



Efforts to Improve the Vocabulary of 5-6 Year-Old Children Through Storytelling Method

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Abstract: This study aimed to improve the Indonesian vocabulary of children aged 5–6 years through a storytelling method using hand puppets and storybooks. The study employed Classroom Action Research (CAR) based on the Kemmis and McTaggart model and was conducted in two cycles, each consisting of planning, action, observation, and reflection stages. The participants were 10 children in Group B. Data were collected through observation, vocabulary assessment, and documentation, and were analyzed using descriptive quantitative and qualitative approaches. The findings showed an improvement in children's vocabulary mastery in the Developing as Expected (BSH) and Developing Very Well (BSB) categories, increasing from 50% in the pre-cycle stage to 70% in Cycle I and 90% in Cycle II. This improvement was accompanied by increased attention and participation, greater confidence in responding to questions, improved ability to identify and repeat new vocabulary, and greater ability to use vocabulary in simple sentences and retell stories. Thus, the implementation of the storytelling method using hand puppets and storybooks contributed to the development of children's vocabulary within the context of classroom action research. These findings suggest that storytelling can serve as an interactive and contextual alternative for supporting language development in early childhood education.

Keywords: Indonesian Vocabulary, Storytelling Method, Children Aged 5–6 Years, Hand Puppets, Classroom Action Research.

Abstrak: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk meningkatkan penguasaan kosakata bahasa Indonesia anak usia 5–6 tahun melalui metode bercerita menggunakan boneka tangan dan buku cerita. Penelitian menggunakan metode Penelitian Tindakan Kelas (PTK) dengan model Kemmis dan McTaggart yang dilaksanakan dalam dua siklus, masing-masing melalui tahap perencanaan, tindakan, observasi, dan refleksi. Subjek penelitian terdiri atas 10 anak kelompok B. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi, penilaian kemampuan kosakata, dan dokumentasi, kemudian dianalisis secara deskriptif kuantitatif dan kualitatif. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan adanya peningkatan penguasaan kosakata anak pada kategori Berkembang Sesuai Harapan (BSH) dan Berkembang Sangat Baik (BSB), dari 50% pada pra-siklus menjadi 70% pada Siklus I dan 90% pada Siklus II. Peningkatan tersebut disertai dengan perkembangan perhatian dan partisipasi anak, keberanian menjawab pertanyaan, kemampuan menyebutkan dan mengulang kosakata baru, serta kemampuan menggunakan kosakata dalam kalimat sederhana dan menceritakan kembali isi cerita. Dengan demikian, penerapan metode bercerita menggunakan boneka tangan dan buku cerita berkontribusi terhadap perkembangan penguasaan kosakata anak dalam konteks penelitian tindakan kelas. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa metode bercerita dapat menjadi alternatif pembelajaran bahasa yang interaktif dan kontekstual bagi anak usia dini.

Kata Kunci: Kosakata Bahasa, Metode Bercerita, Anak Usia 5–6 Tahun, Boneka Tangan, Penelitian Tindakan Kelas.

INTRODUCTION

Early childhood education is a very important stage in optimizing various aspects of a child's development, one of which is language development (Hidayah & Khadijah, 2023; Sitorus, 2023). During early childhood, kids go through rapid development, so they need the right, directed, and suitable stimulation according to their developmental characteristics. Language skills play an

important role because they are a way for children to communicate, express thoughts and feelings, understand information, and build relationships with others (Reese, et al., 2023; Iskandar, Mesiono, & Sit, 2025). Therefore, language stimulation needs to be provided through learning activities that are interesting, fun, and give children the chance to interact actively.

Children aged 5–6 are at a stage of language development that is becoming increasingly complex. At this age, they start to be able to use a more varied vocabulary, understand the meaning of words, form sentences, answer questions, share experiences, and express ideas verbally (Zahra & Sit, 2024; Kogan, 2026). Vocabulary mastery is an important part of language development because a child's ability to communicate is greatly influenced by the number and variety of words they understand and use. The more vocabulary a child knows, the better their chances of expressing ideas, feelings, desires, and experiences more clearly (Angkur & Bajung, 2023).

During the learning process, a child's vocabulary development can show different abilities. Some kids are able to name various objects, answer questions, and express experiences well, while others still have trouble recognizing, understanding, naming, and using certain words. Limited vocabulary can make kids less confident in speaking, less active in interacting, and have difficulty sharing their ideas (Hettiarachchi, Walisundara, & Ranaweera, 2020; Apriani, 2025). This situation shows that vocabulary development needs to be done continuously through activities that provide direct and meaningful language experiences.

One activity that can be used to develop a child's vocabulary is storytelling. Storytelling is the activity of conveying an event or story orally using language that is easy for children to understand and can be supported by pictures, storybooks, dolls, or other media (Bohnacker, 2022; Chen, Wu, Wu, & Shangguan, 2022). Through this activity, children can listen to various words in a complete context, making it easier to understand the relationship between words and objects, characters, actions, or events in the story. Using stories that match the child's age and experience can also boost their attention and interest in participating in learning activities.

The storytelling method gives teachers the chance to create more active language interactions. After telling a story, teachers can engage kids in Q&A, ask them to name characters or objects in the story, repeat certain words, explain the meaning of words, and retell the story in their own words. These activities give kids the experience of listening, speaking, understanding, and using vocabulary directly (Goulding, et al., 2022; Shi & Cheung, 2024). Thus, storytelling methods not only serve as an entertaining activity, but can also be one of the learning strategies that support the development of children's language skills in an integrated way.

Based on the importance of vocabulary mastery for the communication development of 5–6-year-old children and the need for learning activities that match their characteristics, using storytelling methods becomes one relevant approach to apply in learning at Raudhatul Athfal. Storytelling activities carried out in a directed way and actively involving children are expected to help enrich their vocabulary and improve their ability to use words in everyday communication. On this basis, the study “Efforts to Improve the Language Vocabulary of 5–6-Year-Old Children through Storytelling Methods at Raudhatul Athfal Ar Rahmah” is important to conduct as a way to optimize children's language development through learning activities that are communicative, engaging, and suited to the developmental stage of young children.

Vocabulary development through storytelling methods has shown positive results in young children. Research (Bunayyah, et al., 2025) shows that storytelling methods affect the vocabulary abilities of children aged 5–6, especially in helping kids understand and answer the questions given. Next, (Rifkaamelia, Akbarjono, & Budrianto, 2025) found a significant influence of the storytelling method on the vocabulary development of 5–6-year-old children in RA, as shown by the improvement in vocabulary skills after the application of the method. Research (Novitasari, Marta, & Suharni, 2026) also emphasized that using props in storytelling methods can help improve the vocabulary of 5–6-year-old children because they get the chance to understand and discuss the



story they have heard. The findings show that storytelling is a potentially effective activity for stimulating children's vocabulary development.

Nonetheless, there is still room to further explore how the storytelling process can be deliberately used to improve children's vocabulary, not just seeing storytelling as a general language learning activity. Research on language development through storytelling shows that this activity can enrich vocabulary, enhance speaking skills, and help children understand language through themes, sentences, and media that match the child's characteristics. More recent research by (Antika & Nirwana, 2025) also found an improvement in the vocabulary skills of 5–6-year-old children through digital storytelling, but the approach used digital media and was carried out in a specific preschool learning context. This situation shows that there is an opportunity to study the implementation of storytelling methods directly and contextually, especially in a Raudhatul Athfal environment, paying attention to the process of introducing, understanding, pronouncing, and using vocabulary by the children.

Based on these conditions, the novelty of this research lies in focusing on the application of storytelling methods as a systematic effort to enhance the vocabulary of children aged 5–6 in the learning context at RA (Raudhatul Athfal) Ar Rahmah. The novelty of the study is not in using the storytelling method itself, as it has been widely used, but in organizing storytelling activities into learning experiences that allow children to discover new vocabulary, understand its meaning, pronounce it, and use it again through Q&A sessions and retelling activities. Therefore, this research aims to provide a more contextual picture of applying storytelling methods in developing the vocabulary of children aged 5–6, while also offering practical alternatives for RA teachers in creating interactive, communicative language learning that aligns with children's developmental characteristics.

METHOD

This study uses Classroom Action Research (CAR) with a quantitative and qualitative descriptive approach. CAR was chosen because the research is aimed at directly improving the learning process through actions carried out in the classroom. Classroom action research is carried out systematically through a process of planning, action implementation, observation, and reflection that is repeated to achieve continuous improvement in learning (Arikunto, Suhardjono, & Supardi, 2019). The quantitative approach is used to find out the increase in children's vocabulary skills based on assessment results, while the qualitative approach is used to describe the learning process, children's activities, and the implementation of storytelling methods during the action.

This research uses a model (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988) which consists of four stages in each cycle, namely planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. These four stages form a cycle that is repeated, with the reflection results from one cycle serving as the basis for improving the planning in the next cycle. This model fits the characteristics of classroom action research (CAR) because it allows researchers to make gradual improvements in actions based on the real conditions found during the learning process.

The research was carried out collaboratively between the researcher and the teachers of Group B at RA Ar Rahmah. The researcher acted as the one implementing the actions using the storytelling method, while the teacher acted as an observer, watching the children's activities and how the learning was carried out. The subjects of the study were children in Group B, aged 5–6 years at RA (Raudhatul Athfal) Ar Rahmah. In the planning stage, the researcher and teacher prepared the learning activity plans, chose story themes, got storytelling materials ready, arranged observation instruments, and set vocabulary ability indicators to be assessed. In the action stage, the storytelling method was applied through activities like listening to stories, learning new vocabulary, repeating words, answering questions, naming characters or objects in the story, and retelling the story content in a simple way (Sanjaya, 2016).



The observation stage is carried out during the learning process to gather data about the activities of the teacher and children as well as the development of vocabulary skills. The observation is focused on the child's ability to recognize, understand, mention, pronounce, and use the vocabulary introduced through stories. Research data is obtained through observation, vocabulary assessments, and documentation of learning activities. Documentation is used as supporting data to illustrate the implementation process and the child's development during the study. After the action is completed, the researcher and the teacher reflect on the results of the observations and assessments to identify successes, challenges, and aspects of learning that still need improvement. The results of the reflection are then used as the basis for planning actions in the next cycle. The pattern of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting is the main characteristic of classroom action research carried out cyclically (Sugiyono, 2022).

Quantitative data were analyzed descriptively by comparing the children's vocabulary skills at the initial condition, Cycle I, and the following cycles. The improvement in the children's abilities can be seen from changes in achievements on each predetermined indicator. Meanwhile, qualitative data were analyzed through the process of collecting, grouping, presenting, and interpreting the results of observations and documentation. The study is considered successful if the children's vocabulary skills show improvement in accordance with the predetermined success indicators. Therefore, the implementation of Classroom Action Research through storytelling is expected to improve the learning process while also enhancing the vocabulary skills of 5–6-year-old children at RA Ar Rahmah.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

Initial Condition (Pre-Cycle)

Before the implementation of the intervention, the researcher conducted a pre-cycle observation on May 13, 2026, to determine the initial condition of Indonesian vocabulary mastery among children aged 5–6 years in Group B at RA Ar Rahmah. The observation was conducted through storytelling activities using storybooks, focusing on the children's ability to recognize, understand, name, pronounce, and use vocabulary in simple communication. The observations indicated that some children still experienced difficulties in naming objects or characters, answering questions, expressing opinions, and retelling the content of the story. Several children also still required stimulation and teacher assistance in communicating. The results of the vocabulary mastery assessment at the pre-cycle stage are presented in Table 1.

Table 1.
Results of the Assessment of Children's Vocabulary Mastery in the Pre-Cycle

No.	Development Category	Number of Children	Percentage
1	Not Yet Developed (BB)	2	20%
2	Beginning to Develop (MB)	3	30%
3	Developing as Expected (BSH)	4	40%
4	Developing Very Well (BSB)	1	10%
Total		10	100%

Based on Table 1, 2 children (20%) were categorized as BB, 3 children (30%) as MB, 4 children (40%) as BSH, and 1 child (10%) as BSB. Thus, 5 children (50%) had reached the BSH and BSB categories, while the remaining 5 children (50%) were still in the BB and MB categories.



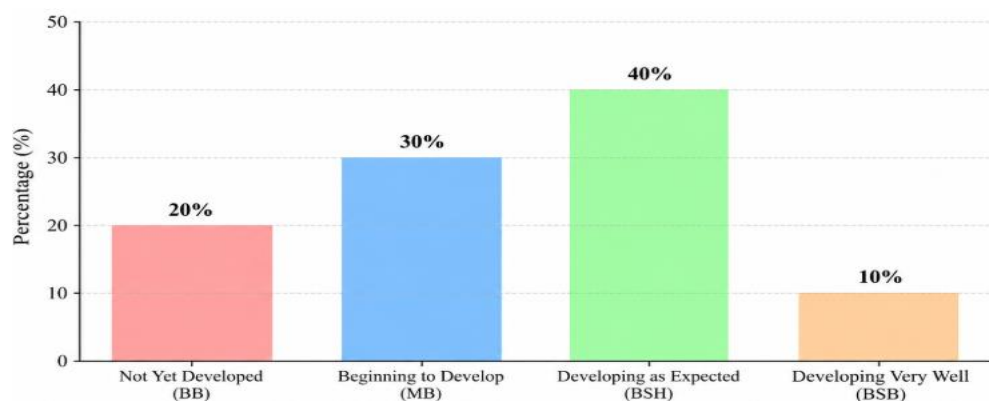


Figure 1. Distribution of Children's Vocabulary Mastery at the Pre-Cycle Stage

The diagram shows that the BSH category had the highest percentage at 40%, followed by the MB category at 30%, BB at 20%, and BSB at 10%. Overall, the combined achievement of the BSH and BSB categories was 50%, which remained below the research success criterion, namely that at least 75% of the children should achieve these categories. This initial condition provided the basis for the researcher to implement an intervention through a storytelling method using hand puppets and storybooks. The activities were designed to provide children with opportunities to listen to stories, become familiar with and imitate new vocabulary, answer questions, name characters or objects, and retell the story using simple sentences. The use of these media was expected to create a more engaging and interactive learning environment while providing repeated vocabulary stimulation. Therefore, the pre-cycle results indicated that the children's vocabulary mastery still needed to be improved. Accordingly, the intervention in Cycle I was directed toward providing more concrete and enjoyable language experiences while encouraging children's active participation through the storytelling method.

Results of the Implementation of Cycle I

Cycle I was conducted in six meetings through the stages of planning, implementation of the intervention, observation, and reflection, carried out collaboratively by the researcher and the classroom teacher. The researcher served as the intervention implementer, while the classroom teacher observed the children's activities and vocabulary development. The planning was based on the pre-cycle results and included the preparation of story themes, storybooks, hand puppets, the vocabulary to be introduced, as well as observation and assessment instruments.

The intervention was implemented through storytelling activities using hand puppets and storybooks. The children were guided to listen to the story, become familiar with and imitate new vocabulary, answer questions, name characters or objects in the story, and retell the story using simple sentences. These activities provided opportunities for children to hear, understand, pronounce, and use vocabulary repeatedly in an enjoyable learning environment.

The observation results indicated that the children began to show greater interest in participating in the activities and became more responsive to the teacher's questions. Some children began to demonstrate the ability to use newly introduced vocabulary and became more confident in expressing their answers. However, several children still required assistance in pronouncing vocabulary, answering questions, and retelling the story in a coherent sequence. The results of the children's vocabulary assessment in Cycle I are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Results of the Assessment of Children's Vocabulary Mastery in Cycle I

No.	Development Category	Number of Children	Percentage
1	Not Yet Developed (BB)	1	10%
2	Beginning to Develop (MB)	2	20%



No.	Development Category	Number of Children	Percentage
3	Developing as Expected (BSH)	5	50%
4	Developing Very Well (BSB)	2	20%
Total		10	100%

Based on Table 2, 1 child (10%) was categorized as BB, 2 children (20%) as MB, 5 children (50%) as BSH, and 2 children (20%) as BSB. Thus, 7 children (70%) had reached the BSH and BSB categories, while 3 children (30%) remained in the BB and MB categories.

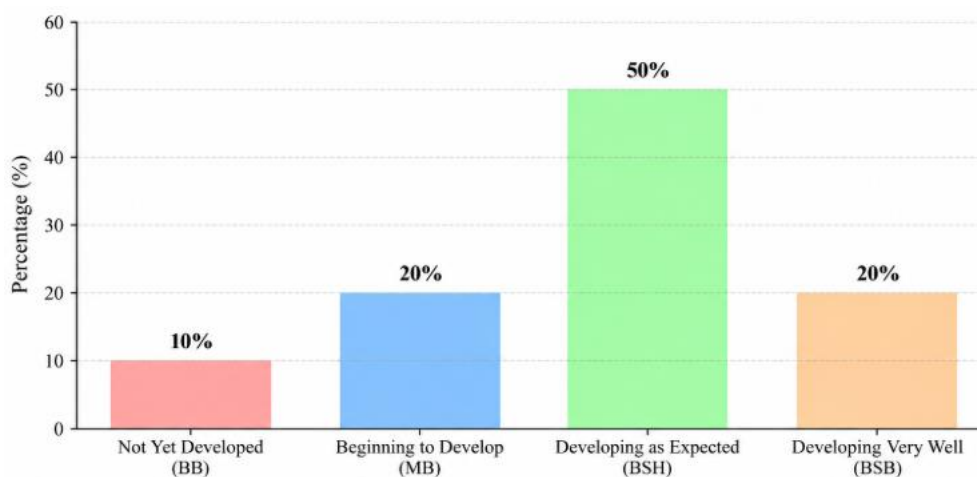


Figure 2. Results of the Assessment of Children's Vocabulary Mastery in Cycle I

Compared with the pre-cycle stage, the combined achievement of the BSH and BSB categories increased from 50% to 70%, representing an increase of 20 percentage points. This improvement indicates the development of children's vocabulary abilities following the implementation of the storytelling method using hand puppets and storybooks. Progress was also evident in the children's increased attention, confidence in answering questions, and ability to recognize the vocabulary introduced during the activities.

Nevertheless, the achievement of 70% had not yet met the research success criterion, which required at least 75% of the children to achieve the BSH or BSB categories. The reflection results indicated that several children still required additional assistance, more equitable opportunities to speak, repeated exposure to vocabulary, and the use of simpler and more contextual language. Therefore, the reflection results from Cycle I were used as the basis for improving the intervention in Cycle II, with an emphasis on increasing active participation, providing greater opportunities for children to speak, giving positive reinforcement, and repeating vocabulary in a more structured and purposeful manner.

Results of the Implementation of Cycle II

Cycle II was implemented as a follow-up to the reflection results from Cycle I and consisted of six meetings. The instructional improvements focused on increasing children's participation, providing equitable opportunities for children to speak, using simple vocabulary, and providing motivation and positive reinforcement. The activities continued to employ the storytelling method using hand puppets and storybooks.

During the implementation, the children were guided to listen to the story, become familiar with and repeat new vocabulary, answer questions, name characters or objects, and retell the story using simple sentences. Providing more equitable opportunities for speaking encouraged the children to participate more actively. The observations indicated that the children demonstrated



greater attention, responsiveness, and confidence in using the vocabulary introduced. The results of the children's vocabulary mastery assessment in Cycle II are presented in Table 3.

Table 3.

Results of the Assessment of Children's Vocabulary Mastery in Cycle II

No.	Development Category	Number of Children	Percentage
1	Not Yet Developed (BB)	0	0%
2	Beginning to Develop (MB)	1	10%
3	Developing as Expected (BSH)	5	50%
4	Developing Very Well (BSB)	4	40%
Total		10	100%

Based on Table 3, 5 children (50%) achieved the BSH category, while 4 children (40%) achieved the BSB category. Thus, 9 children (90%) had reached the BSH and BSB categories, while 1 child (10%) remained in the MB category, and no children were categorized as BB.

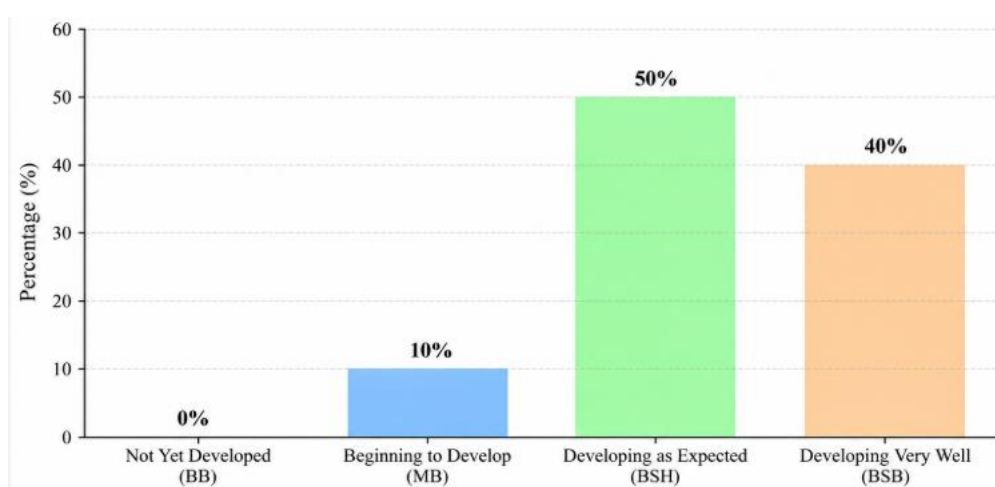


Figure 3. Results of the Assessment of Children's Vocabulary Mastery in Cycle II

The 90% achievement represents an increase of 20 percentage points compared with Cycle I, which reached 70%. In addition, the number of children in the BB category decreased from 1 child to 0. Development was evident in the children's ability to understand vocabulary based on the context of the story, name and pronounce new vocabulary, answer questions, use vocabulary in simple sentences, and retell the story in their own words.

The results of Cycle II exceeded the research success criterion, namely that at least 75% of the children should achieve the BSH or BSB categories. Thus, the research target was achieved in Cycle II, and no further intervention was required. Overall, the instructional improvements, including providing opportunities for children to speak, repeating vocabulary, using simple language, and providing positive reinforcement, supported improvements in children's engagement and vocabulary abilities. These findings indicate the development of children's vocabulary mastery following the implementation of the intervention within the context of classroom action research.

Comparison of Results across the Pre-Cycle, Cycle I, and Cycle II

A comparison of the assessment results from the pre-cycle, Cycle I, and Cycle II stages was conducted to examine the overall development of children's vocabulary mastery. The comparison focused on the number and percentage of children who achieved the *Developing as Expected* (BSH) and *Developing Very Well* (BSB) categories. The findings demonstrated a gradual improvement in



achievement following the implementation of the storytelling method using hand puppets and storybooks.

Table 4.

Comparison of Children's Vocabulary Mastery Results at Each Research Stage

Research Stage	BSH + BSB	BB + MB	Number of Children	Success Criterion	Description
Pre-Cycle	50%	50%	10	$\geq 75\%$	Target not achieved
Cycle I	70%	30%	10	$\geq 75\%$	Target not achieved
Cycle II	90%	10%	10	$\geq 75\%$	Target achieved

Based on Table 4, during the pre-cycle stage, 50% of the children had achieved the BSH and BSB categories, while the remaining 50% were still in the BB and MB categories. This achievement indicates that the children's initial vocabulary mastery was still below the established success criterion, namely that at least 75% of the children should achieve the BSH or BSB categories. In Cycle I, the percentage of children who achieved the BSH and BSB categories increased to 70%. Thus, there was an increase of 20 percentage points compared with the pre-cycle stage. Although this result demonstrated progress, the achievement remained 5 percentage points below the 75% target. Therefore, based on the reflection results, the instructional intervention was continued in Cycle II by making improvements to the implementation of the storytelling activities. In Cycle II, the percentage of children achieving the BSH and BSB categories increased to 90%, representing a further increase of 20 percentage points compared with Cycle I. This achievement exceeded the 75% success criterion by 15 percentage points. Therefore, the research success criterion was achieved in Cycle II.

Table 5.

Recapitulation of the Development of Children's Vocabulary Mastery

Stage	Children Achieving BSH + BSB	Percentage	Change
Pre-Cycle	5 children	50%	Initial condition
Cycle I	7 children	70%	+20 percentage points
Cycle II	9 children	90%	+20 percentage points
Total Increase from Pre-Cycle to Cycle II	+4 children	+40 percentage points	

Table 5 shows that the number of children who achieved the BSH and BSB categories increased from 5 children in the pre-cycle stage to 7 children in Cycle I and 9 children in Cycle II. This means that there was an increase of 4 children reaching the expected developmental categories from the initial condition to the end of the research. In percentage terms, achievement increased by 40 percentage points, from 50% to 90%.

The improvement was evident not only in the assessment results but also in changes in the children's learning behavior during the activities. At the initial stage, some children still experienced difficulties in naming vocabulary, answering questions, and verbally expressing their ideas. Following the implementation of the intervention, the children began to demonstrate greater attention and engagement in the storytelling activities. They also became increasingly confident in responding to questions and repeating the vocabulary introduced.

In Cycle II, the children's development became more evident through their ability to name characters and objects in the story, answer questions, repeat new vocabulary, and retell the story using simple sentences. The use of hand puppets and storybooks provided instructional media that



helped the children follow the storyline and engage more actively in the learning process.

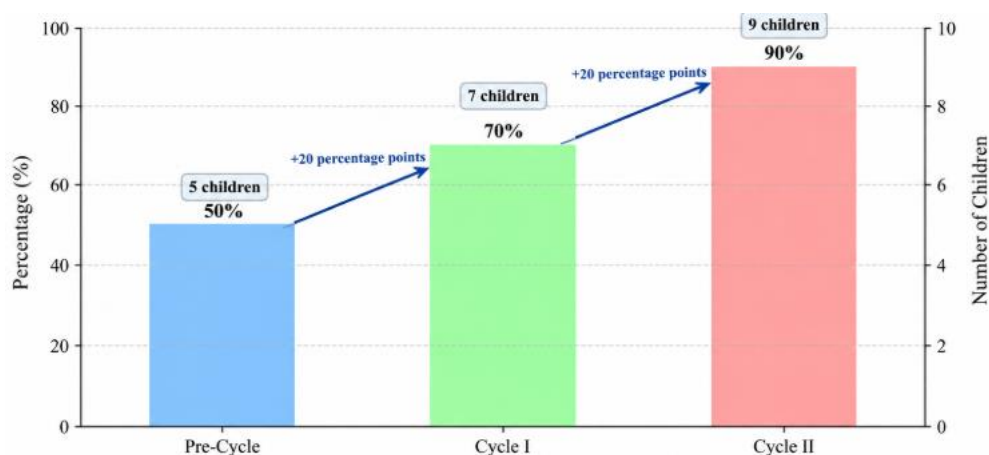


Figure 4. Development in the Percentage of Children Achieving the BSH and BSB Categories in the Pre-Cycle, Cycle I, and Cycle II

Overall, the research findings indicate an improvement in children's vocabulary mastery from the pre-cycle stage through Cycle II. Achievement increased gradually from 50% in the pre-cycle stage to 70% in Cycle I and reached 90% in Cycle II. This improvement was accompanied by increased participation, greater confidence in communicating, improved ability to answer questions, and greater use of newly introduced vocabulary in simple sentences. Thus, within the context of this classroom action research, the implementation of the storytelling method using hand puppets and storybooks contributed to the development of Indonesian vocabulary mastery among children aged 5–6 years.

Discussion

The research results show that there was an improvement in vocabulary mastery among 5–6-year-old children after implementing storytelling using hand puppets and storybooks. In the pre-cycle stage, only 5 out of 10 children (50%) reached the BSH and BSB categories. After the actions in Cycle I, that number increased to 7 children (70%), and then to 9 children (90%) in Cycle II. Thus, there was an increase of 40 percentage points from the initial condition to the end of the study. This improvement was also accompanied by changes in the learning process, such as increased attention, willingness to answer questions, ability to repeat vocabulary, and the ability to retell the story content in simple sentences.

The finding aligns with the research (Kirsch & Morin, 2023) which shows that storytelling methods are related to the improvement of vocabulary skills in 5–6-year-old children. The study was conducted on 15 children and found differences in vocabulary skills after applying the storytelling method. The similarity in results shows that storytelling activities can be a learning context that gives children the opportunity to hear, understand, and use vocabulary in communication. In this study, this process was seen from Cycle I when children began to be more interested in following the story and more responsive to the teacher's questions.

These research findings also support the findings (Winter, Stoeger, & Suggate, 2024) about the vocabulary development of 5–6-year-old children through storytelling methods. Darmila's research involved 30 children and reported differences in vocabulary development between learning with the storytelling method and learning without it. These findings are relevant to this study because the improvement in children's abilities is seen not only in passive word mastery but also in their ability to respond to questions and use vocabulary in communication activities. In Cycle II, children became increasingly able to name characters and objects in stories, answer questions, repeat new vocabulary, and retell the content of the story in their own words.



The aspect of using media in storytelling activities is also important for explaining the development that occurs. (Magay & Lanny, 2022) researching the use of teaching aids in storytelling methods to increase the vocabulary of children aged 5–6 years. The results of the study showed that storytelling activities with teaching aids can support language development, especially when children are involved in listening and trying to retell the story. These findings are closely related to this research because the approach not only uses stories verbally, but also utilizes hand puppets and storybooks as supporting media. These media help present characters and objects in the story more concretely, so children have visual and contextual stimuli when learning new vocabulary.

The use of concrete media can also explain changes in children's participation during the study. In the pre-cycle, some children still had trouble naming objects or characters, answering questions, expressing opinions, and retelling stories. After the intervention, the children showed more attention and engagement. This became even more noticeable in Cycle II after improvements were made, such as giving children more balanced speaking opportunities, repeating vocabulary, using simple language, and giving positive reinforcement. Thus, vocabulary development in this study is closely linked to how storytelling activities are conducted interactively.

The finding is backed up by research (Maureen, Meij, & Jong, 2022) about Interactive Elaborative Storytelling which emphasizes the importance of interactivity in reading and storytelling activities. The study shows that teaching word meanings and increasing interaction during storytelling activities can support children's language development. In this approach, children are not just listeners, but are also involved through questions, explanations, and retelling activities. This aligns with this research, because children are guided to listen, imitate vocabulary, answer questions, mention characters or objects, and retell the story content.

Research (Noerdjanah, Haritsa, & Sugiono, 2025) provides further support for the importance of context and interaction in vocabulary development. Involving 293 preschool children, the study found that interactive elaborative storytelling led to the greatest improvement in story-related vocabulary compared to the comparison conditions used in the study. The children also showed more active engagement during the activities. These findings are relevant to the research because the increase in vocabulary mastery happened alongside increased attention and participation from the children. In other words, storytelling activities not only provide new words but also give context for how to use them, so kids can understand the connections between vocabulary, characters, objects, actions, and the storyline.

When viewed in terms of inter-cycle development, the improvement observed in this study indicates that successful learning depends not only on the selection of an instructional method but also on the process of reflection and the subsequent refinement of the intervention. In Cycle I, the achievement of the BSH and BSB categories reached 70%, which did not yet meet the 75% success criterion. The reflection results indicated that several children still required additional assistance, more equitable opportunities to speak, repeated exposure to vocabulary, and the use of simpler and more contextualized language. These improvements were subsequently implemented in Cycle II, followed by an increase in achievement to 90%. This finding suggests that, within the context of classroom action research, the reflection process plays an important role in adapting instructional strategies to children's needs.

From a language development perspective, the findings also demonstrate that vocabulary mastery develops gradually. Children are initially exposed to vocabulary through listening to stories and are subsequently given opportunities to imitate, recognize, answer questions, and use the vocabulary in communication. In Cycle II, the children's abilities developed to the point where they were able to use vocabulary in simple sentences and retell the story in their own words. This pattern indicates that storytelling activities provide a sequence of language experiences that enables children to progress from merely hearing words to using them in communicative contexts.

Overall, the findings of this study support previous research that positions storytelling as a strategy that can facilitate vocabulary development and language skills among young children.



However, the findings should be interpreted in accordance with the classroom action research design employed in this study. The increase from 50% to 90% indicates an improvement in children's achievement following a series of interventions and instructional improvements, but it cannot be interpreted as evidence that storytelling was the sole cause of this improvement because the study did not employ a control or comparison group. Therefore, the findings are more appropriately interpreted as indicating that the implementation of the storytelling method using hand puppets and storybooks contributed to the development of children's vocabulary mastery within the context of this classroom action research.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings, the implementation of the storytelling method using hand puppets and storybooks demonstrated an improvement in Indonesian vocabulary mastery among children aged 5–6 years within the context of classroom action research. The proportion of children achieving the BSH and BSB categories increased from 50% in the pre-cycle stage to 70% in Cycle I and 90% in Cycle II. This improvement was accompanied by increased attention and participation, greater confidence in responding to questions, and an enhanced ability to use vocabulary in simple sentences. These findings imply that storytelling activities can be utilized as an interactive and contextual language-learning strategy, particularly through vocabulary repetition, opportunities for children to speak, the use of simple language, and positive reinforcement. Nevertheless, this study has several limitations, including its small sample size, implementation in a single educational institution, and the absence of a control group. Therefore, the observed improvement cannot be attributed exclusively to the storytelling method. Future research is recommended to involve larger and more diverse samples and educational institutions, employ comparison or control groups, and examine the effectiveness of different storytelling media as well as the sustainability of children's vocabulary mastery over a longer period.

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