

# **EFL Teachers' Perceptions of Using Picture Strip Stories in Teaching Speaking**

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## **Abstract**

Although studies on the use of picture strip stories have been prominent, exploring perceptions of EFL teachers remain under-research. To fill this gap, this study aims to explore EFL teachers' perceptions of using picture strip stories for teaching speaking skills. This study used qualitative research that collected the data through a semi-structured interview involving three purposively selected English teachers at Indonesian senior high schools in central Lombok, Indonesia. To analyze the data, this study used ATLAS. Ti 9 application with thematic analysis. The findings showed various perceptions of the teachers in using the picture strip stories in their English speaking classrooms, including their perceived ability to promote the students' collaborative learning, accelerate their students' speaking skill, and improve their students' focus on learning. It was also perceived that the students' vocabulary repertoire improved. Challenges encountered by the teachers when implementing the strategy were expounded as well. Limitations and recommendations for future studies on the use of Picture Strip Stories are discussed.

**Keywords:** *EFL Teachers, Perceptions, Picture Strip Story, Speaking skills*

## INTRODUCTION

Speaking is a tremendous and necessary skill that people might make more effort to learn. It has an essential function in delivering ideas and any information in communication. However, the issue is regarding how to communicate effectively and comprehensively since speaking as a communication medium entails linguistic features such as vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and others that students should consider. Regardless of its complexity, according to Leong & Inglés (2017), speaking is one of the most critical skills for developing and enhancing effective communication and a prioritized skill that students should improve. Hence, teaching English speaking skills to students as a second or foreign language (ESL/EFL) is becoming more crucial in this century since the language has become the international language that connects people worldwide.

However, many students find communicating in English challenging. One of the factors is due to limited opportunities to practice their speaking skills. Besides, a monotonous class is another challenge teachers should consider achieving an effectual classroom activity. Thus, English teachers need to comprehend the issue by providing the students with speaking chances and giving them practice speaking in English inside and outside the classroom.

In Indonesia, students have variety of English speaking levels. The main reason is that English is taught as a foreign language which is not communicated in everyday life. With regard to this issue, Wahyuningsih & Afandi (2020) explain two aspects that should be considered in speaking English; social and culture. Meaning that the effectiveness and efficiency in learning English would be highly dependent upon the environment where students learn and whom they communicate with. Hence, to get the proficiency in speaking skill, they need to speak English where it is spoken as a second language such as classroom, or related programs. As equally important, the role of English teachers in developing students' speaking skill is inevitably crucial. Many studies have also proven that the effectiveness of classroom teaching and learning significantly depends upon teachers' teaching strategies. One of the well-known strategies that supports English language instruction is picture story. In this matter, English teachers can implement this strategy to improve students' English-speaking abilities.

Furthermore, regarding the characteristics, Herdiawan (2020) stated that it comprises graphic art for reproduction that tells stories through pictures and words. Teachers can

provide certain pictures that trigger the students to tell the stories based on the pictures in their language. It will trigger the students to develop their ideas and hone their thinking skills, which will be beneficial in everyday communication. Similarly, according to Purnama et al. (2022), a picture strip story is vital for speaking since it allows students to practice speaking in a social setting. Concerning this matter, many studies have evidenced that the strategy is effective for teaching speaking. In this case, Wahyuni (2020)) discovered that a picture strip story provides an engaging setting that improves students' attention in the classroom. Besides, it encourages their participation during classroom learning activities and fosters them to utilize a foreign language for casual conversation. In addition, the picture strip story can improve some influential components of speaking, including fluency, vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation (Nagauleng et al., 2021).

However, most of the previous studies merely discussed the effects of picture strip story on students' speaking proficiency yet not considering teachers' perceptions in implementing the strategy. Besides, it is unavoidable that teachers must find challenges in teaching speaking by applying picture strip stories. Hence, concerning the above matter, the researcher aims to determine English teachers' perspectives on using picture strip story in teaching speaking and the challenges they faced. This study would also investigate how useful and effective the strategy, and how it is implemented in English language classroom settings. Indeed, the teachers' ability to apply the strategy appropriately would be highly influential in determining students' speaking development. In addition, this research also concerns whether picture strip story is applicable for the students and easy for the teachers to implement. To systematically guide this study, the researcher provides two research questions as follows.

1. What are the challenges teachers encounter when implementing picture strip stories?
2. How do the EFL teachers perceive the picture strip stories in teaching speaking?

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

In this part of study, the researcher elaborates related literatures to support the focus of the research which regards to teaching speaking skill in Indonesian EFL context. Besides, several previous related studies are also spelled out and deeply analysed which are aimed to compare and similirize with the current study.

## **Teaching Speaking in Indonesian EFL Context**

Indonesian government has taken an extraordinarily action and attention on English since the societies have come to a conclusion regarding their awareness about the significance of English as the main medium of worldwide communication (Wahyudin & Ali, 2018). The amendment of school-based to 2013 curriculum, as the current regulation, has guided students in Indonesia to be more independent and self-researchers. It is due to the change from teacher-centred to student-centred learning. The government argues that this regulation or concept would lead assist the students in achieving their spoken competence since they are given more time to practice and to conduct classroom learning activities more maximally. Besides, teachers are highly demanded to innovate compatible teaching strategies that are based on students' necessities and are suitable with their learning requirements.

Concerning this matter, Andini et al. (2019) argue that students would not have maximum proficiency in speaking by merely relying on having much exposures without being supported by the teachers' teaching strategies. Therefore, Widiati & Cahyono (2006) believe that extra endavours should be made by the teachers to promote the quality of English language instruction in Indonesia that leads to a good impact on students' English learning outcomes. Hence, the ability to adjust the appropriate strategy and students' characters and needs is highly imperative in teaching English.

With regard to the teaching method, teachers in Indonesia used to adopt various approaches. One of which was Grammar Translation Method (GTM) which focused on students' ability to translate various texts which highlights their writing and reading skills. However, since it was considered ineffective to develop students' speaking skill, the government changed it to Communicative Language Teaching Approach (CLT) (Rambe, 2020). It is believed to not only assist students' receptive skills (listening and reading) but can improve their productive skills (speaking and writing) as well. There are five bases of this approach following its effectiveness in language learning which include linguistic, sociocultural, actional, strategic, and discourse analysis aspects. These elements are believed could foster students' communicative competences in terms of using grammar, communicating in the sociocultural sphere, and so on.

### **Previous Studies on the use of Picture Stories in ELT Context**

The first study, analysed in this study, regarding the effectiveness of using the picture strip story in teaching speaking skills was conducted by Turnip et al. (2020). By employing a quantitative method with a quasi-experimental design and selecting 20 students as the research samples. The researchers found that the strategy effectively improved students' speaking skills since they could elaborate their ideas and viewpoints despite relying on the randomized pictures. The students stated that they were able to communicate confidently without having to think lengthily and with a long pause. Besides, in comparing to being given a topic or issue to discuss, they tend to choose picture strip story because the materials are deemed to be more easily understood. Hence, the teachers prefer this strategy to promote students' enthusiasm in speaking without giving them certain topic to discuss.

Secondly, Purba & Marbun (2019) researched to investigate the outcomes of implementing the picture strip story strategy in narrative speaking and discover students' responses toward implementing the picture strip story as a teaching strategy. The participants were 32 first-grade students in junior high school. The study's findings showed that the strategy has successfully improved ninth-graders speaking ability which can be seen from the progress of decreasing students' speaking problems. However, based on the interview result, the students showed positive and negative responses toward implementing the picture strip story strategy in learning narrative speaking. Some students revealed that the positive impact produced by the picture strip story because it was able to increase the enthusiasm for learning in class and gave students more opportunities to discuss and practice speaking in class. Meanwhile, some students responded to the negative impact of using picture strip stories in the classroom such as the class became noisy so that it disturbed the concentration of other students during the teaching and learning process.

The third research was conducted by Kosdian (2017) entitled *improving students' speaking skills by using strip story in the second grade of Senior High School*. This research was applied through collaborative action research conducted in two cycles. The subject of this research consisted of 34 students. The result showed that picture strip story could improve students' speaking skills, as evidenced by the 22 students who passed the *Minimum Mastery Criterion* (KKM). In addition, the result of field notes showed that the classroom climate during the teaching-learning process by using the strategy created a positive atmosphere. As an illustration, in cycle 1, no students chatted and played handphones during the teaching and learning during the strategy implementation. All of them in a group did the

task together and discussed it, answered the teacher's question, and spoke in English while expressing their ideas. In cycle 2, the classroom situations were completed with students asking questions to the teacher.

Fourthly, Lestari & Sholicah, (2022) researched to investigate the outcome of using picture strip story to improve students' speaking skills. Classroom Action Research (CAR) was chosen as the technique in this research. The subject of the research was the first-grade students in Mts Munir Ismail. To collect the data, the researcher used interviews, an observation checklist, and a speaking test. The result of the research has a positive effect of using picture strip story to improve students speaking skills. It was evidenced by their interest in learning and practicing their speaking skills through picture strip story. Besides that, the use of picture strip stories can improve students' speaking as evidenced by the results of the tests they have done after using picture strip stories. Therefore, picture strip story is an effective teaching material to be used in teaching speaking, especially for junior and senior high schools.

Last, Purnama et al., (2022) researched to find out the EFL students' perception of using picture strip story in teaching speaking skills. This research was conducted by qualitative approach. The sample of the research consists of twelve students. The results of this study indicate positive perception of EFL students for the use of picture strip story. Some aspects improved are students' self-confidence, language skills, motivation, and willingness to learn. More specifically, during the presentation or telling the story, the students explained that they were confident because they did not assume it was a task yet rather a story to be told to their friends. Besides, their ability to use English was improved since they were required to learn the materials (pictures and new vocabularies) before presenting in front of the classroom. In addition, although considered a simple activity, picture strip story requires creativity which motivates the students to compete with their classmates. Finally, this creative strategy was essentially evidenced to be effective for escalating students' speaking ability.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

### **Research Approach**

This study used a qualitative research approach where qualitative research as a scientific method is often used and implemented by a group of researchers in the field of social sciences, including the education sector. A number of reasons were also put forward, the essence of which was research qualitatively enriches the results of quantitative research. Qualitative research is implemented to build knowledge through understanding and discovery. The qualitative research approach is a process of research and understanding which is based on a method that investigates a social phenomenon and human problem. Creswell & David Creswell (2018) stated that qualitative data is a complete source of descriptions and explanations of human processes. Research on EFL teachers' perceptions of using picture strip story in teaching speaking is relevant to the use of qualitative research because it fulfills the characteristics of qualitative research, especially in terms of in-depth disclosure of data through interviews on what informants perceive about the challenges and positive impacts of using picture strip story in teaching speaking skills.

### **Participants**

In a qualitative approach, there are several terms used for designating research subjects. Some call it an informant because it is an informant who provides information about a particular group or entity, and informants are not expected to represent such a group or entity. Term others are participants. Participants are used, especially when the subject is representative of a particular group, and the relationship between the researcher and the research subject is considered meaningful to the subject. The terms informant and participant are interchangeably substantial is seen as the main instrument in qualitative research. In this study, the researcher used participants' terms to design the research subject. The participants of this study consisted of three English language teachers of SMK Islam Raudatul Husna, Kepok. The sampling of the participants was done through purposive sampling based on specific criteria. In this study, the criteria of the participants such as having experienced two years of teaching English using picture strip story, the English teacher of the SMK Islam Raudatul Husna, Kepok.

## Data Collection Methods

In the data collection, the researcher used the interview because the researcher wanted to get information about the challenges and the positive effects of using picture strip story in teaching speaking skills. Furthermore, to collect the data, a researcher used the zoom meeting application to interview the English teacher by adopting a semi-structured interview type. Ruslin et al. (2022) stated that a semi-structured interview is a data collection method that involves asking participants open-ended questions and following them up with probe questions.

## Data Analysis

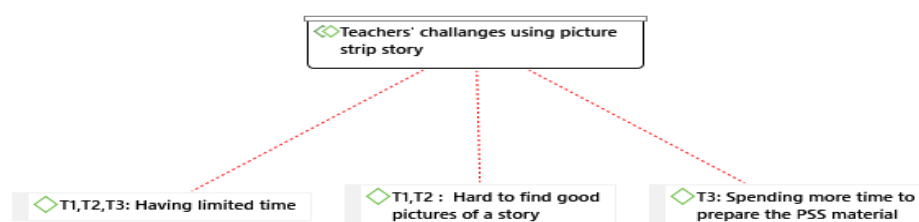
In this study, After all of the data was collected from the data sources, it was transcribed. Then the researcher did the coding and categorized the data with Atlas. ti software tools. Atlas.ti is one of the qualitative analysis software which is used to read large and complex data of various forms sources such as text, documents, audio, images, and videos (Soratto et al. (2020). ATLAS.ti can help to organize, code, and analyze our research data efficiently and structured. This software is capable of reading various types of data, such as audio data, video data, image data, and written data (articles, books, data surveys, or interview transcripts). This lets us in triangulate with different types of data collection. ATLAS.ti this used to develop grounded theory obtained from the network knowledge that explains the relationship between concepts and properties generated from ATLAS.ti

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

After the researcher interviewed the informant about the challenges and positive impact of using picture strip story in teaching speaking skills, the researcher did data analysis and write down the finding in this chapter as follows:

### Teachers' challenges using picture strip story

Table 1





*T1: Based on my experience, there were several obstacles that I faced when using picture strip story. First, a limited time when teaching in class 2 times 45 minutes a week. Second, there isn't much picture strip story material on the internet and it's hard to find good pictures according to the story you want to use.*

*T2: In my opinion, the obstacle faced when using picture strip stories to teach speaking is the first time learning English is very limited at school with a maximum of 90 minutes a week. Second, picture strip stories are rare to find stories with complete pictures on the internet.*

*T3: the obstacles I faced when using picture strip story in teaching speaking. The first is that it takes a lot of time to prepare the material because you have to find the right pictures and stories. Second, learning English at school is only 90 minutes a week, so time is very limited.*

Based on the findings above, there are several challenges faced by teachers when using picture strip story in teaching speaking. All teachers who became informants agreed that the first challenge they faced was the very limited learning time to teach English in class. Second, the challenge that teachers faced was that is difficult to find good pictures and stories based on the results of interviews with informants one and two. Finally, the use of picture strip stories requires a long preparation before using them in class based on the third informant.

### **Limited time in the class**

Based on the interview data, the researcher found that the challenge faced by teachers in teaching was time allocation. In senior high school, English subject was taught only one meeting a week. The time used to learn English was only 90 minutes in a meeting. Songbatumis, (2017) also stated that limited time makes it difficult for the teacher to be able to explain the material properly and will put more emphasis on learning for students so they can practice more in class. Therefore, English is taught for a limited time. Consequently, English teachers were challenged to give the lesson effectively and efficiently in a limited time. The data from the interview showed that the time allocation provided by the school was limited. Thus, the teacher had to manage the time effectively and efficiently.

### **Hard to find good pictures for a story**

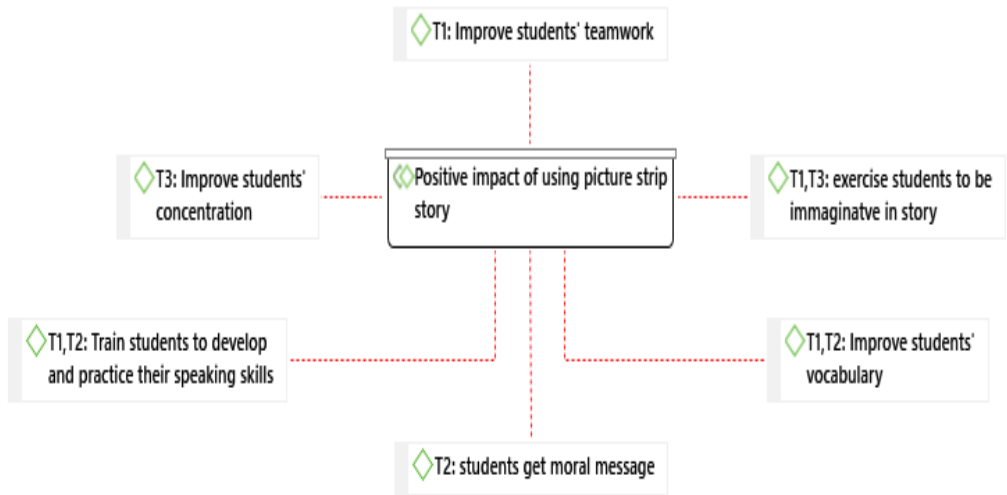
Based on the results of the interviews, two of three informants revealed that picture strip story are rarely found on the internet if you want to use them several times in class. Meanwhile, using unclear pictures of a story will give problems to students in the class when imagining a picture and adapting to the real story. Besides that, students are less interested in using picture strip story when the pictures used are not very good. Therefore, the teacher must have the initiative to make their own picture strip story and arrange them to suit the story that will be used. To provide convenience to teachers and students in the learning process of teaching speaking skills in the classroom. Islamiah & Nurhasanah, (2019) revealed that using good pictures encourages students to be more interested and actively practice speaking skills in class with their group mates.

### **Spending more time preparing the material**

One of the three informants revealed that one of the challenges faced by the teacher when teaching using picture strip stories was that it took a long time to prepare the material. The picture strip story used must be in accordance with the needs of students so that it will have a positive impact on students. Therefore, the teacher must look for material that is appropriate to the student's circumstances so that they can take lessons from the story. For example, the story of Malin Kundang is folklore that tells about a disobedient child to his parents who is cursed to become a stone. At this time many children ignore their parents' orders on the grounds that they are busy with other activities. Porter, (1958) revealed that teaching materials are a very important component for the smooth learning and teaching process in the classroom that can help teachers and students. So, the contents of teaching materials should be adjusted to the abilities of those who use them, both teachers and students.

**The positive impact of using picture strip story**

Table 2



*"T1: According to my experience, the positive impact that picture strip story have in teaching speaking skills is increasing student collaboration in discussions, increasing students' imagination of a story, and trying to improve and train students' speaking".*

*"T2: Based on my experience, there are several positive impacts that picture strip stories have for teaching speaking skills, namely training students to develop speaking skills, students getting moral messages from a story, and increasing students' vocabulary".*

*"T3: In my opinion, the positive impact in teaching speaking using picture strip story is to train students in imagining a story, and train students to be more concentrated, especially in determining the story according to the actual picture strip story".*

Based on the findings above, there are several positive impacts of using picture strip story in teaching speaking skills in the classroom. First, the first informant revealed that there were some positive impacts of using picture strip story in teaching speaking skills, namely increasing collaboration between one student and another student, increasing student vocabulary, training students to develop and improve their speaking skills, and training students to imagine a story. while the second informant revealed the positive impact of the picture strip story is that students get a moral message from the story used, trains students to develop and

improve their speaking skills, and is able to increase students' vocabulary. Finally, according to the third informant, the positive impact of picture strip stories is to increase student concentration and train students in imagining stories.

### **Improve students' teamwork**

Based on the results of the interview above, one of the informants revealed that the positive impact of using picture strip story was to increase collaboration among students. Yappi & Astriana, (2019) also revealed, teaching speaking skills by using picture strip story which is mostly done in groups to help students exchange ideas and give students to practice speaking skills. Teaching speaking with picture strip story is carried out in groups that would allow students to communicate in real situations. The strategy is essentially an effective way to create a variety of classroom discussion patterns, assuming that all discussions need rules to control all the activities in the class (Ade, 2018). The procedure used in the picture strip story can give students more time to think, respond and help each other in-group members. Moreover, this strategy is a simple learning model that allows students to work alone and collaborate. The advantage of this learning would enable the students to optimize their participation in the process of teaching and learning (Madjid, 2020). Therefore the goal of increasing student cooperation will be achieved.

### **Train students to develop and practice their speaking skills**

Based on the results of interviews with informants, it was revealed that the positive impact of using picture strip stories is to train students to develop and practice students speaking skills. These results were also expressed by Syafii, (2021) stated that the use of picture strip story was able to develop students' speaking skills because they were given more time in class to discuss and practice their speaking skills. Moreover, developing English speaking skills is one of the most important things in teaching English. Hence, the picture strip story method can train and develop students' speaking skills. With this regard, Mukmin (2021) stated that picture strip story can give students more time to practice speaking because they are allowed to discuss and present the results of their discussions in front of the class. Therefore, teachers make students as learning centers where teachers have only functioned as facilitators. Furthermore, Nagauleng et al. (2021) that a picture strip story is used for several reasons. These include encouraging silent students to express themselves toward progress and offering opportunities to use language widely. Real

situations can be created, and students benefit from the practice. Furthermore, Nagauleng et al. (2021) stated that the strategy is one of all communication methods that can develop students fluent in the language, promoting interaction in the classroom and increasing motivation.

### **Exercise students to be imaginative in story**

Based on the results of the interviews, two of three informants revealed that the use of picture strip story was able to give students the ability to imagine a story that was used while learning speaking skills. Sulistiyani, (2018) also revealed that picture strip story as a media that can stimulate students to imagine based on the stories used during the teaching and learning process in the classroom. Moreover, implementing picture strip story can lead the students to interpret the contents according to their imagination. Besides, they can re-express the story and reveal the results of their observations in coherent language. Picture strip story is a powerful tool to provoke, encourage, or motivate students to speak. Appreciation or understanding of a picture will differ from one student to another. Therefore, applying the strategy will be given result in better information for the listener. Generally, students use the language they listen to and read, which they will repeat in speaking or writing. It will assist teachers in developing students' speaking skills through the learning strategy that is carried out (Oktavia, 2018).

### **Improve students' vocabulary**

Two of the three informants revealed that picture strip story can increase students' vocabulary in teaching speaking skills because each picture contains keywords in a story. This opinion is supported by Khodabandeh, (2018) who revealed that picture strip story can support students to be able to increase their vocabulary based on the context of the story used and each picture has keywords. In language learning, vocabulary is the most important thing students must have. It is one of the elements of language that plays an important role in mastering spoken and written English (Khan et al., 2018). Essentially, teaching using picture strip story can provide opportunities for students to improve their vocabulary since each picture has keywords students can use to arrange appropriately according to the original story. Therefore, each student must seek the meaning of the keywords in each picture by collaborating with each group member to make it easier for them to understand the

story being told. In addition, the vocabulary of can be applied during presentations in front of the class or used to communicate in daily life.

### **Students get a moral message**

One of the three informants revealed that picture strip story can give a moral message to students because many stories are taken from folklore. Setiawan & Fahriany, (2017) revealed that learning narrative text using picture strip stories can provide moral value to students because many stories are taken from folklore. Teaching students with picture strip story strategy in speaking activity will create a conducive environment for improving students' learning involvement. Besides, it is considered a positive strategy to stimulate the development and growth of students as a basis for preparing for their further education. Furthermore, the picture strip story can be used to educate and form students' positive characters. The existence of life values tucked away behind the story in the picture strip story indirectly becomes an advantage obtained from the story. Hence, moral values can be learned by students through the strip story, which can be a lesson to run their daily life.

### **Improve students' concentration**

Based on the results of the interviews, the last positive impact of using picture strip story in teaching speaking skills was increasing student concentration. Zola, (2021) also revealed that learning by using a picture strip story can increase students' concentration because students will arrange the pictures to the original story. Concentration in teaching and learning becomes the students' primary attention and requires them to be fully aware during the learning process of the subject matter being studied (Yiu & Chou, 2021). Concentration is essential for students to follow the learning process so that the expected competencies can be mastered well. Besides, the importance of concentration is a prerequisite for students to be able to learn and succeed in achieving learning objectives. In addition, the teachers should bear in mind that picture strip story is one strategy that can increase students' concentration during the teaching and learning process. This is in line with the results of research by Qasemi (2020) that using picture strip story can improve students' concentration and learning outcomes.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study aimed to find out the challenges and positive impacts of using picture strip story in teaching students speaking skills. Therefore, English teachers have some perception of the picture strip story strategy in teaching speaking skills. First, during the process of teaching and learning the teachers have some challenges with using picture strip story such as limited time, hard to find good pictures of a story, and spend time preparing the material. Second, the teachers have some positive impact of using the picture strip story in teaching speaking skills such as students' imagination of a story, training students' concentration, rehearsing students in collaborating with their group mates, enabling students to increase their vocabulary, and training them in developing and practicing their speaking skills.

The results of this study show that the implication of the use of picture strip stories in teaching speaking has many positive impacts and challenges faced by teachers while teaching in class. The results of this study also stated that picture stories helped students increase their enthusiasm for learning to speak in class. However, using picture strip story in teaching speaking skills in the classroom is not an easy thing so teachers must have good skills and skills in communicating, and providing picture strip story. Today, teachers can access various sources of material from the internet, making the job of making picture strip stories easier. Therefore the use of picture strip stories in teaching speaking skills can make students more active and enthusiastic to improve students' speaking skills. This study, although successful in confirming teachers' perceptions of using picture strip stories in teaching speaking skills in their schools, is too small in terms of scope to generalize to other contexts. Further research into perceptions of using picture strip stories as synchronous teaching materials at a larger scale with many participants. A similar study conducted in the context of elementary schools can also shed light on whether or not teachers consider picture strip stories suitable as teaching material for elementary school speaking.

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