

## Improving Expressive Language Abilities Through Storytelling Activities (The Mouse Hare And The Crocodile) In Early Childhood In Class B Of Islahul Ummah Kindergarten In The 2024/2025 Academic Year

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### Abstract

*This study aims to determine the level of the learning process using storytelling activities on children's language skills and to determine the level of children's ability in using storytelling activities to improve expressive language skills in TK Islahul Ummah, Dusun Cupek, Sigar Penjalin Village, Tanjung District, Academic Year 2024/2025. The subjects of this study were 23 group B children in TK Islahul Ummah, consisting of 15 boys and 8 girls. The research used a classroom action research approach based on the Kemmis and Taggart model, which consists of the stages of planning, action implementation, observation, and reflection. Data were collected through observation and analyzed using the classical completeness formula, which must reach 80%. The study was carried out in two cycles: cycle I was conducted in three meetings, while cycle II was conducted in two meetings, with each meeting designed to stimulate children's language skills through listening, imitating, and orally retelling story content. Based on observations and data analysis in each cycle, a significant improvement was found in children's expressive language skills, in terms of vocabulary, sentence structure, and speaking confidence. The final results showed that continuous and creative storytelling activities can optimally improve children's expressive language skills at TK Islahul Ummah. The research results show that the storytelling activity "The Clever Deer and the Crocodile" is effective in improving children's expressive language skills. In the pre-action stage, the completeness percentage was only 8.69%. After the first cycle, 10 out of 23 children (43.47%) reached completeness. At the end of the second cycle, the number of children who achieved completeness increased to 19 (82.60%). Thus, there was a total increase of 73.91% in children's expressive language skills.*

**Keywords:** Expressive language, storytelling.

### INTRODUCTION

Language development, particularly expressive language skills, is still underdeveloped. As a prospective early childhood educator, I feel a deep sense of anxiety when I see children struggling to express themselves verbally. Although they possess many interesting ideas and experiences, they often struggle to put words together into clear and coherent sentences. During storytelling sessions, for example, only a handful of children are able to retell the story in their own words, while most remain silent or repeat the teacher's words. This limitation not only hinders their expressive language development but also potentially impacts their self-confidence and ability to interact socially. This is due to the lack of supporting infrastructure, which often leads early childhood teachers to lack understanding of how to stimulate expressive language development in accordance with early childhood development. This anxiety prompted me to seek effective and enjoyable ways to improve children's expressive

language skills, and the story-telling activity of Si Kancil dan Buaya emerged as a promising option.

Early childhood education is a domain for optimally developing a child's potential. Article 1, paragraph 1 of Law No. 20 of 2003 on the National Education System (Sisdiknas) explains that education is a conscious and planned effort to create a learning atmosphere and process so that students actively develop their potential to possess spiritual and religious strength, self-control, personality, intelligence, noble character, and the skills needed by themselves, society, the nation, and the state. (Rahayu, 2021:1)

Early childhood education provides a platform for developing religious and moral values, physical motor skills, cognitive skills, language skills, social-emotional skills, and the arts. One aspect that needs to be developed is language development, which is crucial for early childhood development. Language is a means of communication, conveying messages, desires, and opinions to others, and understanding their needs. Language serves as

a tool for communication and social interaction, facilitating interaction between children, thus further developing their skills through social interaction. (Ernawati, 2021:131)

There are several language skills that children should develop, including expressive and receptive language. According to Khosibah and Damayanti, receptive language is the ability to understand words and language, involving the acquisition of information and meaning from everyday activities. Meanwhile, according to the Minister of Education and Culture Regulation No. 146, expressive language is the ability to express language verbally and nonverbally. Speaking is included in expressive language skills. (Husna & Eliza, 2021:4)

From the expert opinion, it can be concluded that according to Khosibah and Damayanti regarding receptive language, receptive language is the ability to listen and read. In other words, a listener and reader will enjoy or appreciate vocabulary visually or auditorily. From the expert opinion, it can be concluded that according to Permendikbud Number 146 regarding expressive language, expressive language is how we use language to express ourselves, both through the words we say, and through our body language and facial expressions.

One activity to develop expressive language skills is through storytelling (the mouse deer and the crocodile). Storytelling is an effective way to improve expressive language skills in early childhood. Through storytelling, children will discover new vocabulary that they can use (Azhari, 2021). Also, by using storytelling activities, teachers are able to stimulate children to receive information through the messages of the story. After that, students will repeat the story by asking the teacher again about the content or message in the story that has been read. Then, one of the benefits of storytelling activities is that children will become accustomed to doing it and acquire new vocabulary.

According to behaviorist theory, storytelling begins with teacher stimulation, followed by the children receiving the

information. Storytelling is also conducted using various learning media (Kusamastuti, 2022:1).

According to Meity, the storytelling method has several benefits, including improving language structure, training...problem solving and children's thinking power, their souls become calm, they learn moral values, and their speaking skills improve. (Hidayati et al., 2022:35)

From the expert opinion, it can be concluded that the behaviorism theory about storytelling activities (the mouse deer and the crocodile) emphasizes the role of the environment in shaping behavior in storytelling activities, the teacher plays a role as a regulator of the learning environment that provides stimulus and reinforcement to increase children's understanding and participation. Researchers can also conclude that storytelling activities have benefits such as increasing children's language vocabulary, training children in solving their own problems and children's thinking power, focusing children's attention, and recognizing moral values and increasing children's speaking ability.

By using storytelling activities, children will be trained in discovering new vocabulary, practicing their speaking skills, and developing new behaviors, thus enabling them to discover good and correct ways of speaking. Furthermore, through storytelling activities, children are able to express themselves through the story. Through these storytelling activities, teachers are able to stimulate children's language skills (Astuti, 2021). In this case, the use of storytelling activities at Islahul Ummah Kindergarten also significantly impacts the improvement of children's expressive language skills. The storytelling activities provided include interesting pictures, which can attract children's interest and make them more enthusiastic in participating in learning, and the teacher's goal of improving children's expressive language skills can be successful and run optimally.

Storytelling activities to improve expressive language skills are still said to be

very low because there are still children who ignore the storytelling activities, possibly due to less interesting media or story titles that children cannot understand, so perhaps awareness is needed from fellow teachers in choosing and sorting out what stories can attract children's interest to carry out storytelling activities more effectively, and can

The type of research used in this study is Classroom Action Research (CAR). Classroom Action Research (CAR) is an action research conducted in the classroom during learning. It is carried out with the aim of improving or enhancing the quality of learning. It focuses on the classroom or on the learning process that occurs in the classroom. (H. Salim et al., 2020) From the description above, the approach used is a classroom action research (CAR) approach. This research will focus on Improving Expressive Language Skills Through Storytelling Activities at Islahul Ummah Kindergarten, Dusun Cupek.

Data collection techniques are the most strategic step in research because the primary objective is to obtain data (Fahmi, 2021). Therefore, the techniques used are observation, interviews, and documentation. Meanwhile, classroom action research procedures are carried out in a continuous cycle, consisting of two cycles, each consisting of four main activities: planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. (Susilowati, 2018:41)

Data on student learning outcomes is taken from children's receptive language skills and sensitivity in expressing their desires or feelings. Analysis of student learning outcomes data is conducted by calculating student learning completion individually and as a class.

#### a. Individual Learning Completion

Individual learning completion is calculated using the following descriptive data analysis:

$$NA = \frac{SP}{SM} \times 100$$

stimulate children's expressive language skills. Based on the background of the problem, researchers are interested in raising the title Improving Expressive Language Skills Through Storytelling Activities (The Mouse Deer and the Crocodile) at Islahul Ummah Kindergarten in the 2024/2025 Academic Year.

#### METHOD

##### Information

NA: Final Score

SP: Score

SM: Maximum Score

#### b. Classical learning completion

Classical learning completion is calculated using descriptive percentage analysis, namely:

$$KK = \frac{NS}{JS} \times 100\%$$

Information:

KK: Classical Completion / Group Learning Completion

NS: Complete Value

JS: Number of Students

This study was deemed successful individually if the child's score reached 75%, while the class-based score reached 80% with 10 children participating in storytelling activities at Islahul Ummah Kindergarten. (Sugiyono, 2021:4-5)

#### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

##### 1) Learning Strategy Using Storytelling Activities (The Mouse Deer and the Crocodile) on Children's Expressive Language Skills at Islahul Ummah Kindergarten.

In cycle I, the learning strategy using storytelling activities (Si Kancil dan Buaya) was implemented directly by the researcher with the class teacher as an observer. In its implementation, the researcher began by determining a story theme close to the world of children, namely the story "Si Kancil dan Buaya". The selection of this theme aims to attract children's attention and interest, because

familiar stories will be easier to understand and accept. The class teacher observed that during the storytelling activity, the children appeared enthusiastic and the pictorial media was very helpful in improving children's expressive language. However, the results of reflection on cycle I showed that some children still had difficulty remembering the sequence of the story, had limited vocabulary, and needed encouragement to dare to speak.

In cycle II, the researcher improved the implementation of activities based on the evaluation results of cycle I by providing more interesting variations of activities and extending the guidance time in repeating the story. In this cycle, the researcher continued to use the story theme "The Mouse Deer and the Crocodile" and maintained the use of effective media such as picture books and pictures of the story characters. The researcher also increasingly mastered the content of the story, so that he was able to improvise and adjust expressions, intonation, and body movements to attract children's attention. The interactive storytelling method was still used by providing more opportunities for children to imitate the voices of characters, answer questions, and retell parts of the story in turns.

The evaluation results in cycle II showed significant improvement. Children began to retell the story with more structured sentences and confidence. Some children began to use new vocabulary learned from the story. The class teacher noted that almost all children began to enjoy the storytelling activity and eagerly waited for their turn. The teacher also observed that children began to ask questions, indicating they understood the story and were beginning to think critically. Furthermore, the use of visual media increasingly encouraged children to express their ideas and feelings, and helped children who were initially less focused become more interested and involved in the activity.

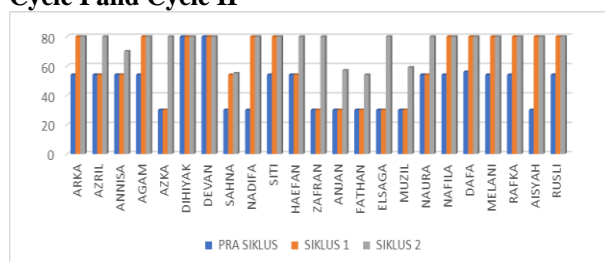
Through improvements made in cycle II, interactive storytelling activities using engaging media proved effective in improving children's expressive language skills. Teachers recommend that this method be implemented continuously because the results achieved are very satisfying and have a positive impact on children's development, both in terms of speaking skills, courage, and imagination. The following data shows the expressive language ability scores of children in Group B at Islahul Ummah Kindergarten.

**Table 01. Recapitulation of Children's Expressive Language Ability Scores in Group B in Pre-Cycle, Cycle I and Cycle II**

No	No	Pre Cycle		Cycle I		Cycle II	
		Score	Mark	Score	Mark	Score	Mark
1	Arka Rifki Ramadan	2	54	3	80	3	80
2	Azril Jannata	2	54	2	54	3	70
3	Bq. Annisa Salsabila	2	54	2	54	2	80
4	Abdiel Agam Abqori	2	54	3	80	3	80
5	Azkassalam	1	30	1	30	3	80
6	Dihiyak Al-Qalbi	3	80	3	80	3	80
7	L. Devandra	3	80	3	80	3	55
8	L. Muhammad Sahna	1	30	1	54	2	80
9	Nadifa Khudsiyah	1	30	3	80	3	80
10	Siti Meiza	2	54	3	80	3	80
11	Haefan Fadil Al-Kasim	2	54	2	54	3	80
12	Ahmad Zafran Ramadhan	1	30	1	30	3	57
13	Dewi Anjan Mulia	1	30	1	30	2	54
14	Ibnu Fathan	1	30	1	30	2	80
15	Langit Ramadlan Elsaga	1	30	1	30	3	59
16	Muzil Hakkam	1	30	1	30	2	80
17	Naura Shufiatul Zahra	2	54	2	54	3	80
18	Nafila Rohailia	2	54	3	80	3	80
19	Robbani Dafa Putra	2	56	3	80	3	80

20	Sinzia Putri Melani	2	54	3	80	3	80
21	Rafka Algifari Aditya	2	54	3	80	3	80
22	Aisyah Azzahra	1	30	3	80	3	80
23	Muhamma d Rusli	2	54	2	54	3	80
Number of Students Completed (NS)		2 Children		10 Children		19 Children	
Classical Completion (KK)		$KK = \frac{NS}{JS} \times 100\%$ $= \frac{2}{23} \times 100\%$ $= 8,69\%$		$KK = \frac{NS}{JS} \times 100\%$ $= \frac{10}{23} \times 100\%$ $= 43,47\%$		$KK = \frac{NS}{JS} \times 100\%$ $= \frac{19}{23} \times 100\%$ $= 82,60\%$	

**Graph 01. Recapitulation of Children's Expressive Language Ability Values in Group B in Pre-Cycle, Cycle I and Cycle II**



## 2) The level of children's ability to use storytelling activities (the mouse deer and the crocodile) to improve children's expressive language skills at Islahul Ummah Kindergarten.

### A. Pre Cycle

Based on the results of observations during the pre-cycle activities, it was found that the initial percentage of children's expressive language skills had only reached 8.69%. A total of 6 children were still in the (LACK) category, which was equivalent to 26.08% of the total number. The results of the observations showed that most children did not understand the story of the mouse deer and the crocodile. Therefore, this condition was categorized as incomplete, so that the design of research actions was needed. In this case, the researcher chose to use storytelling activities (the mouse deer and the crocodile) as an effort to improve children's expressive language skills.

### B. Cycle 1

Based on the results of observations and calculations at the end of Cycle I, which consisted of three meetings, the following data were obtained: the number of children who achieved completeness was 10 children or 43.47%, while the number of children who had not achieved completeness was 9 children, equivalent to 39.13%. Several obstacles that emerged during the implementation of this cycle included some children tending not to understand the content of the story, some others were still shy, and many children still needed assistance from researchers and teachers during the activities. Therefore, at the end of Cycle I, the classical completeness of children's expressive language skills was not yet complete, so that further action planning was needed in the next Cycle to improve children's expressive language skills. The obstacles that caused some children not to achieve completeness included:

- Children lack focus or do not pay attention to the story
- Some children are easily distracted by other things around them, so they don't follow the storyline well.
- The child does not yet understand the content of the story
- The vocabulary in the story is still too difficult, or the storyline has not been conveyed in a way that is appropriate to the child's age and development.
- Lack of active participation
- The child just sits quietly without answering questions, does not respond to the story characters, and does not want to participate in supporting activities (imitating movements, answering, etc.).

### C. Cycle II

Based on the results of observations and calculations at the end of Cycle II which was carried out in two meetings, data was obtained that 19

children had achieved completeness, so that the percentage of classical completeness achieved was 82.60%. Thus, at the end of Cycle II, children's expressive language abilities can be categorized as classically complete. This increase occurred because the activities and observations during Cycle II were more effective, the results of the evaluation and improvements made in Cycle I. Therefore, it can be concluded that the use of storytelling activities (the mouse deer and the crocodile) is effective in improving the expressive language abilities of Group B children at Islahul Ummah Kindergarten, Cupek Hamlet, Sigar Penjalin Village, Tanjung District, North Lombok Regency with a total increase of 80%.

In cycle II, the research results showed an improvement of 82%, but still 2% short of the set target. Of the 23 children, 4 had not yet reached the very good category. Specifically, 1 child was in the poor category and 3 children were in the adequate category. The children who did not experience improvement were due to several obstacles, such as still being less active during the activity, a lack of attention when listening to stories, and still being shy or hesitant to speak in front of their friends. In addition, some children also needed more time to understand the content of the story and retell it.

As a follow-up after the study concludes, children who have not shown improvement still need attention. Teachers can provide specific guidance, especially to children who are still shy or who are not yet confident in telling stories. Storytelling activities should continue to be carried out in more engaging ways, such as using puppets or pictures, to increase children's interest and confidence in speaking. Furthermore, teachers and parents should work together to develop children's language skills, both at school and at home. This way, it is hoped that children who have not yet improved can develop further in the future.

This finding is also supported by the results of research conducted by Nur Azisa

Aisyiah and Herlina and A Sri Wahyuni Asti, which stated that the expressive language abilities of children treated with this storytelling method prove that the storytelling method has a significant influence on the expressive language abilities of early childhood. This finding is also supported by Jerome Bruner's Narrative Theory, which states that children use language to tell their own experiences and to understand the stories of others. This theory highlights the importance of the use of narratives in the development of language and communication in early childhood (Nainggolan, 2024).

## CONCLUSION

In implementing this research, the learning strategy uses storytelling activities. *The Deer and the Crocodile* which was directly applied by researchers and observed by class teachers was proven to be effective in improving children's expressive language skills at Islahul Ummah Kindergarten. This strategy was implemented in a structured manner through several steps, namely: 1. determining the theme of the story, mastering the content of the story, 2. mastering the content of the story, 3. applying interactive storytelling methods, 4. media used, and 5. and conducting evaluations and reflections on each cycle. Storytelling activities designed with visual media and interactive methods encourage children to be more active in speaking, foster self-confidence, and develop creativity and critical thinking skills. Children become more courageous in expressing ideas, are able to remember and retell the content of the story, and increase their vocabulary. Storybooks *The Deer and the Crocodile* conveys important moral messages such as thinking intelligently, being brave in facing problems, and not being easily deceived. Furthermore, this story also provides educational value in language development, social skills, and character building in early childhood.

- a) The level of children's ability to use storytelling activities to improve their expressive language skills at Islahul Ummah Kindergarten. Using the

storybook *Si Kancil Dan Buaya* was effective in improving the expressive language skills of group B children at Islahul Ummah Kindergarten, Cupek Hamlet, Sigar Penjalin Village, in the 2025 academic year, with an increase of 82.60%. This study refers to the Kemmis and Taggart model which includes four stages, namely *Planning* (Planning Stage), *Action* (Execution level)/ action level, *Observation* (observation stage), *Reflection* (reflection stage). The research process was conducted in two cycles, where cycle I consisted of three meetings and cycle II was carried out in two face-to-face meetings. In cycle I, most children were still limited in retelling the story content. They were only able to repeat some words without a complete sentence structure. However, after being given gradual stimulation, in cycle II there was a significant improvement. Children began to be able to construct sentences more clearly, choose appropriate vocabulary, and demonstrate courage to speak in front of the class. The results of the increase in expressive language skills can be seen from the percentage comparison: in the initial condition (pre-cycle) it was 8.69%, increased to 43.47% after cycle I, and reached 82.60% at the end of cycle II. Thus, the minimum completion criterion of 80% was successfully achieved.

## SUGGESTION

### A. For Teachers and Schools

Teachers are expected to continue developing creative and enjoyable learning methods, such as storytelling activities, to stimulate expressive language skills in young children. Fables that contain moral messages, such as *The Deer and the Crocodile*, can be used as an effective learning medium in developing children's language skills and imagination.

### B. For Early Childhood Education Institutions

It's crucial for early childhood education institutions to provide supporting media for storytelling activities, such as picture books, hand puppets, or other props, to make the learning process more interactive and meaningful. Storytelling activities not only enhance expressive language but also build character and foster closeness between teachers and children.

### C. For Further Researchers

This research can serve as a starting point for other researchers who want to examine the influence of storytelling on other aspects of child development, such as social, emotional, or moral skills. Researchers are also encouraged to experiment with variations in storytelling or other storytelling media, such as puppet theater or audiovisuals, to determine the effectiveness of different methods in improving children's expressive language skills.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The author would like to express his gratitude to the extended family of Islahul Ummah Kindergarten for providing the opportunity and support in conducting this research. He also would like to thank the entire academic community of STKIP Hamzar for their continued encouragement and support throughout the research process.

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