



## The Use of English Children's Literature to Enrich EFL College Students' Vocabularies and Reduce Their Reading Anxiety at English Department UNP

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### Abstract

*English literature is a medium that can be used as a way to enrich students' vocabulary and reduce their reading anxiety. This study aims to identify the application of English children's literature, especially short stories to enrich EFL college students' vocabulary mastery. The children's literature text which was used in this experimental research was a collection of short stories entitled "Life with the Lucketts" written by Morris (1965). This research which employs descriptive quantitative design research and a quantitative approach has the population from EFL College Students, particularly the students registered at English Language Education Program (ELEP), English Department of Faculty of Languages and Arts (FBS) Universitas Negeri Padang (UNP) academic year 2021/2022. By using a random sampling method, the sample in this study was taken from 40 students from two classes (K'3 & K'4). Data were collected through pre-test, post-test, and questionnaire. The pre-test and post-test were used to measure the mastery of students' vocabularies. Meanwhile the questionnaire which was adopted from Azhari Muhlis (2017,) was used to measure students' reading anxiety. Based on the study results, the pre-test value in the K'3 class was 553.7 and the post-test value in the K'3 class was 583.5. The results of the normality test of the data on both of the pre-test and post-test for the K3 classes were normally distributed with a pre-test sig. value of 0.069 and a post-test sig value of 0.078. In class K'4 the average score of the students in the pre-test was 566.2 and while the post-test average score for the K'4 class was 613.4. The results of the normality test of the data in the pre-test and post-test for class K'4 was normally distributed with a pre-test sig. value of 0.200 and a post-test sig value of 0.200. The results of the t-test (for student's vocabularies) carried out are the value of Sig. (2-tailed) is  $0.024 < 0.05$ . This means that there is a difference in the results of the pre-test and post-test. For the K'3 class reading anxiety, the grade before English children's literature (short stories) is 85.5 while after English children's literature (short stories) is 91.4. The average score before English children's literature for the K'4 class is 90.5 while after English children's literature is 93.3. The results of the t-test (for students' anxiety), the value of Sig. (2-tailed) is  $0.045 < 0.05$ . Based on the findings, it can be concluded that the use of English children's literature, especially short stories, can be a solution to enrich EFL college students' vocabulary and reduce EFL college students' reading anxiety at English Department of UNP. Other researchers are suggested to conduct the similar research by using the same genres but by using the different titles of stories. Besides, other researchers are suggested to conduct the similar research but by using the different genres of children's literature such as folklore, novels, fiction, etc.*

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## INTRODUCTION

Learning and mastering English today are very important. This is because English is an international language. Therefore, it is very essential to study the language from the earlier years of school. In world education, one of the requirements for graduation is to take an English test. Mastering this language is not an easy thing to do. There are four basic language skills that a student must master. Such as writing, speaking, reading, and listening. To be able to master and practice the language, students must be able to learn as much vocabulary as possible.

English children's short stories were selected among several kinds of literary genres because of the extent of the story and interest for nonnative language learners, especially for weak-intermediate stage of students (Handayani, 2013, p.136). The use of media such as short stories in English is intended to assist the teaching and learning process to achieve teaching goals. The use of short readings in English provides students with many benefits as they significantly increase vocabulary, a better understanding of the language, and the abilities and skills of readers (Guti et al., 2017, p.3).

There was found that there were difficulties in learning vocabulary in class (Thornbury, 2002, p.27). Students often have difficulty memorizing and understanding new vocabulary. Reading activities are the complete jump-start for acquiring a rich subject-related vocabulary (verbs, pronouns, adjectives), grasping new grammatical structures and ultimately improving comprehension and improving language acquisition skills. According to (Sanjaya, 2017, p.185), vocabulary training takes a long time to fulfill the requirements for mastering spoken English, both from school and from the environment. With mastery of vocabulary, students can communicate in certain languages, including spoken and written English.

Hatch, Evelyn & Brown (1995, p.1), state that the term vocabulary refers to a list or collection of words for a particular language that may be used by a speaker of that language. Vocabulary is a core component of language proficiency and provides many of the foundations for how well learners read, speak, write and listen (Richards & Renadya, 2002, p.255). Vocabulary requires several components that we must also master as an assessment of how far we master the language.

Reading is one way to increase students' vocabulary. One of the media that can be used is children's literature, especially short stories. English children's short stories were chosen among various types of literary genres because of the length of the story and the legibility for foreign language learners, especially for students at the lower secondary level (Handayani, 2013, p.136). The use of media such as short stories in English is deliberate to assist the teaching and studying process to achieve teaching objectives.

According to Hancock (2000, p.5), Children's literature is defined as "literature that appeals to the interests, needs, and reading preferences of children and prisoners as its primary audience." Children's literature is not just about picture books. There are four categories such as children's books, children's books, children's choices of books, and children's books (Marlina, 2013, p.45).

Short stories are one of the literary works that can be used as learning media in learning (Guritno, 2017, p.3). Short stories can offer a lot of vocabulary and fun in them. According to King (2001), using stories can offer a solution to such problems,

because stories allow for non-threatening learning situations, encourage a relaxed atmosphere, and allow fun and more learning to occur. Can be used as a medium and variable material in language.

Several previous studies have been conducted using short stories of children in English in reading to enrich vocabulary. Short stories became interesting materials to use to develop student vocabulary in elementary schools (Nazara, 2019, p.157). Several researchers also researched the use of short stories to enrich students' vocabulary, such as (Harris, 1969, p.57). In addition, (Poejilestari, 2019, p.47–57), has also investigated the effectiveness of using short stories in teaching reading.

Other studies have been conducted to reduce students' reading anxiety. The reading strategies were used with reading anxiety and gender after they participated in extensive reading as an additional course requirement (Lien, 2011, p.200). In addition, Pfoest, Artelt, & Weinert (2013, p.9), also conducted research on reducing students' reading anxiety using the scaffolded reading experience method. The strategies used in the scaffolded reading experience are pre-reading, post-reading will vary and during-reading, depending on the planning stage made previously

There are a lot of studies conducted on EFL students' anxiety, for instance, Cakıcı (2016), Sadiq (2017), Neman & Ganap (2018), and Fadlan. (2020), and Dikmen (2021). Furthermore, the research related to students' anxiety, particularly on their receptive and productive. English skills have also been conducted by many researchers. First, students' listening anxiety had been studied by Agustiana (2019), Susilowati (2019). Adnan, Marlina, Annisa (2020). Rahmat, Adnan, Marlina (2020), Adnan, Marlina & Shawfani (2020), Raza (2020), Iftanti & Prastiyo (2021), Hutapea, Adnan, & Marlina (2021), and Marlina, Adna, & Trisno (2021). Second, students' reading anxiety had been studied by Saito, Garza and Horwitz (1999), Zhao (2009), Lien (2011), Zhao, Guo, & Dynia, (2013), Mohammadpur & Ghafournia (2015), and Alfaruq (2019). Third, students writing anxiety had been studied by Heaton and Pray (1982), Petzel, Wenzel (1993), Leki (1999), Cheng (2004), Atay & Kurt (2007), Yaman (2010), and Wahyuni, Marlina, & Oktavia (2019). Other studies have been conducted about speaking anxiety by Mukminin et al. (2015), Aling (2016), Irawan, Warni & Wijirahayu (2018), Asysyifa, Handayani, Rizkiani (2019), Putri & Marlina (2019), and Qurnia & Marlina (2020). However, there is no study about reducing EFL students' reading anxiety by using children's literature especially short stories yet. Consequently, given the foregoing context, it encourages researchers to research *The Use of English Children's Literature to Improving EFL College Students' Vocabulary and Decreasing Their Reading Anxiety at the English Department UNP*.

## METHOD

The method is a quantitative approach, this study employs a descriptive methodology. Descriptive quantitative is applied in this research. According to McMillan (2008) states that "A descriptive study only describes a phenomenon". The description is usually in the form of a percentage or frequency and sometimes variability. The purpose of descriptive quantitative research is a comprehensive summary, in everyday terms, of a particular event experienced by a person or group of individuals. Descriptive method of collecting data through a questionnaire. The

main data were collected from the questionnaire.

The population of this research was EFL College Students, particularly the students registered at English Language Education Program (ELEP), English Department of Faculty of Languages and Arts (FBS) Universitas Negeri Padang (UNP) academic year 2021/2022. The sample of this research is two classes the basic reading class. The sampling technique used in this research is random sampling. The sample of this research was 40 students which were divided into two classes. There are 20 students from K'3 and 20 students from K'4.

The instruments of this research were pre-test, post-test. A questionnaire was used to collect the data. Pre- and post-test questionnaires were given to the students to complete. After that, the data were analyzed to get the difference in the results of the pre-test and post-test. The questionnaire in this study used a Likert scale with five alternative answers, that is:

**Table Score Answers for Each Statement**

| Answer Option | Category          |
|---------------|-------------------|
| 5             | Strongly Agree    |
| 4             | Agree             |
| 3             | No Idea           |
| 2             | Disagree          |
| 1             | Strongly Disagree |

Data entering, editing, coding, and data structuring are some of the tasks that were completed during the data processing stage. Microsoft Excel was used for data storage. The information was ready to be processed once it had been determined that it was valid. Using the SPSS 20.00 application, analyze data.

1. Data Description

The test was analyzed from the average value of the pre-test and post-test. The mean, standard deviation, and results of the pre and post-test scores. To find out whether students have made any progress as a result of using short stories to enrich the vocabulary and reduce students' reading anxiety.

2. T-test

The paired sample t-test was applied to determine whether there is a difference in the average of two samples that are paired or related. Santoso (2014, p.265), the significance value (Sig.) of the results from the SPSS output serves as the foundation for the following principles for decision-making in the paired sample t-test:

- a. The value of Sig. (2-tailed) < 0.05, later, there are an influence or difference between the data.
- b. On the other hand, if the value of Sig.92-tailed) > 0.05, then there is no effect or difference between the data.

**RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

***Research findings (tentative)***

The data in this study were obtained through a questionnaire from EFL College Students in the English Department of Universitas Negeri Padang academic

year 2021/2022 who were members of K'3 and K'4 as many as 20 people in each class. Questionnaire in the form of pre-test and post-test, analyzed by independent-Sample t-test analysis of the pre-test aims to determine whether there is a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores.

After analyzing the data, the researcher found that the use of English children's literature can be a solution to increasing students' vocabulary and decreasing reading anxiety.

**a. Description of the Results of the Students' Pre-test and Post-test in K'3 Class**

|                    | N  | Minimum | Maximum | Mean  | Std. Deviation |
|--------------------|----|---------|---------|-------|----------------|
| Pre-Test           | 20 | 245     | 668     | 553,7 | 90,5           |
| Post-Test          | 20 | 497     | 676     | 580,5 | 43,1           |
| Valid N (listwise) | 20 |         |         |       |                |

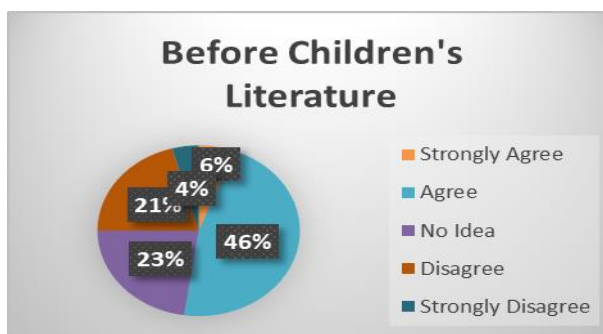
The K'3 class average after (post-test) using English children's literature was higher than the K'3 class average before (pre-test) using English children's literature. The average pre-test for the K'3 class is 553.7 while the post-test average for the K'3 class is 580.5. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is an increase in student scores of K'3 students after using English children's literature in increasing students' vocabulary.

**b. Description of Students' Pre-test and Post-test Results in K'4 Class**

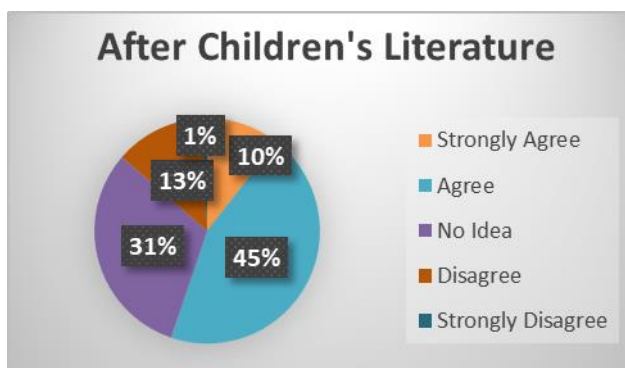
|                    | N  | Minimum | Maximum | Mean  | Std. Deviation |
|--------------------|----|---------|---------|-------|----------------|
| Pre-Test           | 20 | 430     | 680     | 566,2 | 86,1           |
| Post-Test          | 20 | 473     | 702     | 613,4 | 65,5           |
| Valid N (listwise) | 20 |         |         |       |                |

The average obtained by the K'4 class after (post-test) using English children's literature is higher than the average K'4 class before (pre-test) using English children's literature. The average pre-test for the K'4 class is 566.2 while the post-test average for K'4 is 613.4. Thus, it can be concluded that there is an increase in the grades of K'4 students after using English children's literature in increasing students' vocabulary.

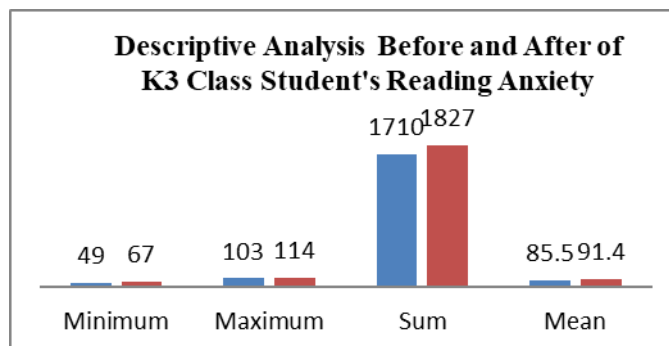
**c. Description of ELF Students' Anxiety Before and After Using Children's Literature (Short Stories) at K'3 Class**



The K'3 class answers before using children's literature were 6% of students answered Strongly Agree, 46% of students answered Agree, 23% of students answered No idea, 21% of students answered Disagree and 4% of students answered Strongly Disagree.

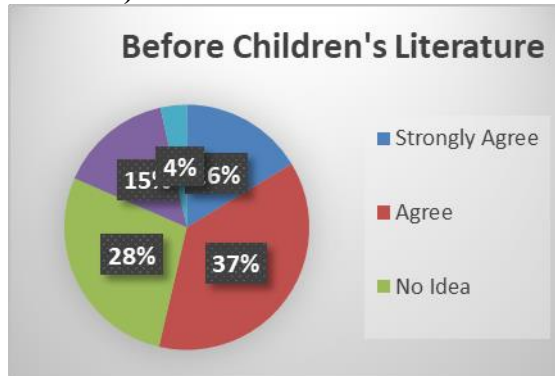


Following the use of children's literature, it is evident in the K'3 class answer diagram, that 10% of students answered strongly agree, 45% students answered agree, 31% students answered no idea, 13% students answered disagree and 1% of students answered strongly disagree.

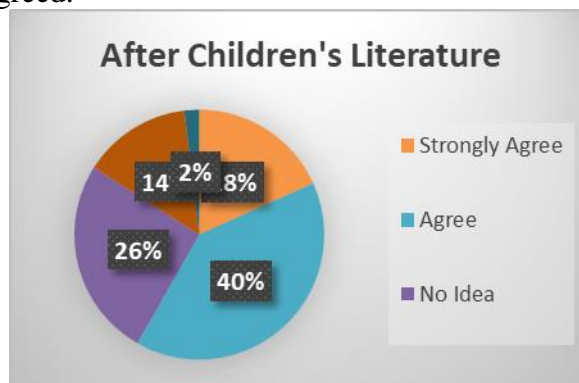


The minimum grade for K'3 before using English children's literature is 49 and the minimum grade for K'3 after using English children's literature is 67. The maximum grade for K'3 before using English children's literature is 103 and the maximum grade for K'3 after using English children's literature is 114. The average before children's literature for the K'3 class is 85.5 while the average after children's literature for the K'3 class is 91.4. So, it can be concluded that there is a significant effect of using English children's literature to reduce students' reading anxiety.

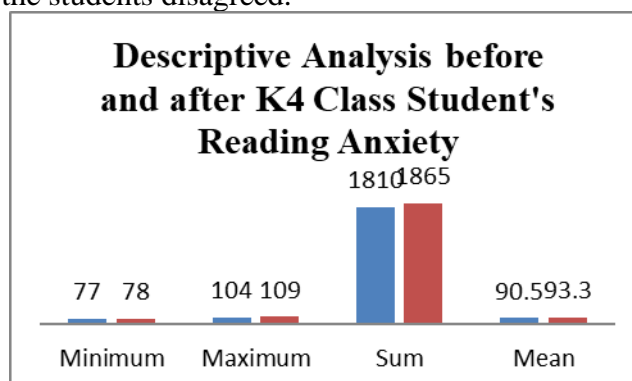
**d. Description of ELF Students' Anxiety Before and After Using Children's Literature (Short Stories) at K'4 Class**



In the answer diagram for class K'4 before utilizing children's book, It is obvious that 16 % of students responded "strongly agree," 37 % responded "agree," 28 % said they had no idea, 15 % said they disagreed, and 4 % said they definitely disagreed.



Following the use of children's literature, the K'4 class's answers are shown in the answer diagram, and it can be seen that 18% of the students answered strongly agreed, 40% of the kids agreed, 26% of the students had no idea, and 14% of the students disagreed.



The minimum grade for K'4 class before using English children's literature was 77 and the minimum grade for K'4 after using English children's literature was 78. The maximum grade for K'4 before using English children's literature was 104 and the maximum grade for K'4 after using

English children's literature was 109. The average score before English children's literature for the K'4 class is 90.5 while the average score after English children's literature for the K'4 class is 93.3. Thus, it can be said that there is a substantial impact to reduce students' reading anxiety after using English children's literature.

**e. T-test Pre-test and Post-test Students' Vocabularies**

**Paired Samples Test**

|        |                       | Paired Differences                        | T          | Df | Sig. (2-tailed) |
|--------|-----------------------|---|------------|----|-----------------|
|        |                       | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference |            |    |                 |
|        |                       | Upper                                     |            |    |                 |
| Pair 1 | Pre Test<br>Post Test | -4.98859                                  | -<br>2.340 | 39 | .024            |

It is known that there is a difference between the average pre-test and post-test because the t-test results in the table above show that the value of Sig. (2-tailed) is 0.024 0.05. Based on the findings of the t-test for both the pre- and post-test, it can be concluded that there is an effect of using English children's literature in increasing the vocabulary of students in the English department of UNP.

**f. T-test Reading Anxiety**

**Paired Samples Test**

|        |                   | Paired Differences                        | T              | Df | Sig. (2-tailed) |
|--------|-------------------|---|----------------|----|-----------------|
|        |                   | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference |                |    |                 |
|        |                   | Upper                                     |                |    |                 |
| Pair 1 | Before –<br>After | -.10232                                   | -<br>2.07<br>4 | 39 | .045            |

The value of Sig. (2-tailed) is 0.045 0.05, which indicates that there is a difference between the average pre-test and post-test, according to the t-test findings in the table above. Based on the T-test pre-test and post-test results, it can be concluded that there is an effect of using English children's short stories in reducing the level of reading anxiety of students in the English Department of UNP.

**Discussion**

The researcher used English children's literature, especially short stories as media in this research. The use of media such as short stories in English is designed to assist the method of instructing and training to achieve teaching objectives. Researchers conducted a pre-test before giving English children's literature as a medium to improve vocabulary mastery of student's skills and reduce their reading anxiety in K'3 and K'4 classes.



Researchers conducted a pre-test before giving English children's literature as a medium to improve students' vocabulary mastery skills in K'3 class. The average value of the pre-test in the K'3 class is 553.7. Furthermore, the results of the students' vocabulary mastery after receiving treatment from the researcher were also assessed in a post-test by the researchers. The result of the post-test average score in the K'3 class was 583.5. Judging from the average results obtained, there is an increase in the average post-test from the average results of the pre-test. For the results of the normality test, the data in the pre-test and post-test for the K'3 class were normally distributed with a pre-test sig value of 0.069 and a post-test sig value of 0.078.

In class K'4 the average score of the students in the pre-test was 566.2 while the post-test average score for the K'4 class was 613.4. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is an increase in the grades of K'4 students after using English children's literature in increasing students' vocabulary. For the results of the normality test, the data for the pre-test and post-test for class K'4 were normally distributed with a pre-test sig value of 0.200 and a post-test sig value of 0.200.

Based on the results of the t-test conducted on the results of the pre-test and post-test on the use of English children's literature in increasing student vocabulary, The findings of the pre-test and post-test differ; the Sig. (2-tailed) is known to be  $0.024 < 0.05$ . The results show that there is an effect of using English children's literature in increasing the vocabulary of students in the English Department of UNP. According of Guti et al (2017), who stated that the use of short reading in English provides many benefits for students because it significantly increases vocabulary, a better understanding of language, and reading skills. Students can be inspired by reading short stories because they will be able to express their emotions through the events depicted in the stories, and they will be compelled to read them until the main conflict has been resolved.

In the reading anxiety conducted in the K'3 class, the average score for the K'3 class before English children's literature was 85.5, while after English children's literature average was 91.4. Therefore, it can be said that using English children's books has a substantial impact on lowering reading anxiety. For the results of the normality test, it is known that the data distribution is normal with the Sig. before anxiety reading the value of 0.200 and the Sig. after an anxiety reading value of 0.092.

Furthermore, the average score before value for the K'4 class is 90.5 while score after value is 93.3. Therefore, It is obvious that using English children's literature effectively may lessen reading anxiety. For the results of the normality test, it is known that the data distribution is normal with a Sig. value before reading anxiety for K'4 class of 0.200 and a Sig. value after reading anxiety of 0.080.

Judging from the results before and after reading, the value of Sig. (2-tailed) is  $0.045 < 0.05$ , so it is known that there is a difference between the average before and after English children's literature. The results show that there is an effect of using children's literature in reducing students' reading anxiety in the English Department of UNP. Reading activities are the perfect starting point for learning-rich topic-related vocabulary (adjectives, nouns, verbs, etc.), picking up new grammatical structures, and ultimately improving understanding and increasing proficiency in language acquisition. Even when reading slowly, children read more new words,

grammar rules, and phrases per minute than they would in a typical brief lesson, TV episode, or song. (Meyer & Moeller, 1995, p. 39).

The finding of this study was a development of previous research. Kuru Gonen (2009) found that uninteresting topics and unknown vocabulary were sources of foreign language reading anxiety caused by reading texts. Therefore, it can be said that children's stories are able to attract students' interest. According to Gonzalez (2010), language acquisition is more enjoyable, entertaining, and remembered when it is enhanced with stories. When engaging in activities that they are comfortable with and find enjoyable, children have an incredible capacity to absorb language, which lowers their reading anxiety.

According to the characteristics of English vocabulary, teachers must use flexible and changeable teaching methods, take appropriate, beautiful teaching, measure designers, and carry out vocabulary teaching effectively (Zaeni, 2015, p. 6). Consequently, based on the findings of the analysis. Therefore, it may be said that using English children's literature especially short stories can be a solution to increasing vocabulary and reducing reading anxiety for EFL college students majoring in the English Department of UNP.

## CONCLUSION

This research was conducted for K'3 and K'4 classes at the English Department of FBS Universitas Negeri Padang academic year 2021/2022. Several implications can be found from the research and discussion. The first is that EFL students who were taught to use English children's literature, especially short stories as a medium in the English department, have more vocabulary knowledge than students who are not taught. Furthermore, students who were taught to use English children's literature, especially short stories, were found to have less reading anxiety on English topics.

The outcomes of the pre-test and post-test can be described as follows in light of the findings of the investigation and discussion conducted in the preceding as follows:

1. There is a difference between the average pre-test and post-test on the use of English children's literature, especially short stories, to broaden the vocabulary of students majoring in English Department UNP, as indicated by the value of Sig. (2-tailed) being  $0.024 < 0.05$ .
2. Next, is the use of English children's literature, particularly short stories, to reduce reading anxiety for students majoring in the English Department UNP is known to differ from the average pre-test and post-test when the value of Sig. (2-tailed) is  $0.045 < 0.05$ .

In this research, the use of English children's literature, especially short stories, can be concluded to be a solution to increase vocabulary and reduce reading anxiety for EFL college students' majoring in the English Department of UNP.

Based on the conclusion above, the researcher provides several suggestions. First, other college are suggested to increase vocabulary and reduce reading anxiety, lecturers must be able to make media or learning methods as interesting as possible, one of which is using children's literature. Second, other English majors are suggested this research can be used as material to add insight to increase vocabulary

and decrease reading anxiety using children's literature and become adequate information, especially for related parties. Third, Other researchers are suggested to conduct the similar research by using the same genres but by using the different titles of stories. Besides, other researchers are suggested to conduct the similar research but by using the different genres of children's literature such as folklore, novels, fiction, etc.

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