# Picture-Text Relationship in Taxi Driver's Picturebook

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*Abstract*

*to interpret their implied meanings based on Grice's theory of implicature.* ***1 (TELLE)***

This study aims to analyze the types of picture–text relationships and the contributions of illustrations to narrative meaning in Lucky's Taxi, a Grade 1 reading passage. The study applies Nikolajeva and Scott's (2001) theoretical framework of picture–text relationships, which explains how verbal and visual elements interact to construct meaning in children's picturebooks. Using a descriptive qualitative approach with content analysis, the study examines twelve illustrated pages, including the opening title page and eleven story pages. The data were collected through documentation and analyzed by identifying the relationships between written texts and illustrations, as well as the visual and contextual information presented in each picture. The findings reveal three types of picture–text relationships: enhancing, complementary, and symmetrical. Enhancing relationships provide additional visual details that strengthen the written narrative, while complementary relationships contribute information not explicitly stated in the text. Symmetrical relationships occur when pictures closely represent the information conveyed through words. Furthermore, the illustrations contribute to the development of setting, characterization, narrative perspective, and temporal progression. The study concludes that pictures and written texts work together to construct narrative meaning, with illustrations providing contextual and visual information that enriches the reading passage.

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***Keywords: picture–text relationships, illustrations, Nikolajeva and Scott, multimodal meaning, Grade 1 reading passage.***

## *INTRODUCTION*

*Reading is an important skill in early language learning because it enables children to recognize written words, understand information, and construct meaning. Children's reading materials are available in various forms, including fictional stories, informational books, expository books, moral stories, poetry, folklore, and picturebooks (Salins et al., 2025; Joo et al., 2021). Green and Keogh (2024) explain that narrative books present stories through characters, settings, and sequences of events, whereas informational books provide factual knowledge about subjects such as science, animals, and nature. Among these reading materials, picturebooks are particularly important because they combine written texts and illustrations to communicate meaning. Oberman (2023) highlights their educational value in supporting learning through visual and verbal information, while Muela-Bermejo and Tabernero-Sala (2026) emphasize the contribution of these elements to children's literacy development. The interaction between visual and verbal elements provides children with different sources of information that contribute to their understanding of a story.*

*Illustrations play an important role in children's reading materials by representing characters, actions, emotions, objects, and settings. They can repeat information presented in written texts or provide additional details that extend the narrative. Pantaleo (2025) explains that visual elements, such as colour, framing, and point of view, communicate ideas, emotions, and actions. Similarly, Elmiana and Shen (2025) highlight how illustrations provide contextual information about social interactions, characters, and familiar environments in children's picturebooks. Hidayat and Nugroho (2026) also examine narrative illustrations in the storybook I Love You Mom and highlight their role in communicating messages,*

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*presenting narratives, and creating emotional connections with readers. These findings suggest that illustrations function not merely as decorative elements but also as meaningful resources that contribute to narrative construction. However, the presence of illustrations does not automatically indicate improved reading comprehension, as their contribution depends on the information they convey and their relationship with the accompanying text. Therefore, examining how pictures and written texts interact is important for understanding how visual and verbal elements construct meaning in children's reading materials.*

*The relationship between pictures and written texts can be understood through the theoretical framework proposed by Nikolajeva and Scott (2001) in How Picturebooks Work. They explain that pictures and words interact in different ways to construct meaning in children's picturebooks. Their framework identifies five types of picture–text relationships: symmetrical, enhancing, complementary, counterpointing, and contradictory. Symmetrical relationships occur when pictures and words communicate substantially similar information. Enhancing relationships involve one mode developing or extending information provided by the other, while complementary relationships occur when pictures and words contribute different but interconnected information to construct a fuller meaning. Counterpointing relationships present alternative perspectives or information, whereas contradictory relationships occur when pictures and words communicate conflicting meanings. This framework provides a theoretical basis for systematically examining how illustrations relate to their accompanying written narratives.*

*Previous studies have explored the relationship between illustrations and reading comprehension. Takacs and Bus (2018) investigated how pictures support young children's story comprehension through an eye-tracking experiment involving 41 children. Their findings indicated that congruent pictures contributed more effectively to children's story retellings than incongruent pictures. Similarly, Eng et al. (2020) examined how illustration complexity relates to attention and comprehension among beginning readers, highlighting the importance of illustration design in reading materials. Other studies have investigated visual information and reading processes from different perspectives. Rasamimanana et al. (2025)*

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*compared comprehension in comics and traditional texts among skilled adult readers and found that although the reading formats influenced reading speed, comprehension scores did not differ. Frick et al. (2025) examined how pictures influence the activation of outdated information during reading. These studies provide insights into how readers process visual information and how illustrations relate to reading activities. However, their primary focus is on readers' responses, attention, and cognitive processes rather than the classification of picture–text relationships within a particular early-grade reading resource.*

*Other researchers have examined how visual and verbal elements interact to construct meaning in children's books. Damayanti and Febrianti (2020) investigated visual and verbal meaning-making in Tacky the Penguin, focusing on how visual and verbal resources contribute to the reading process. Martinez and Harmon (2012) explored how pictures and texts contribute to literary elements, including plot, character, setting, and mood, across picturebooks for different age groups. Damayanti et al. (2021) also examined visual–verbal relationships in Just Ask: A Children's Picture Book, investigating how these elements interact to construct meaning. Similarly, Yefymenko (2024) explored multimodal text–image relationships in picturebooks, particularly how visual and verbal resources represent interpersonal relationships. These studies demonstrate that pictures and written texts function as interconnected elements in the construction of narrative and visual meaning.*

*Research has also investigated picture–text relationships in educational materials. Koutsikou et al. (2021) analyzed verbal text–image relationships in multimodal science texts for preschool children, focusing on interpersonal meanings such as address, social distance, and involvement. Their findings demonstrate that relationships between verbal and visual elements can be systematically analyzed in educational contexts. More recently, Al Farisi et al. (2025) investigated word–image relationships in two children's picturebooks representing different reading levels. Their analysis identified enhancing, complementary, and counterpointing relationships in the lower-level book, while the higher-level book also included contradictory relationships. This study is particularly relevant to the present research because it directly examines different types of relationships between written and*

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*visual elements in children's reading materials. In addition, Dream and Liangi (2024) examined metafictive picturebooks and discussed how verbal and visual storytelling techniques contribute to narrative construction. Choi and Tan (2026) investigated multilingual picturebooks by considering the interaction of artistic techniques, typography, linguistic resources, narrative structure, and reading pathways. Other studies, including Serafini and Reid (2024), Moya and Pinar Sanz (2008), and Hermawan and Sukyadi (2017), have also explored multimodal meaning-making and the interaction between visual and verbal resources. Furthermore, Callow (2020), Chung (2024), and Pramestri and Priyana (2025) have examined multimodal interpretation in educational contexts. Damayanti et al. (2025) and Jaelani et al. (2026) have also investigated patterns of interaction between visual and verbal elements in children's storybooks. Collectively, these studies demonstrate that visual and verbal elements can repeat, complement, extend, and contribute different information to the construction of meaning.*

*Although previous studies have investigated picture–text relationships and multimodal meaning-making from various perspectives, their research materials, theoretical approaches, educational contexts, and analytical focuses differ. Some studies emphasize readers' comprehension, attention, and cognitive processes, while others examine visual meaning-making, literary elements, interpersonal relationships, narrative illustrations, or differences across reading levels. Although studies such as Al Farisi et al. (2025) have directly examined word–image relationships in children's picturebooks, their analysis compares books representing different reading levels. Other studies investigate visual and verbal interaction through different analytical perspectives and research materials. Therefore, further analysis of picture–text relationships within a specific early-grade reading resource is needed to provide a more focused description of how illustrations interact with written narratives. In particular, examining one selected chapter can provide a closer analysis of the relationship types and the visual and contextual information communicated through its illustrations.*

*To address this research gap, the present study examines Lucky's Taxi, a chapter from Big*

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*Book of Little Stories for Grade 1. Unlike previous studies that compare different books, reading levels, or readers' responses, this research focuses on the picture–text relationships within one selected chapter. It applies Nikolajeva and Scott's (2001) theoretical framework to identify and classify the relationships between illustrations and their associated written texts. The study also examines how illustrations provide visual and contextual information related to characters, actions, objects, and settings presented in the written narrative. By focusing on a specific early-grade reading resource, this study aims to provide a more detailed description of how visual and verbal elements work together to construct meaning.*

*This study employs qualitative content analysis to examine the relationships between illustrations and their associated written texts. Specifically, it addresses the following research questions:*

*1. What types of picture–text relationships are found in Lucky's Taxi?*

*2. How do the pictures provide visual and contextual information related to the written texts in Lucky's Taxi?*

*The study is limited to one chapter, with its illustrations and associated written texts serving as the units of analysis. No Grade 1 students are involved as research participants. Consequently, this research does not measure whether illustrations improve students' reading comprehension or learning outcomes. Instead, it focuses on identifying and describing the types of picture–text relationships and explaining how visual elements contribute to meaning-making based on the visual and verbal information presented in the reading material.*

## *RESULT AND DISCUSSION*

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*1. Result*

*This study aims to identify sarcastic implicatures found in the lyrics of Peradaban by .Feast and to interpret their implied meanings based on pragmatic theory. The analysis reveals that sarcasm is used extensively throughout the song to convey criticism of social injustice, discrimination, intolerance, oppression, and restrictions on personal freedom. The sarcastic expressions in the lyrics often carry meanings that differ from their literal interpretations, requiring listeners to infer the intended message through context. The findings are presented in Table 1:*

Abstract

This study analyzes sarcastic implicatures in the song Peradaban-Feast using a pragmatic approach. The objectives of this research are to identify sarcastic expressions found in the song lyrics and to interpret their implied meanings based on Grice's theory of implicature. This study employs a qualitative research design with the lyrics of Peradaban as the primary data source. The data were collected through documentation and library research methods and analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña. The findings reveal ten sarcastic implicatures in the song. These implicatures function mainly as criticism, protest, and mockery toward social issues such as discrimination, intolerance, abuse of power, social inequality, and restrictions on individual freedom. The analysis shows that the intended meanings of the lyrics are often different from their literal meanings and can only be understood through contextual interpretation. Among the identified functions,

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criticism is the most dominant. The study concludes that sarcasm in Peradaban serves as an effective pragmatic strategy for delivering social criticism and encouraging listeners to reflect on contemporary social conditions. Furthermore, the findings emphasize the importance of context in understanding implied meanings and contribute to the study of pragmatics, particularly sarcastic implicatures in contemporary song lyrics.

Keywords: pragmatics, implicature, sarcasm, song lyrics, social criticism.

INTRODUCTION

Reading is a foundational skill in early language learning because it helps children recognize written words, understand information, and construct meaning. In the early years of primary school, including Grade 1, children are commonl around six to seven years old, although the exact age varies across education systems. Reading materials for this stage often combine short written passages with illustrations so that young readers can access a story through both words and images (Green & Keogh, 2024; Joo et al., 2021; Salins et al., 2025).

Children's picturebooks are distinguished by the way written language and illustrations work together to communicate a story. Their illustrations are not merely decorative: they can depict characters, actions, emotions, objects, and settings, while the written text may present only part of the event. The reader therefore constructs meaning by connecting information from both

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modes (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2006; Serafini & Reid, 2024).

Illustrations may repeat information in the written text, make it more specific, or provide details that the text does not mention. Visual features such as colour, framing, facial expression, and point of view can guide readers' attention and communicate aspects of a narrative (Pantaleo, 2025). Illustrations can also provide contextual information about characters and social interactions (Elmiana & Shen,2025). Their contribution, however, should be examined through what the pictures actually show rather than assumed to improve reading comprehension automatically.Previous studies have examined how pictures influence children's reading processes and comprehension (Takacs & Bus, 2018; Eng et al., 2020; Frick et al., 2024; Rasamimanana et al., 2025). Other studies have focused on how visual and verbal elements jointly construct meaning in children's books and educational texts (Damayanti & Febrianti, 2020; Damayanti et al., 2021; Koutsikou et al., 2021; Al Farisi et al., 2025). These studies provide useful accounts of visual–verbal meaning-making, but their materials and analytical focuses differ. The relationship between pictures and written texts can be examined through the framework proposed by Nikolajeva and Scott (2006) in How Picturebooks Work. They identify five types of picture–text relationships. A symmetrical relationship occurs when pictures and words communicate substantially similar information. An enhancing relationship occurs when mode develops or extends information provided by the other. A complementary relationship occurs when pictures and words contribute

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different but interconnected information to create fuller meaning. A counterpointing relationship presents alternative or contrasting perspectives, while a contradictory relationship occurs when the picture and text communicate conflicting meanings. For example, an illustration of a character's worried expression may extend a sentence that simply states that the character is late; by contrast, a picture that shows a different but related aspect of the event may complement the written text. Although previous research has addressed picture–text relationships and multimodal meaning-making, further page-based analysis of a specific early-grade reading passage can show how these relationships operate within one continuous story. This study therefore examines "Lucky's Taxi," a chapter identified in the source material as part of Big Book of Little Stories for Grade 1. The analysis focuses on the dominant relationship between each illustration and its associated written text, as well as the narrative information conveyed visually.

Specifically, the study addresses the following research questions:
1. What types of picture–text relationships are found in Lucky's Taxi?
2. How do the pictures provide visual and contextual information related to the
written texts in Lucky's Taxi?

The study is limited to one chapter and treats its illustrations and associated story texts as the units of analysis. Grade 1 students are not involved as

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participants.
Therefore, the study does not measure students' reading comprehension, learning
experiences, or educational outcomes; it describes the relationship between the
visual and verbal elements in the selected reading material.

## METHODOLOGY

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach through content analysis to examine picture–text relationships in "Lucky's Taxi," a chapter from Big Book of Little Stories for Grade 1, as identified in the copy used for this study. The selected chapter consists of twelve illustrated pages (pp. 1–12): one opening title page and eleven story pages. The visual data comprise twelve illustrations. The verbal data comprise the title on page 1 and 49 narrative sentences across pages 2–12. The READ 1 and READ 2 reading prompts and the follow-up activities on page 13 were excluded because the analysis focuses on the story narrative and its corresponding illustrations.

Data were collected through documentation. Each of the twelve pages was examined and recorded as one unit of analysis. The written story text was identified separately from the reading prompts, and the main visual details in

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each illustration were noted, including characters, actions, facial expressions, objects, setting, and visual framing. Page 1 was treated as a title–image pairing because it presents the story title and an opening illustration rather than narrative prose.The analysis followed the five picture–text relationship categories proposed by Nikolajeva and Scott (2006): symmetrical, enhancing, complementary, counterpointing, and contradictory. First, the verbal information and the visual details on each page were identified. Second, the two modes were compared to determine whether the illustration repeated, extended, complemented, contrasted with, or contradicted the written information. Third, each page was assigned one dominant relationship based on its main contribution to meaning. Finally, the illustrations were examined for their contributions to four narrative elements: setting, characterization, narrative perspective, and time and movement. Because the study analyzes the reading material itself and does not involve Grade 1 students as participants, its findings concern the textual and visual construction of the story only. Claims about children's actual interpretations or changes in reading comprehension would require a separate reader-response orexperimental study.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### PICTURE–TEXT RELATIONSHIP FINDINGS (RQ1)

The page-level analysis identified three relationship types across the twelve

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illustrations. Complementary relationships were found on pages 1, 3, 6, and 11, where the pictures and words contribute different but connected information. Enhancing relationships appeared on pages 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, and 12, where the illustrations extend details already introduced in the written narrative. A symmetrical relationship was identified on page 10, where the illustration and text communicate substantially similar information. No clear counterpointing or contradictory relationship was found. Page 1 is treated as a complementary title–image pairing, while pages 2–12 represent story events. Complementary Relationship A complementary relationship occurs when pictures and words provide different but interconnected information, allowing readers to combine both modes to construct a fuller meaning (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2006). This relationship appears on pages 1, 3, 6, and 11. On page 1, the title "Lucky's Taxi" names the vehicle but does not describe its appearance or identify the driver visually. The illustration introduces Lucky smiling behind the steering wheel and makes the taxi recognizable. On page 3, the written text summarizes Lucky's morning routine and his trip to the petrol station, whereas the illustration focuses on breakfast and adds details such as the tableware, food, and sleeping cat. These details establish a domestic setting that is not fully described in the text. On page 6, the text states that Lucky checks the petrol and still has enough, while the illustration supplies a driver's-eye view of the dashboard, fuel gauge, road, and traffic. On page 11, the text reports that the attendant fills the tank and Lucky sighs with relief; the illustration shows the physical refuelling action. In these examples, the

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image and text select different aspects of the same situation and worktogether to complete the scene.

## DISCUSSIONS

The findings of this study indicate that the use of Duolingo in a mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) context contributes to the reinforcement of linguistic forms but does not optimally support the development of flexible language production. This is reflected in the participants' tendency to produce sentences that rely heavily on previously learned patterns. Their language output is predominantly reproductive rather than generative, suggesting that pattern-based exercises shape how learners process and produce language.

In terms of grammatical competence, errors such as *"I am go to school"* indicate that learners have not yet mastered the consistent application of grammatical rules. Although basic sentence structures are understood, appropriate verb usage remains problematic. From Ellis's (2015) perspective, effective language learning requires the integration of form-focused knowledge and communicative use. Without meaningful production practice, learners tend to recognize patterns without being able to apply them accurately in new contexts.

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Regarding lexical repertoire, the limited variation in vocabulary suggests a strong dependence on the input provided by the application. Learners tend to reproduce familiar words rather than use them flexibly across contexts. This finding aligns with Loewen et al. (2020), who argue that app-based learning is more effective in developing receptive skills than productive language abilities.

In terms of fluency, the results show that speaking performance is influenced by familiarity with learned patterns. P1 demonstrated relatively stable fluency in familiar expressions, whereas P2 showed more hesitation and pauses. This suggests that fluency reflects reproduction rather than spontaneous production. In addition, affective factors such as confidence and anxiety also influence fluency (Kohnke & Moorhouse, 2021).

For pronunciation, both participants produced generally intelligible speech, particularly for frequently practiced vocabulary. This indicates that repeated exposure contributes to phonological development. However, inconsistencies influenced by hesitation and lack of confidence suggest that pronunciation is also affected by affective factors, not solely by practice frequency (Shortt et al., 2023).

The most significant limitation was observed in coherence, where both participants were unable to develop ideas beyond isolated sentences. Their production lacked logical connections between sentences. According to Ellis

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(2015), effective language production involves not only sentence-level accuracy but also the ability to organize meaning across discourse. This limitation suggests that app-based learning alone does not sufficiently support discourse-level development.

Overall, the findings indicate that pattern-based exercises in Duolingo promote the development of formulaic language, where learners rely on fixed structures in language production. This supports Wray's (2002) view that formulaic sequences may enhance fluency but limit flexibility. In this context, learners demonstrate the ability to imitate and repeat, but not to modify or generate new structures independently.

These findings imply that the use of Duolingo should be complemented with communicative activities that encourage free and meaningful language production. Language learning should not rely solely on pattern-based exercises but should also provide opportunities for learners to develop ideas, vary structures, and use language in authentic contexts. Without such integration, there is a risk that learners will develop limited and inflexible language production, highlighting the importance of balancing structured practice and communicative use.

## CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the use of Duolingo in a mobile-assisted

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language learning (MALL) context supports the development of basic language production; however, it does not optimally foster flexible and independent language use. Both participants were able to produce simple sentences with understandable structures, yet they continued to exhibit grammatical errors, particularly in verb forms, as well as limited vocabulary variation.

The findings further indicate that language production tends to be reproductive rather than generative. Participants frequently relied on patterns provided by the application, showed dependence on external support, and demonstrated limited ability to modify sentence structures. In addition, while fluency and pronunciation were relatively adequate when using familiar expressions, performance was still influenced by hesitation and confidence-related factors.

The most significant limitation was observed in coherence, as participants were unable to develop ideas beyond isolated sentences. Their language production lacked logical connections between ideas, suggesting that application-based learning alone does not sufficiently support more complex communicative competence.

Overall, the findings confirm that pattern-based exercises in applications such as Duolingo are effective in reinforcing recognition of language structures but may constrain flexibility in language production if not

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balanced with communicative practice. Therefore, the use of mobile learning applications should be complemented with activities that promote free language production, enabling learners to develop more varied, contextualized, and communicative language abilities.

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