

Improving Early Childhood Storytelling Skills Through Hand Puppet Storytelling Activities

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to improve early childhood language development through hand puppet storytelling activities at PAUD Pelangi Ceria, Lebak, Banten. The study employed Classroom Action Research using the Kemmis and McTaggart model, consisting of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting stages. The participants were 16 children in Group B, aged 5–6 years. Data were collected through observations conducted during the pre-cycle and two intervention cycles, supported by interviews, documentation, and field notes. The observed indicators included listening, understanding story content, expressing ideas orally, and retelling stories. Results showed an increase in language development mastery from 41% in the pre-cycle to 64% in Cycle I and 85% in Cycle II. These findings indicate that interactive hand puppet storytelling can effectively support children's language development.

INTRODUCTION

Early childhood is a critical period of development in which language plays an important role in supporting children's communication, social interaction, cognitive development, and ability to express thoughts and feelings. Language development includes both receptive and expressive abilities, such as listening, understanding spoken messages, responding to questions, expressing ideas verbally, and using vocabulary appropriately. Therefore, early childhood education needs to provide meaningful, interactive, and enjoyable learning experiences that encourage children to use language actively rather than merely listen to teachers.

In practice, however, children's language development does not always progress as expected. An initial observation conducted at PAUD Pelangi Ceria, Ciligrang District, Lebak, Banten, revealed several difficulties in children's verbal communication. Some children were unable to express their opinions in complete sentences and tended to respond to teachers' questions with very short answers such as "yes," "no," or a single word. Other children relied on gestures rather than verbal explanations when communicating their experiences. Children also demonstrated limited vocabulary and difficulty organizing simple experiences into coherent verbal expressions. When asked to describe activities at home or at school, several children were unable to explain what they had done, with whom they had interacted, or what they had experienced. These conditions indicate that children's expressive language abilities, particularly their confidence, vocabulary, and ability to construct meaningful oral expressions, still require systematic stimulation.

The problem is also reflected in children's participation during classroom communication. Only a small number of children actively responded to questions or expressed their opinions, while many others remained silent, avoided eye contact, or required teacher assistance when asked to speak in front of their peers. The existing learning process tended to rely on simple question-and-answer activities and teacher instructions, resulting in relatively limited opportunities for children to become active speakers. Although storytelling with hand puppets had previously been introduced, its implementation was not yet systematic or sufficiently interactive. The teacher remained the dominant storyteller, while children primarily acted as listeners. Consequently, the potential of hand puppet storytelling as an interactive medium for stimulating children's oral language development had not been fully utilized.

Storytelling is considered appropriate for early childhood education because it provides children with opportunities to listen to language in meaningful contexts while simultaneously stimulating imagination, emotional engagement, vocabulary development, and verbal expression. When storytelling is supported by concrete and attractive media such as hand puppets, children can more easily focus their attention on the narrative and become involved in the interaction. More importantly, interactive hand puppet storytelling can transform children from passive listeners into active participants through questioning, responding, role-playing, and retelling stories in their own words. Such activities provide opportunities for children to practice listening, answering

questions, expressing opinions, constructing sentences, and communicating ideas in a natural and enjoyable context.

Previous studies have reported positive relationships between storytelling activities and children's language development. Atik (2021) found that simple storytelling activities could improve children's language abilities, particularly in syntactic and semantic aspects. Zumara et al. (2025) reported that storytelling improved the oral language abilities of children aged five to six years through active participation in learning. Similarly, Margaretha et al. (2025) demonstrated that storytelling implemented through classroom action research could gradually improve children's language development through structured learning cycles.

Despite these findings, a practical gap remains in how storytelling can be implemented as an interactive classroom action to address specific language difficulties among children in a particular early childhood education setting. The present study focuses specifically on PAUD Pelangi Ceria, where children demonstrated difficulties in verbal expression, vocabulary use, responding to questions, and retelling stories, while previous hand puppet storytelling activities remained predominantly teacher-centered. This contextual focus constitutes an important contribution of the study because it examines not merely whether storytelling is beneficial, but how a structured and progressively improved hand puppet storytelling activity can be used as a classroom-based intervention to increase children's active participation and oral language development. The study therefore enriches the practical understanding of storytelling as a child-centered pedagogical strategy in early childhood education.

The novelty of this study lies in the systematic integration of hand puppets, interactive dialogue, simple role-playing, questioning, and story-retelling activities within a cyclical classroom action research framework. The intervention is progressively refined based on observations and reflections from each cycle, allowing the learning strategy to respond directly to children's classroom needs. In this way, hand puppet storytelling is positioned not simply as an instructional medium, but as an interactive learning strategy that provides repeated opportunities for children to listen, speak, respond, and reconstruct stories using their own language.

Based on this background, this study aims to improve the language development of young children through structured and interactive hand puppet storytelling activities at PAUD Pelangi Ceria, Ciligrang District, Lebak, Banten. Specifically, the study seeks to describe the implementation of hand puppet storytelling activities in supporting children's language development and to examine the improvement in children's language abilities following the implementation of the activities, particularly in listening, responding to questions, expressing ideas orally, and retelling stories in their own words.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Early Childhood Language Development

Language development is a fundamental component of early childhood development because language enables children to communicate ideas, express feelings, understand information, and participate in social interactions. During the preschool period, children experience rapid development in vocabulary, sentence structure, listening comprehension, and oral expression. Therefore, early childhood education should provide meaningful opportunities for children to listen, speak, interact, and construct meaning through language-rich experiences. Research on early childhood classrooms consistently emphasizes that teacher-child verbal interaction is an important component of children's oral language development (Hadley et al., 2023). In particular, teachers' conceptual talk, interactive talk, questioning, and elicitation can provide children with opportunities to expand vocabulary and develop more complex oral language.

Language development is not merely the acquisition of vocabulary but also includes children's ability to organize information and communicate meaning through increasingly complex utterances. The development of oral language is closely associated with children's later literacy development because children who can understand and produce increasingly complex language are better prepared to comprehend stories and communicate their own ideas. Hadley et al. (2022) found that teacher language practices in early childhood classrooms include interactive talk, responsive talk, questions and elicitation, and conceptual talk, all of which can contribute to children's oral language development.

The social nature of language development is particularly important in early childhood. Children develop language through meaningful interaction with adults and peers rather than through isolated vocabulary memorization. Consequently, learning activities should provide children with opportunities to listen to language models, respond to questions, negotiate meaning, and express their own ideas. In this context, storytelling provides a particularly suitable learning environment because it combines language exposure, interaction, imagination, and opportunities for oral expression.

Storytelling as a Language Learning Strategy

Storytelling is an instructional strategy that presents language through meaningful narratives. Unlike isolated language exercises, storytelling exposes children to vocabulary, sentence structures, characters, events, emotions, and causal relationships within a coherent context. This contextualized nature of stories can help children understand and remember new language more easily.

Research has demonstrated that storytelling can positively contribute to children's language development. Rafiola et al. (2022), for example, found that storytelling was effective in improving early childhood language development, particularly children's speaking ability, word choice, and sentence structure. Similarly, Margaretha et al. (2025) reported that storytelling activities could improve early childhood language development through structured learning activities. These findings indicate that storytelling can function not only as an entertainment activity but also as a pedagogical strategy for stimulating children's oral language.

The effectiveness of storytelling becomes stronger when children are actively involved in the storytelling process. Suggate et al. (2021) compared interactive elaborative storytelling with repeated reading and phonemic-awareness interventions among 293 preschool children. Their findings indicated that interactive elaborative storytelling produced particularly strong improvements in story-related vocabulary.

Vaahantoranta et al. (2019) further emphasized the importance of involving children as storytellers. Their Interactive Elaborative Storytelling approach combined vocabulary instruction with opportunities for children to participate actively as storytellers. The study suggests that increasing children's participation in storytelling can strengthen vocabulary learning and language development.

Storytelling can also support children's expressive language. Ghofur and Nurhayati (2023) found that multimedia-based storytelling learning media could support the development of expressive language among young children. Their findings suggest that storytelling becomes more powerful when it is presented through engaging media that attract children's attention and encourage interaction.

A similar conclusion was found by Solichah and Hidayah (2022), who examined digital storytelling using a quasi-experimental design. Their results indicated that digital storytelling was effective in improving early childhood language skills, with a large reported effect size.

Hand Puppets as a Storytelling Medium

The use of visual and concrete media is particularly relevant to early childhood education because young children learn effectively through concrete, attractive, and interactive experiences. Hand puppets provide a visual representation of characters and can transform storytelling from a predominantly verbal activity into an interactive experience.

Mujahidah et al. (2021) specifically examined the role of storytelling using hand puppets in early childhood language development. Their systematic literature review concluded that hand-puppet storytelling can encourage children to speak, increase listening interest, develop confidence, strengthen receptive and oral language, enrich vocabulary, and support children's ability to retell stories.

This finding is highly relevant to the present research because the indicators used in the study include listening to stories, answering questions, expressing opinions, retelling stories, and using vocabulary related to the story. These indicators correspond closely with the language benefits identified in previous studies.

Recent empirical evidence also provides direct support for hand-puppet storytelling. Rahmadani et al. (2026) investigated storytelling activities using hand-puppet media among children aged 5–6 years through classroom action research. The study reported an increase in learning mastery from 33% in the pre-action stage to 60% in Cycle I and 87% in Cycle II. The researchers also reported improvements in children's confidence, engagement, and willingness to express ideas orally.

Similarly, research on paper puppets by Rahmawati and Zulfiana (2025) showed that puppet-based storytelling supported children's vocabulary development, sentence construction, and speaking confidence. Although paper puppets differ from hand puppets, the finding strengthens the argument that puppet-based storytelling provides concrete visual and representational support for children's oral language development.

Research involving finger puppets has also demonstrated positive effects on young children's speaking abilities. Rafianur et al. (2025) examined storytelling using finger puppets among children aged 4–5 years and focused on vocabulary, pronunciation, and children's ability to answer questions. The findings provide additional evidence that puppet-based storytelling can stimulate specific components of oral communication.

Furthermore, Sumartiningsih (2024) investigated storytelling using hand puppets among children aged 4–6 years and found that puppet-assisted storytelling could support not only cognitive development but also language-related abilities, conceptual understanding, information processing, and early literacy.

Storytelling, Vocabulary, and Oral Expression

Vocabulary is an essential foundation of children's ability to communicate. Children who possess a wider vocabulary have greater resources for expressing experiences, describing events, answering questions, and constructing narratives. Storytelling offers repeated exposure to vocabulary within meaningful contexts, making it particularly suitable for vocabulary development.

The study by Suggate et al. (2021) provides strong evidence that interactive elaborative storytelling can foster vocabulary development in preschool children. Rather than simply listening to stories, children benefit when vocabulary is explicitly explained and embedded in interactive storytelling experiences.

Shared book reading research also supports the relationship between narrative activities and language development. Noble et al. (2019), through a meta-analysis, found a positive overall effect of shared book reading interventions on children's language development, although the magnitude of the effect varied depending on study design and intervention characteristics.

More recent evidence indicates that shared book reading is also associated with children's spoken language and vocabulary outcomes. A 2025 systematic review and meta-analysis involving 46 studies found significant relationships between home-based shared book reading and language outcomes, including vocabulary and expressive vocabulary.

These findings are relevant to classroom storytelling because both activities provide children with rich exposure to narrative language. However, storytelling with hand puppets has an additional advantage because the puppet can function as a concrete character that facilitates interaction, role-play, questioning, and children's participation.

Interactive Storytelling and Dialogic Interaction

The effectiveness of storytelling depends not only on the story itself but also on how teachers involve children during the activity. Passive listening may provide language exposure, but interactive storytelling creates additional opportunities for children to produce language. Teachers can ask prediction questions, invite children to identify characters, encourage children to describe events, and ask them to retell the story.

Hadley et al. (2023) demonstrated that different forms of teacher language can support children's oral language development in different classroom contexts. Their systematic review of 54 studies highlighted conceptual talk, interactive talk, linguistic features, and management/literal talk as important categories of teacher language practices. The authors specifically noted that conceptual talk during shared book reading and elicitation during play and small-group activities can support oral language development.

Dialogic reading provides a useful theoretical foundation for interactive storytelling. Towson et al. (2017) reviewed the evidence base for dialogic reading in early childhood settings and described it as an evidence-based practice that encourages children to become active participants in shared reading rather than passive listeners.

More recent evidence strengthens this argument. Özcan (2026) synthesized 16 experimental and quasi-experimental studies involving more than 1,800 preschool children and found a significant positive overall effect of dialogic reading on narrative skills ($g = 0.62$). The strongest effects were found in narrative macrostructure and causal-language reasoning.

The findings suggest that effective storytelling should therefore move beyond teacher narration toward interactive and dialogic storytelling. Children should be given opportunities to answer questions, predict events, identify characters, express opinions, use new vocabulary, and retell stories in their own words.

Storytelling and Children's Narrative Skills

Narrative ability refers to children's capacity to organize and communicate events in a meaningful sequence. It includes understanding characters, settings, actions, temporal relationships, causal relationships, and story endings. Narrative competence is important because it requires children to combine vocabulary, grammar, comprehension, memory, and oral expression.

Özcan (2026) argues that narrative skills in preschool are important predictors of later reading comprehension and academic achievement. The systematic review found that dialogic reading significantly improved narrative skills and particularly supported children's ability to construct narrative macrostructures and causal relationships.

This finding directly supports the use of storytelling as a strategy for developing children's ability to retell stories. When children are asked to retell a story, they must remember characters and events, organize the sequence, select appropriate vocabulary, and communicate the story coherently.

The use of puppets can further support this process because the visual representation of characters can serve as a memory and communication prompt. Children can use the puppet as a concrete reference while describing what

happened in the story. Thus, hand puppets may reduce the abstractness of narrative tasks and make it easier for young children to participate.

Theoretical Synthesis and Research Gap

The literature reviewed above indicates three interconnected principles. First, early childhood language development requires rich and meaningful verbal interaction. Second, storytelling provides contextualized language experiences that can support vocabulary, comprehension, oral expression, and narrative development. Third, the use of concrete and interactive media, such as hand puppets, can increase children's attention, participation, confidence, and opportunities to use language.

However, an important research gap remains. Many studies have investigated storytelling in general, digital storytelling, shared reading, paper puppets, or finger puppets. Fewer studies have specifically examined structured hand-puppet storytelling as a classroom action intervention focused simultaneously on listening, comprehension, oral expression, vocabulary, and retelling skills among Group B early childhood children. This gap provides a strong rationale for the present classroom action research.

The research context is particularly appropriate because the uploaded study identified difficulties among children in expressing opinions, answering questions, using vocabulary, and retelling stories. The initial classroom condition also showed that storytelling had been used but was not yet implemented systematically or interactively. Therefore, the intervention should not simply involve teachers telling stories with puppets; it should transform storytelling into a child-centered, interactive activity involving questions, dialogue, role play, and retelling.

The planned action research design is also consistent with this rationale. The study uses cycles of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting, allowing the storytelling strategy to be improved based on children's responses in each cycle. The literature therefore supports the proposition that interactive hand-puppet storytelling can provide an appropriate pedagogical intervention for improving early childhood language and storytelling abilities.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed Classroom Action Research (CAR) using the Kemmis and McTaggart action research model, which consists of four stages:

planning, action, observation, and reflection. The research was conducted in PAUD Pelangi Ceria, Cilograng District, Lebak Regency, Banten, Indonesia, during the second semester of the 2025/2026 academic year, from April to June 2026. The intervention was implemented in two cycles, with each cycle consisting of several learning sessions. The storytelling activities were designed to be interactive and child-centered, involving the teacher in expressive storytelling and encouraging children to participate through questions, simple dialogues, role-playing, and retelling the story.

The population and sample consisted of children enrolled in PAUD Pelangi Ceria who participated in the learning activities. The participants were selected from the class in which the identified problem of early childhood language development occurred. The study focused on children's language development, particularly their ability to listen to stories, understand story content, answer questions, express ideas orally, and retell stories using their own words.

Data were collected through observation, interviews, documentation, and field notes. The primary instrument was an observation sheet developed to assess children's language development. The assessment covered four main indicators: (1) listening and paying attention to stories, (2) understanding story content as demonstrated through responses to questions, (3) expressing answers or opinions orally, and (4) retelling stories using simple language. Children's development was assessed using the four-level early childhood developmental scale: Not Yet Developed (BB), Beginning to Develop (MB), Developing as Expected (BSH), and Very Well Developed (BSB).

Data were analyzed descriptively and comparatively across the pre-cycle, Cycle I, and Cycle II. The analysis focused on changes in children's language development and their participation during storytelling activities. The percentage of children achieving the BSH or BSB categories was used to determine classical achievement. The action was considered successful when at least 75% of the children achieved BSH or BSB. Reflection was conducted at the end of each cycle to identify difficulties and determine improvements for the subsequent cycle.

RESEARCH RESULT

The classroom action research was conducted in two cycles using the Kemmis and McTaggart model, consisting of four stages: planning, acting,

observing, and reflecting. The research was conducted at PAUD Pelangi Ceria, Cilograng, Lebak, Banten, during the second semester of the 2025/2026 academic year. The study aimed to improve young children's language development through storytelling activities using hand puppets.

Pre-Cycle

The pre-cycle observation was conducted to identify the children's initial language development before the intervention. The observation focused on children's ability to listen to stories, understand story content, respond to simple questions, express opinions orally, and retell stories.

The initial observation indicated that children's language development was still relatively low. Many children had difficulty maintaining attention while listening to stories, answering questions, expressing their ideas orally, and retelling stories using simple vocabulary. The classical achievement rate in the pre-cycle was 41%, categorized as Beginning to Develop (MB).

Cycle I

In Cycle I, storytelling activities were implemented using more attractive learning media and simple question-and-answer activities. The teacher presented stories while encouraging children to respond to questions related to the characters and story content. Children were also given opportunities to express their opinions and retell parts of the story.

The observation results showed an improvement in children's language development compared with the pre-cycle. Children began to demonstrate better attention, respond to simple questions, and express their opinions orally. However, some children still had difficulty maintaining focus, retelling stories sequentially, and using appropriate vocabulary. Therefore, the results of Cycle I had not yet reached the predetermined success criterion. The classical achievement rate increased to 64%, categorized as Developing as Expected (BSH).

Based on the reflection of Cycle I, several improvements were made for Cycle II, including the use of more attractive and varied learning media, more intensive teacher guidance, greater opportunities for children to participate in question-and-answer activities, and additional language games and illustrated stories.

Cycle II

In Cycle II, the storytelling activities were improved to become more interactive and participatory. The teacher used more attractive story media, expressive intonation, language games, and provided greater opportunities for children to speak and retell stories independently.

The results showed substantial improvement in children's language development. Children were able to pay closer attention to stories, understand story content, answer questions orally, express simple opinions, and retell stories using their own words. All observed indicators showed improvement, and the classical achievement rate reached 85%, categorized as Very Well Developed (BSB).

Improvement in Children's Language Development

The comparison of children's language development from the pre-cycle to Cycle II is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Improvement in Children's Language Development

Stage	Classical Achievement	Category
Pre-Cycle	41%	Beginning to Develop (MB)
Cycle I	64%	Developing as Expected (BSH)
Cycle II	85%	Very Well Developed (BSB)

As presented in Table 1, children's language development increased consistently throughout the research. The achievement rate increased from 41% in the pre-cycle to 64% in Cycle I, representing an increase of 23 percentage points. It subsequently increased to 85% in Cycle II, representing an additional increase of 21 percentage points. Overall, the achievement increased by 44 percentage points from the pre-cycle to Cycle II.

The results indicate that the predetermined classical success criterion of at least 75% was achieved in Cycle II. Therefore, the classroom action research was considered successful and was terminated after Cycle II.

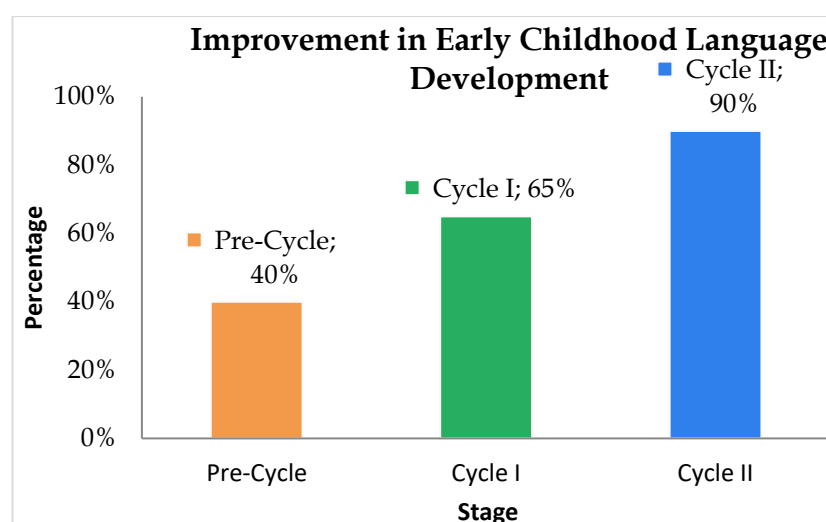


Figure 1. Improvement in Children's Language Development from the Pre-Cycle to Cycle II

The findings demonstrate a consistent improvement in children's language development following the implementation of storytelling activities. The improvement from 41% to 85% suggests that the intervention contributed to better children's listening, oral communication, vocabulary use, and storytelling abilities.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this classroom action research indicate that hand-puppet storytelling activities can contribute positively to the development of early childhood language skills. The improvement was observed progressively from the pre-cycle to the first and second cycles. This improvement was not only reflected in children's language development outcomes but also in their participation, confidence, and willingness to communicate during the learning process. The findings suggest that storytelling activities provide children with meaningful opportunities to listen, understand information, respond to questions, express ideas, and retell stories using their own words.

In the pre-cycle, several children experienced difficulties in expressing their ideas verbally. Some children tended to provide very short answers, use gestures instead of verbal responses, or remain silent when they were asked to speak in front of their peers. Children also had limited vocabulary and experienced difficulties in constructing sentences coherently. These conditions indicate that language development requires learning experiences that provide sufficient opportunities for children to actively communicate. The initial classroom condition also showed that learning activities were relatively teacher-centered, which limited children's opportunities to participate actively in speaking activities.

The implementation of storytelling activities in Cycle I began to create a more communicative learning environment. Through stories supported by visual media, children were encouraged to listen to the story and respond to simple questions. This activity provided children with contextual language input and opportunities to practice verbal responses. Nevertheless, the reflection stage indicated that children's participation still needed to be strengthened. Therefore, the learning strategy was improved in Cycle II by increasing interactive dialogue, role-playing, and opportunities for children to retell the story using their own language.

The improvement observed in Cycle II can be understood from the characteristics of storytelling as an interactive language-learning activity. When children listen to stories and subsequently respond to questions or retell parts of the story, they are exposed to vocabulary, sentence structures, pronunciation, and meaningful contexts simultaneously. Such activities can help children move from merely understanding language toward actively using language to communicate. In this study, the indicators of language development included listening to stories, responding to questions, expressing opinions verbally, and retelling stories.

The use of hand puppets also provided an important element of engagement. A puppet can function as a concrete and visually attractive stimulus that helps children focus their attention on the story and understand the characters and events. For young children, concrete and imaginative learning experiences are particularly relevant because they support learning through observation, interaction, imitation, and play. In the present study, the storytelling activity was designed not merely as a teacher's performance but as an interactive learning experience in which children were encouraged to participate actively.

The findings are also consistent with the theoretical perspective of social interaction in language development. Children's language develops through meaningful communication with adults and peers, while teacher assistance can provide scaffolding that gradually enables children to use language more independently. In the present study, teacher prompts, questions, modeling, and encouragement functioned as forms of support that helped children participate in storytelling. As children's confidence increased, they were given greater opportunities to answer questions, express ideas, and retell the story independently.

The findings further support previous research indicating that storytelling can facilitate children's language development. Earlier studies cited in this research reported positive contributions of storytelling to children's language abilities, including oral language, vocabulary, and communication skills. The present study extends these findings by demonstrating that storytelling can be implemented through a cyclical classroom action research process, allowing teachers to identify children's difficulties, modify instructional strategies, and evaluate the effectiveness of each intervention cycle.

An important finding of this study is that improvement was associated not only with the storytelling medium but also with changes in the way the activity was implemented. In Cycle I, children were primarily introduced to storytelling and encouraged to respond to simple questions. In Cycle II, the activity became more participatory through interactive dialogue, simple role-playing, and retelling activities. This suggests that the effectiveness of hand-puppet storytelling depends on the extent to which children are positioned as active participants rather than passive listeners.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that systematically implemented and interactive hand-puppet storytelling activities can be an effective classroom strategy for supporting early childhood language development. The achievement of the predetermined success criterion, namely that at least 75% of children reach the Developing as Expected or Developing Very Well categories, provides an important basis for concluding that the intervention was successful. The results therefore emphasize the importance of designing storytelling activities that combine attractive media, teacher scaffolding, active child participation, and opportunities for children to use language independently.

From a practical perspective, the findings suggest that early childhood teachers should not limit storytelling to listening activities. Storytelling can be transformed into an interactive learning strategy by inviting children to predict events, answer questions, imitate characters, participate in dialogue, express opinions, and retell stories. Such practices can create richer opportunities for children to develop receptive and expressive language skills while simultaneously strengthening confidence and social interaction.

Thus, this study contributes to early childhood education by showing that hand-puppet storytelling, when implemented systematically through reflective classroom action cycles, can serve as a meaningful and child-centered strategy for improving children's language development. The gradual changes from the

initial condition through Cycle I and Cycle II demonstrate the importance of continuous reflection and instructional improvement in achieving more optimal learning outcomes..

CONCLUSION

The results of this classroom action research indicate that storytelling activities using hand puppets can improve the language development of early childhood learners. The improvement was evident across the observed indicators, including listening to stories, understanding story content, expressing ideas orally, and retelling stories. The percentage of children who achieved the expected level of language development increased from 41% in the pre-cycle stage to 64% in Cycle I and 85% in Cycle II. This finding indicates that the implementation of hand puppet storytelling activities was successful in achieving the predetermined criterion of at least 75% classical mastery.

The implementation of the activities also encouraged children to become more actively involved in the learning process. Through expressive storytelling, interactive questioning, simple role-playing, vocabulary activities, and opportunities to retell stories, children were given greater opportunities to listen, respond, speak, and express their ideas. These activities helped create a more enjoyable, interactive, and child-centered learning environment.

In terms of implementation, teachers are recommended to use hand puppets as an alternative instructional medium for developing children's language abilities. The activities should be designed systematically and interactively rather than being limited to teacher-led storytelling. Teachers should provide opportunities for children to answer questions, participate in simple dialogues, play roles, identify vocabulary, and retell stories using their own words. The selection of stories should also be adjusted to children's age, interests, language abilities, and learning context. This approach can help increase children's confidence, vocabulary, oral communication, and active participation in classroom activities.

ADVANCED RESEARCH

This study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, the research was conducted with a relatively small group of 16 children in one early childhood education institution. Therefore, the findings may not be directly generalizable to children in other schools or educational contexts. Second, the research used a classroom action research design consisting of two cycles, so the improvement observed was closely related to the specific classroom context, teacher intervention, and learning activities implemented during the research period.

Further research is recommended to involve a larger and more diverse sample from several early childhood education institutions. Future studies could also employ quasi-experimental or mixed-method research designs to provide stronger evidence regarding the effectiveness of hand puppet storytelling. Researchers may compare hand puppet storytelling with other storytelling media, such as digital storytelling, picture books, or multimedia-based storytelling. In addition, future research could examine the effects of hand

puppet storytelling on specific aspects of language development, such as vocabulary acquisition, narrative ability, listening comprehension, oral expression, and children's communication confidence.

Future studies may also explore longer intervention periods and different types of stories, including culturally relevant and locally based stories. Such research would provide a broader understanding of how hand puppet storytelling can be adapted to different children's characteristics and learning environments. In this way, hand puppet storytelling can be further developed as an effective, interactive, and developmentally appropriate strategy for supporting early childhood language development.

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