

THE USE OF CHILDREN'S STORIES IN LEARNING ENGLISH VOCABULARY

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ABSTRACT

English is a foreign language that is quite difficult to understand. However, children's storybooks provide a solution for learning English. The use of storybooks in teaching English vocabulary can improve children's English language skills. This study aims to determine (1) the use of children's fairy tales in English vocabulary learning, (2) the process of implementing learning using fairy tales, (3) students' responses to fairy tale-based learning, (4) supporting and inhibiting factors in the use of children's fairy tales. This study used a qualitative method with observation and interview techniques. This study was conducted at SDN Padarek III on fourth-grade students. The results of the study show that the use of children's fairy tales in learning can improve students English vocabulary skills, and students responses to learning using fairy tales are very positive, where children who tend to be passive become active when learning, learning becomes fun, and students are motivated to learn english. The use of English fairy tales as a teaching medium for fourth grade students can foster students' literacy skills and mastery of new vocabulary.

Keywords: English Vocabulary Learning, Storytelling Media, Children's fair tales, Learning Motivation

A. Introduction

In the modern era, technological developments have become increasingly sophisticated and advanced, bringing with them a major impact, particularly in the field of education. CT plays a very important role in the world of education in solving various educational problems and

improving the quality of education. These developments have influenced the way students learn and the learning media they use, such as learning media that uses fairy tale books (Junaedy et al., n.d.) English is an international language that plays an important role in everyday life. English language learning in Indonesia

has been introduced since elementary school, even starting from the first grade through the introduction of numbers and simple object names. However, learning often still emphasizes direct memorization without meaningful context, causing students to quickly forget and become unmotivated (Ummayah et al., 2023).

However, most students still feel unfamiliar with the use of English, so the learning process has not been optimal. The government and teachers have tried to create interesting and non-monotonous learning, but students' interest in learning English is still low and their vocabulary mastery is also lacking (Ledy & Sujarwati, 2023).

English language learning in elementary school has a strategic position because it forms the basis for language development at the next level. One important aspect of language learning is vocabulary acquisition. Without adequate vocabulary, students will have difficulty listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Therefore, vocabulary acquisition should not be limited to memorization, but should be presented in a comprehensive context so that it is easier to understand and remember (Zeng et al., 2025).

In addition, the development of education in the 21st century requires learning that focuses not only on academic abilities, but also creativity, communication, collaboration, and critical thinking. English language learning in

elementary schools should be designed in a contextual and humanistic manner to suit the cognitive and emotional characteristics of students. Engaging learning media such as children's stories provide space for students to learn language naturally through experience, rather than simply memorization. This is in line with student-centered learning, which places students as active subjects in the learning process (Azzahra & Kaniadewi, 2025).

However, the reality is that English language learning in most elementary schools is still carried out traditionally, using lecture and memorization methods, without any innovation in media that is relevant to the world of children. This condition causes students to easily become bored and less enthusiastic, and their vocabulary mastery becomes limited because it is not presented in real situations. Initial observations show that many students know the meaning of words separately but are not yet able to use them in sentences or conversations. This gap between theory and practice highlights the importance of applying story-based learning methods that can provide a complete context of meaning (Rahmadiana & Safitri, 2024).

Through a learning approach using children's stories, students not only learn to understand vocabulary but also apply it in storylines, dialogues, and follow-up activities such as role-playing or simple

discussions. Thus, learning becomes more enjoyable and meaningful. This research is important because it offers an alternative solution to improve vocabulary mastery through media that is familiar to children. In addition, this research is also expected to contribute to the development of creative learning strategies for teachers, especially in English language learning in elementary schools (Otoluwa, 2022).

On the other hand, children's fairy tales are a form of story that is very familiar and popular with elementary school students. Fairy tales have characters, plots, conflicts, and moral messages that are easy to understand, thereby capturing children's attention and imagination. When fairy tales are used in language learning, students not only hear vocabulary, but also see its use in a complete context. This makes it easier for students to understand the meaning of words, remember them longer, and use them in other situations. Fairy tales also create a fun and humanistic learning atmosphere, encouraging students to be more actively involved in the learning process (Rahayu, 2024).

The use of fairy tale books today is not solely for learning to read, but fairy tales have been packaged in line with the times, accompanied by illustrations and supplemented with foreign language learning, namely the use of English in fairy tales. Fairy tales are no longer storybooks

that only contain writing, but fairy tales today are more advanced, equipped with attractive visual images that attract students' interest in learning, especially in literacy development. The use of English and Indonesian in fairy tales is an alternative learning method for students to increase their understanding of new vocabulary, especially English. Learning English through fairy tales is very suitable for children who love fairy tales ((Ambawani & Putranti, 2021) Based on these needs, the researcher wanted to conduct a study entitled "The Use of Children's Stories in English Vocabulary Learning," which aimed to describe the use of children's stories in English vocabulary learning by observing and interviewing learning practices directly. Because this study does not intend to test the influence or relationship between variables, but rather to describe the phenomenon in depth, the approach chosen is descriptive qualitative.

Through this research, it is hoped that a realistic picture will be obtained of how fairy tales are used in English learning in elementary schools, as well as how this medium contributes to students' understanding and mastery of vocabulary.

The results of this research are also expected to provide practical benefits for teachers in developing more creative, contextual learning that is tailored to children's needs.

B. Method

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive type. This approach was chosen because the study aimed to describe in depth the use of children's fairy tales in English vocabulary learning without intending to test the influence or relationship between variables. The qualitative descriptive method allows researchers to describe the learning phenomenon directly according to the actual conditions in the field, so that it is in line with the focus of the study, which is to observe the process, student responses, and supporting and inhibiting factors during learning.

The research was conducted at SDN Padarek III Elementary School in Lemahsugih District, Majalengka, with the research subjects consisting of an English teacher and 15 fourth-grade students, who were selected using purposive sampling based on their direct involvement in the learning process using fairy tales as media.

Data collection techniques were carried out through:

1. Direct observation of the learning process to determine how fairy tales were applied in vocabulary teaching
2. Semi-structured interviews with teachers and students to obtain in depth information about

responses, obstacles, and the benefits of using fairy tales

3. Documentation in the form of field notes, student assignments, and learning media used.

Data analysis was conducted using the Miles and Huberman model, which consists of three stages, namely:

1. data reduction by sorting important information according to the research focus
2. presentation of data in the form of a narrative description, and
3. drawing conclusions based on research findings

To ensure data validity, this study applied source triangulation and technique triangulation, conducted member checking with teachers to confirm data, and extended the observation period to make the research results more accurate and reliable.

C. Results and Discussion

Education and learning are important parts of human life. Language learning is also an important part of education. Language learning, especially English, requires various innovations to attract students' interest. English language learning, especially in schools located in rural areas, is still difficult to implement. For example, learning to support schooling in rural areas is sometimes lacking in learning support facilities. For example, there are still some

schools that do not have books or workbooks, so teachers are constrained in their teaching. Basically, parents in rural areas rely solely on school education. It is rare for parents to provide additional lessons or tutoring for their children, especially in English, which is difficult to understand, so children still lack understanding of English. This study of english language learning is closely related to children's lives, using fairy tales as a medium for delivering material. The results of this study were obtained based on various findings in the English learning process at SDN Pandarek III. The results were obtained through observation of the learning process, interviews with teachers and students, and analysis of various necessary documents. The findings obtained were then presented in three main discussions, namely the use of children's fairy tales in english vocabulary learning, the response and active involvement of students in learning, and finally, the changes in students' vocabulary mastery after English learning with the help of fairy tales as a medium.

This research was conducted at SDN Pandarek III, specifically in the fourth grade. Based on observations of learning in the classroom, English language learning in the fourth grade did not make sufficient use of media relevant to the world of children. Teachers focused on the competition to be achieved but relied only on existing textbooks and learning

videos. In this study, teachers were asked to collaborate with the research team to utilize fairy tales in english language learning, especially in learning English vocabulary. The first step was to ask students to determine which fairy tales they liked best. There were various types of fairy tales, such as legends, fables, parables, and humorous tales. Then, together with the teachers, the researchers determined which fairy tales were most relevant to the students' characters. The selected fairy tales were Dongeng Sang Kancil in english, Timun Mas in English, and Cinderella. The teachers read the fairy tales and the students listened. The teachers were provided with fairy tale books, illustrations, and short videos. The stories were read twice, with the first reading aimed at helping students understand the plot, and the second reading aimed at helping students understand the English vocabulary mentioned by underlining the words that were explained. The vocabulary that was the main focus of the lesson consisted of nouns (food, animals, objects), verbs (run, eat, jump), and adjectives (big, small, hungry). The teacher marked the vocabulary using the read, pause, point technique on the illustrations. After reading and listening to the story, the teacher provided enrichment activities for the students in the form of exciting games such as matching pictures, role play, and

vocabulary hunt in the story. These enrichment activities aimed to strengthen the relationship between words and meanings through the context of the story in a fun way.

Elementary school children greatly need interactive media in school learning (Karsih Asmi et al., n.d.). One type of interactive media is visual media such as storybooks, comics, and animated videos (Hilmi Aziz et al., 2024). In line with the results of observations in this study, the use of fairy tales in English language learning received positive responses from fourth-grade students, who showed enthusiasm and active participation during learning. English storybooks create a more cheerful learning atmosphere in the classroom and are able to attract students' attention because they are learning new things. Meanwhile, student involvement during learning, such as participation in learning activities, such as asking questions related to new understanding they have gained, creates interaction between students, such as imitating the dialogue in storybooks using English, thereby increasing students' knowledge of new English vocabulary. The use of English fairy tales not only elicits a positive response from students but also creates a more active and cheerful learning atmosphere so that students are enthusiastic about learning, increases students' understanding of English, and

makes learning more memorable and meaningful.

Based on the results of observations and interviews, it is evident that the use of English fairy tales can foster students' literacy skills and mastery of new vocabulary. In line with research (SITI FATIMAH, 2024) which explains that using an interactive approach through storybooks can increase children's focus on the content of the material presented by the teacher. Students enjoy reading when the book or story is interesting, such as when it is accompanied by attractive pictures and visuals and is equipped with new language such as English. They are not only reading but also learning. According to Widyahening and Rahayu (2021), the use of fairy tale media improves language skills, which has been proven to help students learn new vocabulary when reading fairy tales. Students do not just read, but they can understand the meaning of every sentence written in them.

E. Conclusion

Based on the results of research conducted on the use of children's fairy tales in teaching English vocabulary to fourth-grade students at SDN Pandarek III, it can be concluded that the use of fairy tales as a teaching medium has proven effective in improving students' vocabulary skills. Fairy tale-based learning creates a fun, humanistic learning atmosphere that is in line with the

developmental characteristics of elementary school children. Through the presentation of vocabulary in the context of a complete story, students find it easier to understand the meaning of words, remember them for longer, and be able to use them again in other situations.

Story based learning also increases student activity and motivation in the learning process. Students who were initially passive become more actively involved through interactive activities such as picture matching, role play, and vocabulary hunts. In addition, the use of stories supports the development of student literacy because, in addition to reading, they also understand the content of the story and practice new vocabulary.

Thus, the use of fairy tales as a learning medium is a creative, contextual, and relevant alternative for improving elementary school students' English vocabulary mastery. This study recommends that teachers make greater use of story based media in English language learning to support a more meaningful, interesting, and child centered learning process.

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