

## The Storytelling Method Using Finger Shadow Puppets to Improve Sentence Construction Skills in Early Childhood

Uswatun Hasanah\*, Aliah Bagus Purwakania Hasan, Zirmansyah

Universitas Al Azhar Indonesia, Indonesia

Email: uswsuksesmandiri@gmail.com\*, aliah@uai.ac.id, zirmansyah8@gmail.com

| KEYWORDS  | ABSTRACT  |
|---|---|
| early childhood, ability to compose sentences, method of storytelling, finger puppet media, expressive language | This research aims to improve the ability to compose sentences in early childhood through the application of the storytelling method using finger puppet media. The focus of the research is directed toward the development of children's expressive language skills, especially in composing simple sentences that are sequential, meaningful, and contextually appropriate to the story. This study uses a Classroom Action Research (PTK) approach carried out in an early childhood institution with group B children as research subjects. The population in this study consists of all group B children, with a research sample of 10 children determined using a saturated sampling technique. The data analysis technique was conducted descriptively, qualitatively, and quantitatively by comparing the improvement in children's abilities in each action cycle. The results of the study show a significant increase in children's sentence-composing skills after the application of the storytelling method using puppets. Children became more active, confident in speaking, able to compose sentences with more complete structures, and showed great enthusiasm during storytelling activities. Improvements were observed in each cycle, both in terms of vocabulary, fluency in speaking, and the ability to tell stories coherently. Based on these findings, it can be concluded that the storytelling method using finger puppet media is effective in improving the ability to compose sentences in early childhood. Therefore, it is recommended that PAUD teachers use wayang jari media as an alternative for creative and innovative learning. |

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## INTRODUCTION

Early childhood education (PAUD) plays an important role in forming the foundation of children's language skills. At this stage, children begin to develop verbal communication skills and to compose sentences properly. Suyadi (2010) emphasized the importance of language development, including sentence-writing skills in PAUD. One of the challenges that early childhood education teachers often face is helping children compose coherent and meaningful sentences. According to Diana Mutiah (2012), play can serve as a means for children to practice composing sentences and communicating. Therefore, creative and engaging learning strategies are needed to encourage children's active participation in the learning process. The storytelling method is one of the effective approaches for developing language skills in early childhood (Kartini, 2017, 2019).

Through storytelling, children learn to listen, understand storylines, and gradually begin to create sentences based on the stories they hear. Slamet Suyanto (2005) emphasized that

language stimulation for early childhood can be cultivated through play and storytelling activities. However, to increase children's interest in participating in storytelling, learning media that attract attention and involvement are essential. (Fisher & Frey, 2014; Sukmadinata, 2013) stated that the use of teaching aids in language instruction not only makes learning more engaging but also helps children concretely represent ideas.

The use of props such as puppets is one type of medium that helps children understand stories and construct sentences. (Hidayati, 2019) emphasized that storytelling using props—specifically puppets—as simple yet effective teaching aids can make early childhood learning through storytelling more lively and appealing. By visualizing the story's characters, children can easily follow the storyline and arrange sentences based on the puppets' roles. This research aims to develop a storytelling method using puppet props to improve early childhood sentence composition skills. It is expected that the use of these props will not only enhance children's verbal abilities but also stimulate their creativity and imagination.

Based on the theory of language development proposed by Noam Chomsky (1965) and Jean Piaget (1969), children have an innate capacity to acquire language. Nevertheless, according to Piaget (1969), environmental stimulation plays a crucial role. He stated that in the preoperational stage (ages 2–7), children begin using symbols such as words and pictures to describe objects and events. At this stage, children need support through interaction and media that help them interpret and process information—such as storytelling and props. The storytelling method using finger puppets allows children to visualize abstract concepts, thereby improving comprehension and sentence-forming skills (Efendi, 2006; Nugroho, 2015).

(Bandura, 1986), in *Social Foundations of Thought and Action: A Social Cognitive Theory*, emphasized the importance of learning through observation and social interaction. Children learn by imitating and modeling the behavior of adults or peers. In the context of storytelling, children can learn to compose sentences by observing the stories told by teachers and the props used—such as puppets. This visualization can encourage them to form sentences based on what they see and hear. Piaget (1969) also underlined the importance of play in the learning process, as it enhances cognitive and language development. Using puppets as storytelling props brings a play element that supports children in forming sentences and narrating stories actively.

Wayang Jari not only makes the story content more engaging but also helps children understand it more easily. Based on their experiences playing with puppets, children can use their vocabulary to compose simple sentences independently. This aligns with the constructivist theory of (Vygotsky, 1978), which asserts that learning occurs through social interaction, and language is the primary tool of cognitive development. In storytelling, children are encouraged to develop language skills through dialogue with teachers and peers. Finger puppet props in storytelling activities help children process complex information and improve their sentence composition skills with support from their environment.

(Dale, 1969), through the Cone of Experience, suggested that the use of visual and concrete media—such as finger puppets—occupies a higher level of learning effectiveness. Direct experiences or visual representations of a story's plot help children comprehend and retain information, ultimately enhancing their sentence-composing ability. Storytelling as a learning method also finds strong theoretical support in Jerome Bruner's (1986) *Actual Minds, Possible Worlds*, which argues that narrative understanding contributes to cognitive

development. Bruner emphasized that children understand the world through stories, and by listening to stories, they learn to sequence events—skills directly applicable to constructing sentences.

Using finger puppets as storytelling aids provides an additional dimension that helps children form their own narratives and strengthens their language skills (Pratiwi, 2021). Language ability is a fundamental competence that should be cultivated early in childhood. At this stage, children begin learning to construct coherent and meaningful sentences, which later serve as the foundation for literacy development (Baker & Freebody, 1989).

Children's language ability is essential for cognitive and social development. Several theories explain this process. The Nativism Theory, proposed by (Chomsky, 1965), argues that children are born with a Language Acquisition Device (LAD)—a biological mechanism that enables them to learn language. According to Chomsky, all languages follow similar developmental patterns, and children possess an innate capacity to grasp complex linguistic structures. This means that, although the environment influences development, children naturally acquire language efficiently (Sari, 2017).

The Behaviorist Theory, popularized by B.F. Skinner (1957), posits that language is learned through imitation and reinforcement. Interaction with the environment and feedback from adults play critical roles in helping children develop language skills.

Language development typically occurs in several stages: the one-word stage, when children begin to say single words and grasp basic meanings; the two-word stage, when they start combining two words into simple sentences; and the multi-word stage, when they use more complex sentence structures with suffixes and varied forms.

According to Vygotsky's Interactionist Theory (1978), language develops through social interaction, emphasizing the importance of scaffolding—temporary support from adults that enables children to construct better sentences. Vygotsky (1978) explained that children possess a range of developing abilities that can be achieved with guidance from adults or more capable peers.

In Bruner's theory (1983), *Child's Talk: Learning to Use Language*, he introduces the Language Acquisition Support System (LASS), which refers to environmental support that complements children's innate abilities. In the context of early childhood, conversations, storytelling, role-playing, and dialogue with teachers or parents encourage children to develop sentence structure. This aligns with Jean Piaget's Theory of Cognitivism, which states that the main concept in children's language development corresponds with cognitive development (Piaget, 1969; Zim, 2025). At the preoperational stage (ages 2–7), children are already able to use word symbols to represent experiences and begin to compose simple sentences. Thus, in early childhood, children can construct sentences according to their level of thinking.

Therefore, the development of language skills is highly dependent on environmental stimulation, social interaction, and adult involvement during the learning process (Nurhalimah, 2018). Providing a supportive environment and sufficient opportunities for communication is essential to help children develop their language skills effectively.

The storytelling method has long been recognized as one of the most effective approaches to improving children's language abilities. Isbell, Sobol, Lindauer, and Lowrance (2004) state that storytelling can enhance vocabulary, story comprehension, and sentence formulation. However, in practice, this method often focuses primarily on listening activities

without actively engaging children in sentence construction. As a result, children tend to become passive listeners, limiting their development of sentence-forming skills.

In addition, the lack of engaging media or props often makes it difficult for children to understand storylines and participate actively in learning. One alternative to address this challenge is to use props such as puppets in storytelling. (Haven, 2007; Isbell & Raines, 2007; Lindgren, 2014) emphasized that storytelling without text encourages children to be imaginative and to practice composing sentences. These props help visualize stories, enabling children to better understand context and sequence, thereby motivating them to form sentences based on what they see and hear.

The use of finger puppets can stimulate children's imagination, making the learning process more enjoyable and effective. (Iskandarwassid & Sunendar, 2011), in Language Learning Strategy, state that storytelling is an effective approach to improving language skills, particularly speaking and sentence construction.

Several factors may contribute to language learning difficulties, including developmental disorders such as dyslexia, which can affect a child's ability to construct and understand sentences. (Arikunto, 2019) examined children's learning difficulties, including dyslexia-related language and speech disorders, in Indonesian education. Expressive dyslexia, for example, makes it difficult for children to form complete sentences when speaking or writing. Additionally, emotional factors, motor impairments, and the lack of communication role models can exacerbate these challenges. (Gindis, 2005) also discussed language difficulties in bilingual children, including dyslexic language disorders. Such language difficulties can have significant effects on education, leading to social isolation and lower self-confidence and self-esteem.

This research is based on the observation that several children in PAUD Mawar Merah still have limited vocabulary and are unable to compose sequential sentences. The results of preliminary observations revealed that some children struggled to link words into sentences. For instance, when asked to describe past activities, they could only say one or two words, such as "playing ball" or "drawing," instead of constructing simple sentences like "I played ball in the school yard."

Children also tended to answer teachers' questions with incomplete sentences. For example, when asked, "What did you do this morning?" a child might respond only with "eating" or "school," without including a subject or descriptive elements. During storytelling activities, several children were unable to retell the story content in sentences; they mentioned only characters or objects from the story.

Based on initial observations at PAUD Mawar Merah, Depok, it was found that children's ability to compose sentences had not yet developed optimally. Some children had difficulty stringing words into simple sentences, lacked confidence when speaking, and tended to respond to teachers' questions using limited vocabulary. This condition is presumably caused by the use of less varied teaching methods and learning media that fail to fully capture children's interest.

Language learning in early childhood should be implemented through enjoyable and developmentally appropriate activities—one of which is storytelling. The storytelling method effectively develops children's language abilities by stimulating imagination, enriching

vocabulary, and training them to compose sentences orally. However, storytelling activities are most effective when supported by engaging and tangible learning media.

One such medium is puppetry. Puppet art serves as a visual and interactive learning tool that captures children's attention and encourages active participation in the learning process. Through finger puppet storytelling, children can better understand storylines, recognize characters, imitate dialogue, and construct simple sentences based on the stories told.

Using the storytelling method with puppet media is expected to create a fun learning atmosphere, increase children's confidence in speaking, and help them compose coherent and meaningful sentences. Consequently, their language skills—especially in sentence composition—can gradually improve, both structurally and cognitively, as their sentence patterns become more complex.

In PAUD Mawar Merah, various props are used in storytelling activities for early childhood learning, such as cardboard puppets, hand puppets, finger dolls, flannel boards, picture story cards, and illustrated storybooks. Cardboard puppets, made from stick-mounted cardboard cutouts, are larger and potentially unsafe for children to manipulate independently (Suryani, 2021). Hand puppets, while engaging, are relatively large and less practical for children's use. Flannel boards and picture story cards emphasize visual order and sequencing but offer limited opportunities for dialogue and sentence formation.

Meanwhile, picture storybooks tend to make children passive listeners, as they primarily hear stories told by teachers. Compared to these media, *wayang jari* has a distinct advantage: it is made of soft EVA foam materials, illustrated, and can be conveniently worn on the fingers.

Finger puppets are practical, interactive, and easy for children to use. Through puppet-based storytelling, children can directly engage in dialogues between characters, encouraging them to practice constructing and articulating coherent, meaningful sentences.

Based on the issues described above, the researcher is interested in conducting a study entitled "Storytelling Method with Puppets to Improve Early Childhood Sentence Composition." This research is expected to contribute to improving the quality of early childhood language learning and to offer an effective, enjoyable alternative learning method for children.

The novelty of this research lies in the use of an interactive and gradual storytelling method supported by finger puppet media, along with the application of a systematic classroom action research design to enhance early childhood sentence composition skills.

#### Problem Formulation

How is the application of the storytelling method using finger puppet media effective in improving early childhood sentence composition?

To what extent is the storytelling method with *wayang jari* media effective in enhancing early childhood sentence-building ability?

#### Research Objectives

To examine how the storytelling method can be applied as a learning strategy to improve early childhood sentence composition skills.

To determine the effectiveness of the storytelling method using *wayang jari* media in enhancing early childhood sentence formation.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

### **Types of Research**

This type of research uses the Classroom Action Research (PTK) method. Classroom Action Research is commonly used when a problem needs to be solved, particularly when the issue is part of an educator's duty and responsibility in the classroom. To improve and enhance teachers' professionalism in the teaching and learning process, Classroom Action Research is conducted by examining the real conditions of students. According to Arikunto, Suhardjono, and Supardi (2019) and as stated in Rohita (2021, p. 35), PTK Method, Classroom Action Research is an activity aimed at improving learning practices by addressing problems that emerge in learning situations.

In addition, Aqib (2011) explains that Classroom Action Research is research conducted by teachers in their own classrooms through self-reflection, with the purpose of improving their teaching performance so that student learning outcomes increase. Arikunto (2015) also notes that the term Class Action Research can be shortened to Action Research (PT), since the word "class" simply refers to the group of learners targeted for improvement.

According to Arikunto (2015), Classroom Action Research aims to solve problems through real action rather than merely observing the phenomenon in question. It can therefore be understood that Classroom Action Research is research carried out based on learning problems that arise with the objective of improving the learning process so that educational goals can be achieved.

Based on the descriptions above, it can be concluded that the Classroom Action Research method involves teachers conducting research in their own classrooms through self-reflection, with the goal of enhancing their teaching performance and improving students' learning outcomes. This research method follows a series of stages characteristic of Class Action Research, which is typically undertaken by teachers encountering problems in their classroom practice.

Classroom Action Research serves as a research approach that allows teachers to improve classroom learning processes by providing practical solutions to instructional challenges they face directly. It is often carried out in the form of cycles involving planning, implementation, observation, and reflection. Kurt Lewin (1946), as the originator of the action research concept, defined Classroom Action Research as a process conducted through action with the goal of improving practice and addressing real-world problems. In the educational context, Classroom Action Research is conducted by teachers in their classrooms to enhance teaching effectiveness and improve student learning outcomes.

### **Research Subject**

The subjects involved in this study are class B students in the age group of 4-6 years, which totals 10 students at PAUD Mawar Merah Kedaung Sawangan Depok.

### **Research Design**

This research uses the Classroom Action Research (PTK) approach which aims to improve and improve the quality of learning processes and outcomes, especially in improving the ability to compose sentences in early childhood through the method of storytelling with the media of puppet fingers.

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The design of this research includes:

- a. Planning
  - b. Implementation
  - c. Initial description of the activity
  - d. Reflection
1. In the planning stage, the researcher prepares a learning plan that includes the preparation of story scenarios, the selection and preparation of puppet media, the determination of indicators of the ability to compose sentences, and the preparation of observation instruments. Planning is carried out based on the results of initial observations on the condition of children's language skills.
  2. The stage of implementing actions is carried out by applying the storytelling method using the media of finger puppets in learning activities. The teacher conveys the story interactively, involves the child in dialogue, and provides the opportunity for the child to imitate, complete, and compose simple sentences based on the story conveyed.
  3. At the initial description stage of learning activities, teachers prepare children to participate in storytelling activities by creating a comfortable, fun, and conducive classroom atmosphere. The activity began by conditioning children to sit in a circle in the classroom area so that children could see the teacher and learning media clearly. The teacher greets the child in a friendly manner, invites the child to pray together, and conducts light perception through simple questions and answers related to the learning theme.
  4. Furthermore, the reflection stage is carried out to analyze the results of the implementation of actions in each cycle. Reflection aims to find out the advantages and disadvantages of learning implementation, as well as determine the necessary improvement steps in the next cycle. If the success indicators have not been achieved, then the action is corrected and continued to the next cycle until optimal results are obtained.

Through this classroom action research design, it is hoped that there will be a gradual and continuous improvement in the ability to compose sentences in early childhood, in line with the research objectives and learning characteristics in early childhood education.

Classroom Action Research was chosen because it allows researchers to carry out learning actions directly in the classroom, observe the ongoing process, and reflect on the results as a basis for improvement in the next action.

The design of this research is arranged in the form of cycles, each of which consists of four main stages, namely planning, implementation of actions, observation, and reflection.

The explanation for each stage of the cycle is as follows:

**Table 4. Three-Cycle Classroom Action Research (PTK) Format Based on the Kemmis & McTaggart model**

| Cycles      | Planning  | Acting  | Observing  | Reflection (Reflecting)   |
|-------------|---|---|--|---|
| Cycle One   | Identify initial problems - Draft the RPPH and Media Learning - Preparing observation instruments | - Carry out learning activities according to RPPH - Using media (e.g. finger puppets) | - Record responses- Activities Son Fill out observation and documentation sheets | Assess Advantages and Disadvantages of Learning - Define changes for the next cycle |
| Cycle Two   | - Improving RPPH/media based on reflection- cycle one - Customizing the indicator                 | - Implementing corrective learning- Engaging children more actively                   | - Observation focuses more on improved aspects                                   | Evaluate the effectiveness of change Notes Improvements and suggestions             |
| Cycle Three | Final revision of the learning plan Sharpening evaluation strategies                              | - Implementation of the last learning Emphasis on method sustainability               | - Thorough observation of results and The Development of a Child (Habib, 2000)   | Final Reflection: Are the goals achieved? - Practice recommendations to             |
|             |   |   |  | - front   |

The model includes four main stages in each cycle:

1. Planning
2. Acting
3. Observing
4. Reflection

The results of the reflection in each cycle will be the basis for planning for the next cycle, in learning, teachers apply the method of storytelling with puppets through the following steps:

1. Preparation: the teacher prepares a Daily Learning Implementation Plan (RPPH) and stories that are relevant to the subject matter and the characters to be used in the story. Finger puppets can be made or chosen according to the characters in the story.



2. Implementation: the teacher tells a story with the help of a finger puppet in front of the class. The teacher can play it while telling an interesting story, with appropriate expressions and varied voice intonation:
3. Interaction with students: Next, teachers can invite students to discuss the story that has been told. Teachers can ask students for their opinions about the storyline, characters, and moral messages that can be taken from the story.
4. Follow-up Activities: the teacher can then provide follow-up activities such as drawing the characters in the story or asking students to reconstruct the story using their own sentences, so that students not only hear but also apply their language skills.
5. Impact on Learning: The use of the storytelling method with puppets in early childhood learning can have a positive impact on several aspects of child development, especially in terms of:
6. Improved Sentence Writing Skills: Children will be helped in stringing words into coherent sentences, because they are inspired by the storyline that has been conveyed.

According to Suharsimi Arikunto (2010), the design of Class Action Research generally follows the Kemmis and McTaggart spiral model which consists of four sequential steps in each cycle consisting of: *Planning*, *Implementation*, *Observing*, and *Reflecting*, where each cycle aims to improve learning and will be repeated if necessary with replanning based on reflections from the previous cycle.

### Data Analysis Techniques

Making data analysis is systematically compiling data obtained from the results of observations and field notes so that it can be easily understood and the findings can be informed to others (Sugiyono, 2011, p. 374). The purpose of the analysis in this class action research is to obtain certainty whether there is an improvement, improvement, or change as expected, not to make generalizations or test theories.

In the action research, this class contains a mixture of quantitative data and qualitative data. Quantitative data analysis is carried out through the calculation of the percentage of research results carried out while qualitative analysis is carried out in the form of field observation results. The formulation used to determine the percentage in this study is as follows:

1. Good criteria, namely if the score obtained by students is between 76 – 100%
2. The criteria are sufficient, namely if the score obtained by the student is between 56-75%
3. The criteria are lacking, namely if the score obtained by the student is between 41-55%
4. The criteria are not good, namely if the score obtained by the student is between 0-40%

Analysis of observation data (observations) was obtained in each action to assess the activities carried out by the teacher in each student against the activities given by the teacher in each cycle

$$P = \frac{F}{N} \times 100 \%$$

**Figure 1. Percentage Formula**  
(Sudijono, 2015) Description:

F = Frequency searched percentage

N = Number of Cases

P = Percentage number

Furthermore, the data is interpreted in four levels (Arikunto, 2013):

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The implementation of this class action research was carried out at PAUD Mawar Merah Sawangan, Depok, with the aim of improving early childhood sentence composition skills through the application of the storytelling method using puppet media (Ismiulya, 2020). The research was conducted gradually and continuously through several cycles, each including the stages of planning, implementation of actions, observation, and reflection.

The subjects of the study were 10 children out of a total of 13 students, aged 4–6 years, who were identified as having low sentence composition skills based on the results of initial observations. The researcher acted as the teacher conducting the learning activities, while the collaborators served as observers who recorded the activities of both teachers and students during the learning process.

### Cycle I

Based on observations in the first cycle, students' ability to compose sentences did not show significant improvement. Although some students showed progress, their achievement in composing sentences remained below the expected target. Of the ten students, only four began to demonstrate the ability to form simple sentences—for example, transforming the word “market” into the sentence “mother went to the market,” or the word “I” into “this is mine.” Thus, the percentage of achievement reached only 40%, meaning the ability to compose sentences in Cycle I was still categorized as very unsuccessful because it did not meet the expected success indicator of over 75%.

Observations during the learning process showed that most students were still unfocused when listening to the stories delivered by the researcher. Some children who were unable to compose sentences were often seen joking with their friends during storytelling activities. In addition, students' motivation and enthusiasm for learning remained low, resulting in limited engagement. This condition made the children easily bored and less interested in the lessons provided by the teacher. Furthermore, the wayang kulit media was considered less safe for early childhood because the wooden sticks used as skewers could injure their hands or fingers.

Based on the results of this reflection, it can be concluded that the implementation of the storytelling method in Cycle I was not optimal. Therefore, improvements were needed in the next cycle, including increasing the variety of story presentations, replacing the learning media to make it safer and more engaging, and providing more intensive stimulation to students so that they become more focused, active, and motivated in composing sentences sequentially.

### Cycle II

Based on the results of the learning implementation in the second cycle, there was an improvement in students' ability to compose sentences. After the storytelling activity, the teacher asked students to repeat the story that had been told. The results showed that most students were able to retell the story content using simple and concise sentences. Out of ten students, only two were unable to arrange sentences in proper sequence alongside their peers.

Observation data indicated that 80% of the students could follow the storyline and maintain good focus during the storytelling activity. They appeared more enthusiastic,

responded actively to the teacher's questions, and were braver in expressing sentences orally compared to the previous cycle. This demonstrates that the application of the storytelling method using finger puppet media had begun to show a positive impact on improving children's sentence composition skills.

However, the reflection results also revealed that some students were still not fully focused and had not yet mastered composing sentences sequentially. Several children continued to require additional stimuli and more intensive assistance to create sentences with a clearer and more structured sequence. Therefore, even though Cycle II showed significant improvement, the research success indicators had not yet been fully achieved.

Based on these considerations, the researcher decided to continue the study into Cycle III as an effort to strengthen learning outcomes. This additional cycle was expected to further optimize students' sentence composition abilities, increase their concentration during storytelling activities, and achieve the maximum research success target.

### **Cycle III**

Based on the results of the implementation of actions in the third cycle, it can be concluded that the application of the storytelling method using puppet media has shown an optimal improvement in the ability to compose sentences in early childhood. In this cycle, children appeared more prepared, enthusiastic, and confident in participating in storytelling activities compared to previous cycles.

Children were able to compose sentences in a more orderly and meaningful way, both when answering the teacher's questions and when retelling the content of the story using simple sentences. The vocabulary used by the children was also increasingly diverse, and their sentence structures showed better development. In addition, most children demonstrated the confidence to speak without the need for much stimulus or assistance from the teacher.

In terms of the learning process, the use of puppet media in Cycle III was more effective and well-directed. Teachers were able to manage the storyline well, provide appropriate stimulus, and create more intensive interactions with the children (Fawcett & Nicolson, 1994). The children were not only listeners but also active participants in storytelling activities, such as imitating character dialogues and expressing opinions orally.

The results of reflection show that the research success indicators were achieved in Cycle III. The improvement in the children's sentence-writing ability had met the predetermined criteria, so there was no need to continue to the next cycle. Thus, the storytelling method using finger puppet media can be declared effective in improving the ability to compose sentences in early childhood.

Overall, Cycle III represented the stage of stabilizing learning outcomes, during which children demonstrated significant expressive language development. These findings confirm that the use of learning media that are interesting, contextual, and aligned with the characteristics of early childhood plays an important role in improving the quality of language learning in Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini (Early Childhood Education) (Shaywitz et al., 2008).

Cycle III in Class Action Research serves as a reinforcement stage to ensure that the improvement in ability is not temporary but consistent and sustainable. This is in line with the opinion of Kemmis and McTaggart (1988), who affirm that the follow-up cycle in Class Action Research serves to confirm, stabilize, and reinforce the improvements achieved in previous

cycles. Arikunto (2015) also stated that a follow-up cycle is necessary to strengthen the results of the action and enhance the effectiveness of the applied methods.

The results of this study show that the application of the storytelling method using concrete media in the form of puppets can significantly improve the ability to compose sentences in early childhood. This increase is evident from the progression between the pre-cycle and the third cycle, where most children achieved the categories of Developing as Expected (BSH) and Developing Very Good (BSB).

This finding is in line with Hurlock's (2013) opinion that "early childhood language development is greatly influenced by environmental stimulation, especially through meaningful communication activities." Storytelling activities provide opportunities for children to actively listen, imitate, and use language, thereby helping them structure sentences gradually.

Viewed from the perspective of Piaget's theory of cognitive development, early childhood is at the preoperational stage—a stage where children more easily understand concepts through concrete experiences and visual symbols. The use of puppet media as a concrete medium helps children connect words, characters, and storylines in tangible ways, making the processes of thinking and sentence construction easier.

Moreover, the results of this study are consistent with Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, particularly the concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and scaffolding. The ZPD represents the most effective learning environment for children. For example, in storytelling activities using finger puppets, teachers provide assistance in the form of model sentences, guiding questions, and directions according to the child's abilities. This assistance is gradually reduced as the child's competence increases, allowing them to compose sentences independently.

Furthermore, according to Tarigan (2011), speaking skills are language skills that develop through practice and direct experience. Storytelling activities using wayang jari media provide space for children to practice speaking actively, increase confidence, and expand their vocabulary in composing sentences (Kusuma, 2016; Setyowati, 2014).

Thus, the results of this study reinforce expert views that storytelling methods supported by concrete media and active social interaction are highly effective in developing early childhood language skills—particularly the ability to compose sentences. The success of the actions in this study underscores the importance of selecting learning methods and media appropriate to the child's developmental stage.

### **Results of Previous Research**

The results of this study are consistent with various previous studies showing that the storytelling method supported by concrete media is effective in improving early childhood language skills, especially in speaking and composing sentences.

Research conducted by Suyanto (2015) states that storytelling activities can improve early childhood language skills because they provide complete and contextual sentence models. Children can more easily understand sentence structures and enrich their vocabulary when stories are delivered in an engaging and interactive manner.

Furthermore, research by Nurhayati (2018) shows that the use of concrete media, such as dolls in storytelling activities, can increase children's confidence to speak and their fluency in expressing ideas. Concrete media help children visualize stories, making the processes of thinking and language development more effective.

Another study by (Rahmawati, 2020) also suggests that the application of storytelling methods using concrete media has a positive impact on early childhood sentence composition skills. Children become more active, confident, and capable of retelling story content using more structured language (Astuti, 2018).

Thus, the results of this study reinforce previous findings that the storytelling method based on concrete media—especially wayang jari—is an effective learning strategy for developing early childhood language skills (Wahyuni, 2020). This research also contributes by demonstrating that the continuous and gradual use of finger puppet media across several action cycles can yield optimal improvements in ability.

### **Research Novelty**

Although several previous studies have shown that the storytelling method using concrete media is effective in improving early childhood language skills (Suyanto, 2015; Nurhayati, 2018; Rahmawati & Lestari, 2020), this study offers distinct novelty.

First, this study employs puppet media specifically developed for storytelling activities, making it simpler, more practical, and more engaging for young children (Nicolopoulou, 2010). This medium allows children to directly play the roles of story characters, which not only enhances their understanding of the narrative but also increases their courage, creativity, and independence in composing sentences.

Second, this research was conducted through multiple cycles of action—pre-cycle, Cycle I, Cycle II, and Cycle III—allowing the gradual and systematic observation of children's developmental progress. This differs from previous studies, which generally employed a single pretest–posttest design without repeated intervention (Snowling & Hulme, 2012).

Third, this study integrates both quantitative and qualitative observations with clear success indicators, namely sentence composition ability, speaking confidence, and appropriate vocabulary use. This approach offers a more comprehensive picture of children's developmental progress and serves as a practical reference for Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini (Early Childhood Education) teachers in designing effective storytelling-based learning activities (Yuwono & Permana, 2023).

Thus, the novelty of this research lies in the use of storytelling methods with interactive and progressive puppet media, combined with a systematic Class Action Research design to enhance early childhood sentence composition skills.

### **Research Limitations**

One of the limitations of this research is the limited time to implement the action. The research was conducted in several cycles with a relatively short duration of activities at each meeting. As a result, some children who need more time to adapt or to develop the ability to compose sentences independently may not have reached their full potential.

This limited time also affects the teacher's opportunity to provide optimal individual guidance to each child, especially for children who are still hesitant or lack confidence in speaking in front of their peers. Nevertheless, the conduct of the study still showed a significant improvement in sentence composing, although the available time did not allow for further in-depth study in some children.

### **Child's Condition**

In addition to time constraints, this study also has limitations related to the condition of children. Early childhood has diverse characteristics, including differences in concentration levels, language skills, interests, and motivation to learn.

Some children may be easily distracted or feel tired more quickly so that they cannot follow all storytelling activities optimally. There are also children who need more intensive assistance to compose sentences or express ideas verbally.

This difference in the child's condition is one of the factors that affect the success of individual actions. Therefore, the results of this study reflect the average group development, while individual child development may vary.

### **Media or Class Situations**

Another limitation in this study is related to the media and classroom situation. Although finger puppet media is effective in attracting children's attention, the amount of media available is limited so not all children can use it at the same time. This sometimes causes children to have to take turns, so some children need to wait their turn and their attention sometimes decreases.

In addition, relatively crowded or noisy classroom situations can affect children's concentration, especially for children who are more sensitive to environmental disturbances. This factor can affect children's active involvement in storytelling activities and their ability to structure sentences optimally. Nevertheless, teachers try to arrange the classroom situation in such a way that children remain focused and actively involved, and use media alternately so that activities continue to run effectively.

### **Summary of Research Results**

The method of storytelling with puppet media is an effective and practical strategy. Based on the results of the study, the main findings show that the application of the storytelling method with puppet media is gradually able to significantly improve the ability to compose sentences in early childhood.

Some of the key findings include:

- a. Children experienced an increase in the ability to compose sentences from pre-cycle to cycle three, as can be seen from the increasing number of children who reached the categories of Developing According to Expectations (BSH) and Developing Very Good (BSB).
- b. The use of wayang jari media has been proven to attract attention, increase children's motivation, courage, and creativity in storytelling.
- c. The improvement of children's abilities occurs gradually and continuously, with the role of the teacher as a facilitator through guidance, stimulating questions, and positive reinforcement.
- d. The action proved to be pedagogically successful because it corresponded to the stage of child development (Piaget), social interaction and ZPD (Vygotsky), as well as the principles of early childhood language learning (Hurlock, Tarigan). Overall, this study shows that to develop the ability to compose sentences in early childhood.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the Classroom Action Research carried out from the pre-cycle to Cycle III, it can be concluded that the storytelling method using finger puppet media has proven to be effective, engaging, and sustainable in improving early childhood sentence composition skills. The improvement occurred gradually, starting from Cycle I with an achievement rate of 40% (not yet meeting the success indicators), increasing significantly in Cycle II to 80% (exceeding the target of >75%), and becoming stable in Cycle III, which showed consistency and reliability of results as well as enhanced focus, active participation, vocabulary, confidence in speaking, and the ability of children to retell story content sequentially and confidently. The use of puppet media successfully captured attention, increased motivation and creativity, and helped children understand the storyline concretely, making the sentence composition process easier and more meaningful. All research success indicators were optimally achieved in Cycle III; therefore, the study was concluded as the objectives had been fully met. The novelty of this research lies in the use of interactive and progressive puppet media within a systematic Penelitian Tindakan Kelas (Classroom Action Research) design, providing a comprehensive overview of the sustainable development of children's language skills. The findings of this study are expected to serve as practical recommendations for PAUD teachers, particularly at PAUD Mawar Merah Depok, in designing and implementing effective early childhood language learning.

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