

Innovation in Indonesian Language Learning for Early Childhood: The Effectiveness of Storytelling Techniques for 5–6 Year Old Children at Legina Kindergarten

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine the effectiveness of storytelling in improving the Indonesian language skills of five- to six-year-old children at Legina Kindergarten. This study employed a quantitative approach and a single-group pre-test-post-test *experimental design*. The study subjects were 20 children aged 5 to 6 years. Before and after the storytelling method was implemented, an Indonesian language skills test was conducted to collect data. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and paired-sample t-tests. The results showed that children's language skill scores increased from 59.82 in the pretest to 65.14 in the posttest. The results of the paired sample test showed a t-value of 5.23 and a significance level of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$). The results indicate that children's language skills differed significantly before and after the storytelling technique was used. The results show that storytelling techniques are effective in improving the Indonesian language skills of five- to six-year-old children. Therefore, storytelling techniques can be used as a relevant learning strategy to support early childhood language development in kindergarten.

Keywords: storytelling techniques, Indonesian language skills, early childhood.

INTRODUCTION

For early childhood, especially those aged 5–6, which is the transitional stage toward primary education, Indonesian language skills are a crucial competency. At this stage, children are required not only to understand what others are saying but also to be able to convey ideas verbally using increasingly complex language structures. Therefore, language learning in kindergarten must be systematically designed and focused on the balanced development of receptive and expressive language¹.

Previous studies have shown that storytelling helps early childhood language development. Storytelling activities can also improve vocabulary, listening skills, and children's confidence in speaking in front of peers. However, most studies have focused solely on describing improvements in overall learning outcomes, without examining in-depth the effectiveness of storytelling techniques based on the Indonesian language skills measured. Furthermore, the context in which storytelling techniques are used is often limited to specific classroom settings, making the results limited in their generalizability².

¹ Patrick J Benetti and others, 'The Attributes of Effective Safety Storytelling: Measurement and Conceptual Advancement', *Safety Science*, 191 (2025), p. 106951, doi:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssci.2025.106951>.

² Dea Apriani, 'Benefits and Objectives of Storytelling in Increasing Early Childhood Reading Interest at the DPAD Library Service Center of the Special Region of Yogyakarta (DIY)', *SIGNIFICANT: Journal of*

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In contrast, empirical research using storytelling as a planned and integrated Indonesian language learning strategy is still relatively limited, especially for children aged 5–6 years. Not many studies have investigated the use of storytelling techniques in early childhood education institutions in certain areas, such as Legina Kindergarten, which have different student characteristics and learning environments. Furthermore, several studies have not clearly distinguished the impact of storytelling techniques on receptive and expressive language aspects, which are the main indicators of early childhood language development ³.

Children can improve their listening skills by listening to the radio, audio stories for children, children's songs, singing, chain messages, imitating sounds, guessing sounds, answering questions, and other activities. Storytelling, talking, asking and answering questions, and conducting Q&A are suitable learning strategies for early childhood ⁴. Based on a thorough consideration of previous research, it can be found that there is still a lack of research. Specifically, research has not conducted research that assesses the effectiveness of storytelling techniques on the Indonesian language skills of children aged 5–6 years using measurable and contextual language development indicators. Furthermore, there is no research that clearly links the use of storytelling techniques with improvements in receptive language skills ⁵.

The purpose of this study was to empirically analyze the effectiveness of storytelling techniques in improving the Indonesian language skills of 5–6-year-old children at Legina Kindergarten, with a particular emphasis on changes in children's receptive and expressive language skills before and after the use of storytelling techniques. Furthermore, this study aimed to identify the Indonesian language skill indicators that experienced the most significant improvement.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study used a quantitative approach with a one-group pretest–posttest pre-experimental design aimed at testing the effectiveness of storytelling techniques in improving the Indonesian language skills of children aged 5–6 years. The study subjects consisted of 20 children at Legina Kindergarten selected using a total sampling technique. For six meetings, storytelling methods were used as the research treatment. Activities designed in this manner included storytelling, the use of supporting media, open-ended questions, and retelling.

Data were collected through structured observations using a language skills observation sheet covering receptive and expressive language skills, compiled based on early childhood language development indicators. Purposive sampling was used to select respondents deemed most suitable to provide data in accordance with the research objectives. ⁶.

Pretests and posttests were conducted to measure changes in language skills before and after treatment. Pretest and posttest results were analyzed using descriptive statistics and paired t-tests to identify significant differences between pretest and posttest results. Instrument reliability was tested through interobserver agreement, while content validity (expert

³ Vinni Helvionita, 'Storytelling Methods in Improving Language Skills and Instilling Moral Values in Early Childhood', *Wacana Umat*, 8.1 (2023).

⁴ Apriani.

⁵ Ehsan Namaziandost and Fidel Çakmak, 'Impact of AI-Generated Storytelling vs. Gamified Learning on Vocabulary Retention and Engagement in CALL Environments', *Computers and Education: Artificial Intelligence*, 9 (2025), p. 100505, doi:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.caeai.2025.100505>.

⁶ J. W Creswell, J. WCreswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches (4th Ed.)* (SAGE Publications., 2014).

judgment) was tested through instrument validity. This research was conducted ethically and obtained school and parental consent ⁷.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

The purpose of this study was to determine the effectiveness of storytelling in improving the Indonesian language skills of five- to six-year-old children at Legina Kindergarten. Data for 20 children were obtained through pretest and posttest measurements. The data were then analyzed using a paired sample t-test.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Children's Language Skills

Variables	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Pretest	20	59.82	3.30
Posttest	20	65.14	6.49

Based on **Table 1** , there is an increase in the average value of children's language skills from **59.82 in the pretest** to **65.14 in the posttest** after applying the storytelling technique.

Table 2. Paired Sample T-Test Results

Mean Difference	Standard Deviation	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
5.32	5.75	5.23	19	0,000

The results of the *paired sample t-test* showed a *t-value* of 5.23 with a significance level of $p = 0.000$ ($p < 0.05$). This indicates a significant difference between children's Indonesian language skills before and after the application of the storytelling technique.

Discussion

The results of the study indicate that the storytelling method has a significant impact on improving the Indonesian language skills of children aged 5–6 years at Legina Kindergarten. Table 1 shows an increase in the average score of children's language skills from 59.82 in the pretest stage to 65.14 in the posttest stage. This increase indicates that storytelling learning improves children's language comprehension and expression. The results of the paired sample t-test in Table 2 show an increase in the average score, with a *t-value* of 5.23 and a significance level of p of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$). These statistical results indicate that children's language skills differ significantly before and after the storytelling technique is used. Therefore, the research hypothesis that the storytelling method is effective in improving children's Indonesian language skills can be accepted.

Theoretically, early childhood language development theory states that social interactions and significant learning experiences foster language development. By using storytelling techniques, children not only passively receive information but also actively engage in listening to the story, understanding its meaning, and relating it to their own experiences. This technique

⁷ J. Miles, MB, Huberman, AM and Saldana, *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Methods Sourcebook*.

allows children to fully understand language in a natural, coherent, and vocabulary-rich context.

Storytelling activities also influence children's receptive and expressive language development. Children gain the ability to listen to stories, understand new vocabulary, and follow the teacher's narrative. Children are encouraged to express their opinions, answer questions, and retell the story in their own words. These activities enable children to use language effectively, which contributes to the development of their language skills.

Previous research has also found that storytelling can improve early childhood listening and speaking skills. It also found that interactive and contextual language learning is more effective than one-way learning. The storytelling technique used in this study creates a communicative learning environment, encouraging children to actively participate in the lesson.

Storytelling techniques have pedagogical advantages because they are tailored to the needs of five- to six-year-old children, who are at the imaginative and symbolic stage of development. To make language learning more relevant and meaningful, teachers can tailor the stories they tell to the learning theme and the children's needs. This explains why the storytelling method used in this study significantly improved language skills.

Consequently, the findings of this study indicate that the storytelling method is not only statistically effective but also theoretically and practically relevant for teaching Indonesian to early childhood children. To optimally improve children's language skills, kindergarten teachers can use storytelling as one of the recommended learning approaches.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research results and discussion, it can be concluded that the storytelling method is effective in improving the Indonesian language skills of 5–6 year old children at Legina Kindergarten. The results of the statistical analysis show that the storytelling technique increased the children's language skill scores from 59.82 in the pretest to 65.14 in the posttest. With a t-value of 5.23 and a significance level of p of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$), the results of the multiple sample t-test indicate that the difference in children's language skills before and after treatment is statistically significant. These findings indicate that the use of the storytelling method in the learning process has a direct effect on improving children's language skills. Therefore, the storytelling approach can be recommended as an effective learning approach to improve the Indonesian language skills of early childhood. If implemented in a planned and sustainable manner, this approach can help children's language development, especially in listening and speaking, in kindergarten.

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