

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1. 1 Background of the study

Vocabulary plays a vital role in mastering the four basic English language skills: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. A strong vocabulary foundation helps students understand instructions, grasp word meanings, and develop an interest in learning English. It is a key tool for expressing ideas, sharing information, and conveying emotions (Munir, 2016). Vocabulary development occurs naturally through experiences, reading, learning, and social interactions. When students build a broad vocabulary, they can communicate more effectively and engage in meaningful conversations.

One effective way to improve vocabulary is by using visual aids, such as pictures and illustrations. Studies have shown that integrating pictures into vocabulary instruction enhances students' learning experiences by making new words more straightforward to understand and remember (Sarmauli et al., 2020). Visual representations help young learners connect abstract words with concrete images, which improves comprehension and retention. Research also highlights that incorporating multimedia elements, such as images and videos, strengthens vocabulary learning by activating both visual and phonological memory pathways (Chung, M.A., 2023). Since the brain processes visuals more efficiently than text, pictures are a powerful tool in language instruction (Yasin, 2024).

Early vocabulary instruction is essential for young learners as they can quickly absorb new words, connect them with prior knowledge, and practice them in different contexts (Beno et al., 2022). Educators are encouraged to use engaging teaching methods,

such as picture-based storytelling, traditional short stories, song lyrics, and real-life objects, to support vocabulary learning (Octaberlina & Anggarini, 2020). These approaches simplify language learning and make it more enjoyable and meaningful. Beyond improving comprehension, visual aids make learning more engaging for children. Studies suggest that colorful and humorous images boost students' motivation and interest in vocabulary lessons (Gunawan, 2022). Additionally, collaborative activities, such as reading picture books, provide a rich context for vocabulary learning, allowing students to actively interact with words and enhance their retention (Sun, 2016).

Traditional short stories also play a crucial role in language learning. They offer multiple benefits, including improving language skills, fostering cultural understanding, and developing critical thinking. Traditional short stories are particularly effective in enhancing speaking and reading skills. Mantra and Maba (2018) emphasize that these stories can be used in structured activities, such as retelling and writing exercises, to improve speaking fluency and grammatical accuracy. These interactive methods provide a supportive environment for students to practice language skills confidently. Additionally, traditional stories stimulate children's imagination, which is essential for literacy development and problem-solving skills (Chademana et al., 2023). The narrative structure of these stories provides a meaningful context for language exposure, enriching vocabulary and comprehension (Safitri et al., 2023).

Besides improving language skills, traditional short stories also help young learners develop moral reasoning and critical thinking. By analyzing characters' actions and decisions, children learn important social values such as fairness, kindness, honesty, and perseverance (Isnaini, 2022). Engaging with these narratives allows students to reflect on

moral lessons and relate them to their own experiences. For instance, when a character is rewarded for kindness, students can internalize the importance of positive behavior in their daily lives.

Despite the proven benefits of visual aids and traditional storytelling in vocabulary learning, there is limited research on combining illustrated traditional short stories as a vocabulary teaching strategy for young learners (Zarfsaz & Yeganehpour, 2021). While many studies have explored the impact of visual learning and storytelling separately, little research has examined how their combination can enhance vocabulary acquisition and retention, particularly in culturally relevant contexts. Additionally, most studies focus on general visual aids rather than illustrations designed explicitly for traditional stories. This leaves a gap in understanding how folklore-based visual storytelling influences young learners' vocabulary mastery.

Furthermore, although cultural preservation is often discussed in education, little attention has been given to how incorporating local folklore into vocabulary instruction can promote language learning and cultural identity (Evy Tri Widyahening & Sri Rahayu, 2021). To address this gap, this study aims to investigate how illustrated traditional short stories, such as *Lona Rara* and *Lona Kaka*, can effectively teach vocabulary while fostering student engagement and cultural awareness.

To explore the effectiveness of visual storytelling in vocabulary learning, this study implements illustrated traditional short stories as instructional media. This approach enhances students' vocabulary comprehension through engaging visuals and meaningful narratives. By integrating storytelling with pictures, learning becomes more interactive and

enjoyable, helping students acquire vocabulary more effectively and improve their overall English proficiency.

The traditional story used in this study is *Lona Rara and Lona Kaka*, a well-known folktale from East Nusa Tenggara (NTT), specifically from the Sumba region. The story explores themes of jealousy and revenge between two sisters: *Lona Kaka (the elder)* and *Lona Rara (the younger)*. *Lona Kaka* becomes envious of *Lona Rara*, who receives more praise from their mother for her diligence. This sibling rivalry leads to multiple attempts by *Lona Kaka* to harm her sister. Despite these challenges, *Lona Rara* survives and ultimately returns to confront her sister.

This research focuses on using illustrated traditional short stories like *Lona Rara and Lona Kaka* to improve vocabulary mastery in young learners. Using local folklore in education supports cultural preservation by introducing traditional narratives to younger generations. The combination of illustrated storytelling and vocabulary instruction not only aids language comprehension but also fosters a deeper appreciation for cultural heritage.

This study aims to enhance young learners' vocabulary acquisition through the use of illustrated storytelling, particularly within the context of the *English Goes to the Kampung* (EGK) community. EGK is a volunteer-based initiative founded by Ms. Roswita Asti Kula, supported by both local and international donors. The program provides free English education to children in coastal regions, especially those with limited access to formal learning environments or private lessons. With 19 active learning posts, 18 in Sumba and one in Kupang. EGK is run by university student volunteers who are committed to empowering local youth. One of the core objectives of the community is to equip children

with sufficient English skills so they can take part in managing their own tourism sectors, reducing reliance on external workers.

In line with this mission, the present research explores how visual storytelling, specifically through illustrated traditional short stories, can make vocabulary learning more meaningful, interactive, and enjoyable. Visual aids serve not only to capture learners' attention but also to support memory retention by connecting words with context-rich images. Through this engaging method, the study seeks to assess the impact of illustrated stories in enriching students' vocabulary.

Thus, the research is titled: ***THE EFFECTIVNES OF USING ILLUSTRATED PICTURES OF TRADITIONAL SHORT STORIES FOR VOCABULARY MASTERY TO YOUNG LEARNERS.***

1. 2 Research Problems

1. Is the illustrated traditional short stories effective in improving young learners' vocabulary?
2. How is an illustrated traditional short story implemented in improving young learners' vocabulary?

1. 3 Objectives of the study

1. To find out if illustrated picture of traditional short story effective in improving young learners' vocabulary or not.
2. To find out how illustrated traditional short stories story implemented in improving young learners' vocabulary.

1.4 Significance of the study

The writer hopes that this study will provide benefits in the process of teaching and learning English, especially in teaching vocabulary

1. For students

By experiencing firsthand the implementation of visual teaching methods, students can improve their vocabulary mastery through more engaging and effective learning processes. This research is also expected to encourage students to master English vocabulary, students feel more relaxed and not bored in learning English vocabulary. And solve their problems in understanding the meaning of words, because teachers use appropriate techniques in teaching. Therefore, the students can use the vocabulary they have learned in communication.

2. For Teachers

With this research, it is expected that teachers can make effective teaching and learning process efforts by using illustrated pictures of traditional short stories as teaching methods. In addition, it is also expected that teachers become more aware that learning media is very important for children to understand the learning context quickly. Thus, the teacher becomes creative, always updates the information, and chooses the right method to make the teaching-learning process effective.

3. For Future Researchers

This study is expected to provide new knowledge for future researchers to conduct better research on teaching and learning cases, and to solve vocabulary problems, and also teachers who have problems in teaching and learning.