Developing Children's Expressive Language Through the Storytelling Methods

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Abstract

This study analyzes the storytelling method's implementation in children's expressive language. The research method used is descriptive qualitative. Data collection techniques using observation, interviews, and documentation. Data analysis uses the steps proposed by Milles & Huberman, namely data reduction, data presentation, and conclusions. The results of this research are 1) the teacher implements the storytelling method following the stages of the lesson plan that has been prepared previously with storytelling techniques adapted to the story conveyed 2) The development of children's expressive language has increased.

Keyword : *storytelling method, expressive language, early childhood*

A. Introduction

Language is a need needed by humans as a means to communicate with others. Language is a communication or liaison tool between people to express their feelings, thoughts, and desires.[1] Language development is related to cognitive development because when children learn to speak with the people around them, they will get various helpful information for honing their thinking power. Hence, children need to get the right stimulus from an early age.

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[1] Nurbiana Dhieni and Lara Fridani, *Hakikat Perkembangan Bahasa Anak* (Jakarta: Universitas Terbuka, 2012).

The role of language is significant for human life, especially in early childhood, namely to think, listen, read, and write so that a child can express thoughts, feelings, and even opinions to others. Therefore, children's language development can be a reference for children's intelligence in the future.[2] However, not all children have good language development. It can be seen in the observations of researchers at RA Al-Firdaus, that many children find it difficult to express their ideas or feelings towards other people/teachers (their expressive language has yet to develop and must be improved). For example, they do not communicate enough during the learning process, are calmer, and, when asked, find it difficult to say what is on their mind.

This problem must be addressed immediately, considering the importance of language skills for children so as not to hinder or interfere with children's cognitive development in the future. One of the causes of this is the need for more enthusiasm in children when receiving learning because it is influenced by learning methods that are less interesting and varied, causing boredom and boredom for children as well as a lack of motivation for children to learn. Therefore, teachers as educators are encouraged to find appropriate learning methods to arouse children's learning interests. One method that can be used to overcome this problem is the storytelling method.[3]

Storytelling is an ancient cultural technique or art carried out to convey important events through words, sounds, and imagination as education, entertainment, culture, and the transmission of knowledge and morals.[4] This method was chosen because children aged 5-6 years can listen carefully to what other people are saying by using the storytelling method.[5] In addition, with the storytelling method, children will learn to understand the events or events being told. After that, the children will be motivated to express their feelings and thoughts about the stories they hear.

In their research, several related studies have been carried out by Hilmiyah et al. stating that storytelling can improve children's language

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[2] Andi Yusmiarti Yusuf, "Penerapan Metode Bercerita Dalam Meningkatkan Bahasa Ekspresif Pada Anak Didik Kelompok B 2 Di Taman Kanak-Kanak Minasa Upa Kota Makassar" (Universitas Negeri Makassar, 2013).

[3] Putri Saraswati, "Implementasi Metode Bercerita Melalui Gambar Seri Dalam Upaya Mengembangkan Bahasa Ekspresif Anak Usia Dini Kelompok B Di RA Muslimat NU Tarbiyatul Wildan Wates Undaan Kudus" (IAIN Kudus, 2022).

[4] Gana Kartinika Hadi, "Pengaruh Metode Bercerita Terhadap Kemampuan Mengungkapkan Bahasa Anak Usia 5-6 Tahun Di TK Pertiwi 1 Banjarsari," *Jurnal PG-PAUD Trunojoyo : Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pembelajaran Anak Usia Dini* 5, no. 2 (2018): 131–37, https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.21107/pgpaudtrunojoyo.v5i2.5441.

[5] Aryani Ayu Sariska Panjaitan, Usman Radiana, and Dian Miranda, "Analisis Metode Bercerita Pada Anak Usia 5-6 Tahun," *Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pembelajaran Khatulistiwa* 9, no. 1 (2020): 1–8, https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.26418/jppk.v9i1.38772.

skills.[6] In line with that, Marcela et al. revealed that by using the method of storytelling, children's language skills increase under the standard level of achievement of children. In line with that, Marcela et al. revealed that by using the storytelling method, children's language skills increase according to the standard level of children's achievement. The storytelling method used by the teacher causes children to be more enthusiastic and motivated to participate in learning and improves children's expressive language skills.[7] Therefore, the writer hopes children's expressive abilities can increase through storytelling.

B. Method

The type of research used in this research is descriptive qualitative, a description of the actual condition of the object being examined at the time the research took place. This study aims to determine the analysis of the implementation of storytelling methods on children's expressive language. This research was conducted in Al-Firdaus Kindergarten, located at East Malangan Village, Pademawu, Pamekasan, East Java, Indonesia. The data in this study consisted of primary data and secondary data. The primary data is the parents, while the secondary data is the documentation during the research.

Data collection techniques in this study are observation, interviews, and documentation. The data analysis technique that the authors used in this study used data reduction, data presentation, and verification or conclusion of data analysis. In this study, the authors used the triangulation technique to check the validity of the data obtained from interviews with the primary sources, which were then combined with a documentary study based on the research conducted, and then observations from the field to produce pure and reliable data validity.

C. Result and Discussion
1. Identifying Children's Expressive Language and Its Importance

According to Paul, in ordinary 2-year-olds, children are generally already able to produce intentional communicative actions. In addition, at that age, they already master an expressive vocabulary of at least 50 words and a much more receptive vocabulary. They can also structure

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[6] Nurul Zahriani JF et al., "Peningkatan Kemampuan Bahasa Anak Melalui Metode Bercerita Menggunakan Media Audio Visual Di RA Raudatul Ilmi Kecamatan Medan Denai," *AUD Cendekia: Journal of Islamic Early Childhood Education* 1, no. 1 (2021): 30–48.

[7] Hadi, "Pengaruh Metode Bercerita Terhadap Kemampuan Mengungkapkan Bahasa Anak Usia 5-6 Tahun Di TK Pertiwi 1 Banjarsari."

speech with multi-words; generally, these abilities can also be understood by those around them who know them well.[8]

The ability of children to express a feeling is part of an aspect of child development that adults cannot ignore. Laranjo said that early expressive vocabulary is a well-documented predictor of children's later socio-cognitive development.[9] Expressive language is an aspect that plays an essential role in identifying healthy child development. It is because it is one of the factors that can prevent the emergence of aggressive behavior[10] as well as being a determining role in the formation of verbal IQ and children's performance in later life[11], academic success, literacy[12], and peer competence.

Shiel et al. mentioned that children are expected to be able to use expressive language in various functions in elementary grades, where verbal interaction becomes one of the main tools for learning with cross-curriculum.[13] Dobinson and Dockrell also mentioned that the expressive language shown by children could predict how well the quality of language provision they have received.[14]

Based on some of the views that have been mentioned, we can know many opinions that reinforce the importance of expressive language skills in children. For this reason, appropriate approaches for developing early childhood skills in expression are also needed. In this case, kindergarten becomes a vehicle that plays a role in seeding the expressive language skills of early childhood.

2. Storytelling for Early Children

This study emphasizes the importance of expressive language development in early childhood. So, why do adults need to connect it to

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[8] Rhea Paul, "Profiles of Toddlers with Slow Expressive Language Development," *Topics in Language Disorders* 11, no. 4 (1991): 1–13, https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1097/00011363-199111040-00003.

[9] Jessica Laranjo and Annie Bernier, "Children's Expressive Language in Early Toddlerhood: Links to Prior Maternal Mind-Mindedness," *Early Child Development and Care* 183, no. 7 (2013): 951–62, https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1080/03004430.2012.699964.

[10] Ginette Dionne et al., "Physical Aggression and Expressive Vocabulary in 19-Month-Old Twins," *Developmental Psychology* 39, no. 2 (March 2003): 261–73, https://doi.org/10.1037//0012-1649.39.2.261; Laranjo and Bernier, "Children's Expressive Language in Early Toddlerhood: Links to Prior Maternal Mind-Mindedness."

[11] Marc H. Bornstein and O. Maurice Haynes, "Vocabulary Competence in Early Childhood: Measurement, Latent Construct, and Predictive Validity," *Child Development* 69, no. 3 (1998): 654–71, https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.2307/1132196.

[12] Andrew Biemiller, "Vocabulary Development and Instruction: A Prerequisite for School Learning," in *Handbook of Early Literacy Research*, ed. D. K. Dickinson and S. B. Neuman (New York: Guilford Press, 2006), 41–51.

[13] Gerry Shiel et al., "Oral Language in Early Childhood and Primary Education (3-8 Years)," 2012.

[14] Keeley L. Dobinson and Julie E. Dockrell, "Universal Strategies for the Improvement of Expressive Language Skills in the Primary Classroom: A Systematic Review," *First Language* 41, no. 5 (2021): 527–54, https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1177/0142723721989471.

storytelling? According to Wright, stories can help young children become aware of shared feelings and introduce them to the sounds of a foreign language. On the other hand, stories can also introduce children to elements of language and sentence structure without using them actively and directly. With this, they can build a language cloud concept in this way. When the time comes for them to move one element of the language or term into their effective control, it is no longer a big deal because the language or term is not new to them.[15]

Some previous studies have also attempted to define storytelling itself. According to Lisenbee and Ford, a broader definition of traditional storytelling encompasses a teacher's experiences transcribing an illustration narrative to children. Sometimes in practice, use dolls to tell a story about a birthday party that happened recently, perform actions that match the words read in the book, or students perform a complete game.[16]

Fischer et al. understand the activity in which the content (facts, information) is transformed and brought into a narrative form called "story." Whereas stories generally have a recognizable beginning, then middle, and end. In addition, the story provides information about the time and space settings that differ from the place where the story was told.[17]

For the current context, storytelling is defined as telling a story in a dynamic triangle, i.e., story, teller, and audience. The three relationships of the storytelling triangle inform each other; the audience's relationship with the storyteller depends partly on how they understand the storyteller's relationship to the story and which stories The Storyteller chooses to tell that audience.[18] However, several storytelling experts tend not to associate storytelling with reading aloud. They assume that these two things are two separate entities and have differences. Storytelling is better understood as telling a story without resorting to the help of printed paper, images, or any property that can break the magnetic flow between the person telling the story and the listener.[19]

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[15] Andrew Wright, *Storytelling with Children* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).

[16] Peggy S. Lisenbee and Carol M. Ford, "Engaging Students in Traditional and Digital Storytelling to Make Connections Between Pedagogy and Children's Experiences," *Early Childhood Education Journal* 46, no. 1 (2017): 129–39, https://doi.org/10.1007/s10643-017-0846-x.

[17] Daniel Fischer et al., "Storytelling for Sustainability: A Definition and Its Implications for Education and Communication," in *Higher Education: An Educator's Handbook*, ed. Petra Molthan-Hill et al. (London: Routledge, 2020), 38–51.

[18] Kate McDowell, "Many Narratives: Storytelling as Epistemological Bridge," in *Proceedings of the Association for Library and Information Science Education Annual Conference* (Pittsburgh: ALISE 2022, 2022), https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.21900/j.alise.2022.1072.

[19] Gerald A. Chesin, "Storytelling and Storyreading," *Peabody Journal of Education* 43, no. 4 (1966): 212–14, https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1080/01619566609537343.

There is a close relationship between storytelling and a child's expressive language development. Storytelling is described by some experts as a form of narrative interaction and is one of the favorite activities widely used in early childhood educational institutions. In interactive storytelling activities, when both parties are involved in creating a story world, the story world gradually grows larger and larger. It includes the storyteller and listener as well as the inhabitants of the creator of the world.[20] The narrative is the primary communication strategy and an essential concept in all interrelated issues since all human beings are storytellers by nature[21] and more easily accept or understand narratives that have been recognized or familiar to them.[22]

3. Implementation of the Storytelling Method for Developing Children's Expressive Language

Before learning, the researcher first carried out the learning planning stages. The researcher did the learning planning with the teacher, namely improving the previous design by adjusting the theme and needs of the child. Then change the indicators according to the design of the new activities to be carried out.

When applying the storytelling method to the learning process, the planning that will be carried out is: 1) Choosing the story to be told, 2) Determining the technique or form of the story, 3) Determining and preparing the tools and materials needed 4) Arranging the child's seat before storytelling begins.

Before the storytelling activity begins, the teacher asks students to pray and read a short surah together. Then the researcher conveys the story's contents that will be conveyed in language that children easily understand. During storytelling activities, the researcher uses expressions adapted to the story's contents, such as laughing when the dialogue is happy or crying expressions when the dialogue is sad.

Teachers carry out the storytelling without the help of print media or books. The teacher tells the story orally and directly confronts the young students. In this case, the researchers put themselves as one of the participants who listened to the story. Nevertheless, on other occasions, the researcher also participated as a person who brought the story. The observation activities are carried out in several sessions. For each storytelling session, there is a different story.

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[20] Ann M. Trousdale, "Interactive Storytelling: Scaffolding Children's Early Narratives," *Stories and Meanings* 67, no. 2 (1990).

[21] Jennifer B. Gray, "The Power of Storytelling: Using Narrative in the Healthcare Context," *Journal of Communication in Healthcare* 2, no. 3 (2009): 258–73, https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1179/cih.2009.2.3.258.

[22] Dolf Zillmann, "Exemplification Effects in the Promotion of Safety and Health," *Journal of Communication* 56, no. 1 (2006): S221–37, https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.2006.00291.x.

During the storytelling activity, it was seen that students showed interest by participating in giving responses or showing expressions according to the story being conveyed. When the students listened to the sad part of the story, their expressions seemed so severe and showed signs of concern. Conversely, when the storyline arrives at the encouraging part, students seem to show excited or happy expressions, such as smiling. After telling the story, the researcher asked the children several questions regarding the contents of the story, then conveyed the moral message and asked the children to retell it in simple language. Based on the description above, the implementation of the storytelling method in optimizing children's expressive language skills went well, with excellent responses from students.

4. The Development of Children's Expressive Language

Researchers classify the results of observations on students who applied the method of storytelling based on indicators that have been set. The data mining found that after telling the story, the researcher asked several questions to the children regarding the content of the story. It was seen that the child could answer the questions asked without the teacher's help. In addition, children can retell the stories they hear well using simple language. It shows that children understand the contents of the story and the messages contained in the story. It is in line with the results of research conducted by Marcela et al., namely that the children experienced an increase after storytelling activities, where they were able to answer and respond well when the teacher asked questions.[23]

The application of the storytelling method carried out by the teacher can stimulate and facilitate children's curiosity. Children tend to ask more questions when they do not understand something, increasing their vocabulary. In line with this statement, Moeslichatoen stated that with storytelling, children could learn to listen to other people carefully, ask questions when they do not understand, and tell and re-express stories they have heard.[24]

In addition, based on the researcher's interviews with several teachers and parents of students shows that after the storytelling activity is carried out, the child's expressive language skills have increased. One of the teachers stated that after learning about storytelling methods, expressive language development in children had developed. For example, when asked, they immediately responded with mimic words and intonation. The teacher also stated that her children became more active

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[23] Fachrul Rozie and Rina Ayu Marcela, "Penerapan Metode Bercerita Dalam Optimalisasi Bahasa Reseptif Anak Usia 5-6 Tahun Di TK Negeri 02 Tenggarong," *Jurnal Lentera Anak: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Perkembangan Anak Usia Dini* 1, no. 1 (2020): 27–38.

[24] Moeslichatoen R, *Metode Pengajaran Di Taman Kanak-Kanak* (Jakarta: Rineka Cipta, 2004).

in learning after doing storytelling activities and responded more quickly. Related to it, Guntur stated that after the storytelling method was applied, children responded more quickly whenever the teacher asked a question and asked them to do something.[25]

These results are in line with what Hibbin found in his research. The research suggests that the benefits of oral storytelling over a range of processes related to self-expression, identification, empathic understanding of oneself and others, and two-way communication for children are enormous, particularly for their socio-emotional development.[26] Storytelling can also support the increased development of critical thinking skills, creativity, active engagement in learning, literacy skills, narrative thinking skills, self-exploration, and interpersonal skills in children.[27]

D. Conclusion

The implementation of storytelling method activities is that after the teacher prepares a lesson plan, the teacher carries out storytelling activities according to the predetermined stages by using storytelling techniques appropriate to the story being conveyed. During the learning process, the teacher applies the storytelling method well, and the children respond very well. Based on the results of research and interviews with teachers and parents, it is also known that children's expressive language skills have developed. The researcher hopes that further researchers can conduct research using learning methods or media to improve children's language skills.

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[26] Rebecca Hibbin, "The Psychosocial Benefits of Oral Storytelling in School: Developing Identity and Empathy through Narrative," *Pastoral Care in Education: An International Journal of Personal, Social and Emotional Development* 34, no. 4 (2016): 218–31, https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1080/02643944.2016.1225315.

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