

# IMPROVING LITERACY SKILLS THROUGH THE STORYTELLING METHOD FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD

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## Abstract

This research aims to describe the increase in literacy skills of young children through the storytelling method. PAUD schools were chosen as a means of cultivating literacy skills because it is hoped that by familiarizing themselves with literacy from an early age, children can improve their literacy skills as a preparation for facing the future. Literacy has a broad scope, not only talking about reading and writing letters, but also the ability to capture information with logical and critical thinking, ultimately being able to use it effectively to achieve certain goals. One method of increasing literacy in students is by using the storytelling method. This research is a qualitative research. Data collection techniques used by observation, interviews and documentation. Data analysis techniques used by data reduction, data presentation and data conclusions. The results of this research showed that the storytelling method could improve children's literacy skills and children not only enjoy the listening but children have the ability to tell stories.

**Keywords:** Literacy; Storytelling Method; Early Childhood.

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## INTRODUCTION

Education is one of the most important factors in improving human resources and the nation's standard of living. People in Indonesia read an average of zero to one book per year. This condition is lower than residents in ASEAN countries, apart from Indonesia, who read two to three books a year. The better the education of a nation, the better the quality of the nation itself. One of the things that is very influential in education is the level of children's reading ability and interest, because reading is a window to the world. By reading, everyone can explore information from various parts of the world for free, but not many people have the habit of reading regularly (Permatasai. A., 2015) .

The efforts in order to improve the quality of education in Indonesia focus heavily on improving literacy skills as one of the crucial and urgent efforts to be disseminated to educational institutions, especially early childhood education. This can be seen from the government's efforts to formulate a curriculum that includes programs that empower higher education academics as government partners in accelerating the achievement of government targets at the basic level such as the Teaching Campus program and thematic KKN programs in the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) curriculum. Efforts like this are a form of government initiative to make the young generation capable, competent and adaptive to keep up with the times which are becoming increasingly rapid along with advances in Information and Communication Technology (ICT).

Based on the 2015 PISA report Wandasari. Y., (2017) middle school (age 15 years) Indonesian students' reading comprehension (apart from mathematics and science) is tested by organizations for economic cooperation and development in the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA). The results of research conducted by PISA in 2011 showed that Indonesian students were ranked 64th out of 65 countries participating in PISA with a score of 396. Meanwhile, the results of research conducted in 2015 showed that Indonesian students were ranked 61st. PISA creates these rankings by testing 15-year-old students to see whether they have the skills and knowledge in science, reading and mathematics necessary to participate fully in modern society.

The PISA study aims to look at the effectiveness of the education system from an international perspective. For 12 years following PISA, achievement in Indonesia is still below the international average reading literacy score. In 2000 the average reading literacy score of Indonesian students was 371. In 2003 the average reading literacy score of Indonesian students was 382. In 2006 the average reading literacy score of Indonesian students was 393. In 2009 the average literacy score reading for Indonesian students is 402. Even though the average international literacy score should be 500 (OECD, 2009). Up-to-date reading literacy skills are closely related to the thinking abilities, reasoning abilities and creativity that a person needs to live in the information age. In modern times, a person can only be said to have literacy skills if he can understand something because he reads and does something based on his reading comprehension (Hirai. D. L. Cook., 2009).

In Indonesia, PISA 2018 was implemented in 399 education units involving 12,098 students selected using a valid sampling method. The sample represents 85% of the population aged 15 years or 3,768,508 students. Indonesian students scored 379 out of 489 on the OECD average in mathematics. This means that Indonesian students have literacy skills below the OECD average score. This places Indonesian students in 73rd position out of 79 participating countries (Amalya. I., 2022).

In 2000 Indonesia was ranked 39th out of 41 countries participating in the PISA assessment. This caused reactions from several groups, including the mass media and education stakeholders, who used the results of the PISA assessment as a reason why education needed to improve. Furthermore, in 2003 Indonesia again participated in the assessment carried out by PISA and after carrying out the test the results were not much different from the previous year, namely Indonesia's ranking remained at the bottom, as well as the following year until now after Indonesia's participation for eighteen years the assessment score was given PISA still makes Indonesia have to improve its current education system and management because the PISA report for 2018 Indonesia is in 74th position out of 79 countries participating in the assessment carried out by PISA (the program for international student assessment) (Schleicher. A., 2018).

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) has announced the 2018 PISA scores for Indonesia in the areas of literacy, mathematics and science. PISA measurements aim to evaluate the education system by measuring student performance in secondary education, especially in three main areas. The 2018 PISA results for Indonesia have been submitted to the Minister of Education and Culture (Mendikbud) Nadiem Makarim and determined that Indonesia is in 70th place out of 78 participating countries.

Several countries have used national scale assessments to monitor and evaluate the quality of their country's education system. Similar to Indonesia, national assessments in these countries are expected to provide a very diverse picture to stakeholders regarding information on the general condition of schools and the quality of education as a basis for future policy planning (Indahri. Y., 2021). One of the international tests that Indonesia participates in is the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA). The main reason Indonesia participated in PISA 2018 was the desire to understand student performance in Indonesia compared to international standards and other countries facing similar challenges. This understanding will be used to recognize aspects related to student achievement and effectively improve it (Balitbang, 2019). The Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) is an international assessment program to measure student competency at the age of 15 years. This global assessment is under the auspices of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) which is held every 3 years with 3 assessment objects, namely science, mathematics and reading (Pratiwi. I., 2019). It is assumed that the presence of PISA in Indonesia will have an impact on Indonesia's relations internationally. Especially regarding Indonesia's cooperation with OECD countries in order to improve the quality of education. Apart from that, countries that work together will continue to compete to gain influence in the international world (Indahri. Y., 2021).

Based on the data above, it is necessary to instill a culture of literacy from an early age. This school literacy movement is strongly encouraged by the local government. The reason is that the school literacy movement can strengthen the movement to develop one's character. One of the most appropriate formal educational institutions for cultivating literacy from an early age. By cultivating literacy from an early age, it is hoped that children will become accustomed to literacy so that they can increase their insight and knowledge as a provision for the future.

According to (Miller. S., 2008). One way to improve children's literacy is the storytelling method. Apart from being able to develop children's interest in reading, this storytelling method can also improve children's verbal language skills, comprehensive reading comprehension and writing abilities. The correlation of increasing reading and writing abilities will ultimately lead to increasing children's competence in various areas in their respective lives. The results of previous research summarized in (Miller. S., 2008), state that comprehension, critical listening, and thinking skills are also developed by combining storytelling with questioning, imagery, inferencing, and retelling, namely to develop comprehensive understanding, critical listening, and Children's thinking skills are by combining storytelling methods.

## METHODOLOGY

This research is to analyze and describe the application of the storytelling method in improving students' literacy skills. This type of research is qualitative research, the author uses it to analyze studies on the application of the storytelling method in improving literacy skills in the children of the Santa Theresia Dhereisa Play Group.

The data collection methods used are observation, interviews and documentation as tools for collecting data.

- 1) Observation

Observations were carried out by observing student development and participation related to the implementation of literacy activities carried out at school using the storytelling method to improve the early literacy skills of children in the Santa Theresia Dhereisa Play Group.

- 2) Interview

Interviews were conducted by the author to explore information related to the application of storytelling methods in improving the literacy skills of children in the Santa Theresia Dhereisa Play Group. Data from observations and interviews that have been collected from several sources interviewed are then summarized and described based on concrete data.

3) Documentation

In qualitative research documentation is very important. Data from documentation is useful to help display some data that may not yet be obtained. In this research, documentation was obtained through the use of social media by taking pictures when implementing the storytelling method in improving children's literacy skills in the Santa Theresia Dhereisa Playgroup.

The data analysis techniques were used data reduction, data presentation and drawing conclusions.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This research was carried out on the children of the Santa Theresia Dhereisa Play Group with a total of 16 children. In the process of improving children's learning abilities, educators are needed who have a decisive role, because educators are the main key to educational success. So professional teachers are needed who have certain abilities. These abilities are needed to help students learn. The success of students' learning will be greatly influenced by the abilities of professional teachers. A professional teacher is a teacher who is competent in his field and has good control over the material to be taught and is able to choose appropriate teaching and learning methods so that the learning process can be successful running well as expected. In order to improve students' ability to understand reading content, students need high-level thinking skills, namely language skills, critical thinking and creative thinking. With the ability to think that students have, it will certainly prepare students to think in various disciplines and can be used to fulfill intellectual needs and develop students' potential.

At the beginning of this activity, many students were not interested because they were used to playing with their friends rather than reading books. It takes quite a long time for teachers to get students used to carrying out these activities. The teacher assigns each student to bring a story book or other relevant book to read and collect at school or visit the library. Books are arranged neatly on a shelf and arranged in such a way that a reading corner is formed. The reading corner is a corner in the classroom and is equipped with a collection of books to attract and foster students' interest in reading in their free time after the learning process. This reading corner or reading corner is intended to be a place that can attract students' interest as a place to gather and exchange reading books brought by each student or various kinds of reading books that have been provided. In this way, it is hoped that students' interest in reading can increase.

The teacher's role is very important in increasing students' interest in reading. Teachers are one of the determining factors for students' success in increasing their interest in reading. Teachers must be able to adapt themselves to various kinds of characters who are able to encourage students to be more enthusiastic in the process of increasing their interest in reading. In practice, literacy habits are carried out every day before learning begins.

This literacy activity is carried out according to the concept that has been formulated, namely combining storytelling methods with questioning, imagery, inferencing and retelling, as well as delivery techniques to make the story more connected or related to life. students, then by using this storytelling method, students will be interested in always reading books, because students tend to be more interested in books that have more pictures and colors than writing with this series of activities provided. A library that is clean, tidy and contains interesting books can also increase students' interest in reading. Apart from these activities, libraries are also another alternative for carrying out literacy familiarization activities in school.

From the results of observations, the results of the achievements of the children of the Santa Theresia Dhereisa Play Group before using the storytelling method, which was done by simply providing a reading book without using the storytelling method, decreased by 37.5%. This

can be seen because children get bored if they are only asked to read without recounting what they have read in the reading book, and there are some children who lack concentration and only have the will to play. This is different from using the storytelling method, where children are more accustomed to reading, then they retell what they have read and relate it to their lives, and they are more concentrated in telling stories using reading books that they own or that they borrow from the library. experienced an increase of 62.5%. Where, the content of this discussion is focused on the results of observations of literacy activities through the "storytelling method" held at the Santa Theresia Dhereisa Playgroup.

Based on the results of research that has been conducted regarding the application of the storytelling method, increasing literacy skills in the children of the Santa Theresia Dhereisa Play Group can be done using the storytelling method. Applying the storytelling method makes them have much better listening, reading, speaking and writing skills. This method has also stimulated children to ask more questions so that their vocabulary increases.

According to Priyatni. E. T., (2015) literacy is the integration of listening, speaking, writing, reading and critical thinking skills. According to Faizah. U. D., (2016) school literacy is the ability to access, understand and use something intelligently through various activities, including reading, viewing, listening, writing and/or speaking. Abidin. Y., (2017), defines literacy as the ability to use language and images in rich and varied forms to read, write, listen, speak, see, present and think critically about ideas. Based on the understanding of several experts above, it can be concluded that the definition of literacy is an activity that aims to obtain information through reading, writing, listening and speaking.

Literacy skills are divided into four aspects, namely listening, reading, speaking and writing. First, the listening aspect is a form of receptive language skills with full attention, understanding, appreciation and interpretation to obtain information or messages that have been conveyed by the speaker through spoken language. Second, the reading aspect is the process of translating symbols or writing as an activity to obtain information conveyed by the author through writing. Third, the speaking aspect is a skill obtained through listening activities which aims to convey desires, needs, feelings and desires to other people. Meanwhile, the writing aspect is a language skill that is used to communicate indirectly through writing.

The storytelling method is one way of providing learning experiences for children by presenting stories orally. The story that is told must attract the child's attention without departing from the learning objectives. Furthermore, Moeslichatoen said that if the story is related to the child's life, then learning will be easier to understand by paying attention in listening to the story (Mardianto, 2015). The storytelling method has various benefits in that storytelling activities develop students' language skills. According to Dhieni, telling stories to children plays an important role not only in fostering interest and reading habits, but also in developing children's language and thoughts (Pebri Damaryanti, 2017).

With the storytelling method, students are expected to be able to understand and recognize several kinds of language sounds and vocabulary and will also slowly be able to create a series of more complex words or at least be able to tell a story or narrate something well, which will enable the vocabulary to increase. to students (Supriatna, 2022). Permatasari. N. A., (2017) stated that by developing early childhood language skills using the storytelling method, teachers can also apply this activity to improve children's abilities in other areas.

The storytelling method can be a very important learning method for improving early childhood development, because the storytelling method focuses more on active learning and can trigger students to be more critical in every activity, where the storytelling method is a creative learning process. which makes children feel something different while the learning process is taking place, so that children in each development will be increasingly able to take an active role not only in the intellectual aspect but also in the aspects of character, sensitivity, art, emotions, imagination and the power to fantasize and imagine, so that in their development and growth children not only prioritize the abilities of their right brain but also their left brain as well, (Jumiatih. J., 2020).

Many researchers agree that the storytelling method is very effective for improving literacy skills for students and improving reading comprehension skills. Storytelling is also a pedagogical



strategy to strengthen understanding by helping students develop a sense of a storyline or story. Through storytelling, students learn the social aspects of language and increase understanding of various cultures because most of what is told is literary work in the form of fairy tales (Miller. S., 2008). Developing a child's sense of a story is the initial stage for children to write. That is why the storytelling method is related to reading and writing.

Meanwhile, Musfiroh in Permatasari. R. W., (2014) also agrees that storytelling plays a very important role in increasing children's literacy. Musfiroh explained several benefits that can be obtained through the storytelling method, namely as follows;

- 1) Helping children's personal and moral formation. Effective stories are useful for influencing the way children think and behave.
- 2) Channel the needs of imagination and fantasy. Children need to channel their imagination and fantasies about various things that always appear in children's minds.
- 3) Stimulate children's verbal abilities. A good story not only entertains but also educates, while stimulating the development of the most important component of linguistic intelligence, namely the ability to use language for practical purposes.
- 4) Stimulate children's interest in writing. Children who enjoy hearing and reading stories will have the ability to speak, write and understand complex ideas better. Stories can inspire and stimulate children to write.
- 5) Stimulate children's interest in reading. Telling stories using books is an effective stimulation for children because at that time children's interest in reading begins to grow.
- 6) Opens children's horizons of knowledge. Telling stories can bring children to a better attitude, increase curiosity, mystery, and an attitude of respect for life.

It is highly recommended that the storytelling method be started with children from an early age, but it does not rule out the possibility of being applied to adults as well. Sorting story material, using interesting media and interesting delivery techniques that need to be considered to achieve the desired goals.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the results of research that has been carried out regarding the application of the storytelling method in improving the literacy skills of children in the Santa Theresa Dhereisa play group, it is now increasing. Applying the storytelling method makes them have much better listening, reading, speaking and writing skills. This method has also stimulated children to ask more questions so that their vocabulary might increasing according to the expectations.

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