many English words, but they may still struggle with sustained attention, confidence, vocabulary, and deeper understanding. Story-based English exposure may address

these concerns by offering texts that are manageable, interesting, and emotionally engaging. Pelletier et al. (2025) noted that teacher support and reading frequency are connected with reading motivation and engagement from the upper elementary years onward. This supports the idea that regular exposure to stories may help Grade 5 learners build more positive reading habits.

METHODS

Research Design

The study utilized a predictive reading engagement mapping design. This design was appropriate because the study did not only describe the learners' exposure to English stories and their reading motivation, but also mapped how specific story-based experiences were associated with stronger or weaker motivational responses. It allowed the researcher to identify which forms of story exposure appeared most meaningful in encouraging Grade 5 learners to enjoy, attempt, and sustain English reading activities.

Research Locale

The study was conducted at Masipi Elementary School in Cabagan, Isabela. The school was selected because it represented a public elementary school setting where English reading development was part of the regular learning process. The locale provided a suitable context for examining how exposure to English stories was connected with the reading motivation of Grade 5 learners.

Participants and Sampling Technique

The participants were Grade 5 learners of Masipi Elementary School. The study used purposive complete-enumeration sampling, where all learners who met the inclusion criteria were invited to participate. This technique was considered appropriate because the study required respondents who had direct classroom experience with English stories and could provide meaningful responses about their motivation toward reading.

Research Instrument

The study used a validated researcher-developed survey instrument. The first section measured story-based English exposure along selected indicators such as teacher read-aloud sessions, independent story reading, guided story discussion, vocabulary encounter through stories, and story-related learning tasks. The second section assessed reading motivation in terms of reading interest, enjoyment, confidence, persistence, and willingness to participate in English reading activities. The questionnaire was reviewed by specialists in English education, reading instruction, and elementary pedagogy to determine its content validity, clarity, and suitability for Grade 5 learners. Revisions were made based on their suggestions. A pilot administration was conducted with learners who were not included in the actual data gathering. The reliability analysis produced an overall Cronbach's alpha of 0.91, which indicated excellent internal consistency. The story-based English exposure scale obtained an alpha value of 0.90, while the reading motivation scale obtained an alpha value of 0.92.

Data Gathering

The researcher first secured approval from the appropriate school authorities. After permission was granted, coordination was made with the concerned teacher regarding the schedule and manner of administration. The purpose of the study was explained to the learners using simple and age-appropriate language. The survey was administered in a quiet classroom setting, with enough time given for the learners to read and answer each item. The researcher clarified instructions when necessary but avoided giving

explanations that could influence the responses. After administration, the questionnaires were collected, screened for completeness, coded, and prepared for analysis.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed through descriptive profiling and dominance-based regression analysis. Weighted mean and standard deviation were used to describe the levels of story-based English exposure and reading motivation. To determine the degree of association between the two variables, Kendall's tau-b correlation was applied because it was suitable for ordinal data and tied responses commonly found in Likert-scale results. To identify the strongest story-based exposure indicators that influenced reading motivation, dominance analysis with ordinal regression was used. This treatment was selected because it showed not only whether predictors were significant, but also which story-based experiences contributed the greatest explanatory value to learners' reading motivation.

Ethical Consideration

The study followed ethical standards for research involving children. Permission was obtained from the school before the conduct of the study. Parental consent and learner assent were secured prior to participation. The learners were informed that their participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw at any point without penalty. Their identities were kept confidential, and the findings were reported only in summarized form. The data were used solely for academic purposes. Care was also taken to ensure that the survey did not interfere with regular class activities or cause discomfort among the learners.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Level of Story-Based English Exposure Among Grade 5 Learners

Indicators	Mean	SD	Qualitative Description
Teacher read-aloud sessions	3.78	0.61	High
Guided story discussion	3.64	0.66	High
Vocabulary encounter through stories	3.52	0.69	High
Story-related learning tasks	3.39	0.72	Moderate
Independent story reading	3.21	0.76	Moderate
Overall Mean	3.51	0.69	High

Legend: 4.21 to 5.00, Very High; 3.41 to 4.20, High; 2.61 to 3.40, Moderate; 1.81 to 2.60, Low; 1.00 to 1.80, Very Low.

The results show that Grade 5 learners had a generally high level of story-based English exposure. Teacher read-aloud sessions received the highest mean, which suggests that learners were more often exposed to English stories through teacher-led activities. This implies that the teacher played an important role in making English stories accessible, especially for learners who may still lack confidence in reading independently. However, independent story reading obtained the lowest mean, indicating that learners were not yet fully motivated or confident to read English stories on their own. This shows a realistic concern in the classroom, since learners appeared to enjoy stories more when guided by the teacher but became less engaged when reading required individual effort.

Table 2. Level of Reading Motivation Among Grade 5 Learners

Indicators	Mean	SD	Qualitative Description
Enjoyment of stories	3.81	0.58	High
Willingness to participate in reading activities	3.66	0.63	High

Indicators	Mean	SD	Qualitative Description
Reading interest	3.48	0.70	High
Confidence in reading English	3.27	0.75	Moderate
Persistence in reading tasks	3.18	0.78	Moderate
Overall Mean	3.48	0.69	High

The table reveals that the learners had a high level of reading motivation overall. The highest mean was observed in enjoyment of stories, which indicates that learners responded positively when reading was presented through narratives. This means that stories were able to capture their attention and emotional interest. However, persistence in reading tasks and confidence in reading English were only moderate. This suggests that while learners enjoyed stories, some still hesitated when reading became difficult, lengthy, or independent. The finding implies that motivation was present, but it was not yet strong enough to fully overcome reading anxiety, unfamiliar vocabulary, or limited fluency.

Table 3. Relationship Between Story-Based English Exposure and Reading Motivation

Variables	Kendall's tau-b	p-value	Interpretation	Decision
Story-Based English Exposure and Reading Motivation	0.574	0.002	Moderate positive significant relationship	Reject Ho

The result indicates a moderate positive significant relationship between story-based English exposure and reading motivation. This means that learners who had greater exposure to English stories also tended to show higher motivation to read. The relationship was not weak, which suggests that story-based activities had a meaningful connection with learners' interest, enjoyment, participation, confidence, and persistence. However, the relationship was only moderate, not very strong. This implies that story exposure alone may not completely explain reading motivation. Other factors such as reading ability, home reading support, availability of books, peer influence, and learner confidence may also affect how motivated pupils become in reading English texts.

Table 4. Dominance-Based Ordinal Regression Analysis of Story-Based English Exposure Indicators Predicting Reading Motivation

Predictors	Estimate	SE	Wald	p-value	Dominance Weight	Rank	Interpretation
Guided story discussion	0.684	0.211	10.503	0.001	0.312	1	Significant predictor
Teacher read-aloud sessions	0.593	0.204	8.444	0.004	0.264	2	Significant predictor
Vocabulary encounter through stories	0.471	0.198	5.664	0.017	0.203	3	Significant predictor
Story-related learning tasks	0.286	0.175	2.672	0.102	0.126	4	Not significant
Independent story reading	0.219	0.181	1.463	0.226	0.095	5	Not significant

The regression results show that guided story discussion was the strongest predictor of reading motivation. This means that learners became more motivated when they were given opportunities to talk about stories, answer questions, share ideas, and connect story events with their own experiences. Teacher read-aloud sessions also significantly predicted reading motivation, showing that expressive and guided reading helped learners become more interested in English stories. Vocabulary encounter through stories

was likewise significant, suggesting that learners were more motivated when unfamiliar English words were introduced through meaningful story contexts.

On the other hand, story-related learning tasks and independent story reading were not significant predictors. This does not mean that these activities were unimportant. Rather, it suggests that they may not yet be strong enough to influence motivation when learners experience them without adequate guidance. The result points to a practical classroom problem: learners enjoyed stories and participated well when the teacher supported the activity, but their motivation weakened when reading required more independent effort.

CONCLUSION

The public elementary school teachers in the City of Ilagan, Isabela demonstrated a very high extent of sustainability-oriented Home Economics instruction and a very high level of circular consumption education, which indicated that sustainability and circularity had already become strongly evident in their instructional practices. The findings further established that sustainability-oriented Home Economics instruction had a strong and significant positive relationship with circular consumption education, confirming that teachers who more consistently integrated sustainability concepts, promoted resource-conscious habits, and used practical sustainability activities were also more likely to advance circular consumption education in the classroom. Moreover, the regression results revealed that the dimensions of sustainability-oriented instruction significantly predicted circular consumption education, with integration of sustainability concepts in lesson delivery emerging as the strongest predictor. Based on these findings, it was recommended that school administrators and education leaders sustain and strengthen the integration of sustainability concepts in Home Economics instruction through targeted capacity-building activities, contextualized teaching resources, and school-based initiatives that further promote circular consumption values. Teachers may also be encouraged to enrich classroom instruction with more localized, practical, and learner-centered sustainability activities that reinforce waste reduction, reuse, repurposing, and mindful consumption. In addition, curriculum planners and supervisors may continue supporting the inclusion of sustainability and circularity themes in elementary education to deepen their classroom application and long-term educational impact.

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