

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the methodological framework employed in the present study. It explains how the research was conducted to explore the use of children's short stories in teaching vocabulary to fifth-grade EFL young learners. The chapter covers the research design, research participants, research site, research procedures, data collection, data analysis, and ethical considerations. These methodological components provide a systematic basis for collecting, analyzing, and interpreting the data in relation to the research questions.

3.1 Research Design

Research design provides a methodological framework that guides the researcher in addressing the research questions and conducting the study systematically. Since the present study aims to explore the use of children's short stories in vocabulary instruction within a natural classroom context, a **qualitative approach** was employed. Qualitative research is appropriate when a study seeks to develop an in-depth understanding of participants' experiences and a phenomenon within its particular context rather than primarily measuring variables numerically. Creswell and Poth (2024) identify qualitative inquiry as an approach that allows researchers to investigate complex phenomena through detailed and context-sensitive exploration.

More specifically, the present study employed a **case study design**. Case study is one of the established approaches to qualitative inquiry and enables a phenomenon to be investigated within a particular case and context (Creswell &

Poth, 2024). This design was considered appropriate because the study focuses on a specific educational context, namely the use of children's short stories in teaching English vocabulary to fifth-grade learners in an EFL classroom. Rather than examining the effectiveness of the stories through experimental procedures, the study seeks to obtain a detailed understanding of how they are used during vocabulary instruction and how the learning process is experienced by the participants.

The case in the present study is bounded by a particular classroom context, participants, and instructional focus. The investigation focuses on fifth-grade EFL learners and the use of children's short stories during vocabulary instruction at the selected elementary school. Data from classroom observation, semi-structured interviews, documentation, and field notes were used to capture different aspects of the phenomenon. Through these sources, the case study design enabled the researcher to examine the classroom implementation and participants' experiences in depth while maintaining the natural context in which the teaching and learning process occurred.

3.2 Research Participants

The participants of the present study were twenty-eight fifth-grade students at SDN Sukarama. The students had varying levels of English proficiency and had previously been introduced to basic English vocabulary. Fifth-grade students were involved because their English learning activities and vocabulary development were directly relevant to the focus of the present study. Their participation provided

an opportunity to explore the use of children's short stories in vocabulary learning within their regular classroom context.

In this study, the researcher also acted as the English teacher who conducted the vocabulary lessons using children's short stories. This dual role allowed the researcher to be directly involved in the teaching and learning process while investigating the phenomenon in its natural classroom setting.

Five students were then purposively selected to provide more detailed perspectives on their learning experiences. Purposive selection in qualitative research allows researchers to intentionally identify participants who can provide information relevant to the phenomenon being investigated (Creswell & Poth, 2024). The five students represented varying levels of English proficiency, including relatively high, moderate, and lower proficiency levels. Including students with different proficiency levels was intended to capture a range of experiences and perspectives regarding vocabulary learning through children's short stories rather than to statistically represent the entire class.

3.3 Research Site

The present study was conducted at SDN Sukaram, an elementary school where English is taught to fifth-grade students. The school was chosen as the research site because it provided an appropriate educational context for exploring the use of children's short stories in vocabulary instruction for EFL young learners. The setting was directly related to the focus of the study and allowed the phenomenon to be investigated within an authentic classroom environment (Creswell & Poth, 2024).

Furthermore, the researcher had direct access to the teaching and learning activities at the school as the English teacher of the class involved in the study. This access enabled the research to take place within the students' regular learning environment rather than in an artificially created setting. Therefore, SDN Sukarame provided a relevant context for investigating the use of children's short stories in vocabulary teaching.

3.4 Research Procedures

This study was carried out through a series of systematic procedures to ensure that the research process was consistent with the objectives of the study (Creswell & Poth, 2024). The procedures covered the preparation stage, the implementation of classroom activities, data collection, and data analysis. Each stage was conducted sequentially to obtain relevant information concerning the use of children's short stories in teaching vocabulary to fifth-grade EFL young learners.

3.4.1 Obtaining Research Permission

Before conducting the study, the researcher obtained permission from the principal of SDN Sukarame to carry out the research activities in the fifth-grade classroom (Creswell & Creswell, 2022). After permission was granted, the researcher coordinated the research schedule with the school to ensure that the activities could be conducted within the regular English learning schedule. This stage was necessary to ensure that the study was conducted with the school's approval and did not interfere with the established classroom program.

3.4.2 Preparing the Research Instruments and Instructional Materials

Following the approval, the researcher prepared the instruments required for collecting the data. These included an observation sheet, field notes, a semi-structured interview guide, and documentation (Creswell & Poth, 2024). The researcher also prepared the instructional materials by selecting children's short stories that were appropriate for the fifth-grade learners. The selection considered the students' level of English proficiency, the difficulty of the vocabulary, the suitability of the story content for young learners, and its relevance to the learning objectives. The selected stories were subsequently incorporated into the vocabulary learning activities conducted during the study.

3.4.3 Implementing the Teaching Activities

The teaching activities were conducted during the students' regular English lessons, with the researcher acting as the English teacher as well as the researcher. Children's short stories were used as the main instructional materials for introducing and reinforcing English vocabulary (Ellis & Brewster, 2014). Throughout the lessons, the researcher guided the students in understanding the stories, introduced unfamiliar vocabulary within the narrative context, and involved the students in activities related to the stories and target vocabulary. The implementation was conducted over four classroom meetings.

3.4.4 Collecting the Data

Data were collected during and after the implementation of the teaching activities. Classroom observation was conducted throughout the lessons to document the use of children's short stories, students' participation, classroom

interaction, and their responses to vocabulary learning activities. Field notes were used to support the observation by recording relevant classroom events. In addition, five students representing varying levels of English proficiency were selected to provide more detailed information about their learning experiences. Relevant documentation was also collected to complement the classroom data (Creswell & Poth, 2024). Detailed explanations of the data collection techniques and instruments are presented in the following section.

3.4.5 Analyzing the Data

After the data collection process was completed, the researcher organized and reviewed the information obtained from the different data sources. The data were examined to identify information relevant to the research questions and were subsequently organized into meaningful categories for interpretation (Miles et al., 2014). The analysis focused on developing an in-depth understanding of the use of children's short stories in vocabulary instruction and the students' experiences during the learning process. The specific stages and theoretical framework employed in analyzing the data are explained further in the Data Analysis section.

3.5 Data Collection

Data collection is an important stage in qualitative research because it enables the researcher to obtain information that is relevant to the research questions and the phenomenon being investigated. In the present study, the data were collected in the natural classroom setting to obtain a detailed understanding of the use of children's short stories in teaching vocabulary to EFL young learners. Since the study used a qualitative case study design, multiple data sources were used to

capture classroom implementation and participants' experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2024).

The data were primarily collected through classroom observation and semi-structured interviews. Classroom observation was used to examine the teaching and learning process as it occurred in the classroom, whereas semi-structured interviews were used to obtain more detailed information about the students' experiences and perspectives. Field notes were used to support the observation process by recording relevant classroom events. The following subsections describe each data collection technique in detail.

In this study, the observation was conducted while the researcher was directly involved in the teaching process as the English teacher. Therefore, the researcher observed the classroom activities while simultaneously implementing the vocabulary lessons using children's short stories.

3.5.1 Classroom Observation

Classroom observation provided direct information about how children's short stories were used in teaching vocabulary and how students participated in and responded to the learning activities. Observation is useful for examining behavior and events within their natural setting (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The observation focused on the implementation of the stories, vocabulary instruction, students' participation, classroom interaction, and students' responses during the learning process.

The observation was conducted during four classroom meetings involving all twenty-eight fifth-grade students. Since the researcher acted as the teacher-

researcher during the implementation of the lessons, an observation sheet was prepared to provide systematic aspects for documenting the classroom process. Field notes were also used as a supporting instrument to record relevant events, interactions, and students' responses that required additional description beyond the predetermined observation aspects. In this way, the observation data provided contextual information concerning how vocabulary learning through children's short stories took place in the classroom.

To ensure that the observation remained consistent with the objectives of the study, the observation aspects were developed based on the focus of the research. The aspects covered the implementation of children's short stories, vocabulary instruction, students' participation, classroom interaction, and students' responses. The observation guidelines are presented in Table 3.1.

Table 3. 1 Classroom Observation Aspects

No.	Observation Aspect	Indicators
1.	Implementation of Children's Short Stories	The use of children's short stories during the vocabulary teaching and learning process
2.	Vocabulary Instruction	The ways new vocabulary is introduced, explained, and reinforced through the stories
3.	Students' Participation	Students' involvement in answering questions, responding to the stories, and participating in vocabulary activities
4.	Classroom Interaction	Students' verbal and non-verbal responses, including interest, attention, and engagement during the learning activities

The observation aspects presented in Table 3.1 were used to guide the researcher in documenting relevant classroom events systematically. The

observation was not intended to measure students' achievement quantitatively; rather, it was used to obtain descriptive data concerning the implementation of children's short stories and the learning process experienced by the students.

3.5.2 Semi-structured Interview

While classroom observation provided information about what occurred during the teaching and learning process, observation alone could not fully reveal how the students interpreted their learning experiences. Therefore, semi-structured interviews were employed to complement the observational data by exploring the students' perspectives in greater depth. A semi-structured format was selected because it provides predetermined guiding questions while allowing the researcher to ask follow-up questions when clarification or further explanation is needed. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) explain that qualitative interviewing allows researchers to obtain information that cannot always be directly observed, particularly participants' experiences, perceptions, and interpretations.

The semi-structured interviews involved five fifth-grade students who were selected purposively from the twenty-eight students participating in the classroom activities. The students represented varying levels of English proficiency, including relatively high, moderate, and lower proficiency levels. This variation was intended to provide diverse perspectives and learning experiences regarding vocabulary learning through children's short stories rather than to make statistical comparisons among proficiency groups.

Each participant was interviewed once after the classroom implementation had been completed. The interviews were conducted individually using a semi-

structured interview guide. During each interview, the researcher took written notes to document the students' responses and other relevant information. Audio recording was not employed; therefore, the interview data were based on the written notes taken during the interview sessions. Follow-up questions were asked when necessary to clarify the students' responses and obtain more detailed information about their learning experiences.

The interviews were conducted to explore the students' experiences of learning vocabulary through children's short stories, their understanding of new vocabulary, their participation and engagement during the activities, and any difficulties they encountered during the learning process. An interview guide was used to maintain consistency with the research objectives while still allowing additional questions to emerge according to the students' responses.

The interview aspects were developed in relation to the focus of the study and the information that could not be fully obtained through classroom observation. The interview guidelines are presented in Table 3.2.

Table 3. 2 Semi-structured Interview Guidelines

Participants	Interview Aspects	Indicators
Students	Learning Experience	Students' experiences of learning English vocabulary through children's short stories
Students	Vocabulary Understanding	Students' perceptions of how the stories helped them understand the meaning of new

		vocabulary
Students	Vocabulary Learning	Students' experiences in recognizing and learning new words presented through the stories
Students	Engagement and Participation	Students' perceptions of their interest and participation during storytelling and vocabulary activities
Students	Learning Difficulties	Difficulties experienced by students when learning vocabulary through children's short stories
Students	Students' Responses	Students' opinions and responses toward the use of children's short stories in vocabulary learning

The interview guidelines served as a framework rather than a rigid set of questions. Therefore, the researcher could further explore relevant responses provided by the students while maintaining the focus of the interview on the research objectives. The interview data were subsequently used alongside the observational data to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the students' experiences of vocabulary learning through children's short stories.

3.5.3 Documentation

Documentation was used as a supporting source of data to complement the information obtained through classroom observation and semi-structured interviews. It provided additional records of the teaching and learning process and helped the researcher document relevant aspects of the use of children's short stories in vocabulary instruction. In qualitative research, documents can provide contextual and supplementary information that contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon being investigated (Creswell & Poth, 2024).

The documentation collected in this study included photographs of the teaching and learning activities, the children's short stories used during the lessons, lesson plans and teaching modules, and vocabulary learning materials. Each type of documentation served a different supporting function. The photographs provided visual records of the classroom activities, while the selected stories and vocabulary materials documented the instructional content presented to the students. The lesson plans and teaching modules were used to provide information about the planned learning objectives, activities, and instructional procedures related to the use of children's short stories in vocabulary teaching.

These documents were reviewed alongside the classroom observation and interview data to provide contextual support for the interpretation of the findings. Rather than functioning as a separate measure of students' vocabulary achievement, the documentation was used to complement the other data sources and provide a

clearer account of how children's short stories were incorporated into the vocabulary learning process.

3.6 Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted to organize, interpret, and develop meaning from the qualitative data collected during the study. Since the data were obtained from different sources, namely classroom observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation, each source was analyzed according to its characteristics and its contribution to answering the research questions. The analysis was conducted throughout the process of reviewing and interpreting the collected data rather than merely presenting the information obtained from the participants.

The analysis of the qualitative data was guided by the interactive model proposed by Miles et al. (2014), which involves three main activities: data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Data condensation involves selecting, focusing, and organizing relevant information from the collected data. Data display refers to arranging the selected information in an organized form to facilitate interpretation, while conclusion drawing and verification involve identifying meanings and patterns and examining them against the available data. In the present study, these analytical processes were applied to the observation, interview, and documentation data as described in the following subsections.

3.6.1 Analysis of Classroom Observation Data

The classroom observation data were analyzed to identify how children's short stories were implemented in vocabulary instruction and how the students

participated in and responded to the learning activities. The analysis was based on the observation sheet and field notes collected during the four classroom meetings.

First, the researcher reviewed the observation records and field notes and selected information that was directly related to the focus of the study (Miles et al., 2014). The relevant information was then organized according to the observation aspects, including the implementation of children's short stories, vocabulary instruction, students' participation, classroom interaction, and students' responses. Classroom events or information that provided further explanation of these aspects were also considered during the analysis.

The organized data were subsequently presented in descriptive form to illustrate patterns occurring across the classroom meetings. The researcher compared the observation records from the different meetings to identify recurring or meaningful patterns related to the use of children's short stories in vocabulary learning. Finally, interpretations were developed based on the observed classroom evidence and were later considered together with information obtained from the other data sources.

3.6.2 Analysis of Semi-structured Interview Data

The semi-structured interview data were analyzed to obtain a deeper understanding of the students' experiences and perspectives regarding vocabulary learning through children's short stories. Since the interviews were not audio-recorded, the analysis was based on the **written interview notes** taken by the researcher during the individual interview sessions with the five selected students.

The researcher first reviewed the interview notes repeatedly to identify responses relevant to the research questions. The relevant information was then grouped according to the main interview aspects, such as students' learning experiences, vocabulary understanding, vocabulary learning, engagement and participation, learning difficulties, and responses toward the use of children's short stories (Miles et al., 2014). Similar responses across participants were compared, while differing responses were retained when they provided meaningful perspectives on the students' experiences.

The categorized information was then organized into descriptive accounts to identify recurring patterns and variations among the participants' responses. The researcher interpreted these patterns in relation to the focus of the study and compared them with the classroom observation findings. This process enabled the interview data to provide further explanation of experiences and responses that could not be fully understood through classroom observation alone.

3.6.3 Analysis of Documentation Data

Documentation was analyzed as supporting data to provide additional contextual information concerning the implementation of children's short stories in vocabulary instruction. The documents examined in this study consisted of photographs of the teaching and learning activities, the children's short stories used during the lessons, lesson plans and teaching modules, and vocabulary learning materials.

The researcher reviewed and selected documentation that was relevant to the research questions and the classroom activities observed during the study (Miles et

al., 2014). The children's short stories and vocabulary materials were examined in relation to the instructional content presented during the lessons, while the lesson plans and teaching modules were reviewed to identify the planned learning objectives and classroom activities. Photographs were examined as visual records of relevant teaching and learning activities.

The information obtained from the documentation was not analyzed as an independent measure of students' vocabulary achievement. Instead, it was used to complement and contextualize the findings obtained from classroom observation and semi-structured interviews. The researcher compared relevant documentary information with the other data sources to support the interpretation of how children's short stories were incorporated into the vocabulary teaching and learning process.

To enhance credibility, triangulation was employed by comparing classroom observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation (Creswell & Poth, 2024). The researcher examined the extent to which information from these data sources supported, complemented, or provided different perspectives on the same aspects of the teaching and learning process. For example, students' participation and responses identified during classroom observation were compared with their accounts in the interviews, while relevant documentation was used to provide additional contextual evidence of the instructional activities. Through this process, the interpretation of the findings was not based on a single source of data but was developed by considering evidence from multiple sources.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations were taken into account throughout the research process to protect the participants and to ensure that the study was conducted responsibly. Ethical issues should be considered throughout the research process, particularly in relation to participants, data collection, privacy, and the reporting of research findings (Creswell & Creswell, 2022). In the present study, particular attention was given to research permission, students' willingness to participate, confidentiality, and the researcher's dual role as both the English teacher and the researcher.

Before conducting the study, the researcher obtained permission from the school to carry out the research activities in the fifth-grade classroom. The classroom teacher was also informed about the research activities involving the students. Prior to data collection, the students were provided with an explanation of the research activities in language appropriate to their level of understanding. The students expressed their willingness to participate in the activities and did not object to the documentation of the teaching and learning process.

Since the researcher also acted as the students' English teacher, particular attention was given to the teacher–student relationship during the research process. The students were given opportunities to express their experiences and opinions without being directed toward particular responses. During the semi-structured interviews, the researcher avoided leading questions and used follow-up questions only when clarification or further explanation was required. Their responses were

treated as research data and were not used as a basis for determining their academic grades.

The confidentiality and privacy of the participants were also considered when managing and presenting the research data. Students' names were not disclosed in the presentation of the interview findings; instead, participant codes or pseudonyms were used to protect their identities. Photographs collected during the classroom activities were used only for purposes related to the research, and identifiable information was handled carefully when the research findings and documentation were presented.

Overall, these ethical considerations were applied throughout the study to respect the participants, protect their privacy, and minimize the potential influence of the researcher's position as their English teacher. By considering ethical issues throughout the research process, the study sought to maintain responsible research practices while obtaining information relevant to the research objectives.