



The Effect of Storytelling as an Islamic Education Learning Method on Children's Oral Communication Skills

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Abstract

Oral communication skills are an essential component of early childhood language development, enabling children to express ideas, interact confidently, and participate actively in classroom learning. In Islamic education, storytelling is widely recognized as a learner-centered instructional method that facilitates language development while creating meaningful learning experiences. However, the oral communication skills of children at Kindergarten, were still below the expected level. This study aimed to examine the effect of the storytelling method as an Islamic education learning method on children's oral communication skills. A quantitative approach employing a quasi-experimental method with a pretest–posttest control group design was used. The sample consisted of an experimental class and a control class selected through purposive sampling. The experimental class received instruction using the storytelling method, whereas the control class was taught through conventional learning. Data were collected using an observation sheet covering four indicators of oral communication skills: confidence in speaking before others, the ability to express ideas coherently, clarity of intonation and voice volume, and responsiveness to questions. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and inferential statistics through prerequisite tests and an independent sample t-test. The findings revealed a significance value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$), indicating a significant difference between the experimental and control groups. The storytelling method significantly improved children's oral communication skills compared with conventional instruction. These findings suggest that storytelling is an effective learning method in Islamic education for enhancing children's oral communication skills and supporting more interactive and meaningful learning experiences.

INTRODUCTION

Communication skills and language development are often considered synonymous, although conceptually they represent different constructs. Language development refers to children's acquisition of linguistic competencies according to their developmental stages, including vocabulary, grammar, phonology, semantics, pragmatics, as well as receptive and expressive language abilities. It

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semantics, pragmatics, as well as receptive and expressive language abilities. It addresses whether children's linguistic competence develops appropriately for their age. In contrast, communication skills refer to the ability to use language effectively in social contexts, emphasizing the competence to convey messages, express ideas, participate in dialogue, listen actively, respond appropriately, and interact confidently with others. Therefore, while language development provides the foundation, communication skills reflect the practical application of language in everyday interactions (Du et al., 2021; Setiawati & Romli, 2023).

A simple example can illustrate this distinction. A five-year-old child may possess a broad vocabulary, construct complete sentences, and understand teachers' instructions, indicating age-appropriate language development. However, when asked to share personal experiences in front of classmates, the child may remain silent, speak hesitantly, or struggle to organize ideas coherently (Tanfidiyah & Utama, 2019; Yulsyofriend et al., 2019). This suggests that although language development is adequate, oral communication skills have not yet fully developed. Conversely, some children with relatively simple language abilities may confidently participate in conversations, ask questions, and communicate actively with peers. Thus, language development constitutes the foundation of communication skills, whereas communication skills demonstrate children's ability to apply language effectively in authentic social situations (Carson et al., 2016; Nan & Tian, 2025; Nuryanto, 2016).

In the context of Islamic Education, oral communication is not merely a linguistic competence but also an essential educational outcome that supports children's active participation in the learning process. Effective oral communication enables children to ask and answer questions, express opinions, retell learning materials, and engage in meaningful interactions with teachers and peers during Islamic learning activities. As Islamic education emphasizes holistic child development encompassing cognitive, affective, and social dimensions, fostering children's communication skills becomes an integral component of effective classroom instruction (Khalil, 2016; Paujiah et al., 2022; Sumiyati, 2018).

Oral communication skills constitute one of the fundamental competencies that should be developed during early childhood. During the *golden age*, children experience rapid growth in cognitive, linguistic, social, and emotional domains, making this period particularly important for developing communication abilities. Oral communication encompasses not only speaking but also expressing ideas, asking and answering questions, participating in discussions, conveying feelings, and interacting effectively with others. Developing these competencies from an early age provides children with the necessary foundation for successful social interaction, active classroom participation, and future academic achievement (NAEYC, 2020; UNESCO, 2021; Elia, 2026).

Within early childhood education, oral communication skills represent the practical manifestation of children's language development in social interaction. Language development equips children with the ability to understand and produce language, whereas communication skills demonstrate how effectively these linguistic competencies are utilized in real-life situations. Consequently, oral communication is closely associated not only with language development but also with socio-emotional competencies, including self-confidence, emotional regulation, peer interaction, and collaborative learning. Children with well-developed oral communication skills are generally more confident in expressing opinions, participating in classroom discussions, and interacting with teachers and classmates (Vygotsky, 1978; Bruner, 1983; Papalia & Martorell, 2021).

However, evidence from early childhood educational settings indicates that children's oral communication skills are often not optimally developed. Preliminary observations conducted at Mutiara Hati Kindergarten, East Pariaman, revealed that

several children aged five to six years were reluctant to respond to teachers' questions, hesitant to express opinions, spoke with low voice volume, lacked confidence when speaking before classmates, and experienced difficulty retelling stories or personal experiences. Such conditions limited children's classroom participation and reduced opportunities to develop effective communication skills (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2022; Suyadi & Maulidya Ulfah, 2016).

These findings indicate that oral communication skills do not develop automatically but require systematic instructional support and appropriate pedagogical strategies. Teachers therefore play a strategic role in creating safe, supportive, and engaging learning environments where every child is encouraged to communicate confidently without fear of making mistakes. Selecting instructional methods that correspond to children's developmental characteristics is consequently essential for promoting effective oral communication (Hurlock, 2011; Morrison, 2020).

One instructional method widely recognized for promoting active learning is the storytelling method. Within Islamic Education, storytelling is frequently employed as an instructional approach because it presents learning materials through meaningful narratives that encourage children's participation while fostering communication and interaction. Storytelling provides enjoyable learning experiences that stimulate children's imagination, enrich vocabulary, improve listening comprehension, and encourage learners to ask questions, answer teachers' questions, express ideas, and retell stories using their own words. Through these interactive activities, children actively practice oral communication in authentic classroom situations (Isbell et al., 2004; Wright, 2019; Elia, 2022).

The selection of storytelling in this study is based on the developmental characteristics of early childhood, who naturally enjoy learning through stories and imaginative experiences. Compared with teacher-centered instruction, storytelling creates a more interactive and child-centered learning environment in which children are encouraged to participate actively in classroom communication. Within Islamic education, storytelling also facilitates meaningful learning by enabling teachers to deliver instructional content through engaging narratives while simultaneously encouraging children to communicate confidently, organize ideas coherently, and interact with peers and teachers. Therefore, storytelling functions not only as a medium for delivering learning materials but also as an effective instructional method for strengthening children's oral communication skills (Moeslichatoen, 2004; Madyawati, 2017).

Previous studies have consistently demonstrated that storytelling contributes positively to children's language development, vocabulary acquisition, listening comprehension, speaking ability, and socio-emotional development. Nevertheless, most existing studies have examined storytelling within general early childhood education contexts, with limited attention to its implementation as a learning method in Islamic education. Furthermore, relatively few studies have specifically investigated children's oral communication skills as a multidimensional competence encompassing confidence in speaking, expressing ideas coherently, responding to questions, and participating actively in classroom interaction. This gap highlights the need to examine storytelling as an instructional method in Islamic education that supports both children's oral communication development and more interactive learning experiences (Isbell et al., 2004; Nurhayati et al., 2023; Rahmawati & Suryana, 2024).

Based on these considerations, this study aims to examine the effect of the storytelling method in Islamic education on the oral communication skills of children aged five to six years. The findings are expected to provide empirical evidence regarding the effectiveness of storytelling as a learning method in Islamic education

for enhancing children's oral communication skills. In addition, this study is expected to enrich the literature on Islamic early childhood education and provide practical guidance for teachers in selecting instructional methods that encourage active classroom participation, effective communication, and meaningful learning experiences for young children (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2022; UNESCO, 2021).

METHODS

This study employed a quantitative approach using a quasi-experimental method with a pretest–posttest control group design. A quasi-experimental design was selected because the researcher was unable to randomly assign participants to the experimental and control groups (Anwar & Rahmah, 2017; Engkizar et al., 2026; Kuckartz, 2019; Lubinski, 2016; Putri et al., 2025). Therefore, the existing classroom groups were maintained throughout the study as the experimental and control groups (Sugiyono, 2016). The study was conducted at Kindergarten, west sumatera. The sample consisted of one experimental class and one control class selected through purposive sampling. The experimental class received instruction using the storytelling method implemented during classroom learning, whereas the control class received conventional learning activities. The research design is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Pretest–Posttest Control Group Design

Group	Pretest	Treatment	Posttest
Experiment	O ₁	X	O ₂
Control	O ₃	-	O ₄

Source: Creswell (2008, p. 299).

Information:

- **O₁** = Experimental group pretest (oral communication skills before treatment)
- **O₂** = Experimental group posttest (oral communication skills after treatment)
- **O₃** = Control group pretest
- **O₄** = Control group posttest
- **X** = Learning using the storytelling method

Data were collected using an observation sheet designed to assess children's oral communication skills. The instrument measured four indicators: (1) confidence in speaking before others, (2) the ability to express ideas coherently, (3) clarity of intonation and voice volume, and (4) responsiveness in answering questions. Observations were conducted before and after the implementation of the learning activities to determine changes in children's oral communication skills.

The collected data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Prior to hypothesis testing, the data were subjected to normality and homogeneity tests to ensure that the assumptions for parametric analysis were satisfied. The research hypothesis was then tested using an independent-samples t-test with IBM SPSS Statistics, employing a significance level of 0.05 to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference between the experimental and control groups after the implementation of the storytelling method (Almquist et al., 2019; Mustafy & Rahman, 2024; Syafril et al., 2021).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Initial Description of Children's Oral Communication Skills

A pretest was conducted before the implementation of the storytelling method to determine the initial level of children's oral communication skills in both the experimental and control groups. The pretest results indicate that the oral communication abilities of children in both groups were generally low before the treatment was administered.

Table 2. Recapitulation of Pretest Results of Oral Communication Skills in the Experimental Group

Criteria	Interval	Frequency	Presentation
Mastering	$X > 75$	3	15.00
Just Master	$37 < x \leq 75$	4	20.00
Not yet mastered	$X \leq 37$	13	65.00
Amount		20	100.00

Based on Table 2, only 15.00% of children in the experimental group were categorized as Mastering, 20.00% were classified as Just Master, while 65.00% had Not Yet Mastered the expected oral communication skills. These findings indicate that most children required instructional intervention to improve their oral communication abilities.

Table 3. Recapitulation of Pretest Results of Oral Communication Skills in the Control Group

Criteria	Interval	Frequency	Presentation
Mastering	$X > 75$	2	11.11
Just Master	$37 < x \leq 75$	4	22.22
Not yet mastered	$X \leq 37$	12	66.67
Amount		18	100.00

As shown in Table 3, 11.11% of children in the control group were categorized as Mastering, 22.22% were Just Master, and 66.67% were Not Yet Mastered. These results demonstrate that both groups had relatively similar oral communication abilities before the implementation of the treatment.

To obtain a more comprehensive understanding of children's initial oral communication skills, the researchers further analyzed each communication indicator, including (1) confidence in speaking before others, (2) ability to express ideas coherently, (3) intonation and voice volume, and (4) ability to respond to questions.

Confidence in Speaking Before Others

Table 4. Initial Oral Communication Skills of the Experimental Group on the Confidence in Speaking Before Others Indicator

Indicator	Criteria	Interval	Frequency	Peresentase
Be willing to move to the front of the class without being forced.	Mastering	$X > 8$	2	10.00
	Just Master	$4 < x \leq 8$	1	0.05
	Not yet mastered	$X \leq 4$	17	85.00
Dare to tell your experiences or the contents of the story.	Mastering	$X > 8$	1	0.05
	Just Master	$4 < x \leq 8$	4	20.00
	Not yet mastered	$X \leq 4$	15	75.00
Dare to ask questions to teachers or friends	Mastering	$X > 3$	3	15.00
	Just Master	$1 < x \leq 3$	17	85.00
	Not yet mastered	$X \leq 1$	1	0.05
Complete speaking activities until finished.	Mastering	$X > 3$	0	0.00
	Just Master	$1 < x \leq 3$	2	10.00
	Not yet mastered	$X \leq 1$	18	90.00

The findings presented in Table 4 indicate that most children in the experimental group were still reluctant to speak in front of others. The majority of children were categorized as Not Yet Mastered across all observed indicators, particularly in completing speaking activities and retelling experiences confidently.

Table 5. Initial Oral Communication Skills of the Control Group on the Confidence in Speaking Before Others Indicator

Indicator	Criteria	Interval	Frequency	Peresentase
Be willing to move to	Mastering	$X > 8$	1	5,56

the front of the class without being forced.	Just Master	$4 < x \leq 8$	1	5.56
	Not yet mastered	$X \leq 4$	16	88.89
Dare to tell your experiences or the contents of the story.	Mastering	$X > 8$	0	0.00
	Just Master	$4 < x \leq 8$	3	16.67
	Not yet mastered	$X \leq 4$	15	83.33
Dare to ask questions to teachers or friends	Mastering	$X > 3$	0	0.00
	Just Master	$1 < x \leq 3$	17	94.44
	Not yet mastered	$X \leq 1$	1	5.56
Complete speaking activities until finished.	Mastering	$X > 3$	3	16.67
	Just Master	$1 < x \leq 3$	0	0.00
	Not yet mastered	$X \leq 1$	14	77.78

Table 5 shows a similar pattern in the control group. Most children had not yet demonstrated sufficient confidence to speak before the class, voluntarily tell stories, or actively ask questions during classroom activities.

Ability to Express Ideas Coherently

Table 6. Initial Oral Communication Skills of the Experimental Group on the Ability to Express Ideas Coherently

Indicator	Criteria	Interval	Frequency	Peresentase
Telling experiences in sequence	Mastering	$X > 3$	2	10.00
	Just Master	$1 < x \leq 3$	2	10.00
	Not yet mastered	$X \leq 1$	16	80.00
Using related sentences	Mastering	2	3	15.00
	Just Master	1	4	20.00
	Not yet mastered	0	13	65.00
Explain the contents of the picture or story in sequence	Mastering	$X > 3$	1	0.05
	Just Master	$1 < x \leq 3$	4	20.00
	Not yet mastered	$X \leq 1$	15	75.00
The story is easy for listeners to understand	Mastering	2	2	10.00
	Just Master	1	3	15.00
	Not yet mastered	0	15	75.00

The data presented in Table 6 indicate that most children experienced difficulties in organizing ideas logically, explaining stories sequentially, and producing coherent sentences. These findings suggest that children's ability to communicate ideas systematically still required improvement.

Table 7. Initial Oral Communication Skills of the Control Group on the Ability to Express Ideas Coherently

Indicator	Criteria	Interval	Frequency	Peresentase
Telling experiences in sequence	Mastering	$X > 3$	1	5.56
	Just Master	$1 < x \leq 3$	3	16.67
	Not yet mastered	$X \leq 1$	14	77.78
Using related sentences	Mastering	2	3	16.67
	Just Master	1	3	16.67
	Not yet mastered	0	12	66.67
Explain the contents of the picture or story in sequence	Mastering	$X > 3$	0	0.00
	Just Master	$1 < x \leq 3$	4	22.22
	Not yet mastered	$X \leq 1$	14	77.78
The story is easy for listeners to understand	Mastering	2	1	5.56
	Just Master	1	2	11.11
	Not yet mastered	0	15	83.33

The control group demonstrated similar results. Most children had not yet mastered the ability to explain stories coherently or connect ideas into meaningful sentences.

Intonation and Voice Volume

Table 8. Initial Oral Communication Skills of the Experimental Group on Intonation and Voice Volume

Indicator	Criteria	Interval	Frequency	Peresentase
Speak in a clear voice volume	Mastering	$X > 3$	3	15.00
	Just Master	$1 < x \leq 3$	3	15.00
	Not yet mastered	$X \leq 1$	14	85.00
Emphasize important words	Mastering	2	4	20.00
	Just Master	1	4	20.00
	Not yet mastered	0	12	60.00
Adjust the volume of your voice according to the situation	Mastering	$X > 3$	0	0.00
	Just Master	$1 < x \leq 3$	5	25.00
	Not yet mastered	$X \leq 1$	15	75.00
Speak at an appropriate tempo	Mastering	2	0	0.00
	Just Master	1	3	15.00
	Not yet mastered	0	17	85.00
Varying Intonation	Mastering	$X > 4$	0	0.00
	Just Master	$2 < x \leq 4$	3	15.00
	Not yet mastered	$X \leq 2$	15	85.00

The results reveal that most children had not yet mastered appropriate voice volume, speaking tempo, or intonation. Only a small proportion of children demonstrated satisfactory speaking performance in these aspects.

Table 9. Initial Oral Communication Skills of the Control Group on Intonation and Voice Volume

Indicator	Criteria	Interval	Frequency	Peresentase
Speak in a clear voice volume	Mastering	$X > 3$	1	5.56
	Just Master	$1 < x \leq 3$	3	16.67
	Not yet mastered	$X \leq 1$	14	77.78
Emphasize important words	Mastering	2	3	16.67
	Just Master	1	3	16.67
	Not yet mastered	0	12	66.67
Adjust the volume of your voice according to the situation	Mastering	$X > 3$	0	0.00
	Just Master	$1 < x \leq 3$	4	22.22
	Not yet mastered	$X \leq 1$	14	77.78
Speak at an appropriate tempo	Mastering	2	1	5.56
	Just Master	1	2	11.11
	Not yet mastered	0	15	83.33
Varying Intonation	Mastering	$X > 4$	0	0.00
	Just Master	$2 < x \leq 4$	3	16.67
	Not yet mastered	$X \leq 2$	15	83.33

Similar findings were identified in the control group, indicating that children generally lacked confidence in adjusting voice volume and varying intonation during oral communication.

Ability to Respond to Questions

Table 10. Initial Oral Communication Skills of the Experimental Group on the Ability to Respond to Questions

Indicator	Criteria	Interval	Frequency	Peresentase
Answer with simple sentences	Mastering	$X > 3$	3	15.00
	Just Master	$1 < x \leq 3$	3	15.00
	Not yet mastered	$X \leq 1$	14	70.00
Answer questions	Mastering	2	3	15.00

according to context	Just Master	1	3	15.00
	Not yet mastered	0	12	60.00
Adding information to the answer	Mastering	$X > 3$	1	0.05
	Just Master	$1 < x \leq 3$	4	20.00
	Not yet mastered	$X \leq 1$	15	75.00
Respond to questions politely	Mastering	2	2	0.1
	Just Master	1	1	0.05
	Not yet mastered	0	17	85.00
Answer without excessive hesitation	Mastering	$X > 4$	6	30.00
	Just Master	$2 < x \leq 4$	7	35.00
	Not yet mastered	$X \leq 2$	5	25.00

Table 10 shows that many children were able to answer simple questions; however, most still experienced difficulties in providing complete responses, adding supporting information, and responding confidently without hesitation.

Table 11. Initial Oral Communication Skills of the Control Group on the Ability to Respond to Questions

Indicator	Criteria	Interval	Frequency	Peresentase
Answer with simple sentences	Mastering	$X > 3$	3	5.56
	Just Master	$1 < x \leq 3$	3	5.56
	Not yet mastered	$X \leq 1$	12	66.66
Answer questions according to context	Mastering	2	2	11.11
	Just Master	1	3	5.56
	Not yet mastered	0	13	72.22
Adding information to the answer	Mastering	$X > 3$	1	5.56
	Just Master	$1 < x \leq 3$	3	16.67
	Not yet mastered	$X \leq 1$	14	77.77
Respond to questions politely	Mastering	2	2	11.11
	Just Master	1	3	16.67
	Not yet mastered	0	15	83.33
Answer without excessive hesitation	Mastering	$X > 4$	5	27.78
	Just Master	$2 < x \leq 4$	7	38.88
	Not yet mastered	$X \leq 2$	4	22.22

The findings in the control group were comparable to those of the experimental group, indicating that children's ability to respond appropriately and confidently to teachers' questions remained relatively low before the treatment.

Assumption Tests

Before testing the research hypothesis, assumption tests consisting of normality and homogeneity tests were conducted to determine whether the data met the requirements for parametric statistical analysis.

Normality Test

The normality test was conducted using the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test with the assistance of IBM SPSS Statistics. The data were considered normally distributed when the significance value exceeded 0.05.

Table 12. Normality Test Results

Treatment	Class	N	Average	KS-Z	Say, (2-tailed)	H ₀
Pre-test	Experiment	20	35.6000	.769	.596	Accepted
	Control	18	38.1111	.951	.326	Accepted
Post-test	Experiment	20	102.1000	.676	.751	Accepted
	Control	18	59.1667	.825	.504	Accepted
N-Gain	Experiment	20	0.8845	0.808	0.531	Accepted
	Control	18	0.2650	1.003	0.267	Accepted

The results presented in Table 11 indicate that all significance values exceeded 0.05, demonstrating that the pretest, posttest, and N-gain scores of both groups were normally distributed. Therefore, the data fulfilled the assumptions required for parametric statistical analysis.

Homogeneity Test

A homogeneity test was subsequently performed using Levene's Test for Equality of Variances to determine whether the variances of the two groups were homogeneous.

Table 13. Homogeneity Test Results

Treatment	<i>Levene Statistic</i>	<i>df1</i>	<i>df2</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Pre-test	.001	1	36	.976
Post-test	4.100	1	36	.073
N-Gain	2.557	1	36	0.119

As shown in Table 13, the significance values for the pretest, posttest, and N-gain scores were all greater than **0.05**. Therefore, the variances of the experimental and control groups were homogeneous, indicating that the data met the assumptions for conducting the independent-samples *t*-test.

Hypothesis Testing

Following the normality and homogeneity tests, an independent-samples *t*-test was conducted to determine whether there was a significant difference in oral communication skills between children taught using the storytelling method and those receiving conventional instruction.

Table 14. Independent-Samples t-Test Results

Class	Skor N-gain	Standard Deviation	Mean Difference	I swear	Sig.	H ₀
Experiment	0.8845	0.07141	0.61950	17.316	0.000	Rejected
Control	0.2650	0.14135				

The findings presented in Table 13 reveal that the significance value was 0.000 ($p < 0.05$). Consequently, the null hypothesis (H_0) was rejected, indicating a statistically significant difference between the experimental and control groups. Furthermore, the experimental group achieved a higher N-gain score (0.8845) than the control group (0.2650), demonstrating that the storytelling method was considerably more effective in improving children's oral communication skills.

Analysis of Oral Communication Indicators

To identify which aspects of oral communication benefited most from the storytelling method, an independent-samples *t*-test was conducted for each communication indicator.

Table 15. Independent-Samples t-Test Results for Each Oral Communication Indicator

Indicator	Class	Score N-gain	Std. deviation	Mean Difference	I swear	Sig.	H ₀
Indicator 1	Experiment	.8000	.27625	.34167	3.818	.001	Rejected
	control	.4583	.27453				
Indicator 2	Experiment	.4500	.27625	.14444	1.681	.102	Accepted
	control	.3056	.25082				
Indicator 3	Experiment	.5415	.22878	.20817	2.911	.006	Rejected
	control	.3333	.21004				
Indicator 4	Experiment	.5250	.25521	.16389	2.069	.046	Rejected
	control	.3611	.23044				

The results indicate that significant improvements were observed in three communication indicators, namely confidence in speaking before others, intonation and voice volume, and ability to respond to questions ($p < 0.05$). In contrast, the ability to express ideas coherently did not show a statistically significant difference

between the experimental and control groups ($p > 0.05$). These findings suggest that the storytelling method was particularly effective in enhancing children's confidence, speaking performance, and interactive communication, although additional instructional support may be required to improve the organization of ideas during oral communication.

The findings of this study demonstrate that the storytelling method significantly improved children's oral communication skills. The independent-samples t -test revealed a significance value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$), indicating a statistically significant difference between the experimental and control groups after the implementation of the storytelling method. Moreover, the experimental group achieved a substantially higher N-gain score (0.8845) than the control group (0.2650), confirming that storytelling was more effective than conventional instruction in enhancing children's oral communication skills.

These findings indicate that storytelling creates meaningful learning experiences by encouraging children to participate actively in classroom communication. Throughout the storytelling activities, children were encouraged to listen attentively, answer teachers' questions, express their opinions, retell stories, and interact with classmates. Such activities provided authentic opportunities for children to practice oral communication in a supportive learning environment, thereby improving their confidence and communication competence.

The present findings are consistent with Vygotsky's Social Constructivist Theory, which emphasizes that children's cognitive and language development occurs through meaningful social interaction. Storytelling facilitates interaction between teachers and children while creating opportunities for dialogue, questioning, collaborative learning, and guided participation. Through these interactions, children gradually develop greater confidence in expressing ideas and communicating effectively (Vygotsky, 1978). Likewise, Bruner (1983) argued that language development is fostered through active participation in meaningful learning experiences. Storytelling provides a natural context in which children construct knowledge by listening, speaking, questioning, and responding during classroom interaction.

The improvement in children's oral communication skills is also supported by previous studies. Isbell et al. (2004) reported that storytelling enhances children's vocabulary acquisition, listening comprehension, speaking ability, and narrative skills. Similarly, Wright (2019) emphasized that storytelling stimulates children's imagination while simultaneously encouraging active verbal interaction. More recent studies by Nurhayati et al. (2023) and Rahmawati and Suryana (2024) likewise concluded that storytelling contributes positively to children's language development and classroom participation. The present study extends these findings by demonstrating that storytelling not only supports language development but also significantly improves oral communication skills as reflected in children's confidence, interaction, responsiveness, and speaking performance.

The analysis of individual communication indicators provides further insight into the effectiveness of the storytelling method. Significant improvements were observed in children's confidence to speak before others, intonation and voice volume, and ability to respond to questions. These findings suggest that storytelling successfully creates a learning environment where children feel comfortable expressing themselves and communicating with teachers and peers. However, no statistically significant improvement was found in the indicator measuring children's ability to express ideas coherently. This result indicates that organizing ideas into well-structured oral narratives is a more complex cognitive process that may require longer instructional periods and continuous practice beyond the duration of the present intervention.

Classroom observations further support the quantitative findings. During storytelling sessions, children demonstrated greater enthusiasm and participation than during conventional learning activities. They listened attentively to stories, responded actively to teachers' questions, volunteered to retell stories, and showed greater confidence when speaking before the class. The use of attractive storytelling media, expressive narration, and interactive questioning-maintained children's attention and motivated them to participate actively throughout the learning process. These observations suggest that storytelling promotes a more engaging and child-centered learning environment that encourages oral interaction (Assidiki et al., 2026; Lia & Sari, 2021).

Within the context of Islamic Education, storytelling serves not only as an instructional strategy for developing communication skills but also as a pedagogical approach for integrating moral and religious values into classroom learning. In this study, storytelling activities incorporated narratives containing positive moral messages, including stories of the Prophets and other educational stories that encouraged honesty, responsibility, respect, and compassion (Hambali et al., 2022; Karim et al., 2023; Lestari, 2018). These narratives enabled children to practice oral communication while simultaneously reflecting on Islamic values conveyed through the stories. Consequently, storytelling supports the holistic objectives of Islamic education, which emphasize the balanced development of cognitive, linguistic, social, moral, and spiritual competencies.

The findings therefore imply that storytelling represents an effective learning method in Islamic education, particularly in early childhood classrooms. Besides enhancing children's oral communication skills, storytelling creates meaningful learning experiences that promote active participation, collaborative interaction, and value-based education. Teachers are therefore encouraged to integrate storytelling more systematically into Islamic learning activities by selecting age-appropriate stories that combine language development with the cultivation of Islamic character and moral values.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the storytelling method significantly improves children's oral communication skills in comparison with conventional learning. The experimental group demonstrated greater improvement across all dimensions of oral communication, including confidence in speaking before others, the ability to express ideas coherently, appropriate intonation and voice volume, and responsiveness to questions. Statistical analysis confirmed a significant difference between the experimental and control groups ($p < 0.05$), indicating that storytelling is more effective than conventional instruction in enhancing children's oral communication skills.

These findings imply that storytelling represents an effective learning method in Islamic education, particularly in early childhood classrooms. Beyond improving children's communication competence, storytelling creates meaningful and interactive learning experiences that encourage active participation while providing opportunities to integrate Islamic moral values through educational narratives. Therefore, teachers are encouraged to incorporate storytelling more systematically into Islamic learning activities to promote children's language development, communication skills, and character formation simultaneously. Future studies are recommended to investigate the long-term effects of storytelling across different educational settings and explore its impact on other developmental domains, such as social-emotional competence, critical thinking, and Islamic character development.

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