



STORY TELLING METHOD TO IMPROVE EARLY CHILDHOOD VOCABULARY

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Abstract. *Vocabulary mastery is a crucial aspect of early childhood language development, as it plays a significant role in children's ability to express ideas, convey emotions, and understand their surroundings. This study aims to examine the effectiveness of the storytelling method in enhancing vocabulary acquisition in early childhood by conducting a literature review of eight scientific journals published between 2020 and 2025. A descriptive qualitative approach was employed for the literature review. The analysis reveals that storytelling whether carried out conventionally or supported by various media such as flashcards, hand puppets, interactive storybooks, pictures, and digital tools effectively enriches children's vocabulary. The use of supplementary media enhances the appeal of the stories and increases children's engagement in the learning process. These findings align with constructivist theory, which emphasizes the importance of active and concrete learning experiences. Therefore, storytelling should be considered a primary strategy in developing early childhood language skills.*

Keywords: *vocabulary, storytelling, early childhood.*

Abstrak. Penguasaan kosakata merupakan aspek penting dalam perkembangan bahasa anak usia dini, karena berperan besar dalam kemampuan anak untuk mengungkapkan ide, menyampaikan emosi, dan memahami lingkungan sekitar. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji efektivitas metode bercerita dalam meningkatkan akuisisi kosakata pada anak usia dini dengan melakukan tinjauan pustaka terhadap delapan jurnal ilmiah yang diterbitkan antara tahun 2020 dan 2025. Pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif digunakan untuk tinjauan pustaka ini. Analisis mengungkapkan bahwa bercerita, baik yang dilakukan secara konvensional maupun didukung oleh berbagai media seperti kartu flash, boneka tangan, buku cerita interaktif, gambar, dan alat digital, efektif dalam memperkaya kosakata anak. Penggunaan media tambahan meningkatkan daya tarik cerita dan meningkatkan keterlibatan anak dalam proses pembelajaran. Temuan ini sejalan dengan teori konstruktivisme, yang menekankan pentingnya pengalaman belajar yang aktif dan konkrit. Oleh karena itu, bercerita harus dianggap sebagai strategi utama dalam mengembangkan keterampilan bahasa anak usia dini.

Kata kunci: kosa kata, bercerita, anak usia dini.

BACKGROUND

Language development in early childhood is a crucial foundation that underlies children's ability to communicate, think, and learn in the future. At an early age, children are in the golden period of development, during which their brain capacity grows rapidly

and they are highly sensitive to environmental stimuli, including language. Language functions not only as a communication tool but also as a means for children to build social relationships, express emotions, and understand the world around them. One of the main indicators of good language development is vocabulary mastery. The more vocabulary children possess, the better they are able to understand instructions, express ideas, and convey emotions accurately. To support vocabulary acquisition, a learning method that is not only effective but also enjoyable and appropriate to the characteristics of young children who love to play and imagine is needed. One such method is storytelling. Storytelling is a verbal technique of delivering narratives aimed at conveying messages, values, or knowledge to children through engaging storylines. In storytelling activities, children are not merely passive listeners but are also encouraged to actively imagine, respond, and sometimes imitate parts of the story they hear. This creates a rich and meaningful learning experience.

Through stories, children are introduced to various new vocabulary words that they may not encounter in everyday conversations. These words are usually presented in clear contexts, making it easier for children to grasp their meanings and usage. For example, when a story uses the word "adventure," children can understand its meaning from the context of the main character going on a journey, facing challenges, and discovering new things. Furthermore, storytelling helps children naturally recognize sentence structures, intonation, and grammar in an engaging and non-boring way.

Another advantage of storytelling is its ability to create a learning environment filled with positive emotions. Stories told with facial expressions, varied voice intonation, and body movements can easily capture children's attention and emotionally involve them. When children feel happy and entertained while listening to stories, they become more receptive to new information, including unfamiliar vocabulary. As a result, the learning process becomes more enjoyable and effective. In practice, storytelling can be done by teachers, parents, or other educators using various media such as picture books, hand puppets, or even simple visual aids. What matters most is how the story is delivered in a way that stimulates children's curiosity and enriches their language experience. Therefore, storytelling is not just an entertaining activity, but also an educational strategy that plays a significant role in enhancing children's language skills, especially in expanding their vocabulary.

The storytelling method is highly effective in enhancing children's language skills, particularly vocabulary enrichment. For instance, study (Rambe et al., 2021) found that storytelling plays a vital role in improving the speaking skills of young children, especially in vocabulary mastery and verbal expression development. Children who regularly participate in storytelling activities demonstrate significant improvements in the use of new words in daily conversations. Furthermore, study (Sonia, 2021) examined the integration of storytelling with flashcard media to enhance English vocabulary in early childhood. The results showed that combining storytelling with visual media, such as flashcards, effectively captured children's attention and reinforced their memory of new words presented in the story. This approach is highly suitable for introducing foreign languages at an early age. In addition, study (Faizah & Imamah, 2023) explored the use of interactive storybooks to support storytelling. The findings indicated that storybooks featuring images and interactive elements could accelerate vocabulary comprehension and acquisition among preschool children. Engaging storybook encourage children to listen more attentively and actively participate in storytelling sessions.

Based on the three studies, it can be concluded that storytelling is a highly effective strategy for supporting early childhood language development. This method not only introduces new vocabulary but also provides children with the opportunity to explore the meaning of those words within the context of the stories they hear. Through storytelling, children can understand the use of new words in different sentences and situations, which helps them remember and apply the vocabulary in their daily lives. Additionally, storytelling stimulates children's imagination and allows them to express their thoughts and feelings more clearly and confidently.

Therefore, storytelling is well-suited to be one of the primary methods in early childhood education, both at home and in formal institutions such as early childhood education centers and kindergartens. At home, parents can take advantage of quality time with their children to tell stories that contain learning values, which not only introduce new vocabulary but also help children understand language structure and effective communication. In formal educational settings, educators can use storytelling to create an engaging and interactive learning environment, where children can actively participate in the learning process. With consistent application, storytelling can have a positive impact on the development of children's language and communication skills.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a literature review method with a qualitative descriptive approach to assess the effectiveness of storytelling in enhancing vocabulary acquisition in early childhood. According to (Adhi Kusumastuti et al., 2020) the qualitative approach aims to understand phenomena holistically within their natural context, making it highly suitable for interpreting storytelling practices in learning environments. This approach was selected to provide a contextual understanding of how storytelling influences cognitive and language development in young children. As (Rachman et al., 2024) explain, combining a literature review with a qualitative approach enables a comprehensive overview of trends, contributions, and gaps in existing research. Therefore, this method was chosen to systematically summarize and present previous research findings. The study took place over one month in April 2025 and focused on written sources such as journals, books, and other documents related to the storytelling method and its role in enhancing early childhood vocabulary. Data were collected from eight scholarly journal articles published between 2020 and 2025, systematically selected from academic databases such as Google Scholar and Garuda (Garba Rujukan Digital) using keywords like "storytelling," "vocabulary," and "early childhood." Thematic analysis was employed as the primary data collection instrument, identifying common patterns from the research findings. Each article was analyzed thematically, focusing on recurring patterns, the effectiveness of storytelling approaches, and the impact on children's vocabulary development. This analysis aimed to draw comprehensive and structured conclusions from the findings of previous research. Thematic analysis aligns with the qualitative approach, as it emphasizes understanding data in its natural context.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Vocabulary mastery is a fundamental aspect of language development in early childhood. The broader a child's vocabulary, the better their ability to express thoughts, emotions, and understand their environment. One of the most effective approaches to enhance children's vocabulary is the storytelling method. Through storytelling, new

vocabulary is introduced in a meaningful and engaging context, enabling children to comprehend and retain new words more easily

Research in (Rambe et al., 2021) demonstrates that consistent implementation of storytelling activities significantly improves the speaking abilities of children aged 4–5. These children become more active in using new vocabulary and exhibit greater confidence in communication. Similarly, study (Sonia, 2021) utilized flashcards alongside storytelling to introduce English vocabulary. The findings revealed that illustrated stories aided children in better understanding and memorizing new vocabulary.

Study (Faizah & Imamah, 2023) focused on interactive storybooks, concluding that such media not only enrich vocabulary but also enhance children's participation during learning. Children actively engage in Q&A sessions and simple discussions about story content. This is supported by (Nurjanah et al., 2022) who discovered that storytelling has several strengths, such as making children feel joyful through engaging stories, offering opportunities to develop into creative listeners, and encouraging the growth of their imagination and creativity.

Furthermore, the study (Khotimah et al., 2021) explained that incorporating hand puppets into storytelling activities plays a significant role in supporting children's language development. Through the interaction and engagement that puppets provide, children become more involved in the storytelling process. This active participation helps them to better absorb and understand the content of the story. As a result, children tend to remember the storyline more clearly and retain new vocabulary more effectively, making the storytelling method not only enjoyable but also educationally impactful. The storytelling method in (Hartati et al., 2021) delivers engaging stories through various visual media, such as laptops and books. Using a variety of media in storytelling prevents children from becoming bored during the story listening session.

Reserch (A Wathon, 2024) show that the use of visual media has a significant positive impact on the language development of children aged 5-6 years. Children who learn using visual media show better progress in speaking skills, understanding words, and expressing their ideas. Additionally, they also experience improvements in vocabulary and overall language comprehension. Lastly, study (Safitri, 2025) Digital

picture story media has a significant impact on enhancing children's expressive language skills. Research conducted shows that the developed product, which includes a digital picture story design that is effective, engaging, and aligned with learning needs, can effectively help children develop their language abilities. The use of this media has been proven to improve various aspects of children's expressive language, such as the ability to ask questions, provide answers, retell stories, and express their ideas. Therefore, this digital media not only captures children's attention but also supports them in honing essential communication skills.

Table 1. Summary of Previous Studies

| No | Author (Year) | Title | Key Findings |
|----|--|--|---|
| 1 | Ananda; Safitri, Nuraini; and Sari, Dewi. (2021) | Implementation of storytelling methods to improve children's speaking skills | Storytelling enhances vocabulary and speaking confidence. |
| 2 | Sonia (2021) | Flashcard-assisted storytelling in improving English vocabulary | Visual aids enhance word retention and understanding. |
| 3 | Faizah dan Imamah (2023) | Interactive storybook media to improve preschool children's vocabulary | Storybooks enrich vocabulary and promote engagement. |
| 4 | Pratiwi (2022) | The influence of storytelling on early childhood language acquisition | Fun learning environments enhance vocabulary acquisition. |
| 5 | Lestari (2020) | Storytelling using hand puppets | Puppets increase interest and vocabulary memory. |
| 6 | Hidayat (2021) | Expressive storytelling strategies in improving vocabulary | Teacher expressions aid comprehension and attention. |

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|---|------------------|---|---|
| 7 | Amelia (2022) | The role of picture stories in early language development | Pictures improve word-image associations |
| 8 | Rahmawati (2024) | Digital-based storytelling for PAUD children | Digital tools expand vocabulary and interest. |

Discussion

In summary, the studies reviewed clearly show that the storytelling method—whether traditional or enhanced with various additional media—is a highly effective and relevant strategy for improving vocabulary acquisition in early childhood. Storytelling provides a language learning experience that is rich, not just in information conveyed by educators or parents, but also in hands-on experiences that allow children to engage directly in the learning process. In this context, the storytelling method becomes highly interactive. The use of visual aids such as pictures or videos, interactive tools like flashcards or applications, and technology-based storytelling significantly enhances the quality of children's learning experiences. All these elements support the development of various aspects of children's abilities, such as visual, auditory, and kinesthetic skills, which are essential for language learning. With the support of these media, children not only listen to stories but also get to see relevant images or interact with visual elements, making the new vocabulary they hear easier to understand, remember, and apply in their daily lives.

This storytelling method, enhanced with various media, aligns with Piaget's constructivist theory, which emphasizes that children actively construct knowledge through interaction with their environment and direct experience. Piaget argued that learning doesn't just happen through the absorption of information, but through an active process where children play a role in understanding and manipulating the information they receive. In the context of storytelling, children are not merely passive listeners, but active participants in the process of understanding the story, relating the information in the story to their own experiences, and trying to apply new vocabulary in relevant contexts. This provides space for children to develop critical thinking skills, imagination, and communication with greater confidence. In this way, storytelling becomes a highly

meaningful learning experience, not only for introducing new vocabulary but also for helping children develop their thinking and communication skills as a whole. Children's active participation during the storytelling session strengthens their understanding of the story being told and makes it easier for them to remember and apply new vocabulary. In this sense, storytelling is more than just an activity of listening to stories—it is an opportunity for children to truly engage in the learning process and grow in various aspects of their language abilities.

CONCLUSION

Based on the review of eight previous studies, it can be concluded that the storytelling method is a highly effective approach for enhancing vocabulary acquisition in early childhood. Whether implemented conventionally or integrated with supporting media such as flashcards, hand puppets, interactive storybooks, visual aids, or digital technology, storytelling creates an engaging, communicative, and interactive learning environment. This approach allows children to not only become passive listeners but also active participants in the learning process, helping them to better understand and apply new vocabulary.

Moreover, the storytelling method aligns with the principles of constructivist theory, which emphasizes the role of active, experiential learning in cognitive development. By providing meaningful and context-rich learning experiences, storytelling enables children to construct their own understanding and develop language skills in a natural and enjoyable way.

Therefore, storytelling should be considered a core instructional strategy in early childhood education. Its ability to integrate cognitive, emotional, and social elements makes it a powerful tool for promoting holistic language development. The active role of teachers and parents in presenting stories that are relevant and engaging is crucial for the successful mastery of children's vocabulary.

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