

ABSTRACT

The Use of Children's Short Stories to Enrich EFL Young Learners' Vocabulary

Abstract: Vocabulary learning among young EFL learners requires instructional contexts that enable them to encounter and engage with words meaningfully rather than relying primarily on isolated memorization. Children's short stories offer narrative and visual contexts in which vocabulary can be introduced and revisited as part of meaningful classroom experiences. This study aimed to explore the implementation of children's short stories in vocabulary teaching, investigate how the stories supported vocabulary learning, and identify students' perceptions of their use. A qualitative case study was conducted with twenty-eight fifth-grade students at SDN Sukarama. Five students representing different levels of English proficiency were purposively selected for semi-structured interviews. The data were collected through classroom observations, field notes, semi-structured interviews, and documentation across four classroom meetings using *The Lion and the Mouse* and *The Hare and the Tortoise*. The findings revealed that the stories were implemented through storytelling, visual illustrations, vocabulary introduction, pronunciation practice, repetition, questioning, and interactive vocabulary activities. The stories enriched the vocabulary-learning process by providing meaningful contexts for encountering unfamiliar words, visual support for understanding meaning, repeated vocabulary exposure, pronunciation practice, and opportunities for classroom interaction. Students generally perceived story-based vocabulary learning positively, particularly because the stories and illustrations made the activities more interesting and helped them understand unfamiliar words. Nevertheless, some students continued to experience difficulties in recalling and pronouncing particular vocabulary items. These findings suggest that children's short stories can enrich young learners' vocabulary-learning experiences by creating meaningful and engaging opportunities for vocabulary exposure and practice, although such enrichment should not be interpreted as statistically measured vocabulary improvement.

Keywords: *children's short stories; vocabulary enrichment; EFL young learners; vocabulary learning; qualitative case study*