Application of the Storytelling Method
to Improve Early Childhood Language Development
at Islamic Kindergarten Al Ittifaqiah Indralaya

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Abstract: Classroom Action Research is one of the efforts that can be taken by teachers/researchers to test the effectiveness of a learning method and measure students' abilities in their treatment in a research class. Based on the low language skills of students in the Ittifaqiah Indralaya Islamic Kindergarten students, where in initial observations only 25% of my students had fairly good language skills, the researcher then conducted PTK using the storytelling method. The research was carried out for two cycles in which two actions were carried out in each cycle. Based on the results of the first action of cycle I, an increase of 60% was achieved, which was then followed by the second action of cycle I, which achieved an increase of 85%. In the first action cycle II, the research target of 90% was exceeded to 95% or leaving 1 student who had not reached the specified KKM. Based on the data analysis, it can be concluded that the storytelling method is successful in improving the language skills of Ittifaqiah Indralaya Islamic Kindergarten students.

Keywords: Classroom Action Research, Kindergarten Students, Storytelling Method

A. Introduction

National education functions to develop capabilities and shape dignified national character and civilization in the context of educating the nation's life, aiming at developing the potential of students to become human beings who believe, fear God almighty, have noble character, are healthy, knowledgeable, capable, creative, independent, and become a democratic and responsible citizen.

Early childhood education is essentially education that is organized with the aim of facilitating the growth and development of children as a whole or emphasizing the development of all aspects of the child's personality. Therefore, Early Childhood Education provides opportunities for children to develop their personality and potential to the fullest. Early childhood is a small individual who is undergoing a very rapid process of development, growth and maturation in his life.

The government regulates that in the National Education System Law Number 20 of 2013 concerning national education it is explained that: "Early childhood education is

a coaching effort aimed at children from birth up to the age of 6 which is carried out through the provision of educational stimuli to help growth and development physically and spiritually so that children are ready to enter further education. Early childhood education is held before the basic education level which can be held through formal, non-formal and informal channels.

Storytelling is an important teaching resource with a strong presence in all societies since the evolution of human language and has a highly effective role in the education of young children (Phillips, 2000). At the age of 3-5 years children's enjoyment of story books increases sharply. Even so, at this stage children still like story books that have lots of illustrations and bright colors, especially pictures of the main characters in the story. Therefore, the best stimulation at this stage is by reading stories, stories, or fairy tales. By telling a story, it offers an opportunity for children to interpret the contents of the story with real life, such as what is experienced, seen, and felt by children. Through the simplification, interaction and affordability of technology, digital storytelling methods have been quickly and widely spreading. It has become a reliable learning platform, as new technologies have become cheaper and more commonly accessible to a more considerable number of people (McLellan, 2006). Technology allows teachers to access innovative and improved instructional approaches to support children's learning and growth (Wang & Hoot, 2006). Additionally, technology also helps children from low- to medium-income households excel in vocabulary, literacy and math testing, and their overall readiness for school (Wright et al., 2001). Technology opens up greater opportunities for children to learn, as education practitioners increasingly incorporate technology and digital media into their classrooms, so children have the same right to participate and learn (Cross et al., 2009).

Whereas in the rules set by Regulation Minister of Education and Culture Number 137 of 2014 Article 25 Paragraph (1) that: "the qualifications of educators or teachers in Early Childhood Education (PAUD) have Diploma four (D-IV) or Bachelor (S-1) diplomas in in the field of early childhood education or other relevant education such as psychologists and having a PAUD professional education certificate (PPG) from an accredited tertiary institution (Susanto, 2017)".

Story telling activities can indeed stimulate children's skills to think systematically because many aspects of child development are related to thinking, language, logic, and the introduction of literacy elements. If the child is accustomed to hearing stories, the child will acquire vocabulary, expressions, people's character, history, and so on. Digital storytelling has strengthened the conceptual understanding of the course material by the preschoolers more than conventional storytelling (Kocaman-Karoglu, 2015). Various school subject matter can also be included slowly in the story to help your child understand the lessons given at school. Children can learn the names of objects, colors, sizes, shapes and numbers (Hana, 2014).

By carrying out learning activities through the storytelling method, it is hoped that it can improve children's language development. So that children can interact with school friends, teachers, adults and their environment. Based on the description above, the authors feel interested in conducting research on teaching and learning processes using the storytelling method to make it easier for children to develop their language.

In learning, there are components and objectives related to the learning process, namely: teachers, students, methods, materials, media, and evaluation. To achieve the goal, an educator must understand the position of the method in a lesson because the method is one of the components that contributes to the success of teaching and learning activities. The method is used as a way of conveying a message or subject matter to students. Inappropriate teaching methods will hinder the smooth running of a teaching and learning process so that a lot of time is wasted. Therefore, the method applied by the new teacher is successful if it is able to be used to achieve the goal. It provides an understanding of the method in the world of learning is a way that teachers/educators do in teaching and learning activities with the aim of achieving a good learning process.

Telling a story is telling something that talks about an action or an incident and is conveyed orally with the aim of sharing experiences and knowledge with others. According to Moeslichatoen, (2004) the storytelling method is "one of the providing learning experiences for Kindergartens by bringing stories to children orally". Based on the above opinion, it can be concluded that the storytelling method is a way of conveying or presenting material orally in the form of stories from teachers to children in kindergarten. In carrying out learning activities in Kindergarten the storytelling method is carried out in an effort to introduce, provide information or explanations about new things in order to convey learning that can develop various basic competencies of children in Kindergarten.

The storytelling method is one of the most effective ways of building "language" neural connections in a child's growing brain. Reading stories to children can also be a healthy habit that can support their language development. The storytelling method is one of the methods that can be used to broaden children's horizons and ways of thinking, because in storytelling activities children get additional experiences that can be new things, of course children will get the opportunity to repeat memories of things they have obtained or experienced.

According to Moeslichatoen, (2004) that the purpose of "the storytelling method is one of the ways that the teacher takes to provide a learning experience so that children gain better mastery of the content of the story conveyed". Through the storytelling method, it will absorb the messages conveyed through storytelling activities.

Meanwhile, according to Majid, (2006) the purpose of the storytelling method is "entertaining children and pleasing them by telling good stories, helping children's knowledge in general, developing imagination, educating morals, and sharpening feelings". In general, the storytelling method functions as a giver or the best possible way for the operational implementation of this knowledge. Storytelling does not only function as entertainment but is also a way that can be used to achieve educational goals or targets. The storytelling method can make the learning atmosphere fun and enjoyable.

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. According to Moeslihatoen (2004), the implementation of storytelling techniques can be done in various ways, such as: a) Read directly from the story book; b) Tell stories using illustrated pictures from books; c) Telling fairy tales; d) Tell stories using a flannel board; e) Tell stories using puppet media; f) Dramatization of a story; g) Telling stories while playing with the fingers.

Telling stories should pay attention to the following steps: a) The place to tell the story; b) Position in storytelling; c) The language of the story; d) Teacher's voice in telling the story; e) Make the story characters act according to their original characters; f) Paying attention to emotional attitude reactions; g) Lower the sound; h) Controlling students' emotions when telling stories and; i) Avoid excessive repetition of words.

To be able to tell stories well, the teacher should pay attention to the following things: a) As the contents of the story in its entirety; b) Having storytelling skills; c) Practice in rhythm and voice modulation continuously; d) Using equipment that attracts children's attention; e) Creating an emotional situation in accordance with the demands of the story.

In society, stories with the theme of the kinds of jobs that exist in society or are related to transportation. The teacher's ability to tell a good story must be supported by a good story, namely the following criteria: a) The story must be interesting and captivate the teacher's own attention; b) The story must suit the child's personality, style and talents; c) The story must be according to the age level and the child is able to understand the contents of the story.

The advantages of the storytelling method include: being able to reach a relatively larger number of children, available time can be used effectively and efficiently, class arrangements are simpler, teachers can control the class easily, relatively do not require a lot of money. The disadvantages of the storytelling method include: Passive students because they listen more to or receive explanations from the teacher, do not stimulate the development of creativity and students' abilities to express their opinions, the absorption or comprehension of students is different and still weak so it

is difficult to understand the main purpose of the story, fast growing boredom, especially if the presentation is not interesting.

Several specific patterns of adult-young child interaction play a role in enhancing language development, namely: eye contact and sharing of the same referrals, communication cycles, speech addressed to children, verbal mapping, asking questions, supporting language and mediation (Otto, 2015). Early childhood language development, especially kindergarten children, has its own characteristics. Jamaris (2006) divides early childhood language development into 2 (Jamaris, 2006), namely: a) Characteristics of language skills of children aged 4 years; b) Characteristics of children's language skills aged 5-6 years.

From a neuroscientific perspective, the newborn brain is not a white paper as John Locke said. Certain areas have been assigned to certain stimuli, including spoken language. The window of opportunity for a child's brain to learn spoken language opens from birth and narrows in the first stage at the age of 5 years, then narrows in the second stage at the age of 10-12 years.

Introducing foreign languages to children when they enter middle school, both junior high and high school, is too late. Therefore, language learning must start from early childhood or elementary school. Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia 137 of 2014 concerning National Standards for Early Childhood Education Chapter I Article I Paragraph 02 which reads: "Standards for the level of achievement of early childhood development, hereinafter referred to as STPPA, are criteria regarding the abilities achieved by children in all aspects of development and growth, including aspects religious and moral values, physical-motor, cognitive, language, social-emotional, and artistic" (Permendikbud RI, 2014).

B. Methods

Research Place and Time

This classroom action research was conducted at the Al-Ittifaqiah Indralaya Islamic Kindergarten which is located at Jl Lintas Timur KM. 36 Indralaya Mulya Ogan Ilir South Sumatra. This research was conducted on group B children in the 2022 school year. The time and duration of action in this study are estimated from September to December 2022.

Research Object

The objects of this study were group B children aged 5-6 years at the Al-Ittifaqiah Indralaya Islamic Kindergarten in the Ummu Salamah class, which consisted of 20 students consisting of 11 boys and 9 girls.

Data Sources

The data source is the subject from which the data can be obtained. Furthermore Sugiyono (2015) says that when viewed from the data source, data collection can use primary data and secondary data. Primary data is a data source that directly provides data to data collectors. The primary data obtained from observations and interviews with informants. Secondary data is the data needed to complete the data and information obtained from primary data. This data is obtained from the documentation.

Data Collection Techniques

Data collection techniques are tools that are used and selected by the author in collecting data activities so that these activities become systematic and easy (Arikunto 2014), in this study used observation and documentation.

Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis was carried out to determine the effectiveness of an activity carried out. In this class action research used quantitative descriptive analysis. Qualitative descriptive, namely a research method that describes the reality of early childhood language development and early childhood language skills (Aqib, 2012). To calculate the value obtained by students, the following formula is used.

Description: n = value
To calculate the average value of these students used the following formula.

$$r = \frac{Complete\ Student\ Number}{unfinished amount} x100$$

Description: r = average
Score Range:
83-100   = Very Good
75-82   = Good
60-74   = Enough
42-59   = Less

The child is said to be complete, if the child's total score reaches 75 according to the Minimum Completeness Criteria of Ittifaqiah Islamic Kindergarten. While the success rate of research is declared successful if it has reached 90% of the total existing research sample.

Research Performance Indicators

The performance indicators of this study are used to measure the increase in students' learning success both classically and individually. Criteria for increasing student learning success can be measured with the table assessment guidelines as follows:

Table 1. Criteria for the Level of Success in Children's Learning

No	Score	Category
1	> 80 %	Very Well Developed
2	60-79 %	Growing As Expected
3	40-59 %	Start Growing
4	<20 %	Undeveloped

The indicator of success in this study is if the percentage of classical learning completeness reaches 80% of the children complete/experiencing an increase.

Research Procedure

The research procedure is a series of steps carried out in the research, namely: the preparation stage, the implementation of the research and data analysis. The procedure used in this study is in the form of a cycle mechanism which includes four activities, namely: planning, implementation, action observation, action reflection. Each learning cycle is carried out 2 meetings.

Pre-Cycle

The pre-cycle was held on Tuesday 10 September 2022. From the observations of the pre-cycle teaching and learning activities, the results obtained were the results of an assessment of children's language development measurements in the pre-cycle. it can be concluded that the results of the assessment of the language development of group B children were obtained in the pre-cycle, namely, the number of children who completed was 5 children and the number of children who had not completed was 15 children. The percentage of pre-cycle learning completeness is as follows:
Complete   : P = 25%
Not Completed   : P = 75%

First Meeting of Cycle I

Implementation of Cycle I was held in 2 meetings, namely on Monday, 7 February 2023 and 14 February 2023. Each meeting was 2 x 45 minutes. The planning stages in cycle I include the following:

Action Planning

Researchers have prepared daily learning implementation plans (RPPH), observation sheets of children's activities, assessment sheets of children's language development as well as tools and materials used in storytelling activities.

Implementation

Implementation of learning is done with a scientific learning model and methods of storytelling, lectures and questions and answers. The class teacher also functions as an observer when the researcher is doing storytelling activities.

Observation of first cycle I action

Observation activities are carried out by teachers and colleagues during the learning process. Colleagues are tasked with filling out the teacher/researcher observation sheet during the learning action. This is done to find out how the teacher's level of ability in delivering storytelling material. Meanwhile, the student observation sheets were filled in by the researchers themselves.

Reflection

Reflection is a reflection of an action that will become a guide for carrying out further actions. From the results of this reflection, the researcher will later find out the weaknesses and deficiencies that have occurred in the previous action so that they will not be repeated in the next action. This will be very useful for improving the learning methods used and producing more optimal research.

Action Cycle II

The implementation of cycle two is planned to also be carried out with 2 actions, namely the second meeting of Cycle II to be held on 21 February 2023 and 28 February 2023. The planning stages in cycle II include the following:

Action Planning

As with the previous actions, in planning this time the researcher has prepared a daily learning implementation plan (RPPH), observation sheets for children's activities, assessment sheets for children's language development as well as tools and materials used in storytelling activities.

Implementation

Implementation of learning is done with a scientific learning model and methods of storytelling, lectures and questions and answers. The class teacher also functions as an observer when the researcher is doing storytelling activities.

Observation of cycle II actions

Observations made in the second action in cycle II will see the results of the second action in cycle I. If the results of the teacher's motivation and competence are good, observations will only be made on improving students' language skills using the same assessment format.

Reflection

Reflection will still be carried out like previous actions to find out the weaknesses and shortcomings of the methods used and as an effort to determine the level of success that has been achieved. The results of this reflection in cycle II will later become a basis for researchers to carry out a second action or even cycle III if it is still needed.

C. Results and Discussion

A Brief History of Al-Ittifaqiah Indralaya Islamic Kindergarten

Al Ittifaqiah Indralaya Islamic Kindergarten was born under the auspices of the Al Ittifaqiah Indralaya Islamic boarding school which had been established for a long time in 1918-1922. This modern boarding school, which has developed very rapidly, is a boarding school founded by a great scholar named KH. Ishak Bahsin, who is a graduate of Al-Azhar Cairo Egypt.

At first, this Islamic boarding school in its early days from 1922 to 1942 still adopted the traditional education system. Therefore, the madrasah system is still in effect at Islamic boarding schools located on Jalan Asian Highway No. 25, RW. 14, Indralaya Mulia, Kec. Indralaya, Ogan Ilir Regency, South Sumatra.

Identity, Vision, Mission, and Goals of Ittifaqiah Indralaya Islamic Kindergarten

Al-Ittifaqiah Indralaya Islamic Kindergarten is one of the PAUD institutions operating under the auspices of the Office of Education and Culture of Ogan Ilir Regency, South Sumatra. This Islamic Kindergarten which is located at Jalan Lintas Timur, Kilometer 36, Ogan Ilir operates based on the Permit Decree number 500/012/PAUD/DPMPTSP/2021 with accreditation level B. This Islamic

Kindergarten is a private school owned by the Ittifaqiah boarding school foundation with a permit establishment number 421/247/DS.4/D.Diknas.Kab/2002 which is intended for the general public in the surrounding area as well as those interested in studying at this Islamic Kindergarten.

In order to realize this noble vision, a number of missions have been made which can later become benchmarks for the success of the vision that has been proclaimed, namely; (1) Improving teacher competence so that they are able to carry out learning, coaching and nurturing as well as exemplary consistently and continuously, (2) Organizing an integrative and balanced education system between faith and piety, and science and technology, (3) Instilling and providing values Islamic values and good morals in life.

Based on the vis and miss that have been made, it is clear that the aim of the Al-Ittifaqiah Indralaya Islamic Kindergarten is to create students who are not only diligent, but also have the ability to worship who are capable, have noble character, are intelligent, skilled, independent, and responsible.

Pre-Cycle Research Results
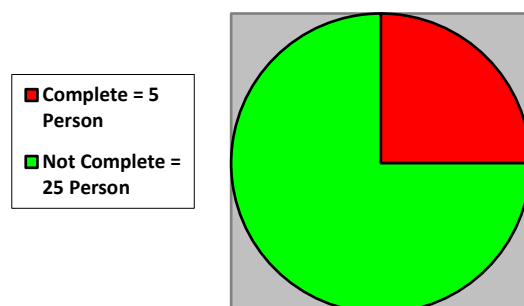
Diagram 1. Percentage Of Complete Pre-Cycle Learning

Before carrying out the research action (cycle), the researcher made initial observations (pre-cycle), so that 25% of language development began to develop (MB) and 75% of children's language development had not yet developed (BB). In this pre cycle the percentage of learning completeness. children, namely as many as 5 children have completed and as many as 15 children have not completed. Based on the initial data that the researcher has, special treatment is needed in the research cycle to be carried out in order to further improve the language skills of the students of the Al-Ittifaqiah Indralaya Islamic Kindergarten Group B as the object of this research.

Cycle I Research Results

Complete = 12 Person
Not Complete = 8
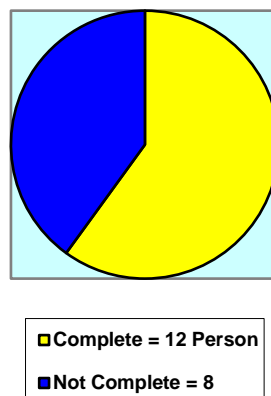
Diagram 2. The Completeness Value of the application of the Storytelling Method to Improve Early Childhood Language Development In Islamic Kindergarten Al Ittifaqiah Indralaya Cycle I

Action Research Cycle II

Action research in the second cycle will be carried out in one learning action. This is because the researcher is getting closer to the research target set. In the second action in cycle I, there were only 3 students left who had not reached the Minimum Completeness Criteria (KKM). So, based on this possibility, the researcher is optimistic that the results of the first action in cycle II will succeed in meeting the research target of 80%.

Discussion of Research Results

Pre-Cycle Discussion

Before conducting this classroom action research, the researcher made preliminary observations about the language skills of the Ittifaqiah Islamic Kindergarten students where the researcher taught. Based on the results of these observations, the researcher then conducted an initial test as a pre-cycle measure to determine the students' language skills which were still very low.

This of course can be influenced by many factors that must be proven. Based on the learning method that researchers usually use, namely the lecture method, the success rate of students in understanding teaching material only reaches 25% of all students whose language skills can be said to be good. Meanwhile, the remaining 75% or 15 students are still lacking.

Based on this pre-cycle research, the researchers tried to examine and choose a method that they felt would be able to change students' language skills for the better. So, the

storytelling method was chosen. The storytelling method which is considered close to early childhood is expected to have a positive influence on the development of students' language skills.

Discussion of the Results of the First Cycle I Learning Actions

The results of the first cycle I learning actions which were carried out on Monday, February 7 2023 and February 14 2023. Each meeting is 2 x 45 minutes. At the first meeting in cycle I it showed a significant increase in results on student motivation in participating in learning, the teacher's ability to convey teaching material, and also student learning outcomes.

The results of observations made to students show that students are still not familiar with the treatments carried out by the teacher/researcher and colleagues in the room. Some students were still a little 'disturbed' by the activities of their colleagues who supervised the learning process while documenting the learning process.

However, when compared with the pre-cycle situation, at the first meeting in cycle I the students had developed a little. Of the 20 students who were in the Fair and Good categories, there were even seven students who were in the Very Good category. If the percentage is 70% of student learning motivation in this category, the remaining 25% will continue to be developed so that they are even more motivated.

Discussion of Second Cycle I Learning Action Results

The second action in cycle I was carried out on Monday, 14 February 2023. At the second meeting in cycle I, there was a very good improvement compared to the previous first meeting.

Based on the results of processing student observation data, it is known that the level of student activity in participating in the learning process using the storytelling method is growing very well. The average value of student activity increased significantly.

Discussion of the Results of the First Action Cycle II

Based on the results of observations on the first act of cycle II, the increase in student activity in participating in learning using the storytelling method again experienced a very good and impressive increase. The average aspect of observation has reached the Very Good level. Of the 20 students, only four students were still in the good category, while 16 others were in the Very Good category. This is certainly a very encouraging barometer for researchers.

D. Conclusion

Based on the results of research that has been carried out for two cycles, each cycle consisting of two research actions on, the Application of the Storytelling Method to Improve Early Childhood Language Development in Islamic Kindergarten Al Ittifaqiah Indralaya, several research results were obtained which were then analyzed and described in several distribution table which then the values are processed using a predetermined formula.

Based on the results of data analysis and discussion that has been carried out, it can be concluded that the storytelling method can improve the language skills of Ittifaqiah Islamic Kindergarten students, especially group B for the 2022 academic year with a total of 20 research subjects.

The classroom action research conducted for 2 cycles succeeded in improving the language skills of the Ittifaqiah Islamic Kindergarten students, especially group B by 95% until the end of the first cycle I action. Classroom action research that started with pre-cycle action with a research success rate of 25% was continued to the first cycle I action which succeeded in increasing students' language skills to 60% of the total research sample. After reflecting, some deficiencies were identified and method improvements were also made before taking further action.

In the second action of cycle I, there was a very significant increase in students' language skills, out of 20 students only 1 student left who had not reached the Minimum Completeness Criteria with a score of 75. If put into percentages, the success rate of this class action research is already 85%. meaning that only 5% of the research target set at 90% remains. This class research action was stopped in the first cycle II action because the research target had been successfully exceeded to 95%. this success rate is not only hitting the target but exceeding the 5% above it. Thus, it can be said that the storytelling method is a very effective learning method for use with children aged 5-6 years or at the Kindergarten (TK) level in terms of improving students' verbal and nonverbal language skills.

E. Acknowledgment

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