



## Students' Perception of the Use Serial-Image as an English Learning Media

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### ABSTRACT

This study investigated students' perceptions of serial-image media in English reading instruction at SMP Al Kautsar Bandar Lampung during the 2024/2025 academic year. Employing a quantitative descriptive method with a non-experimental survey design, data were collected from 96 ninth-grade students selected through purposive sampling. A closed-ended questionnaire consisting of 20 items, validated using Pearson Product Moment and tested for reliability with Cronbach's Alpha ( $\alpha = 0.892$ ), was administered to measure four aspects: learning process and skill development, direct experience, challenges, and general perception. Findings revealed that students demonstrated a generally positive perception of serial-image media. The highest mean score was found in the aspect of learning process and skill development ( $M = 3.77$ ), followed by direct experience ( $M = 3.71$ ), challenges ( $M = 3.34$ ), and general perception ( $M = 3.33$ ). Students reported that serial images facilitated comprehension, enriched vocabulary, and stimulated classroom engagement, though some noted difficulties with unclear visuals. These results support Mayer's Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning, emphasizing the benefits of integrating verbal and visual modalities. The study suggests that serial images are effective supplementary tools for enhancing reading comprehension and encourages their integration with teacher guidance and interactive methods.

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### INTRODUCTION

Learning media plays a fundamental role in facilitating the teaching and learning process, particularly within the field of language education. The process of

acquiring a new language is inherently complex, as it requires learners to grasp unfamiliar vocabulary, master grammatical structures, and interpret cultural contexts embedded in communication (Trinovita et al., 2025). In this regard, the use of media provides essential support in bridging the gap between abstract linguistic concepts and students' concrete understanding. When teachers integrate appropriate media into instruction, learners are more likely to process information effectively and retain knowledge over time. According to Bowman et al. (2022), instructional media serves not only as a bridge but also as a scaffold that helps students gradually move from dependence on external aids to independent comprehension. Without adequate media support, abstract ideas may remain inaccessible, leading to frustration and decreased learning outcomes (Andewi et al., 2025).

In addition to serving as a bridge, effective use of media has also been shown to encourage active learning. Students are not merely passive recipients of information but are instead engaged participants in the construction of meaning. As Rosyada and Sundari (2021) note, classroom environments enriched with diverse instructional media promote higher levels of engagement, comprehension, and retention. Media can transform a monotonous classroom into a dynamic and interactive learning space, where students feel motivated to explore new ideas and actively contribute to discussions (Fathi et al., 2024). This active involvement is crucial for language learning, which thrives on interaction, practice, and meaningful communication. Thus, media is not simply an accessory in the classroom but a central component of effective pedagogy.

Among the many available types of instructional media, visual aids have gained prominence for their ability to simplify complex ideas and appeal to learners' cognitive and affective domains. Visuals are powerful because they reduce linguistic barriers and present information in a form that can be universally understood. Nicolaou et al. (2019) emphasizes that visual representations enhance vocabulary development, clarify abstract meanings, and strengthen learners' comprehension of narrative structures. In language classrooms, where learners often struggle with textual overload, visuals provide essential cues that make texts more accessible. For instance, charts, diagrams, and storyboards can help students understand sequences, relationships, and cause-effect patterns that are otherwise difficult to discern from text alone. Beyond comprehension, visual aids also stimulate motivation, making learners more willing to participate in activities and discussions (Ribeiro & Eslami, 2025).

The role of visual tools becomes even more evident in the context of reading comprehension, which demands more than the ability to decode words. To read effectively, students must be able to interpret meanings beyond literal understanding, analyze authors' intentions, and connect texts with broader contexts. Istiara and Hastomo (2023) observes that visual tools act as scaffolding

devices that guide learners toward deeper interpretation of texts. By providing contextual clues, visuals can reduce the cognitive load associated with unfamiliar vocabulary or lengthy passages. For example, illustrations accompanying a narrative text can direct students' attention to key themes, while graphic organizers can help them identify main ideas and supporting details. Such tools ultimately empower learners to engage in higher-order thinking processes, such as inference and evaluation (Wang et al., 2022).

Within the wide range of visual media, serial images have emerged as a particularly effective resource. Serial images consist of sequences of pictures that tell a story, providing learners with a coherent visual narrative. According to Izah and Cahyaningtyas (2025), these images serve as contextual anchors that make abstract texts more concrete and comprehensible. Because they follow a logical sequence, serial images allow students to predict upcoming events, infer relationships, and organize ideas in a structured way. This aligns with Mayer's (2005) Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning, which highlights the importance of dual coding—processing information through both verbal and visual channels. When students receive information in two complementary forms, they are more likely to integrate and retain it, leading to deeper learning. Serial images therefore represent not just an illustrative tool but a pedagogical strategy grounded in established cognitive theory.

Despite the potential advantages of using serial images (Halim & Arifin, 2022), many junior high school students continue to face significant difficulties in reading English texts. Common challenges include unfamiliar vocabulary, lengthy passages that overwhelm working memory, and difficulties in identifying main ideas or text structures. These obstacles often reduce learners' motivation, leading to disengagement and superficial comprehension. Ekarista (2018) notes that students who struggle with these barriers may become reluctant readers, thereby missing opportunities to develop critical literacy skills. It is in this context that media, especially serial images, can provide essential support by making reading tasks less intimidating and more approachable.

Evidence from teaching practice (PPL) conducted at SMP Al Kautsar provides valuable insights into the practical use of serial images. Observations during classroom activities revealed that students responded with enthusiasm when serial images were incorporated into lessons. Learners showed curiosity and eagerness to interpret the sequences, and many were more willing to discuss storylines or predict outcomes. However, their perceptions were not uniform. Some students regarded serial images as highly helpful in understanding the content, while others viewed them as supplementary and preferred textual explanations. These variations highlight the need to explore students' perceptions more systematically, as

perceptions significantly influence engagement, acceptance, and responsiveness to instructional innovations.

Unlike previous studies, which largely focused on measuring outcomes such as comprehension scores or vocabulary gains (Ekarista, 2018; Halim & Arifin, 2022; Islamiah & Nurhasanah, 2019; Nizzu, 2016; Ramadhanty et al., 2021), the present study shifts attention to learners' subjective experiences. While quantitative outcomes are important for assessing effectiveness, they often overlook how students themselves perceive and value instructional tools. Exploring perceptions adds a novel dimension to research because it acknowledges that learning is not only about measurable achievement but also about attitudes, preferences, and psychological readiness. A tool may be pedagogically sound, but if students perceive it as irrelevant or unhelpful, its impact will be limited. By focusing on students' perceptions, this study contributes to the development of more student-centered approaches in English reading instruction, ensuring that strategies align not only with theoretical models but also with learners' needs and expectations.

## **METHOD**

This research employed a quantitative descriptive method with a non-experimental survey design, following the framework outlined by Creswell (2012). The choice of this design was deliberate, as the purpose of the study was not to test interventions or establish causal relationships, but rather to document and analyze students' perceptions in their natural learning environment. By avoiding manipulation of classroom conditions, the survey design allowed for a more authentic representation of learners' views regarding the use of serial-image media in English reading lessons. The descriptive approach also made it possible to present findings in the form of clear summaries and distributions, which are appropriate when the primary goal is to portray existing attitudes, tendencies, and responses.

The population of this study was ninth-grade students enrolled at SMP Al Kautsar Bandar Lampung during the 2024/2025 academic year. This school was selected due to its consistent implementation of innovative learning practices and accessibility during the researcher's teaching practice. From the total population, a sample of 96 students was drawn from three different classes, namely IX A, IX D, and IX I. A purposive sampling technique was employed, as the chosen classes were considered representative of the overall population and had direct exposure to reading lessons that integrated serial-image media. This ensured that the data collected would reflect relevant experiences and perceptions aligned with the objectives of the study.

The primary research instrument used was a closed-ended questionnaire consisting of 20 items. The questionnaire was carefully constructed to measure four distinct dimensions: (1) Learning Process and Skill Development, which focused on how serial images contributed to comprehension and language practice; (2) Direct

Experience, which examined students' firsthand interactions with the media; (3) Challenges, which identified potential difficulties or limitations encountered; and (4) General Perception, which provided an overview of learners' overall attitudes toward the use of serial images. These dimensions were selected to provide a holistic understanding of students' perspectives.

To ensure the validity of the instrument, each item was tested using the Pearson Product Moment correlation technique, which confirmed that the items measured the intended constructs. The reliability of the questionnaire was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha, yielding results that demonstrated internal consistency and stability across items (Leech, 2022). After validation and reliability testing, the instrument was distributed to the selected participants. The data analysis was conducted descriptively, employing mean scores and frequency distributions to capture patterns and tendencies in students' responses. This approach enabled the researcher to provide an accurate and detailed picture of how learners perceived the integration of serial-image media in English reading instruction.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Results

Before analyzing students' perceptions, the researcher conducted instrument testing to ensure validity and reliability.

**Table 1. Research instrument validity test results**

No. Item	Rxy	Interpretation
1.	>0.361	Valid

**Table 2 Reliability test results**

Cronbach's Alpha	Interpretation
0.892	Highly Reliable

The questionnaire consisting of 20 items was tested using Pearson Product Moment, and the results showed that all items met the validity requirement because the value of rxy exceeded r table (0.361). Furthermore, the reliability test using Cronbach's Alpha produced a coefficient of 0.892, which indicates that the instrument was highly reliable. Therefore, the questionnaire could be used as a valid and consistent tool to measure students' perceptions of using serial-image media in reading comprehension.

**Table 3. Average mean score of students' perception**

No.	Aspect	Mean Score
1.	Learning Process and Skill Development	3.77
2.	Direct Experience	3.71
3.	Challenges	3.34
4.	General Perception	3.33

Based on the table above, the analysis of student responses revealed that learners generally had a positive perception of serial-image media in reading activities. As presented in Table 3, the highest mean score was found in the aspect of Learning Process and Skill Development ( $M = 3.77$ ). This was followed by Direct Experience ( $M = 3.71$ ), Challenges ( $M = 3.34$ ), and General Perception ( $M = 3.33$ ). These results suggest that students believed serial images made texts easier to understand, supported vocabulary acquisition, and made learning more enjoyable.

The highest scores in Learning Process and Skill Development demonstrate that students felt serial images contributed to their comprehension and skill enhancement. Meanwhile, the lower score in Challenges reflects that some issues, such as unclear visuals, were occasionally present but did not overshadow the overall positive response.

## **Discussion**

The findings of this study confirm the relevance of Mayer's Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning (2005), which emphasizes that students are able to learn more effectively when information is delivered through both verbal and visual modalities. In the present context, serial images operated as scaffolding tools that enabled learners to structure their comprehension, recall sequences of events, and connect textual information with corresponding visual clues. This interpretation aligns closely with Halim and Arifin's (2022) argument that pictures are not merely decorative elements but rather essential aids in contextualizing language input and facilitating meaning-making. By combining linguistic elements with visual narratives, the learning process becomes more accessible, particularly in a foreign language classroom where textual comprehension is often constrained by limited vocabulary or unfamiliar grammatical patterns. The present study therefore affirms that the integration of serial images functions as a practical application of multimedia learning theory and provides empirical support for the notion that multimodal presentation strengthens understanding.

The results demonstrated that the highest mean score was recorded in the aspect of Learning Process and Skill Development ( $M = 3.77$ ). Students acknowledged that the use of serial images allowed them to identify main ideas more efficiently and assisted them in enriching their vocabulary repertoire. These perceptions resonate with Ekarista's (2018) observation that visual media transforms abstract concepts into concrete forms, thereby reducing cognitive demands and making comprehension easier. The role of visuals in clarifying meaning is particularly important in narrative texts, where chronological sequencing and logical organization play a central role. Similarly, the study conducted by Nizzu (2016) found that serial pictures significantly enhanced learners' ability to comprehend narrative structures. The common thread between these findings and the present research lies in the sequencing function of visuals,

which helps students recognize main ideas, connect supporting details, and build coherent mental models of the text. However, unlike Islamiah and Nurhasanah (2019), who directly measured comprehension outcomes through testing, the present study explored learners' subjective perceptions. This methodological distinction contributes a degree of novelty, as it sheds light not only on what students achieve but also on how they evaluate the medium and perceive its contribution to their own learning processes.

The second highest mean score was found in the dimension of Direct Experience ( $M = 3.71$ ). Students valued the way serial images provided contextual support during reading tasks and stimulated their imagination in engaging with the storyline. This finding is consistent with Halim and Arifin (2022), who reported that serial images transform abstract texts into concrete experiences, allowing learners to interact with content in more meaningful ways. Visual sequences not only supply background knowledge but also encourage students to predict events, infer meaning, and participate actively in classroom discussions. Observations conducted during the teaching internship corroborated this view, as students were observed to show visible enthusiasm when serial images were incorporated into lessons. The images served as a catalyst for dialogue, enabling learners to articulate their interpretations, negotiate meaning with peers, and construct shared understandings of the texts. Such results are echoed in Dewi et al.'s (2018) study on picture storybooks, which demonstrated that visual contexts enhance not only comprehension but also motivation and vocabulary development. The parallel between their findings and the present research highlights the broader pedagogical value of visuals as instruments of experiential learning, where reading is no longer confined to decoding text but expands into an interactive, multimodal experience.

Although the overall findings were positive, the aspect of Challenges recorded a mean score of 3.34, indicating that some students encountered difficulties when visuals were unclear or lacked sufficient detail. This result underscores the importance of both image quality and teacher scaffolding in ensuring the effectiveness of visual media. As Halim and Arifin (2022) also observed, ambiguous or poorly designed illustrations can lead to confusion and misinterpretation, ultimately hindering comprehension rather than supporting it. However, proper instructional guidance can mitigate such difficulties, enabling learners to use visuals productively. What makes the present study distinctive is its focus on students' lived experiences of these challenges, rather than measuring outcomes alone. By documenting learners' perceptions of difficulties, the study offers practical insights into how teachers might refine the use of serial-image media, for instance by selecting higher-quality visuals, aligning them carefully with textual content, and providing explicit prompts or scaffolds to guide interpretation. These implications are valuable because they highlight that instructional media is not inherently

effective; rather, its success depends on thoughtful integration and supportive teaching practices.

The aspect of General Perception produced a moderate mean score ( $M = 3.33$ ). Students recognized the usefulness of serial images but also pointed out that such media should not function as the sole instructional resource. Instead, they emphasized that visuals are most effective when complemented by teacher explanation and other interactive strategies. This perception is consistent with Ekarista (2018), who found that picture series improved comprehension most effectively when combined with teacher-led guidance and collaborative learning activities. Students' views in the present research thus reflect an awareness of the balanced role of media: while visuals can reduce linguistic barriers and enhance engagement, they cannot replace the broader range of pedagogical interactions necessary for holistic language learning. This perspective highlights the critical importance of integrating serial images within a multimodal instructional framework rather than using them in isolation.

Taken together, the findings suggest that serial images offer significant benefits for enhancing comprehension, stimulating motivation, and fostering classroom participation. By making texts more accessible, visuals allow learners to focus less on decoding individual words and more on constructing meaning across sentences and paragraphs. At the same time, they encourage imagination, prediction, and interpretation, thereby enriching the reading experience. However, the findings also reveal that students remain critically aware of the limitations of such media, recognizing the need for teacher support and supplementary strategies. Compared with earlier research that concentrated primarily on measurable learning outcomes (Ekarista, 2018; Halim & Arifin, 2022; Islamiah & Nurhasanah, 2019; Nizzu, 2016; Ramadhanty et al., 2021), this study introduces a distinctive contribution by examining learners' subjective experiences and perceptions. Such insights are essential for the development of student-centered approaches to English reading instruction, as they highlight not only what instructional media can achieve but also how learners themselves perceive its value and limitations. In this sense, the study underscores the importance of aligning instructional innovations with learners' perspectives in order to foster engagement, motivation, and long-term success in language learning.

## **CONCLUSION**

The findings of this study indicate that students generally perceived the use of serial images in English reading lessons positively, with the highest scores recorded in the aspects of learning process and skill development, followed by direct experience, challenges, and general perception. Serial images were acknowledged as effective tools that facilitated comprehension, enriched vocabulary acquisition, and encouraged participation, thereby confirming Mayer's Cognitive Theory of



Multimedia Learning (2005) and supporting earlier research emphasizing the pedagogical value of visuals. These results highlight important implications for English language teaching, particularly in junior high school contexts, where the integration of visual media can scaffold learners' understanding and create a more engaging classroom atmosphere. Teachers are encouraged to adopt serial-image media as supplementary instructional resources, while ensuring alignment with learning objectives and providing appropriate guidance to maximize their benefits.

Despite these promising results, the study has certain limitations. The data were drawn from a single school context and relied on self-reported perceptions, which may not fully capture actual performance or long-term learning outcomes. Additionally, challenges such as unclear visuals and uneven student preferences remind educators that serial images should not be used in isolation but integrated with teacher explanations and interactive methods. Future research could expand the scope by including diverse school settings, larger samples, or mixed-methods approaches to triangulate perceptions with achievement data. It is also recommended that further studies investigate how different forms of visual media, including digital and interactive platforms, might enhance students' engagement and comprehension. By addressing these limitations and exploring new directions, subsequent research can contribute to more comprehensive insights into the role of visual media in language learning.

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