

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the findings of the study concerning the use of children's short stories in teaching English vocabulary to fifth-grade EFL young learners. The findings are presented based on the qualitative data obtained through classroom observation, semi-structured interviews, field notes, and documentation. In accordance with the research questions, the findings focus on three main areas: the implementation of children's short stories in vocabulary instruction, the ways in which the stories supported students' vocabulary learning, and the students' perceptions of learning vocabulary through children's short stories. Following the presentation of the findings, the results are discussed in relation to the theoretical perspectives and previous studies reviewed in Chapter II.

- **Findings**

The findings of this study are presented based on the data obtained throughout the implementation of children's short stories in teaching vocabulary to fifth-grade EFL young learners. The data were derived from classroom observations, field notes, semi-structured interviews, and documentation, as established in the research methodology. These sources were used to capture the classroom learning process as well as the students' experiences and responses during vocabulary learning through children's short stories.

The findings were analyzed qualitatively through the stages of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Relevant information from the different data sources was selected, organized, and compared

in relation to the focus of the study. Observation and field-note data provided evidence of what occurred during the classroom implementation, while the semi-structured interviews offered further information about the students' learning experiences and perceptions. Documentation was used to support and contextualize the findings obtained from these sources.

In accordance with the research questions, the findings are organized into three main areas. The first concerns the implementation of children's short stories in teaching vocabulary, particularly how the stories and vocabulary-learning activities were carried out during the classroom meetings. The second focuses on how children's short stories supported the students' vocabulary learning as reflected in the classroom data and students' learning experiences. The third addresses the students' perceptions toward the use of children's short stories in vocabulary learning. Presenting the findings according to these areas enables the data to be examined systematically while maintaining a clear connection between the research questions and the evidence obtained during the study.

4.1.1 The Implementation of Children's Short Stories in Teaching Vocabulary

The findings from classroom observations and field notes showed that children's short stories were implemented as the primary instructional material for vocabulary learning throughout four classroom meetings. Two stories were used during the implementation: *The Lion and the Mouse* in the first and second meetings and *The Hare and the Tortoise* in the third and fourth meetings. Across the meetings, storytelling was combined with vocabulary introduction,

pronunciation practice, visual illustrations, questions, and interactive classroom activities.

To provide a concise overview of the implementation, the stories, vocabulary focus, and main learning activities conducted across the four classroom meetings are summarized in Table 4.1.

Table 4. 1 Summary of the Implementation of Children’s Short Stories

Meeting	Story	Main Vocabulary Focus	Main Activities
1	<i>The Lion and the Mouse</i>	lion, mouse, forest, trap, rope, help, friend	Story introduction, pictures, vocabulary introduction, pronunciation, storytelling, questioning
2	<i>The Lion and the Mouse</i>	Review of previously introduced vocabulary	Story review, shared reading, pronunciation practice, questioning, picture-word matching
3	<i>The Hare and the Tortoise</i>	hare, tortoise, race, fast, slow, finish, winner	Story introduction, pictures, vocabulary introduction, pronunciation, storytelling, prediction and questioning
4	<i>The Hare and the Tortoise</i>	Review of previously introduced vocabulary	

As summarized in Table 4.1, each story was implemented across two consecutive meetings, with the initial meeting focusing mainly on introducing the story and target vocabulary and the subsequent meeting providing opportunities for vocabulary review and further practice. A detailed description of each meeting is presented below.

1. First Meeting

The first meeting focused on introducing children's short stories as instructional material for learning English vocabulary. *The Lion and the Mouse* was used as the first story. The lesson began with a greeting, attendance checking, and a brief introduction to the learning objectives. Before presenting the story, the researcher displayed several illustrations related to *The Lion and the Mouse* to activate the students' background knowledge and introduce them to the characters and context of the story.

The researcher then introduced several target words from the story, including *lion, mouse, forest, trap, rope, help, and friend*. The vocabulary was presented through pictures, pronunciation practice, and simple contextual explanations. After introducing the vocabulary, the researcher read the story aloud while showing the illustrations. At several points during the storytelling process, the researcher paused to ask simple questions, invite students to predict what might happen next, and encourage them to repeat unfamiliar English words.

Classroom observation showed that most students responded positively to these activities. The illustrations attracted their attention, while several students actively answered questions, repeated the target vocabulary, and asked about unfamiliar words. Some students were initially hesitant to participate but gradually became more involved after observing their classmates and receiving encouragement from the researcher. These classroom responses indicated that the first meeting provided students with an initial experience of encountering English

vocabulary through storytelling, visual support, and classroom interaction. During the first meeting, the teacher introduced vocabulary while presenting *The Lion and the Mouse*. The target words were connected with the characters, pictures, and events in the story. Students were asked to repeat the words after the teacher and respond to questions related to the pictures and story context. The observation indicated that vocabulary instruction was integrated into the storytelling process rather than presented only as an isolated list of words.

2. Second Meeting

The second meeting continued the use of *The Lion and the Mouse*, with greater emphasis on reviewing and reinforcing the vocabulary introduced in the first meeting. Rather than introducing a large number of new words, the activities provided students with opportunities to encounter the previously introduced vocabulary again through the same story context.

The lesson began by reviewing the characters and important events in *The Lion and the Mouse*. Illustrations from the story were displayed, and students were encouraged to identify the pictures, mention the English names of the characters, and recall the meanings of selected target words. Observation data showed that more students were willing to respond to questions and participate in classroom interaction than during the initial meeting.

The activities continued with shared reading and pronunciation practice. Students followed the story while practicing the pronunciation of the target vocabulary. The researcher also asked simple comprehension questions that required students to relate particular vocabulary items to events in the story. A picture-based matching activity was subsequently used, in which students connected English words with the corresponding illustrations.

The observation records indicated that many students were increasingly familiar with the vocabulary encountered in the previous meeting. Several students responded to questions and pronounced familiar words with greater confidence, although some still required guidance with pronunciation and word meaning. Thus, the second meeting primarily functioned as an opportunity for repeated exposure and further engagement with vocabulary introduced through the first story.

3. Third Meeting

The third meeting introduced a different children's short story, *The Hare and the Tortoise*. While the first two meetings had focused on *The Lion and the Mouse*, the third meeting provided a new narrative context and another set of vocabulary for students to encounter during the learning activities.

The lesson began with a brief review of the previous learning activities before the researcher introduced the characters in the new story through illustrations. Students observed the pictures and were encouraged

to identify the animals, initially using words they already knew and, when possible, mentioning their names in English.

Several target words related to *The Hare and the Tortoise* were then introduced, including *hare*, *tortoise*, *race*, *fast*, *slow*, *finish*, and *winner*. Similar to the first story, the vocabulary was presented through pictures, pronunciation practice, and simple contextual explanations. The researcher subsequently read the story aloud while displaying illustrations. During the storytelling process, students were invited to predict upcoming events, respond to simple questions, and repeat the newly introduced vocabulary.

Classroom observation showed that students generally responded enthusiastically to the new story. The characters and storyline attracted their attention, and a number of students asked questions and shared their responses to the events presented in the story. Students also participated in pronunciation and classroom discussion, although some continued to require support when dealing with unfamiliar vocabulary.

4. Fourth Meeting

The fourth meeting focused on reviewing and reinforcing vocabulary from *The Hare and the Tortoise*. As the final meeting of the classroom implementation, the activities provided students with further opportunities to recall and engage with vocabulary encountered in the previous meeting.

The lesson started by reviewing the story through several illustrations. Students were encouraged to recall the characters, events, and vocabulary associated with the pictures. Some students were able to

mention English words related to the illustrations, while others participated by responding to questions and explaining their understanding of the story.

Vocabulary reinforcement continued through interactive activities in which students identified pictures, matched words with their meanings, answered simple questions related to the story, and used selected vocabulary in short responses based on the narrative context. These activities provided repeated opportunities to encounter and practice the vocabulary introduced through the story.

Based on classroom observation, most students participated actively during the final meeting. Some students who had initially been hesitant were willing to attempt the pronunciation of English words and respond to classroom questions. Nevertheless, differences among students remained evident, as several students still required assistance in recalling the meaning or pronunciation of particular vocabulary items.

5. Summary of the Implementation Findings

Across the four meetings, the implementation followed a recurring pattern in which children's short stories provided the context for introducing, reviewing, and practicing English vocabulary. The first and third meetings primarily introduced a story and its associated vocabulary, whereas the second and fourth meetings provided further opportunities to revisit and reinforce vocabulary through the same story. Visual

illustrations, pronunciation practice, storytelling, questions, repetition, and interactive activities were incorporated throughout the implementation.

The observation and field-note data also showed variation in students' participation. While many students actively responded to the activities, some initially showed hesitation or required additional assistance with unfamiliar vocabulary. Nevertheless, the four meetings demonstrated how children's short stories were incorporated into vocabulary instruction through a combination of narrative context, visual support, repetition, and classroom interaction.

4.1.2 The Role of Children's Short Stories in Supporting Students' Vocabulary Learning

The findings indicated that children's short stories supported students' vocabulary learning by providing a meaningful context in which new English words were introduced and explored. Based on the classroom observations and field notes, students encountered vocabulary through the characters, actions, events, and situations presented in the stories. Rather than encountering the target words separately, students were exposed to them as part of the narrative context during the learning activities.

During the classroom implementation, the researcher directed students' attention to selected vocabulary appearing in the stories and provided explanations of unfamiliar words when necessary. Students were also given opportunities to respond to questions related to the vocabulary and the content of the stories. The observation data showed that these activities allowed students to encounter and

revisit the target vocabulary at different points during the learning process. Words introduced during storytelling could be discussed again when particular characters, actions, or events were addressed in classroom interaction.

Visual elements accompanying the stories also emerged as an important form of support. Based on the interview data, most of the interviewed students indicated that the pictures helped them understand and remember unfamiliar vocabulary more easily. The pictures provided visual references that students could associate with the words and situations presented in the stories. The combination of visual information and narrative context therefore appeared to help the students make connections between new vocabulary and its meaning.

The interview findings further showed that most of the students experienced vocabulary learning through the stories positively. They generally considered the activities enjoyable and exciting and reported that learning words through pictures and stories made vocabulary easier to remember. These responses complemented the classroom observations, in which students showed involvement in the vocabulary-learning activities associated with the stories.

However, the findings also revealed differences in students' experiences. Although most of the interviewed students indicated that the stories and pictures helped them remember vocabulary, some students still experienced difficulty in memorizing unfamiliar English words. This variation was evident among the interview participants, who represented relatively high, moderate, and lower levels of English proficiency. Thus, the use of children's short stories did not result in identical learning experiences for all students. Some students appeared to engage

with and remember the vocabulary more readily, while others continued to require additional support and repeated exposure to unfamiliar words.

The documentation provided further contextual support for these findings. The children's short stories, vocabulary-learning materials, lesson plans and teaching modules, and photographs of classroom activities showed that vocabulary instruction was integrated into the story-based learning process. These documents were consistent with the observation and interview data concerning the use of story contexts and visual elements as part of the vocabulary-learning activities.

Overall, the findings showed that children's short stories supported vocabulary learning in several ways: by presenting unfamiliar words within narrative contexts, providing visual support through pictures, allowing vocabulary to be revisited during classroom interaction, and creating learning activities that most of the interviewed students experienced as enjoyable and engaging. At the same time, difficulties in remembering unfamiliar words remained evident for some students. Therefore, the findings describe the ways in which children's short stories supported the vocabulary-learning process, rather than demonstrating a measurable increase in students' vocabulary achievement. Across the four meetings, vocabulary learning was supported in several interconnected ways. The narrative context allowed unfamiliar words to be introduced through characters, actions, objects, and events, while illustrations provided visual references for understanding meaning. Repetition and pronunciation practice allowed the students to encounter and practice the same vocabulary more than once. Classroom questioning and vocabulary activities also provided opportunities for students to

respond to and use the vocabulary during the learning process. In this sense, vocabulary enrichment was reflected in the variety of opportunities provided for students to encounter, understand, pronounce, and practice English words rather than in a quantitatively measured increase in vocabulary achievement.

4.1.3 Students' Perceptions toward the Use of Children's Short Stories in Vocabulary Learning

The findings from the semi-structured interviews showed that the students generally had positive perceptions toward the use of children's short stories in vocabulary learning. Most of the interviewed students described the learning activities as enjoyable and interesting. They expressed greater interest in learning vocabulary when the words were presented through stories and pictures rather than through vocabulary memorization alone. These responses were consistent with the classroom observations, which showed that most students participated enthusiastically in the storytelling and vocabulary activities.

One aspect that received particularly positive responses was the use of illustrations. Most of the interviewed students indicated that pictures helped them understand and remember unfamiliar vocabulary more easily. The illustrations provided visual references for the characters, objects, and events in the stories, allowing students to associate particular English words with what they could see in the pictures. The students therefore perceived the combination of stories and illustrations as helpful during vocabulary learning.

The students also responded positively to the vocabulary activities accompanying the stories. Based on the interview notes, activities such as repeating

words aloud, matching words with pictures, and answering simple questions provided opportunities for them to encounter and review vocabulary introduced through the stories. These activities were also observed during the classroom implementation, indicating consistency between the students' reported experiences and the classroom observation data. The same activities were documented in the original findings, particularly repetition, picture matching, and simple questioning.

However, the interview findings did not indicate that all students experienced vocabulary learning in the same way. Although most of the interviewed students perceived the use of stories and pictures positively, some students still experienced difficulty in remembering unfamiliar English words. Differences were particularly evident in how easily individual students could recall vocabulary and its meaning. This variation was relevant because the five interview participants represented relatively high, moderate, and lower levels of English proficiency. Therefore, positive perceptions toward the learning activities did not necessarily mean that vocabulary learning was equally easy for every student.

The classroom observation data supported these varied perceptions. Throughout the implementation, most students showed enthusiasm and willingness to participate in storytelling, pronunciation practice, vocabulary repetition, and question-and-answer activities. At the same time, some students continued to require assistance, particularly when recalling the meaning or pronunciation of particular words. For example, observation during the fourth meeting showed that although most students participated actively, a few still required assistance with vocabulary recall and pronunciation.

Overall, the findings indicated that the students generally perceived children's short stories as an enjoyable and engaging way of learning English vocabulary. The combination of narrative context and visual illustrations was particularly appreciated because students felt that it helped them connect unfamiliar words with meanings and made the vocabulary easier to remember. Nevertheless, individual differences remained evident, as some students continued to experience difficulty in memorizing unfamiliar words despite their positive responses toward the learning activities. Thus, the students' perceptions were predominantly positive, while their individual vocabulary-learning experiences varied according to their learning needs and levels of English proficiency.

- **Discussion**

This section discusses the findings of the study in relation to the theoretical perspectives and previous studies presented in Chapter II. The discussion is organized according to the three main areas addressed in the research questions: the implementation of children's short stories in vocabulary instruction, the role of children's short stories in supporting students' vocabulary learning, and students' perceptions toward their use. Rather than treating the findings as evidence of measurable vocabulary gains, the discussion interprets how children's short stories functioned within the vocabulary-learning process and how the students experienced their use in the classroom.

4.2.1 The Implementation of Children's Short Stories in Vocabulary Instruction

The findings showed that children's short stories were implemented as the primary instructional material across four classroom meetings. *The Lion and the Mouse* was used during the first and second meetings, while *The Hare and the Tortoise* was used during the third and fourth meetings. The implementation combined storytelling with visual illustrations, vocabulary introduction, pronunciation practice, repetition, questioning, and interactive vocabulary activities. The first and third meetings mainly introduced the stories and their target vocabulary, whereas the second and fourth meetings provided opportunities for students to revisit and practice previously introduced words.

This pattern indicates that vocabulary was not presented merely as a collection of isolated English words. Instead, the stories provided narrative situations in which students encountered vocabulary through characters, actions, objects, and events. This finding is consistent with the theoretical perspective presented in Chapter II that vocabulary learning involves developing knowledge of words through meaningful contexts rather than simply accumulating isolated lexical items (Nation, 2013; Schmitt, 2010). In the context of young EFL learners, meaningful and age-appropriate classroom activities can also provide opportunities for students to engage more actively with unfamiliar vocabulary (Umme, 2024; Liu & Reynolds, 2025).

The use of the stories as contextual instructional material also corresponds with the characteristics of children's short stories discussed in Chapter II. Children-

oriented stories can present language through accessible narratives in which vocabulary occurs within connected texts rather than separate word lists (Asnita & Marlina, 2022). Furthermore, illustrations, recurring language, characters, actions, and situations can provide contextual information that makes the narrative more accessible to young learners. The classroom implementation in the present study reflected these characteristics because vocabulary was introduced in connection with the storyline and was supported by illustrations and oral explanation.

Another important feature of the implementation was repeated exposure. The same story was used for two consecutive meetings, allowing vocabulary introduced in the first encounter to be revisited in the following meeting. For example, vocabulary from *The Lion and the Mouse* was introduced in the first meeting and reviewed through shared reading, pronunciation practice, questioning, and picture-based matching activities in the second meeting. A similar pattern was applied to *The Hare and the Tortoise* in the third and fourth meetings. The findings therefore suggest that the instructional value of the stories was not limited to the initial storytelling activity; the stories also provided a continuing context for subsequent vocabulary practice.

This finding can be related to the theoretical discussion in Chapter II concerning the gradual nature of vocabulary learning. Schmitt (2010) views vocabulary knowledge as developing progressively rather than through a single encounter, while Nation (2013) emphasizes the importance of different dimensions of word knowledge. The repeated classroom encounters observed in this study provided students with opportunities to engage with vocabulary through meaning,

pronunciation, visual representation, and contextual use. Therefore, the implementation of the stories supported a process in which vocabulary could be revisited through different classroom activities rather than introduced only once.

The implementation findings are also consistent with previous studies reviewed in Chapter II, although the present study differs in its particular classroom context. Previous research has employed storytelling in different forms to facilitate vocabulary learning among young learners. Maya et al. (2022) investigated digital storytelling, Gao et al. (2023) compared different storytelling approaches, and Brilianti and Sugirin (2024) incorporated puppet pictures into storytelling activities. In contrast, the present study focused specifically on children's short stories as the primary instructional material in a fifth-grade EFL classroom. The findings therefore extend the previous literature by illustrating how story-based vocabulary instruction can be implemented through a sequence of storytelling, visual support, vocabulary explanation, pronunciation practice, repetition, and interactive classroom activities without relying on an additional digital or experimental intervention.

Overall, the implementation findings indicate that children's short stories functioned not simply as texts to be read to the students but as a contextual framework around which vocabulary-learning activities were organized. The combination of narrative context, illustrations, repetition, pronunciation practice, and classroom interaction enabled vocabulary to be incorporated throughout the four meetings. This finding addresses the first research question by demonstrating

how children's short stories were practically integrated into vocabulary instruction within the investigated fifth-grade EFL classroom.

4.2.2 The Role of Children's Short Stories in Supporting Students' Vocabulary Learning

The findings showed that children's short stories supported students' vocabulary learning in several interconnected ways. The stories provided a narrative context for unfamiliar words, while illustrations offered visual support that helped students connect vocabulary with characters, objects, actions, and events. Repeated exposure to the target words through storytelling, pronunciation practice, questioning, and vocabulary activities also provided opportunities for students to encounter the same vocabulary more than once. These findings suggest that the role of children's short stories in this study was not limited to presenting new words, but also involved creating contextual and repeated opportunities for students to engage with vocabulary.

One of the most apparent forms of support was the contextual presentation of vocabulary. Students encountered unfamiliar words as part of the events and situations presented in *The Lion and the Mouse* and *The Hare and the Tortoise*. This finding corresponds with the theoretical perspective discussed in Chapter II that vocabulary knowledge develops gradually and involves more than knowing a simple word–meaning relationship. Nation (2013) emphasizes receptive and productive dimensions of vocabulary knowledge, while Schmitt (2010) describes lexical knowledge as developing progressively through learners' encounters with words. In the context of the present study, the stories provided opportunities for

students to encounter vocabulary within understandable situations rather than exclusively through isolated word memorization.

The visual illustrations accompanying the stories also appeared to support the vocabulary-learning process. Interview findings showed that most of the interviewed students felt that pictures made unfamiliar vocabulary easier to understand and remember. During classroom activities, the illustrations were used when introducing characters and vocabulary, reviewing previously introduced words, and asking students to connect words with their meanings. This finding is consistent with the discussion of children's short stories in Chapter II, which identifies illustrations as a feature that can provide visual information for understanding characters, objects, and events within a narrative. In this study, therefore, illustrations functioned as more than decorative elements; they provided visual references that students could associate with unfamiliar English words.

Another relevant finding was the repeated encounter with vocabulary across the learning activities. The same story was used over two meetings, and vocabulary introduced during the initial storytelling activities was revisited through pronunciation practice, questions, picture matching, and story review. This pattern is relevant to Liu and Reynolds (2025), whose systematic review highlights that vocabulary learning can be strengthened when young EFL learners engage more deeply with new words rather than merely encountering them without further processing. The findings of the present study similarly showed that students had multiple opportunities to engage with the target vocabulary through different activities connected to the same narrative context.

The findings also demonstrated the importance of active classroom involvement. Students did not only listen to the stories but were encouraged to repeat vocabulary, respond to questions, identify pictures, match words with visual representations, and provide short responses related to the stories. This corresponds with the theoretical discussion in Chapter II emphasizing the value of meaningful, age-appropriate, and interactive vocabulary activities for young learners. Umme (2024) highlights the importance of appropriate instructional support at the primary-school level, while Fauzi (2022) found that interactive vocabulary activities can provide enjoyable learning experiences while supporting learners' engagement with vocabulary. Although Fauzi's study employed songs and games rather than children's short stories, both studies point to the relevance of active learner involvement in vocabulary instruction for young learners.

The findings of the present study are also related to previous studies on storytelling and vocabulary learning. Gao et al. (2023) investigated different storytelling approaches in relation to vocabulary acquisition, while Brilianti and Sugirin (2024) examined storytelling supported by puppet pictures. Maya et al. (2022), meanwhile, investigated fifth-grade learners' perceptions of digital storytelling. The present findings support the broader view emerging from these studies that storytelling can provide a useful context for young learners' encounters with English vocabulary. However, the present study differs by focusing on children's short stories as the primary instructional material and by examining the learning process qualitatively within an actual fifth-grade classroom rather than

primarily measuring vocabulary outcomes. This distinction is consistent with the research gap identified in Chapter II.

Importantly, the findings did not show that vocabulary learning became equally easy for all students. Although most of the interviewed students reported that stories and pictures helped them remember vocabulary, some students continued to experience difficulty in recalling unfamiliar words. Similar variation was observed during classroom activities, where some students required additional assistance with word meaning and pronunciation. This finding indicates that children's short stories provided support for vocabulary learning but did not eliminate individual differences among learners. Therefore, the findings should not be interpreted as evidence that story-based instruction automatically produces the same vocabulary-learning outcomes for every student.

This variation can also be understood in relation to the theoretical view presented in Chapter II that vocabulary learning is a gradual process and that vocabulary instruction should be adapted to learners' needs and classroom conditions. Annajmi (2023) emphasizes that teachers may employ different strategies according to learners' characteristics and instructional needs. In the present study, students who continued to experience difficulty with unfamiliar vocabulary appeared to require additional repetition, explanation, and instructional support. Thus, the findings highlight both the potential contribution of children's short stories and the continuing importance of teacher support in vocabulary learning.

Overall, the findings suggest that children's short stories supported and enriched the vocabulary-learning process by combining narrative context, visual support, repeated exposure, pronunciation practice, and active classroom interaction. In the context of this study, enrichment refers to providing students with multiple and meaningful opportunities to encounter, understand, pronounce, and practice unfamiliar English words. However, this should not be interpreted as evidence of statistically measured vocabulary improvement or guaranteed vocabulary mastery.

4.2.3 Students' Perceptions toward the Use of Children's Short Stories in Vocabulary Learning

The findings revealed that the students generally had positive perceptions toward the use of children's short stories in vocabulary learning. Most of the interviewed students described the learning activities as enjoyable and interesting, and they expressed enthusiasm when vocabulary was presented through stories and illustrations. The interview data also indicated that the students particularly appreciated the visual elements of the stories because the pictures helped them connect unfamiliar English words with their meanings. At the same time, the findings showed that positive perceptions did not necessarily mean that all students experienced vocabulary learning with the same level of ease.

The students' positive responses can be understood in relation to the characteristics of children's short stories discussed in Chapter II. Stories intended for young learners generally present language and content in accessible forms, while illustrations can provide additional contextual information for understanding

characters, objects, and events. Akidah (2022) highlights simplicity of content and form as an important characteristic of children's stories, while the theoretical review also identifies illustrations and recurring language as features that can make narratives more accessible to young learners. In the present study, these characteristics were reflected in the students' responses, particularly their interest in the stories and their perception that pictures made unfamiliar vocabulary easier to understand and remember.

The students' enjoyment and enthusiasm also suggest that the use of stories created a learning experience that encouraged their involvement in vocabulary activities. This finding is consistent with the theoretical discussion in Chapter II concerning the importance of age-appropriate and engaging vocabulary instruction for young learners. Fauzi (2022), although examining song- and game-based vocabulary activities rather than storytelling, found that enjoyable learning activities could support young learners' involvement in vocabulary learning. Similarly, the present study showed that students generally responded positively when vocabulary learning involved stories, pictures, repetition, and classroom interaction.

The findings are also comparable with previous research on learners' perceptions of storytelling. The study by Maya et al. (2022), which is particularly relevant because it also involved fifth-grade elementary learners and examined students' perceptions of digital storytelling. The study forms part of the previous research reviewed in Chapter II showing that storytelling has been examined not only in relation to vocabulary outcomes but also in relation to learners' perceptions

and engagement. The present study adds a different classroom perspective by examining students' perceptions when children's short stories were used as the primary instructional material rather than through a specifically digital storytelling format.

Positive responses toward visual support can also be considered alongside Brilianti and Sugirin (2024), who incorporated puppet pictures into storytelling for vocabulary learning. Although the instructional media were different, both studies draw attention to the role of visual elements accompanying storytelling. In the present study, pictures accompanying *The Lion and the Mouse* and *The Hare and the Tortoise* were repeatedly used during vocabulary introduction, story presentation, and review activities. The students' interview responses suggest that these visual elements were among the aspects they perceived as helpful when encountering unfamiliar words.

However, the students' perceptions were not entirely uniform. Some interviewed students still reported difficulty in remembering unfamiliar English vocabulary despite enjoying the story-based activities. Classroom observations similarly showed that some students continued to require assistance with vocabulary meaning and pronunciation, particularly when recalling unfamiliar words. This finding is important because it demonstrates that positive attitudes toward an instructional activity should not automatically be interpreted as equal vocabulary-learning experiences among all learners.

The variation among students can be related to the discussion in Chapter II concerning the need to consider learners' characteristics when teaching vocabulary.

Annajmi (2023) found that vocabulary-teaching strategies at the elementary level may vary according to classroom conditions and learners' characteristics. In the present study, the different responses among students with relatively high, moderate, and lower levels of English proficiency suggest that children's short stories may provide an engaging learning context while some learners still require additional explanation, repetition, and teacher support. Therefore, enjoyment of the stories should be distinguished from ease of vocabulary learning.

This finding also contributes to the research gap identified in Chapter II. Previous studies have examined storytelling from different perspectives, including vocabulary outcomes, learner perceptions, engagement, and teachers' practices, but these dimensions have often been investigated separately. By examining students' perceptions alongside classroom implementation and the role of stories in the vocabulary-learning process, the present study provides a more contextualized account of how fifth-grade EFL learners experienced children's short stories during actual classroom instruction.

Overall, the findings indicate that the students' perceptions toward the use of children's short stories were predominantly positive. Most students perceived the activities as enjoyable and engaging, and the combination of stories and illustrations was considered helpful for understanding and remembering unfamiliar vocabulary. Nevertheless, some students continued to experience difficulty in vocabulary recall despite responding positively to the learning activities. Therefore, the answer to the third research question is not simply that the students "liked" children's short stories; rather, they generally valued the stories as an enjoyable and supportive way

of learning vocabulary while demonstrating different individual learning experiences.