

USING STORYTELLING TO INCREASE VOCABULARY MASTERY OF ELEMENTARY STUDENTS

¹Muhamad Asrul Hasby

¹English Lecturer, FBMB, Mandalika University of Education, Indonesia

Corresponding Author Email: muhammadasrulhasby@undikma.ac.id

ABSTRACTS	ARTICLE INFO
Among the essential components of language learning, vocabulary mastery serves as the foundation for developing listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. Students with insufficient vocabulary knowledge often experience difficulties in expressing ideas and understanding language input. Traditional vocabulary instruction frequently emphasizes memorization and repetition, which may reduce learners' motivation and engagement. This study aims to investigate the effectiveness of storytelling as a pedagogical strategy to improve vocabulary mastery among elementary school students learning English as a foreign language. Vocabulary acquisition remains a significant challenge for young learners due to limited exposure and traditional teaching approaches. Storytelling offers contextualized, meaningful, and engaging language experiences that can facilitate vocabulary development. This classroom action research involved 30 fifth-grade elementary students of SDN 1 Ampenan in academic year 2025/2026 and was conducted in two cycles. Data were collected through vocabulary tests, observations, interviews, and field notes. The findings revealed a substantial improvement in students' vocabulary achievement, classroom participation, motivation, and confidence. The average score increased from 58.4 in the pre-test to 71.2 after Cycle I and 84.6 after Cycle II. The study concludes that storytelling is an effective instructional strategy for improving vocabulary mastery among elementary students.	Article History: <i>Received: 10th July 2026</i> <i>Revised: 15th July 2026</i> <i>Published: July 2026</i> Keywords: <i>Storytelling, Vocabulary Mastery, Elementary Students, English Learning, Classroom Action Research</i>

INTRODUCTION

Storytelling has been widely recognized as an effective educational strategy because it integrates language, imagination, emotions, and cultural values. Through stories, students encounter vocabulary in meaningful contexts, enabling them to understand and retain new words more effectively. Furthermore, storytelling encourages active participation and creates an enjoyable learning environment. This study aims to investigate whether storytelling can improve vocabulary mastery among elementary students and to identify the benefits of storytelling in English language learning. English plays a crucial role in global communication and education. In Indonesia, English is introduced from an early educational level to prepare students for future academic and professional challenges. Among the essential components of language learning, vocabulary mastery serves as the foundation for

developing listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. Students with insufficient vocabulary knowledge often experience difficulties in expressing ideas and understanding language input. Traditional vocabulary instruction frequently emphasizes memorization and repetition, which may reduce learners' motivation and engagement. Consequently, educators are encouraged to employ innovative teaching strategies that provide meaningful learning experiences. One promising approach is storytelling. Storytelling has been widely recognized as an effective educational strategy because it integrates language, imagination, emotions, and cultural values. Through stories, students encounter vocabulary in meaningful contexts, enabling them to understand and retain new words more effectively. Furthermore, storytelling encourages active participation and creates an enjoyable learning environment.

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RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed Classroom Action Research (CAR) using the model proposed by Kemmis and McTaggart, consisting of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting stages. The research participants were 30 fifth-grade students at an elementary school. Data collection instruments included vocabulary tests, observation sheets, interview guides, and field notes. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, while qualitative data were analyzed through data reduction, display, and conclusion drawing. This study employed Classroom Action Research (CAR) using the model proposed by Kemmis and McTaggart, consisting of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting stages. The research participants were 30 fifth-grade students at an elementary school. Data collection instruments included vocabulary tests, observation sheets, interview guides, and field notes. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, while qualitative data were analyzed through data reduction, display, and conclusion drawing. This study employed Classroom Action Research (CAR) using the model proposed by Kemmis and McTaggart, consisting of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting stages. The research participants were 30 fifth-grade students at an elementary school. Data collection instruments included vocabulary tests, observation sheets, interview guides, and field notes. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, while qualitative data were analyzed through data reduction, display, and conclusion drawing.

Table 1. Research Schedule

Activity	Cycle I	Cycle II
Planning	Week 1	Week 3
Implementation	Week 2	Week 4
Observation	Week 2	Week 4
Reflection	Week 2	Week 4

Table 2. Research Instruments

Instrument	Purpose	Data Type
Vocabulary Test	Measure vocabulary mastery	Quantitative
Observation Sheet	Observe participation	Qualitative
Interview	Gather perceptions	Qualitative
Field Notes	Record classroom events	Qualitative

RESEARCH FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The implementation of storytelling demonstrated significant improvements in students' vocabulary mastery. During Cycle I, students showed increased enthusiasm and participation. However, several students still experienced difficulties in remembering vocabulary items. After revising instructional procedures and incorporating additional visual support in Cycle II, students demonstrated substantial improvement.

The quantitative findings indicated that the mean score increased from 58.4 in the pre-test to 71.2 in Cycle I and further increased to 84.6 in Cycle II. Classroom observations also revealed improvements in student confidence, participation, and motivation. These findings support previous studies indicating that storytelling provides contextualized and meaningful language learning experiences.

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Table 3. Students' Vocabulary Achievement

Assessment	Mean Score
Pre-Test	58.4
Cycle I	71.2
Cycle II	84.6

The improvement in vocabulary mastery can be explained by several factors. First, storytelling provides repeated exposure to vocabulary in authentic contexts. Second, visual aids and teacher gestures facilitate comprehension. Third, storytelling creates an enjoyable classroom atmosphere that increases learners' intrinsic motivation. Therefore, storytelling can be considered an effective pedagogical strategy for young learners.

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CONCLUSION

This study concludes that storytelling effectively increases vocabulary mastery among elementary students. Storytelling improves students' vocabulary acquisition, participation,

motivation, and confidence. English teachers are encouraged to integrate storytelling into classroom instruction to create meaningful and engaging learning experiences. Future research may investigate the use of digital storytelling and multimedia-assisted storytelling.

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