



The Application of Storytelling Methods in Language Development for Early Childhood

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Abstract

This study was motivated by the importance of developing language skills in early childhood, particularly at As-Salam Hutarimbaru Kindergarten in Lembah Melintang District, West Pasaman Regency. Based on the results of observations, it was found that many children were unable to develop their language skills optimally. One of the reasons for this was that teachers often used lecture methods, which made children feel bored and less interested in learning. The research methodology used was qualitative and a case study approach. Based on the research results and data analysis, it can be concluded that: i) The storytelling method was implemented systematically and planned, using media such as picture books and hand puppets that made children more interested and active in learning, ii) There was a significant improvement in children's language skills, marked by their courage to speak, increased vocabulary, and their ability to understand and retell the story, iii) Teachers play an important role in optimizing the storytelling method through creative strategies and collaboration with parents, so that children's language stimulation can also take place at home. The results of this study can be used as preliminary data for future researchers in examining this issue in different contexts and issues.

INTRODUCTION

One approach to improving children's language skills is the storytelling method which can create an engaging learning environment, stimulate imagination, and broaden children's horizons (Ikhtiarani et al., 2024; Nurbaeti et al., 2022; Sumitra et al., 2020). as in many other early childhood education institutions, a common challenge is the difference in language development levels among children. Some children face obstacles in understanding comprehension, forming sentence structures, and communicating. Other factors such as parenting patterns and limited learning media can also hinder language development (Almaghfiroh et al., 2024; Anidi et al., 2025; Astria et al., 2024; Hotmauli Damanik et al., 2024; Naibaho et al., 2025; Nursahara et al., 2024; Ramona et al., 2025). Storytelling activities can be carried out using various learning media. Learning media have several important

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functions in learning activities, such as motivating children's interest, presenting information, directing children's attention, and clarifying the delivery of messages. In the learning process, learning media are very helpful in delivering material or information to children in order to achieve learning objectives and make it easier for students to understand and remember what the teacher has conveyed. To apply the storytelling method effectively, teachers need careful and creative planning.

Language development is very important for early childhood because with language, children can communicate to convey their opinions and desires to their parents, teachers, and peers. Early childhood language development is divided into two major periods, namely the period from 0 to 1 year and 1 to 6 years. In the 0 to 3 month period, the sounds produced by children originate from the throat, and at 3 to 12 months, children speak a lot using lips and palate (Bonita et al., 2022; Priyoambodo & Suminar, 2021; Samiyah et al., 2025; Setiati & Shafira, 2023; Shadrina et al., 2024).

When it comes to children's language intelligence, parents play an important role in educating and teaching their children good and correct vocabulary. This will enable children to understand when communicating with people around them. Nowadays, many children are brave enough to explore their communication skills, both verbally and non-verbally. Young children are very quick to absorb and even imitate what adults teach them. Therefore, it is very important for parents to always supervise their children when they interact with strangers. Through communication, children will gain a lot of information from the people they talk to (Afina, 2021; Asmiati et al., 2021; Etnawati, 2022; Noorhayati & Dewi, 2019).

Supporting early literacy is also an important part of children's language development. Parents can help children learn the alphabet, read together, and encourage an interest in reading by providing access to a variety of books. Having books at home and forming a habit of reading from an early age will help children become more skilled readers in the future (Anhar et al., 2024; Annas et al., 2024; Parapat et al., 2023). However, it is important to remember that every child has a different pace of development. Parents need to be patient and not compare their children with others. Positive support and praise for children's efforts in using language will build their self-confidence.

When it comes to children's language intelligence, parents play an important role in educating and teaching their children good and correct vocabulary. This will enable children to understand when communicating with people around them. Nowadays, many children are brave enough to explore their communication skills, both verbally and non-verbally. Young children are very quick to absorb and even imitate what adults teach them. Therefore, it is very important for parents to always supervise their children when they interact with strangers. Through communication, children will gain a lot of information from the people they talk to.

At As-Salam Kindergarten, teachers must utilize various media such as audiovisual aids, picture books, and posters to attract children's attention and increase their participation in the storytelling process. The use of these media helps children follow stories more easily, stimulates their imagination, and enriches their learning experience through visual and auditory observation. This approach also provides opportunities for children to be more actively involved with the story material, whether by asking questions, giving responses, or participating in group discussions, which will ultimately strengthen their understanding. In addition, the variety of media used provides opportunities for children to learn according to their learning styles, such as through sight, hearing, or physical activities related to the story. This supports a deeper understanding of the story. The importance of utilizing various tools in storytelling activities is to enrich children's learning experiences and support the development of their language skills. Therefore, the use of appropriate

media in storytelling is an important element in increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of this method in creating a pleasant classroom atmosphere, while also training children's comprehension, speaking skills, listening skills, creativity, and imagination.

METODE

This study uses qualitative methods. The type of research used is a case study. In addition, case studies are generally a suitable strategy in real-world contexts (Engkizar et al., 2022; Febriani et al., 2022; Mutathahirin et al., 2022; Sabrina et al., 2022; Ummah et al., 2025). The reason the researcher used a descriptive qualitative approach and a case study research method was to make it easier for the researcher to collect complete data and describe the data in the field as well as the research objectives. This study focused on a single case to be studied, namely to describe the application of the storytelling method in language development in early childhood. In this study, the informants were elements related to the research, such as teachers. Data sources were obtained in two ways, namely: Primary sources and Secondary Data Sources (Akem et al., 2025; Akmal et al., 2024; Engkizar et al., 2025; Istiqamah et al., 2024; Mustafa et al., 2025; Okenova et al., 2025). This study used the snowball sampling technique, which is the determination of informants starting from one or two people and then expanding to the next informants based on the recommendations of the initial informants. This technique was chosen because the researcher wanted to explore in-depth information from various related parties, such as teachers and parents, so that the data obtained was. There are three data collection techniques used in this study: First, interviews are conversations with a specific purpose between the interviewer and the interviewee, using face-to-face interviews. Second, observation is the systematic recording of observations of the phenomena being investigated, whereby the researcher goes directly into the field or to an educational institution. The observation relates to the issue of the application of storytelling methods in language development in early childhood. Third, documentation is the search for data on matters or variables in the form of notes, transcripts, textbooks, student achievements, and so on. The document study was conducted on reports on the Application of the Storytelling Method in Language Development in Early Childhood (Engkizar et al., 2025; Htay et al., 2025).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Based on the results of research conducted by researchers through interviews, observations, and documentation regarding the Application of Storytelling Methods in Language Development in Early Childhood. The researcher will describe the application of the storytelling method in language development in children at As-Salam Hutarimbaru Kindergarten, the language skills of early childhood at As-Salam Hutarimbaru Kindergarten, and the efforts of teachers to improve the language skills of children at As-Salam Hutarimbaru Kindergarten, as follows:

The application of storytelling methods in the development of children's language skills

The process of implementing storytelling methods by teachers in learning

Storytelling methods Kindergarten are applied as part of a learning strategy that emphasizes the development of children's language skills through listening and speaking experiences. Teachers begin the activity by preparing story material that is in line with the daily learning theme, such as family, the surrounding environment, or animals. During the storytelling process, teachers use varied intonation, facial expressions, and props such as picture books and hand puppets to attract children's attention.

This activity is carried out routinely every day, especially at the beginning of the day before the main lessons start. After listening to the story, the children are asked to retell the story in their own words. Through this process, teachers can assess the extent of the children's vocabulary and speaking skills development (Karim et al., 2022; Nuryati & Ranganis, 2022).

"Every morning, I read a story that I have chosen according to the theme of the day. For example, if this week's theme is about the environment, I will read a story about keeping the park clean. The children sit in a circle on the carpet and listen to the story I tell. After finishing, I give them the opportunity to retell the story in their own words. From there, I can see which children are already fluent in speaking and which still need guidance (Informan)."

"I often use hand puppets when telling stories because children are more interested when there are visuals. When the puppets talk, they become more focused and enthusiastic. After the story is finished, I ask the children about the characters in the story, the plot, and the moral message that can be learned. This helps them to think and speak more structurally (Informan)."

"My child often retells stories he hears at school. For example, yesterday he told me a story about a rabbit who diligently cleaned the yard. I can see from this that the storytelling method at school really affects my child's speaking and memory skills (Informan)."

"Since the teacher started storytelling regularly, I have noticed that my child has become more talkative. He even often repeats the stories he hears to his younger sibling at home. I feel that this activity makes children more confident and happy to talk (Informan)."

From interviews with various sources, it can be concluded that the storytelling method applied by teachers is effective. Teachers use media such as picture books and hand puppets to attract children's attention, while parents see a real impact on their children's vocabulary and self-confidence (Fitriani et al., 2019; Supriatna et al., 2022). The application of the storytelling method at As-Salam Hutarimbaru Kindergarten has succeeded in creating a fun and interactive learning atmosphere. Teachers play an active role in designing storytelling activities, while children show significant progress in speaking and language comprehension skills.

Teacher strategies in applying the storytelling method

The steps for implementing the storytelling method are carried out systematically and deliberately. Teachers begin with the preparation stage, which involves determining the theme and selecting stories relevant to that theme, such as stories about the environment, friendship, or helpfulness. After that, teachers prepare supporting media such as hand puppets, pictures, or picture books.

During the implementation stage, teachers convey stories with clear intonation, varied facial expressions, and simple language that is easy for children to understand (Amin et al., 2024; Panjaitan et al., 2020). Teachers also give children the opportunity to interact by asking and answering questions about the content of the story. The final stage is evaluation and follow-up, where teachers ask children to retell the story in their own words, provide positive reinforcement, and plan follow-up activities related to the story.

"Before telling a story, I always prepare story materials that are in line with the learning theme. For example, if this week's theme is about animals, I choose stories about animals they often see, such as cats or chickens. When telling the story, I use hand puppets to make the children more interested. After finishing, I ask them to retell the story in their own words (Informan)."

"The first step I take is to choose a story that is in line with the moral values I want to convey. Then I prepare the media, such as picture books or other teaching aids. When telling the story, I use different intonations so that the children don't get bored. After the story is finished, I invite them to discuss the moral message in the story (Informan)."

"I see my child often imitating his teacher when telling stories at home. He even likes to use dolls at home while telling stories he heard at school. I think the teachers at this kindergarten have clear and consistent steps in teaching children through stories (Informan).

"My child often retells stories he hears with enthusiasm. I have noticed how teachers at school encourage children to be more confident and assertive when speaking. In fact, he often asks me to repeat stories he hears at school (Informan).

From interviews with various sources, it can be concluded that teachers at As-Salam Hutarimbaru Kindergarten apply systematic steps in using the storytelling method, starting from theme and media preparation, interesting and interactive implementation, to evaluations that involve the children. Parents feel the positive impact of applying these steps, as seen from changes in their children's behavior and speaking abilities at home.

Language skills in early childhood

Children's ability to understand stories

The language skills of early childhood at As-Salam Kindergarten in Hutarimbaru have improved significantly after the implementation of the storytelling method. Through regular storytelling activities, children have become more active in communicating and more courageous in expressing their opinions. Before the implementation of this method, many children were still limited in their use of vocabulary, and even tended to answer questions with only simple words. After the teachers consistently applied the storytelling method, positive changes were observed, such as an increase in the number of words used by children when speaking, the ability to construct simple sentences, and the courage to tell stories in front of their friends. This improvement was also felt by parents who observed their children's development at home, where children began to talk about their daily experiences or stories they heard from their teachers.

Based on the results regarding how children's language skills developed after the storytelling method was implemented, she explained that:

Before we routinely used storytelling, most children would only speak when asked a question, and even then their answers were brief. After I made storytelling a daily activity, I noticed that many children were able to retell the stories I told them, even adding their own experiences. This was a very happy development for me.

"The improvement in children's language skills is clearly visible. Children who used to only be able to say words one by one are now starting to form sentences. They are also beginning to understand the meaning of stories and can explain the messages contained within them in simple language. This shows that the storytelling method is very effective for their language development (Informan).

"I feel a big difference. My child now often talks about his activities at school and the stories he hears from his teachers. He used to be quiet, but now he can speak more clearly and at greater length. He even often retells the stories to his younger sibling (Informan).

"My child used to be shy and rarely spoke. But since the teacher started regularly using the storytelling method, she has become more confident and talkative. Even at home, she often practices storytelling with me and the family. I am very grateful to see this development (Informan).

From the results of interviews with various sources, it can be concluded that the storytelling method has a major influence on the development of children's language skills. Teachers see a significant increase in children's courage to speak and their ability to understand stories, while parents feel the same impact when interacting with their children at home. The storytelling method has proven to be effective in developing the language skills of early childhood. Consistent application

helps children enrich their vocabulary, construct more complex sentences, and increase their confidence in speaking. In addition, this method also strengthens the communication relationship between children, teachers, and parents.

Language Proficiency Assessment Indicators

The assessment of children's language proficiency at As-Salam Hutarimbaru Kindergarten is carried out through several indicators that are tailored to the development of early childhood. These indicators cover the aspects of listening, speaking, understanding, and repeating stories. Teachers use these indicators to monitor the extent of children's language development after applying the storytelling method. With clear indicators, teachers can provide objective assessments and develop appropriate learning strategies to help children who still need additional assistance.

"I usually assess children's language skills from several aspects. First, whether children can understand the story I tell. Second, whether they can clearly recount the characters and plot of the story. Third, I observe how children use new vocabulary acquired from the story in everyday conversation (Informant).

"The indicators I use in assessing children's language skills include the ability to listen well while the story is being told, the ability to answer questions about the story, and the ability to retell the story. If a child can do these three things, then I assess that their language development is as expected (Informant).

"I observe my child's language development from the way he retells stories at home. If he can clearly retell stories from school, it means he understands the content of the story. I also pay attention to his use of new words that he has never said before (Informant).

"For me, my child's language development can be seen from his courage to speak and the length of the sentences he uses. In the past, he only used one or two words, but now he can speak in more complete sentences. This shows excellent development (Informant).

From interviews with various sources, it can be concluded that the indicators used to assess children's language skills include understanding stories, the ability to retell stories, the use of new vocabulary, the courage to speak, and the length and clarity of the sentences used by children. These indicators provide a clear picture of children's language development after the application of the storytelling method. Assessing children's language skills through appropriate indicators helps teachers and parents understand their children's development comprehensively. With consistent monitoring, teachers can provide appropriate guidance so that children's language development is optimized. The storytelling method has proven to be effective as a means of learning and evaluating the language skills of early childhood.

Teachers' efforts to Improve Children's Language Skills

Efforts made by teachers

Teachers at As-Salam Hutarimbaru Kindergarten have an important responsibility in supporting the language development of early childhood. The efforts made by teachers are not limited to delivering religious subject matter, but also include developing children's communication skills. Teachers use storytelling as the main medium of learning to enrich children's vocabulary, practice speaking skills, and increase children's confidence in expressing their opinions. In addition, teachers also apply an individual approach by paying special attention to children who have difficulty speaking and coordinating with parents so that language stimulation is also carried out at home. This structured approach helps make the learning process more effective and enjoyable.

"When teaching language to children, I always begin the lesson by telling stories that contain religious values. In addition, I encourage children to actively participate in question and answer sessions after storytelling so that they become accustomed to expressing their opinions and speaking clearly (Informan).

"I try to motivate children by praising them every time they try to speak or tell a story. I also give every child the opportunity to speak in front of their friends, so that they become more confident and courageous (Informan).

"Teachers at school often give us guidance on how to support our children at home. For example, reading storybooks before bedtime and encouraging children to talk about their daily activities. We see that this helps our children speak more fluently (Informan).

"I feel that teachers are very concerned about children's language development. Teachers also regularly communicate with parents about their children's development, so that we can work together to teach children to speak better (Informan).

From the results of interviews with various sources, it can be concluded that teachers make various efforts to improve children's language skills, ranging from the use of storytelling methods, providing motivation and praise, individual guidance for children who need special attention, to collaboration with parents in stimulating children's language at home. Teachers' efforts to improve children's language skills have had a significant positive impact. Through the application of storytelling methods, motivation, and cooperation with parents, children's language development can be optimally improved, making them more confident, active, and able to communicate well.

Teacher Strategies

Teachers optimize storytelling methods to improve children's language skills through various creative and planned approaches. Teachers not only tell stories, but also pay attention to selecting stories that are appropriate for the age and development of the children, using supporting media such as hand puppets, picture books, and simple teaching aids, and actively involving children in the storytelling process. This strategy aims to make storytelling activities more interesting, interactive, and provide meaningful learning experiences for children. With the right strategy, children not only hear stories, but also understand, repeat, and develop their speaking skills.

informan

"I choose stories that are relevant to the learning theme and moral values that I want to convey. In addition, I use hand puppets to make the stories more lively and interesting for the children. After telling the story, I encourage the children to retell the story in their own words (Informan).

"I often modify stories to suit the situation of the children in the class. In addition, I give the children the opportunity to play the characters in the story. That way, they are more actively involved and confident when speaking (Informan).

"Teachers often provide us with information about the story themes being studied at school. This makes it easier for us to continue storytelling activities at home. My child now tells stories more often and uses new words learned at school (Informan).

"I see my child becoming more confident because of the teacher's creative and fun strategies. My child often retells stories from school while role-playing at home. This has accelerated her language development (Informan).

From the results of interviews with various sources, it can be concluded that the teacher's strategy in optimizing the storytelling method includes selecting relevant stories, using interesting supporting media, involving children in storytelling activities, and collaborating with parents. This strategy makes children more active, confident, and developed in their speaking skills. The right teacher strategies in optimizing storytelling methods have proven effective in improving the language skills of young children. With a creative, interactive, and collaborative approach, storytelling becomes a fun and educational tool, enabling children to develop optimally in their language skills.

Application of Storytelling Methods in Language Development for Children

Based on the results of the study, the application of storytelling methods at As-Salam Hutarimbaru Kindergarten was well-structured and effective. Teachers consistently carried out storytelling activities every day using interesting media such as picture books and hand puppets. This makes children more interested in listening to stories and participating in the learning process. From interviews with teachers and parents, it appears that this method is able to improve children's speaking skills, vocabulary, and confidence in communicating.

In theory, the storytelling method is one of the effective learning strategies in early childhood education. Storytelling can stimulate children's imagination and thinking skills while developing their language abilities. By listening to stories, children learn to understand the content of the story, remember the plot, and retell it in their own words. This is in line with the language learning objectives for early childhood, which are to develop listening, speaking, and contextual language comprehension skills.

These findings are also in line with research conducted by Suyadi, which shows that the use of storytelling methods in learning can significantly improve children's language skills. Another study also confirms that structured storytelling activities help children master new vocabulary and understand moral concepts. Thus, the application of the storytelling method at As-Salam Hutarimbaru Kindergarten is in line with internationally recommended educational practices.

Therefore, it can be concluded that the application of the storytelling method contributes positively to children's language development. This activity not only provides an enjoyable learning experience but also forms the basis of communication skills that will be useful for children in the future.

Language Skills in Early Childhood

The language skills of early childhood at As-Salam Hutarimbaru Kindergarten showed positive development after the storytelling method was implemented. Teachers and parents reported that children became more active in speaking, able to construct simple sentences, and dared to express their opinions. Before this method was implemented, many children only responded to questions with short answers, but now they are more communicative and expressive.

According to language development theory, early childhood is the golden age for language development. Santrock states that appropriate language stimulation at this age will have a major impact on children's communication skills in the future. The storytelling method, as a form of language stimulation, provides children with the opportunity to listen, understand, and speak naturally in a learning context.

The results of this study are in line with research conducted by Musfiroh, which found that storytelling has a positive impact on improving the speaking skills of children in kindergarten. In addition, research from the Ministry of National Education also emphasizes the importance of using interactive methods such as storytelling in improving the language competence of early childhood.

It can be concluded that the language skills of children at As-Salam Hutarimbaru Kindergarten have developed significantly thanks to the consistent application of storytelling methods by teachers and the support of parents.

Teachers' Efforts to Improve Children's Language Skills

Teachers play a central role in helping children develop language skills. At As-Salam Hutarimbaru Kindergarten, teachers not only deliver religious lessons but also integrate storytelling activities into the learning process. Teachers motivate children to speak through stories that contain moral and religious values and encourage them to retell the stories. This has been proven to improve speaking skills while strengthening children's character.

According to learning theory, teachers act as facilitators who provide stimuli and a supportive learning environment. By providing stimuli through relevant stories, teachers can help children understand language as well as the positive values contained in the stories. This approach also helps children develop social skills through interaction with their friends during storytelling activities. Research by Suyadi confirms that teachers who use storytelling as part of religious education can improve children's language skills while internalizing moral values.

This shows that the role of teachers is not limited to teaching religion, but also to developing children's communication skills. Thus, the strategies employed by teachers in optimizing the storytelling method are key to improving children's language skills. Collaboration between teachers, parents, and the school environment is essential to achieve maximum and sustainable results.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research and discussion presented above, the following conclusions can be drawn. First, the application of storytelling methods at As-Salam Hutarimbaru Kindergarten has proven to be effective in developing children's language skills. Teachers consistently use various media, such as picture books and hand puppets, to attract children's attention and create a fun learning atmosphere. This makes children more enthusiastic, active, and confident in speaking. Second, children's language skills have improved significantly after the implementation of the storytelling method. Children are able to enrich their vocabulary, construct simple sentences, understand the content of stories, and retell them in their own words. This is evident both at school and at home, as reported by teachers and parents. Third, teachers play an important role in optimizing the storytelling method. Teachers not only guide storytelling activities, but also establish good communication with parents to ensure that language stimulation continues at home. The strategies used by PAI teachers include creative learning, motivation, and an individual approach to children who need special attention.

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