



Improving Language Development Through Story Book Media in Early Childhood

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ABSTRACT

Based on the situation that occurs in PAUD Bombana Regency, children's language skills are still relatively lacking, this is because teachers at PAUD do not apply interesting learning media. Improving children's language skills is very important to help the growth and development of children specifically in further education. So, this research aims to find out (1) an overview of children's language abilities using storybook media in early childhood at Handayani Kindergarten, Bombana Regency, (2) Improving language skills using storybook media in pre-school children at Handayani PAUD, Bombana Regency. This research uses a classroom action approach (PTK) with two cycles which have four stages, namely, planning, implementation, observation and reflection. The data collection techniques used are observation, documentation and assessment. The research results showed that as many as 12 children had language proficiency using storybooks as a very good assessment (BSB) with a completeness criterion of 91% or were in the good category. Thus, it is hoped that schools or teachers can apply more varied and innovative learning media so that children are more interested in the learning process.

Keywords: *Language Ability, Storybook, Early Childhood Islamic Education*

1. Introduction

According to Montessori in (Fadhillah, 2019) in the age range from birth to 6 years, children experience a golden age (the golden years) which is a time when children begin to be sensitive to receiving various stimuli. The sensitive period is a time when physical and psychological function maturity occurs, children are ready to respond to stimuli given by the environment. The sensitive period for each child is different, along with the rate of growth and development of the child individually. This period is also the first foundation for developing cognitive, language, motoric, and social emotional abilities in early childhood. Therefore, at this time it is very important to stimulate the growth and development of children.

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According to Permendikbud No. 137 of 2014 Early Childhood Education (PAUD) is a development effort aimed at children from birth to 6 (six) years of age which is carried out through the provision of educational stimulation to help physical and spiritual growth and development so that children are ready to enter further education. Meanwhile, according to (Khairi, 2018) early childhood is a child aged 0-6 years, who is in the early stages of childhood growth and development, who has unique characteristics and has differences with the next age. Language skills are one of the main things that must be considered by every educator, in order to optimize the five senses of children, both through what is seen, heard, and felt by the child himself (Intan, 2014). If a child has a delay in developing language, it will have an impact on his social and psychological development, especially if it will spread to the child's emotions (Karlina, 2018).

Mulyasa in (Heryani, 2020) stated that language is a means of communication. It covers all ways to communicate so that thoughts and feelings are expressed in written, spoken, gestures or movements using words, sentences, sounds, symbols, and pictures. To produce language in life, there are two languages that are often used, namely oral and written language (Runtin, N. & Poerwati, 2018). Meanwhile, expressing children's language is a system of oral symbols used by children. This symbol system is used by children to communicate with other people who refer to a particular language (Ermita, 2018). Language can be concluded that language ability is a tool for communicating and interacting with someone either through oral, written, or systematic and orderly feelings consisting of reading, listening, writing, and speaking so that it is related to the ability to learn the mother tongue (Azhari, 2021).

Based on the results of initial observations conducted in group A at Handayani Kindergarten during the learning process, it turned out that the language development of students in the kindergarten had not developed optimally, namely that almost all children's listening skills were still not good and they had difficulty understanding sentences conveyed by the teacher. This was seen during the learning process with the theme of Plants when the teacher asked the child to answer the questions given, for example "who can name the plants?" the child was silent and did not give an answer and when the child was asked to repeat what had been conveyed by the teacher, for example, "come on, who can explain what we learned earlier?" the child seemed unable to answer and repeat what he had learned.

Improving children's language development is certainly very important to pay attention to in order to help growth and development, especially in listening skills so that children are ready to enter further education. Thus, researchers intend to conduct research aimed at developing children's language skills, especially in children's listening skills through the media. (Dr. Muhammad Hasan, S.Pd., 2021) media is one component of a learning strategy which is a message container or distributor that is forwarded to the target or recipient of the message, and the material delivered is the learning message that you want to achieve is the learning process. One of the media that can develop children's listening skills is by using storybook media. Toha-sarumpet in (Ratnasari & Zubaidah, 2019) picture storybooks are books that present stories using pictures. In line with that, according to (Verdiana, 2022) said that picture storybooks are books that convey picture stories and text and the two are intertwined.

2. Methods

The type of research used is classroom action research abbreviated as PTK. "The typical characteristic of PTK is action research conducted by teachers as well as researchers in their classes or together with others (collaboration) by designing, implementing, and reflecting on actions collaboratively and participatively aimed at improving or enhancing the quality of learning in their classes through certain actions in a cycle (Mulia, D. S., & Suwarno, 2016). Classroom Action Research according to (Sanjaya, 2013) Collaborative action research is usually the initiative to implement PTK not from the teacher, but from an external party who wants to solve learning problems. In this study, the action was carried out in two cycles using story books as learning media. The subjects of the study were group A. Handayani Kindergarten, Bombana Regency with a total of 13 children, with details of 6 girls and 7 boys.

The language that the researcher means is the listening ability of children aged 4-5 years in Permendikbud No. 137 of 2014. The data collection technique used in this study is Observation, which is the process of observing the entire learning process using storybook media to improve children's language development in the form of teacher and child teaching activities, Documentation, this data collection technique is carried out with the aim of providing an overview of the entire research process in the form of photos and videos of children and teachers., researchers refer to the assessment guidelines in accordance with Permendikbud No. 137 of 2014, namely by providing symbols that can be seen in the following table: After collecting observational data, an evaluation was carried out using a quantitative descriptive method using percentages to assess the effectiveness of the steps taken in each cycle. The formula used to assess the achievement of each student is as follows:

$$\text{Individual Success Presentation} = \frac{\text{MB Value} + \text{Total BB Value}}{\text{Total Number of Indicators}}$$

Referring to this equation, individual achievements can be classified into the following categories:

Tabel 1. Kategori Pencapaian Individu

Interval	Category	Star Symbol
3,50-4,00	Developing Very Well (BSB)	****
2,50-3,49	Developing As Expected (BSH)	***
1,50-2,49	Starting to Grow (MB)	**
0,01-1,45	Not Yet Developed (BB)	*

Table 1 shows the individual achievement categories based on a certain range of values or intervals associated with star symbols as a form of visualization of the level of development. The highest value interval, namely 3.50-4.00, is categorized as Very Well Developed (BSB) and is given a symbol of four stars (****), indicating optimal achievement. Furthermore, the interval of 2.50-3.49 is included in the category of Developing According to Expectations (BSH) with a symbol of three stars (***), indicating achievement that meets the expected standards. The interval of 1.50-2.49 is categorized as Starting to Develop (MB) with a symbol of two stars (**), indicating that the individual is starting to show development although not yet optimal. Meanwhile, the lowest achievement is in the interval of 0.01-1.45 which is included in the category of

Not Developing (BB) and is given a symbol of one star (*), reflecting that the individual has not shown significant development.

3. Findings and Discussion

3.1 Findings

Before the activity was carried out, the researcher first held an initial meeting with the principal of Handayani Kindergarten, namely on 2023. The researcher conducted a pre-action study to determine the impact of storybook media on children's language development. Based on the data obtained by the researcher, it can be seen that children's language skills are in the poor criteria. Some of group A are still lacking in listening, for example, children cannot understand the story that has been read. Children cannot understand two commands at the same time. There are children who cannot repeat the story that has been told. The table below is the result of the pre-action.

Table 2. Calculation of Classical Pre-Action Values for Handayani Kindergarten Children

Children's Language Ability Achievement Indicators	Final Grade/Presentation			
	BB	MB	BSH	BSB
Children can retell the gist of the story	69%	23%	8%	0%
Children can name and imitate the voices of characters in the story	53%	30%	8%	0%
Children can mention the characteristics of each character in the story	69%	23%	8%	0%

Based on the pre-action table provided, there are three criteria used to evaluate children's language development. From the evaluation, there are children who show: First indicator: 9 (69%) children are categorized as Not Developing, 4 (23%) children are categorized as Starting to Develop, 1 (8%) child is categorized as Developing According to Expectations, and none have achieved the Very Good Development indicator. Second indicator: 7 (53%) children are categorized as Not Developing, 4 (30%) children are categorized as Starting to Develop, 1 (8%) child is categorized as Developing According to Expectations and none have achieved the Very Good Development indicator. Third indicator: 9 (69%) children are categorized as Not Developing, 4 (23%) children are categorized as Starting to Develop, 1 (8%) child is categorized as Developing According to Expectations, and none have achieved the Very Good Development indicator.

Based on the results of the documentation and initial data collection that had been carried out regarding children's language development, the researcher continued by preparing a plan for the first cycle, which consisted of three stages. Furthermore, preparations were made by preparing the RPPH assisted by the class A teacher of Handayani Kindergarten, preparing story book media, preparing assessment instruments in the form of observation sheets to measure children's language abilities in the learning process, and preparing documentation tools during learning activities. Cycle I research was conducted on August 21, 22, and 23, 2023, with 13 students. Each meeting was facilitated by a teacher from group A who acted as a collaborator and researcher, who provided instructions to group A students. The data obtained from the implementation of cycle I during three meetings were obtained classically. The

data from the results of obtaining the ability scores of group A students classically are shown in the following table:

Table 3. Classical Value Acquisition in Cycle I

No	Category	Number of children	Percentage (%)
1.	Developing Very Well (BSB)	1	8%
2.	Developing As Expected (BSH)	3	23%
3.	Starting to Develop (MB)	3	23%
4.	Not Yet Developing (BB)	6	46%
	Amount	13	100%

Based on the table above, it can be seen that learning activities using storybook media in a classical manner have had a fairly good impact on language development in cycle I. The results show that 1 child or 8% of the total number of children achieved a star score (****). Furthermore, 3 children representing 23% of the group, achieved a star score (***). 3 children or 23% got a star (**). Finally, 6 or 46% of children achieved a star (*).

Based on the results of observations and comments obtained in the field in cycle I, it shows that the success indicators have not been achieved. This is known from the results of children's language development using storybook media at the first, second and third meetings, which is 31% of the percentage of BSH and BSB values, so there are still shortcomings in improving children's language skills. Furthermore, the researcher continued to cycle II because completion had not been achieved in cycle I. Cycle II activities took place for three meetings, by making more optimal preparations and better preparations, so that the shortcomings in cycle I could be minimized in cycle II. The first meeting was held on the 28th, the second meeting on the 29th and the third meeting on August 30, 2023.

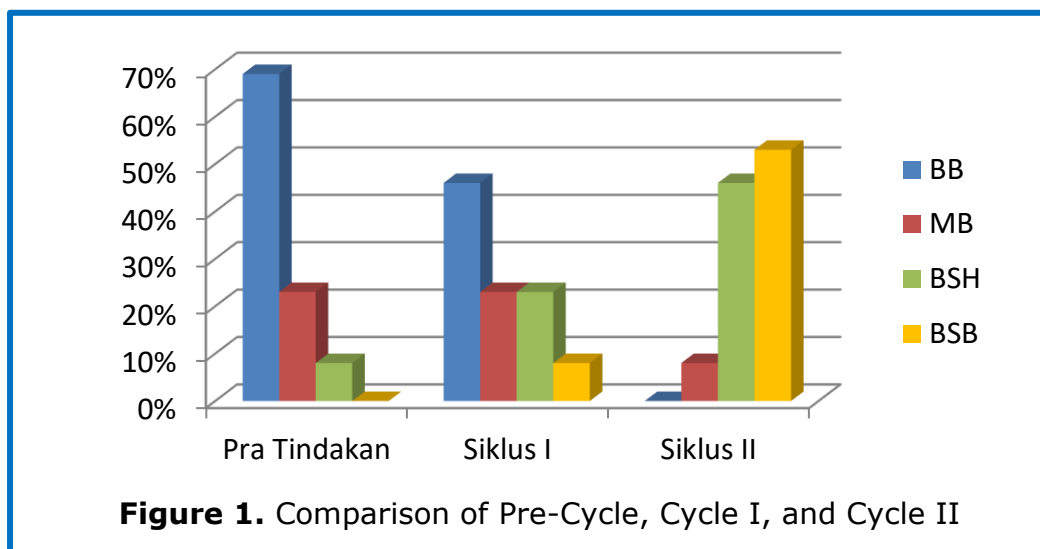
The achievement of children's language ability scores through storybook media, namely, children who received a star score (****) in the Very Well Developing category were 7 people (54%) children, who received a star score (***) in the Developing According to Expectations category were 6 people or (46%) children, who received a star (**) in the Starting to Develop category were 1 person or (8%) children. In terms of percentage, children's language ability in cycle II, third meeting, was in the range of Developing Very Well (BSB) and Developing According to Expectations (BSH) achieved by 12 students.

Table 4. Acquisition of Values by Classical Method in Cycle II

No	Category	Number of children	Percentage (%)
1.	Developing Very Well (BSB)	7	54%
2.	Developing As Expected (BSH)	5	38%
3.	Starting to Develop (MB)	1	8%
4.	Not Yet Developing (BB)	0	0%
	Amount	13	100%

Based on the table above, it is proven that using storybook media to improve children's language development in group A of Handayani Kindergarten has a positive impact on cycle II. The percentage of success has been achieved, namely 91% or 12 students are in the BSH and BSB criteria. These results can be said to be successful because they have exceeded the indicators for assessing

the success of classroom actions that are the researchers' references, namely 80%. Therefore, improving children's language skills through storybook media in group A of Handayani Kindergarten does not need to be continued.



The graph above shows that in the pre-action, 69% or 9 out of 13 students were in the Not Developing (BB) criteria, after the action was carried out in cycle I, the success became 31% or 4 out of 13 students and after the action in cycle II, it increased very well to 91% or 12 students were in the completed category. The findings of this study are in line with previous findings that storybook media are appropriate and can develop children's language skills (Islamiati., 2020). In line with the findings of research from (Azhari, 2021) and (Cendana & Suryana, 2021) which found that through storybook media, it can improve the language development of early childhood. With the help of media in the form of storybook media, children are more enthusiastic, do not feel bored, and are active in learning.

3.2 Discussion

Based on the results of the research that has been conducted, it can be concluded that the use of story book media has a significant impact on the language development of children in group A of Handayani Kindergarten.

Pre-action stage, most children in group A of Handayani Kindergarten are still in the Not Yet Developing category in various indicators of language ability. This can be seen from their difficulty in understanding and remembering the contents of the story that has been conveyed. When asked to retell, many children are only able to mention a small part of the story or even cannot express it at all. Limitations in mastery of vocabulary and sentence structure are one of the factors that influence their low ability to tell stories. In addition, children also have difficulty in mentioning the characters in the story. Some of them cannot identify the main characters or supporting characters in the story they hear. This shows that their understanding of the contents of the story is still very limited. Lack of experience in listening to stories repeatedly and minimal active involvement in story discussions are thought to be the main causes of their lack of ability to recognize and mention characters in the story. Not only that, most children are also not yet able to recognize the nature of the characters in the story being conveyed. They have difficulty distinguishing between good and bad

characters and cannot connect the character's nature with the actions taken in the story. This shows that they still need further guidance in understanding the contents of the story in more depth. Therefore, a more interactive and repetitive learning strategy is needed to improve children's language skills, such as the use of picture media, hand puppets, or more interesting storytelling methods so that they can more easily understand and remember the contents of the story.

The results of cycle I in this study showed an increase compared to the previous conditions, although it had not yet reached the expected success indicators. This increase can be seen from the increasing number of children who were included in the Very Well Developed and Developed According to Expectations categories. However, the percentage of children in this category is still relatively low, so improvements and strengthening are needed in the next cycle. Factors that influence the low percentage of success in cycle I can come from various aspects, such as suboptimal learning methods, children's involvement that is still less active, and children's diverse understanding of the material given. In addition, support from the environment, both teachers and parents, also plays an important role in improving children's learning outcomes. Therefore, evaluating the approach that has been used is an important step to improve the results in the next cycle. To improve success in the next cycle, several improvement strategies need to be carried out, such as increasing interaction in learning, providing more varied stimulation, and strengthening children's motivation through more interesting and enjoyable methods. In addition, more intensive assistance from teachers and collaboration with parents can also help children understand and apply learning better. With these steps, it is hoped that the learning outcomes in the next cycle can achieve the predetermined success indicators.

Cycle II, after improvements were made in teaching methods and the use of storybook media more optimally, there was a significant increase in children's language skills in group A of Handayani Kindergarten. Teachers were more active in implementing an interactive approach by inviting children to discuss, ask questions, and express opinions after listening to the story. In addition, the selection of storybooks that were more varied and in accordance with the child's development level also helped increase the appeal of learning. With this strategy, children became more enthusiastic and involved in each learning session. The evaluation results showed that 91% of students managed to achieve the Very Well Developed and Developed According to Expectations categories. This figure increased significantly compared to Cycle I, which showed that storybook media was very effective in improving children's understanding and language skills. Children were not only able to repeat the contents of the story better, but also showed developments in the use of vocabulary, sentence structure, and courage in speaking in front of their friends. This proves that story-based learning has a positive impact on children's language development. The success in Cycle II reinforces the importance of interactive and fun learning methods in improving children's language skills. With a more communicative approach, children feel more comfortable expressing themselves and understand the material presented better. In addition, teacher involvement in guiding and providing appropriate stimuli also plays an important role in improving learning outcomes. Therefore, the use of story books as a learning medium is expected to continue to be developed and applied more widely in learning at the early childhood education level.

4. Conclusion

Based on the results of the study, the use of storybook media has proven to be effective in improving children's language skills in group A of Handayani Kindergarten. This can be seen from the increase in the average achievement of children in each cycle. At the pre-action stage, only 8% of children reached the BSH category, but after the action was carried out in cycle I, the number increased to 31%. A more significant increase occurred in cycle II, where 91% of children had reached the BSH and BSB categories. These data show that storybook media is able to provide good stimulus in children's language development. It can be concluded that the application of storybook media is an effective learning strategy in improving the language skills of early childhood children. The gradual increase from pre-action to cycle II shows that children are increasingly accustomed to and skilled in speaking through interaction with interesting stories. In addition, the achievement results reaching 91% indicate that this method is worthy of being used as an alternative in children's language development at the early childhood education level.

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