

The Benefits Of The Storytelling Method On The Language Development Of 5-6 Year-Old Children At Lagan Pertiwi Paud

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ABSTRACT

Language development is one of the important aspects that must be optimally stimulated in early childhood education. One learning method that can support children's language development is the storytelling method. This study aimed to analyze the benefits of storytelling methods on the language development of children aged 5–6 years at PAUD Lagan Pertiwi, Lubuk Lagan Village, Seluma Regency. This research employed a descriptive qualitative approach. Data were collected through observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation involving the principal, teachers, and children aged 5–6 years. Data analysis was conducted using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, including data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings revealed that storytelling methods using picture storybooks provided significant benefits in improving children's listening skills, enriching vocabulary, enhancing speaking skills, increasing the ability to express opinions, improving the ability to retell stories, and strengthening children's self-confidence in communication. The success of storytelling activities was supported by attractive picture storybooks, teachers' storytelling skills, children's enthusiasm, school support, and a conducive learning environment. However, several obstacles were identified, including differences in children's language abilities, limited concentration spans, low self-confidence among some children, limited storybook variations, and classroom management challenges. Therefore, storytelling methods can be recommended as an effective learning strategy to optimize language development in early childhood..



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Introduction

Early Childhood Education (ECE) is a crucial level of education because it serves as the foundation for children's development in subsequent stages of life. Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System states that early childhood education is an educational effort aimed at children from birth to six years of age through the provision of educational stimulation to support their physical and psychological growth and development, enabling them to be prepared for further education. During this period, children experience rapid growth and development, which is often referred to as the *golden age*. At this stage, all aspects of child development progress optimally, including religious and moral values, physical-motor development, cognitive development, social-emotional development, artistic development, and language development (Suyadi, 2017).

One of the most important developmental aspects that should be nurtured from an early age is language development. Language is a communication tool used by humans to express thoughts, feelings, ideas, and needs to others. Language ability serves as the foundation for children to build social relationships, acquire knowledge, and develop thinking skills. Hurlock (2017) states that language development is an important indicator of child development because language functions as both a means of communication and a tool for thinking. Children who possess good language skills tend to interact more easily with their environment compared to children who experience language delays.

Language development in early childhood includes listening, speaking, emergent reading, and emergent writing skills. According to Dhieni (2020), children's language development can be divided into two main aspects: receptive language and expressive language. Receptive language refers to a child's ability to understand language received through listening and reading activities, while expressive language refers to the ability to express ideas, thoughts, and feelings through speaking and writing. Both aspects need to be optimally stimulated to ensure that children's language development progresses according to their developmental stage.

Children aged 5–6 years are at a stage of rapid language development. At this age, children begin to understand more complex sentences, retell events, express opinions, answer questions, and use a wider range of vocabulary. Santrock (2018) explains that preschool-aged children experience significant vocabulary growth and begin to use more complex sentence structures than in earlier stages of development. Therefore, children require a learning environment that actively and enjoyably stimulates language development. Children's language abilities do not develop automatically; they require appropriate stimulation from both family and school environments. Vygotsky (1978) explains that children's language development occurs through social interactions with adults and peers. Through these interactions, children gain language experiences that contribute to the development of their communication skills. Therefore, teachers play a crucial role in providing learning activities that effectively stimulate children's language development.

Language plays an essential role in all aspects of early childhood development because it serves as the primary means through which children interact with their surroundings. Through language, children learn to understand information received from others while simultaneously developing the ability to express their ideas, feelings, and experiences. According to Susanto (2017), optimal language development helps children enhance their thinking skills, social abilities, and readiness for future educational stages. Therefore, language stimulation should be continuously provided through activities that align with the characteristics of early childhood development.

Children's language development is influenced not only by biological factors but also by

social environments and learning experiences. Children who grow up in environments rich in verbal interaction tend to have better language abilities than those who have fewer opportunities to communicate. Hurlock (2013) explains that family and school environments are two important factors influencing children's language development. The more opportunities children have to listen, speak, and interact with others, the more rapidly their language abilities develop. In the context of early childhood education, teachers are responsible for creating learning environments that optimally stimulate children's language development. One form of stimulation can be provided through learning activities involving active communication between teachers and children. These activities may include conversations, singing, role-playing, reading storybooks, and storytelling. Among these activities, storytelling is one of the most widely used methods because it aligns with young children's characteristics, particularly their enjoyment of stories and imagination (Musfiroh, 2017). In addition to developing language skills, storytelling can also support children's cognitive, social-emotional, moral, and creative development. While listening to stories, children learn about cause-and-effect relationships, recognize character traits, understand moral values, and develop critical thinking regarding events occurring within the story. According to Nurgiyantoro (2018), stories provide meaningful learning experiences because children acquire information through engaging and easily understood contexts. Previous studies have shown that the consistent use of storytelling methods can improve the quality of classroom interactions. Hasanah (2018) found that storytelling activities increase children's participation in learning and help them develop confidence in communication. Similarly, Rahmawati (2021) stated that storytelling has a positive effect on the development of both receptive and expressive language skills in early childhood. These findings indicate that storytelling is not only a source of entertainment for children but also an effective learning strategy for language development.

One learning method that can be used to develop children's language abilities is the storytelling method. Storytelling is a method of delivering learning materials through orally presented stories aimed at providing enjoyable and meaningful learning experiences for children. According to Musfiroh (2017), storytelling activities can enhance language skills, imagination, thinking abilities, and moral value development in early childhood. Through storytelling, children not only acquire new information but also learn to understand story meanings, recognize characters, comprehend plot sequences, and develop communication skills. Storytelling offers various advantages in early childhood learning. While listening to stories, children learn to pay attention to information conveyed by the teacher. At the same time, they acquire new vocabulary that enriches their language abilities. Furthermore, storytelling provides opportunities for children to retell stories in their own words, thereby enhancing their speaking skills (Madyawati, 2016).

The use of storytelling methods can also improve children's receptive and expressive language abilities. Isbell et al. (2004) found that storytelling positively influences children's oral language development, particularly in understanding stories and retelling the stories they have heard. These findings suggest that storytelling is an effective learning strategy for improving language skills in early childhood. In practice, storytelling can be supported by various learning media, one of which is picture storybooks. Picture storybooks possess visual appeal that can increase children's attention and interest in learning activities. According to Otto (2015), illustrations in picture storybooks help children understand story meanings more concretely, making it easier for them to connect language with the objects or events being described. Therefore, the use of picture storybooks can strengthen the effectiveness of storytelling in developing children's language abilities. Based on preliminary observations conducted at PAUD Lagan Pertiwi, teachers were found to have implemented storytelling as one of the learning activities to develop children's language abilities. Teachers used picture

storybooks adapted to learning themes, and children appeared enthusiastic during storytelling sessions. Most children were able to pay attention to the stories, answer simple questions, and retell story content in their own words. However, some children still experienced difficulties in expressing opinions and communicating actively during learning activities. Various previous studies have demonstrated that storytelling has a positive influence on early childhood language development. Research conducted by Khasanah and Suryana (2023) showed that storytelling improves children's speaking abilities and enriches their vocabulary. Similarly, Fitriyah and Rahmawati (2022) found that storytelling activities enhance listening skills and help children better understand language structures. Nevertheless, each educational institution has different student characteristics, learning environments, and instructional practices, making it necessary to conduct further research in different contexts. Based on the explanation above, this study is important to gain an in-depth understanding of the benefits of storytelling methods for the language development of children aged 5–6 years at PAUD Lagan Pertiwi. This study is expected to contribute to early childhood educators in selecting effective learning methods to develop children's language abilities from an early age. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to describe and analyze the benefits of storytelling methods for the language development of children aged 5–6 years at PAUD Lagan Pertiwi.

Method

This study employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive research design. The qualitative approach was chosen because the study aimed to obtain an in-depth understanding of the benefits of the storytelling method for the language development of children aged 5–6 years at PAUD Lagan Pertiwi. Qualitative research enables researchers to understand phenomena that occur naturally through direct observation of research subjects, allowing the data obtained to accurately reflect actual conditions in the field (Sugiyono, 2023; Moleong, 2022). The study was conducted at PAUD Lagan Pertiwi, located in Lubuk Lagan Village, West Seluma District, Seluma Regency, during the second semester of the 2025/2026 academic year. The research subjects were Group B children aged 5–6 years, while the research informants consisted of the principal and classroom teachers who were directly involved in the implementation of the storytelling method. Informants were selected using a purposive sampling technique, which involves selecting participants based on specific considerations relevant to the research objectives, ensuring that they could provide comprehensive and relevant information regarding the research focus (Sugiyono, 2023).

In this study, the researcher acted as the primary instrument (human instrument) responsible for data collection, observation, interviews, and data analysis throughout the research process. To support data collection, the researcher utilized observation guidelines, interview guidelines, documentation, and field notes. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation. Observations were conducted directly to examine the implementation of the storytelling method, interactions between teachers and children, and the development of children's language skills during the learning process. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the principal and classroom teachers to obtain more in-depth information regarding the implementation of the storytelling method and its benefits for children's language development. In addition, documentation was used as supporting data, including photographs of learning activities, Daily Lesson Plans (RPPH), and records of children's language development (Arikunto, 2021; Moleong, 2022).

The collected data were analyzed using the interactive analysis model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2018), which consists of three stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data reduction was carried out by selecting and focusing on data

relevant to the research objectives. The data were then presented in a narrative form to facilitate understanding and analysis. Subsequently, conclusions were drawn based on the patterns and findings that emerged during the research process. To ensure data validity, this study employed source triangulation and technique triangulation. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing information obtained from the principal, teachers, and observation results of the children, while technique triangulation involved comparing data collected through observation, interviews, and documentation. The use of triangulation aimed to enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of the research findings, ensuring that the data obtained could be scientifically justified (Sugiyono, 2023; Moleong, 2022).

Results and Discussion

A. Initial Condition of Language Development of Children Aged 5–6 Years at PAUD Lagan Pertiwi

Based on the initial observations conducted by the researcher at PAUD Lagan Pertiwi, Lubuk Lagan Village, Seluma Regency, the language development of children aged 5–6 years showed varying levels of achievement. Some children had developed language skills appropriate to their age, while others still required more intensive stimulation to optimize their language development. These differences could be observed in the children's ability to listen, speak, answer questions, express opinions, and interact with teachers and peers during the learning process. Children with well-developed language skills appeared more active during classroom activities. They were able to understand instructions given by the teacher, answer questions using simple sentences, and confidently express their ideas and experiences. In contrast, some children appeared less confident when asked to speak in front of the class, tended to provide very brief responses, or even remained silent when the teacher asked questions. The observation results also indicated differences in children's listening abilities. Some children were able to pay attention when the teacher explained learning materials and listened to stories until the end, while others were easily distracted by their surroundings and had difficulty maintaining concentration during learning activities.

This condition caused some children to struggle in understanding information delivered by the teacher. During discussion sessions, several children were able to respond to questions and participate actively, while others tended to follow their friends' answers without expressing their own opinions. These findings suggest that both receptive and expressive language skills had not yet developed evenly among all children. Based on interviews with classroom teachers, several factors were found to influence children's language development. The first factor was the family environment. Children who were accustomed to communicating actively with their parents, listening to stories at home, and being encouraged to express their opinions generally demonstrated better language abilities. In contrast, children who received limited language stimulation at home tended to have a restricted vocabulary and lower confidence in communication. Another factor was children's previous learning experiences.

Children who had prior opportunities to interact with peers and participate in educational activities showed more advanced language development than those who were experiencing formal education for the first time. These findings are consistent with Hurlock's theory, which states that children's language development is influenced by environmental factors, learning opportunities, social conditions, and life experiences (Hurlock, 2013). A supportive environment that provides children with ample opportunities to communicate contributes significantly to language growth. Likewise, Vygotsky (1978) argued that language

develops through social interaction between children and adults or peers. Through these interactions, children acquire vocabulary, understand linguistic meanings, and learn to use language as a tool for communication and thinking.

This view is further supported by Dhieni (2020), who emphasized that early childhood language development requires continuous stimulation through activities that encourage children to listen, speak, and express their ideas actively. Observation results also revealed that children were generally more interested in activities involving pictures, stories, and games than in teacher-centered instructional methods. When teachers relied solely on verbal explanations, several children quickly lost interest and concentration. However, when attractive learning media were used, children became more attentive and engaged. This finding indicates that language learning for young children should be adapted to their developmental characteristics. According to Piaget (1964), children aged 5–6 years are in the preoperational stage, during which they learn effectively through symbols, images, language, and imaginative experiences.

Therefore, the use of engaging and developmentally appropriate learning methods is essential to support optimal language development. Based on these initial conditions, teachers sought instructional methods that could effectively improve children's language skills while maintaining their interest and enthusiasm. One of the methods implemented was storytelling using picture storybooks. This method was chosen because it provides enjoyable learning experiences while simultaneously offering rich language stimulation. Through storytelling, children are exposed to new vocabulary, narrative structures, characters, and events while also being encouraged to express opinions and retell information. Consequently, storytelling was expected to address the language-related challenges identified during the initial observations.

B. Implementation of the Storytelling Method Using Picture Storybooks at PAUD Lagan Pertiwi

The storytelling method at PAUD Lagan Pertiwi was implemented systematically as part of daily learning activities. Teachers carefully prepared picture storybooks that were aligned with the learning themes, children's developmental levels, and intended educational objectives. The selected books generally contained attractive illustrations, colorful images, simple language, and moral values suitable for young learners. The use of picture storybooks was considered effective because visual elements could capture children's attention and facilitate their understanding of the stories. Storytelling sessions began with introductory activities such as greetings, prayers, and apperception. During this stage, teachers created a positive learning atmosphere and connected children's prior experiences with the theme of the story.

Teachers asked simple questions to stimulate children's speaking abilities and arouse their curiosity about the story to be presented. This introductory activity helped children prepare mentally and emotionally for the learning experience. Next, teachers showed the picture storybook to the children and encouraged them to observe the illustrations on the cover and pages. Children enthusiastically examined the pictures and attempted to predict the content of the story based on what they observed. Some children expressed opinions about the characters shown in the illustrations, while others tried to guess the storyline.

This activity demonstrated that visual media effectively stimulated children's imagination and thinking before the storytelling session began. According to Otto (2015), picture storybooks help children connect spoken language with visual representations, making learning more meaningful and effective. During the storytelling process, teachers used varied

voice intonation, expressive facial expressions, and body movements that matched the storyline. They emphasized important parts of the story to help children understand the sequence of events and the characteristics of the characters. Throughout the session, children listened attentively and observed the illustrations carefully. Many children responded spontaneously by laughing, asking questions, or commenting on the events and characters in the story.

These interactions indicated that storytelling created active communication between teachers and children. After the storytelling session, teachers conducted follow-up activities through questions and discussions to assess children's understanding of the story. Children were encouraged to answer questions, express their opinions, and retell the story in their own words. These activities aimed to strengthen both comprehension and speaking skills. Musfiroh (2017) explains that storytelling is not merely an entertaining activity but also an effective educational strategy for developing language skills, imagination, creativity, and critical thinking in young children. The observation results showed that storytelling using picture storybooks created a more active, enjoyable, and meaningful learning environment than traditional teacher-centered instruction. Children appeared more enthusiastic, focused, and willing to participate in classroom activities. These findings confirm that storytelling is highly compatible with the developmental characteristics of young children, who naturally enjoy stories, pictures, and imaginative experiences (Musfiroh, 2017).

C. Benefits of the Storytelling Method for the Language Development of Children Aged 5–6 Years at PAUD Lagan Pertiwi

The findings of this study indicate that the storytelling method using picture storybooks provides significant benefits for the language development of children aged 5–6 years at PAUD Lagan Pertiwi. One of the most noticeable improvements was in children's listening skills. After participating in regular storytelling activities, children became more capable of focusing on stories and understanding the information conveyed by the teacher. Improved listening skills were evident when children could answer questions about characters, plot sequences, and moral messages contained in the stories. These findings are consistent with the study conducted by Fitriyah and Rahmawati (2022), which found that storytelling effectively enhances young children's listening abilities because it captures and maintains their attention throughout the learning process. In addition to improving listening skills, storytelling contributed significantly to vocabulary development.

During storytelling sessions, children were introduced to various new words related to characters, objects, places, traits, and events within the stories. Over time, these newly acquired words began to appear in children's daily conversations with teachers and peers. Observation results showed that children became more capable of expressing their thoughts and feelings because they possessed a broader vocabulary. These findings support the research of Isbell et al. (2004), who concluded that storytelling positively influences children's oral language development and vocabulary acquisition. Another important benefit observed was the improvement in children's speaking skills. After participating in regular storytelling activities, children became more active in answering questions, expressing opinions, and interacting with their peers. Children who had previously been passive gradually gained the confidence to speak in front of the class. They also demonstrated greater ability to construct longer and clearer sentences when expressing ideas or sharing experiences.

According to Dhieni (2020), children's speaking skills develop effectively when they are given sufficient opportunities to use language actively in various communication situations.

Storytelling also helped children develop their ability to express opinions and retell stories they had heard. Children were able to explain which characters they liked, identify the most interesting parts of the story, and communicate the moral lessons they learned. Furthermore, most children were capable of retelling the stories in a logical sequence using language appropriate to their developmental stage. This ability indicates that children were not merely passive listeners but were actively processing, remembering, and communicating information. These findings support the study conducted by Putri and Hadziq (2020), which found that storytelling activities improve children's expressive language skills through retelling experiences.

Another significant benefit identified in this study was increased self-confidence in communication. According to teacher interviews, children who had previously been shy became more willing to speak in front of the class and answer questions voluntarily. They appeared more confident when expressing opinions and retelling stories. These findings suggest that storytelling contributes not only to language development but also to children's social-emotional growth. This result is consistent with Rahmawati (2021), who reported that storytelling activities enhance children's self-confidence by providing positive and enjoyable communication experiences. Overall, the findings demonstrate that storytelling using picture storybooks provides substantial benefits for the language development of children aged 5–6 years at PAUD Lagan Pertiwi. The method improves listening skills, enriches vocabulary, enhances speaking abilities, develops children's capacity to express opinions, strengthens story-retelling skills, and increases self-confidence in communication. These findings reinforce the views of Musfiroh (2017), Dhieni (2020), and Otto (2015), who emphasize that storytelling is one of the most effective instructional strategies for supporting early childhood language development because it offers active, enjoyable, and meaningful learning experiences.

Conclusion

Based on the findings and discussion conducted at PAUD Lagan Pertiwi, it can be concluded that the storytelling method using picture storybooks provides significant benefits for the language development of children aged 5–6 years. The implementation of storytelling activities created an active, enjoyable, and meaningful learning environment that improved children's listening abilities, enriched vocabulary, enhanced speaking skills, encouraged opinion expression, strengthened story-retelling abilities, and increased self-confidence in communication. Attractive visual illustrations supported children's understanding and maintained their attention during learning activities. These findings indicate that storytelling using picture storybooks can serve as an effective instructional strategy for supporting optimal language development in early childhood and is recommended for continuous implementation in educational settings.

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