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Development of Storytelling-based Learning in Stimulating Children's Receptive and Expressive Language

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ABSTRACT:
This study aims to develop an innovative and effective storytelling learning method to stimulate receptive and expressive language skills in early childhood. The main issue faced at Doa Ibu Early Childhood Education Kindergarten, Makassar is the low receptive and expressive language abilities of the children. The study uses a qualitative approach with the Lesson Study method, implemented over two cycles, involving 15 children. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation. Data analysis was conducted using descriptive methods and the calculation of descriptive statistics with N Gain to assess the effectiveness of the learning. In the first cycle, audio-visual media was used in storytelling learning but was not effective in capturing the children's attention until the end of the story. The second cycle introduced an interactive approach by combining video visuals and hand puppets, which increased participation and active learning. The results of the study show that the combination of video-visual media and hand puppets in three learning steps— tonton cerita (watch the story), ulas cerita (review the story), and ekspresikan cerita (express the story)—abbreviated as TRUE Storytelling, proved to be an effective method for enhancing children's receptive and expressive language abilities

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1. Introduction

Receptive and expressive language stimulation supports young children's communication development. Receptive language enables children to understand spoken language, process verbal instructions, and respond to social cues, which are important foundations for academic success and everyday interactions (Putri et al., 2020). Early detection and active stimulation from caregivers have been shown to significantly improve this ability, especially through proactive parenting practices. Expressive language, on the other hand, helps children articulate thoughts, convey emotions, and build social relationships. This ability is closely related to emotion regulation and early vocabulary development, where the affective dimension of language learning becomes an important aspect of daily interactions (Mues et al., 2023; Susanti et al., 2020). However, children with language impairment often face barriers in communication that require specialized interventions. Therefore, comprehensive support strategies are necessary to ensure all children can optimally develop receptive and expressive language skills.

Well-designed interventions have great potential to improve language skills in children, especially those who are bilingual or have developmental language disorders. Vocabulary-based strategies are one effective approach, with evidence showing that techniques such as semantic networks can significantly improve expressive language skills (Kim & Yim, 2022). Technology-based interventions such as using tablets have proven to be just as effective as traditional methods using real objects, providing flexibility in implementation (Zwitserlood et al., 2022). In addition, personalizing interventions based on individual needs, such as non-linguistic cognitive abilities and emotional expression, can improve learning outcomes (Li, 2023). This approach is further strengthened by the integration of

different types of interventions, both home and school-based, that create supportive learning environments for bilingual children with DLD (KK Nair et al., 2023). While vocabulary-based strategies show effectiveness, further research is needed to explore interventions in other language domains, such as morphosyntax and narrative skills, to support more holistic language development.

The challenges kindergarten children face in following instructions during storytelling activities reflect the complex relationship between language development and various environmental factors. Socioeconomic status (SES) plays an important role, with children from high SES backgrounds tending to have better language skills compared to those from disadvantaged backgrounds, where this gap can be evident as early as 18 months of age (Akol, 2024; Ribeiro et al., n.d.). In addition, the emotional quality of early childhood education is also a determining factor, as emotionally supportive interactions can strengthen children's language development (Rankin et al., 2022). Family language policies influence children's narrative skills, with parental ideology and engagement being key to supporting this development (Yin et al., 2021). Although these environmental factors are highly influential, some views emphasize that children's innate abilities also play an important role, suggesting that language development is the result of a complex interaction between natural and nurturing factors. Early intervention strategies that take these factors into account can help address gaps in early childhood language development.

Children's social-emotional skills have a significant relationship with language development, as evidenced by numerous studies. Better emotional understanding is known to improve communication skills, which form the basis of effective social interaction. Children with strong social-emotional skills tend to exhibit more positive behavior and better academic achievement (Ozerova et al., 2023). However, children with challenges such as language development disorders require specially designed interventions to meet their needs and support their communication progress (Riad et al., 2023). Research also shows that responsive and inclusive learning environments can play an important role in supporting social-emotional and language development, especially for children who face difficulties (Roudhotul Jannah, 2022). However, there is a view that emphasizes the importance of a holistic approach that not only focuses on social-emotional but also considers other factors, such as cognitive development and environmental influences, to optimize children's language skills.

Children's language development is strongly influenced by the quality of interactions with caregivers. Research shows that caregiver-initiated conversations not only improve expressive language skills but also provide significant benefits to infants' language abilities from as early as 18 months of age (Mance & Lamot, 2023). The caregiver's response to the child's early communicative behavior is also an important determinant in promoting language development (Salter et al., 2023). Caregivers who provide timely and contextualized responses to children's communication attempts can build a foundation of pre-linguistic skills that play a role in later language development. In addition, the quality of language input, such as the use of interactive and contextualized speech, is significantly related to the progress of pragmatism and overall language ability (Day, 2023; Smith et al., 2024).

In the digital age, technology plays an important role in education, including in children's language development. Research shows that appropriate use of education-based digital media can enrich language abilities, especially through increased vocabulary and communication skills. Interactive apps and other technological tools create a dynamic and engaging learning environment, allowing children to learn actively according to their needs (Adetokun et al., 2023; Kaicer Pinargote et al., 2024). In addition, the involvement of caregivers or parents is needed to guide the use of technology, ensuring that the content accessed is educational and age-appropriate (Najiha et al., 2023). However, it is also important to be aware of the risks that may arise, such as reduced face-to-face interactions that may affect the development of social language skills (Najiha et al., 2023). The study also emphasizes the importance of limiting children's screen time to under two hours per day to avoid negative impacts on their language development (Tatar & Gerde, 2023). With a balanced approach between the use of technology and hands-on interaction, digital media can be an effective tool in supporting children's language development.

The integration of digital media in early childhood education has great potential to improve children's language development, especially when teachers actively guide families in selecting quality resources. Interactive media, such as audio-visual aids, are proven to capture children's attention while encouraging their active engagement, an important factor for effective language learning. Teachers have a strategic role in partnering with families to identify and utilize digital tools that support children's language skills. For example, providing handouts and resources can help families understand effective ways to engage children with educational media (Tatar & Gerde, 2023). In addition, digital literacy training for teachers ensures they can recommend relevant and appropriate content for children (Adetokun et al., 2023).

Interactive media such as videos and digital games also provide significant benefits to linguistic development. Research shows that exposure to high-quality video content can result in short-term improvements in certain language skills (Gowenlock et al., 2024). In addition, interactive tools such as compact disks have demonstrated the ability to improve children's language skills through structured activities (Ansorida, 2022). While digital media offers promising opportunities, challenges related to screen time and content quality remain a concern. Therefore, it is important to integrate these technologies with traditional learning approaches so that children's language development can be realized comprehensively.

The social environment, including interactions with peers and play activities, has a significant effect on children's language development, especially those with receptive-expressive language impairment (Lloyd-Esenkaya et al., 2020). Although children with DLD face difficulties in communication, they can still form friendships and engage in social play (Lloyd-Esenkaya et al., 2020). Excessive screen time negatively impacts language development, although interactive media such as co-watching can mitigate the effect (Alroqi et al., 2023). Activities like reading stories are important for language development, and family support is instrumental in fostering language skills (Carvalho et al., 2016; Wangke et al., 2021).

Children's low engagement in storytelling activities at Doa Ibu Preschool can be addressed through strategies that increase engagement and inclusiveness. Research shows that well-organized storytelling can increase children's emotional engagement and participation, especially those with special needs. One effective technique is the use of props and expressive body language, which encourages emotional engagement and cooperation between children (Xiao et al., 2023). In addition, interactive storytelling methods, such as the use of straw puppets, have also been shown to improve children's receptive language skills (Ismawati et al., 2023). The integration of interactive technology in storytelling can create a more inclusive environment, allowing children with special needs to participate more actively (Tokar, 2023). Providing a diverse selection of stories can also cater to different interests and abilities, promoting inclusivity (Ligthart et al., 2020). However, intrinsic factors such as personal interest or social dynamics can still influence participation, so a tailored approach is needed to effectively address these challenges (Hutton et al., 2017).

The integration of audio-visual media and hand puppets within the TPACK framework can significantly improve children's engagement and learning outcomes. TPACK, which combines technology, pedagogy, and content knowledge, enables educators to create an interactive and stimulating learning environment. This approach not only captures children's attention but also encourages their active participation in the learning process (Kusuma Wardani, 2022). Interactive media, such as audio-visual tools, are proven to be effective in maintaining children's interest and improving learning outcomes (Karaduman & Akman, 2024). In addition, children who had control over their learning environment through interactive media showed increased engagement and motivation (Simangunsong et al., 2024). The development of TPACK-based learning media also received positive feedback from students, indicating its effectiveness in improving understanding and engagement (Amaliyah, 2023). However, challenges remain in ensuring that all educators have the skills needed to implement these strategies effectively, making continuous professional development key to maximizing the benefits of TPACK in various learning contexts.

The integration of animated media in education has been shown to significantly improve vocabulary acquisition and comprehension in children, particularly in early childhood education. Animated videos and interactive visuals can capture children's attention, make learning more fun, and facilitate understanding of new concepts. Research shows the use of animation improves student learning outcomes, with significant cognitive improvements after implementing animated media (Ibda et al., 2023). Interactive learning through animation also reduces boredom and increases student engagement (Rahmawati et al., 2023). However, keep in mind that responses to animated media can vary, especially for children with autism spectrum disorders (Retna Ningrum & Ifianti, 2022), and some educators argue that traditional methods are still relevant, especially in structured learning environments. Combining animation with conventional teaching strategies can accommodate diverse learning preferences.

Based on these findings, the problem formulation that arises is how to develop innovative learning methods to improve children's receptive and expressive language skills through creative and inclusive media-based storytelling. This research aims to develop a storytelling method based on audio-visual media and hand puppets to improve children's receptive and expressive language skills. Hopefully, this research can provide theoretical, practical, and social benefits. Theoretically, this research can contribute to the development of early childhood learning theory, while practically, it can help educators create more interesting and inclusive learning. In addition, this research is also expected to support the language development of children, including children with special needs, through fun and effective stimulation.

2. Method

This research method uses a qualitative descriptive approach with data collection techniques through observation, interviews, documentation, and qualitative descriptive analysis (Moleong, 2018). This research was conducted at the Early Childhood Education Kindergarten Doa Ibu Makassar, with a focus on storytelling activities attended by 15 children. This study uses a Lesson Study consisting of three stages: Plan, Do, and See. Data was collected using observation, interviews, and documentation. The instrument was validated by 2 experts, namely in the field of early childhood language development and experts in the field of early childhood learning media development. Data analysis was carried out using the descriptive statistical N Gain calculation method to assess the effectiveness of learning. In the first cycle, audio-visual media is used in learning. The second cycle introduces an interactive approach with the incorporation of video visuals and hand puppets.

3. Result And Discussion

This study aims to develop an innovative and effective storytelling learning method to improve children's receptive and expressive language skills at Doa Ibu Early Childhood Education Kindergarten, Makassar. The Lesson Study procedure was implemented in two cycles with the stages of Plan, Do, and See. The following are the results of the study, which include observation and analysis of each stage for both learning cycles.

3.1. Result

In the Plan stage of the first cycle, the teacher planned to use audio-visual media as the main tool in storytelling activities. Learning focuses on improving children's ability to retell stories with richer vocabulary, express feelings and opinions with simple sentences, and carry out more complex commands. The material chosen is a story about "medicinal plants," which is presented through audio-visual with moving pictures and sounds to attract children's attention. The learning strategy includes story design, which is choosing stories that are appropriate for children's age and can increase vocabulary. The use of media is using audio-visual to provide interesting visualization for children. Learning activities, i.e., after watching, children are asked to answer reflection questions according to the story topic.

In the Do stage, the storytelling activity began by introducing a story through audio-visuals about the benefits of medicinal plants. Children are invited to watch the audio-visual, and after that, they are asked to answer reflection questions according to the topic of the story they have watched. The teacher gives simple questions and asks the children to retell the content of the story with simple sentences. Some children began to participate, but some still had difficulty in using richer vocabulary and following more complex commands.

Table 1. Cycle 1 Observation Results

No	Child's Name Initials	Receptive & Expressive Language Indicators				Average	Category
		1	2	3	4		
1	MF	2	2	2	2	2	low
2	KA	2	2	2	2	2	low
3	AU	3	2	2	2	2.25	low
4	QA	2	1	3	2	2	low
5	MN	2	1	3	3	2.25	low
6	AR	2	2	2	2	2	low
7	FK	2	2	2	2	2	low
8	AR	1	1	3	2	1.75	low
9	AA	2	2	2	2	2	low
10	AA	3	2	3	2	2.5	high
11	FI	2	1	2	2	1.75	low
12	MH	2	2	2	2	2	low
13	RF	1	1	2	2	1.5	low
14	SF	2	2	3	2	2.25	low
15	MA	2	1	3	2	2	low
Average		1.8	2	1.6	2.4	2.07	low

Indicator Description:

1. Retells what is heard with a richer vocabulary
2. Carry out more complex commands according to given rules
3. Express wishes, feelings, and opinions with simple sentences in communicating with children or adults 4.
4. Retell the content of a story in a simple way

The results of Cycle 1 observations show a picture of receptive and expressive language skills in 15 early childhoods based on four indicators. The indicators assessed include the ability to retell what is heard with a richer vocabulary, carry out complex commands according to the rules, express wishes or opinions with simple sentences, and tell the contents of the story simply. The average scores for each indicator were 1.8, 2.0, 1.6, and 2.4, respectively, with an overall average of 2.07, which is in the low category. Only one child reached the high category with an average score of 2.5, while the rest were in the low category. The highest achieving indicator was the fourth indicator (average 2.4), while the lowest was the third indicator (average 1.6). These findings indicate that the majority of children have receptive and expressive language skills that still need to be improved through intervention efforts and more effective learning.

The See stage of the reflection on the implementation of Cycle 1 was conducted through the Lesson Study team's discussion of the observation results of the learning activities. The results showed that although the audio-visual media attracted children's attention at the beginning of the activity, its effectiveness decreased over time as some children lost focus after a few minutes. This can be seen from the overall average score of 2.07, which is in the low category, and only one child reached the high category. The indicator of expressing wishes, feelings, and opinions

in simple sentences had the lowest average of 1.6, indicating the challenge of helping children use richer vocabulary to communicate.

In addition, children who have difficulty executing complex commands or retelling stories also need additional approaches to support their learning. The team discussions highlighted that audio-visual media alone is insufficient to encourage children's active engagement. Therefore, it is recommended to use more interactive media, such as hand puppets or other props that involve children directly in storytelling activities. This is expected to increase children's attention, facilitate their ability to express themselves and enrich a more effective learning experience.

In the second cycle, the teacher planned to combine video-visual media with hand puppets as an additional tool to increase interactivity. Learning still focuses on improving receptive and expressive language skills, but this time, the children are also invited to actively participate in using hand puppets to retell the story. The story used was still themed, "The benefits of medicinal plants," but this time, it was introduced with more interaction through hand puppets that represented the characters in the story. The steps in planning the second cycle were for children to watch the story using video-visual media. Next, review the story by the teacher repeating the story that the children have watched using hand puppets. In the last stage, the children are asked to retell by telling stories using hand puppets.

In the Do stage, children watch the story through video-visuals and then listen to the teacher's review using hand puppets to participate in the storytelling activity. Children choose characters in the story and retell parts of the story using hand puppets. The teacher gives more complex instructions and encourages children to speak more and more clearly. In this cycle, most children showed significant improvement in their engagement and language skills.

Table 2. Cycle 2 Observation Results

No	Child's Name Initials	Receptive & Expressive Language Indicators				Average	Category
		1	2	3	4		
1	MF	4	4	3	4	3.75	very high
2	KA	4	3	3	4	3.5	very high
3	AU	4	4	4	4	4	very high
4	QA	4	4	4	4	4	very high
5	MN	4	4	4	3	3.75	very high
6	AR	3	3	4	4	3.5	very high
7	FK	4	4	3	3	3.5	very high
8	AR	3	3	4	4	3.5	very high
9	AA	3	4	3	4	3.5	very high
10	AA	3	3	3	4	3.25	high
11	FI	3	4	3	3	3.25	high
12	MH	3	3	3	3	3	high
13	RF	3	3	3	3	3	high
14	SF	3	3	3	3	3	high
15	MA	3	3	3	3	3	high
Average		**4**	**3.4**	**3.47**	**3.33**	**3.53**	**very high**

Indicator Description:

1. Retells what is heard with a richer vocabulary
2. Carry out more complex commands according to given rules
3. Express wishes, feelings, and opinions with simple sentences in communicating with children or adults 4.
4. Retell the content of a story in a simple way

Cycle 2 observation results showed a significant increase in receptive and expressive language skills in early childhood after learning improvements. Based on observations of 15 children, most were in the Very High category, with an average score above 3.5, while the rest were in the High category, with an average score between 3.0 and 3.25. No children were in the Low category this cycle. The overall average for all four indicators reached 3.53, which is in the Very High category, with the highest indicator being the ability to retell what was heard using richer vocabulary (average 4.0). The other three indicators also showed improvement, each in the Very High category with an average score of 3.4 for carrying out complex commands, 3.47 for expressing wishes or opinions, and 3.33 for retelling the content of the story. This finding confirms that interactive media-based learning and a more active approach can improve children's attention, understanding, and language skills as a whole.

At the See stage, reflection was conducted by evaluating the success of using hand puppets as learning media in increasing children's engagement. This reflection was conducted after the use of hand puppets in storytelling activities in Cycle 2. The results of the reflection showed that hand puppets proved to be very effective in attracting children's attention and encouraging them to actively participate in learning activities. Previously, some children showed inactivity and difficulty in communicating, but after the introduction of hand puppets, they became more confident and eager to retell the stories they had watched.

Hand puppets provide visual and tactile stimulation that helps children feel more involved in the story, facilitating them to be more expressive in expressing their feelings, opinions, and understanding. The presence of hand puppets provides a sense of security and comfort for children, allowing them to communicate more freely without fear or embarrassment. Some children who previously struggled with using richer vocabulary and constructing more complex sentences are now more creative in expressing themselves.

As a result of these findings, the Lesson Study team suggested that the use of interactive media, such as hand puppets, should continue to be developed and expanded in the next cycle. The use of interactive props is expected to improve the quality of learning, especially in improving children's receptive and expressive language skills. The team also suggests exploring other media variations that can support more interesting and fun learning for children.

A comparison of cycle-1 and cycle-2 data from the trial results of the application of storytelling learning in stimulating children's receptive and expressive language can be seen in Figure 4.1 below:

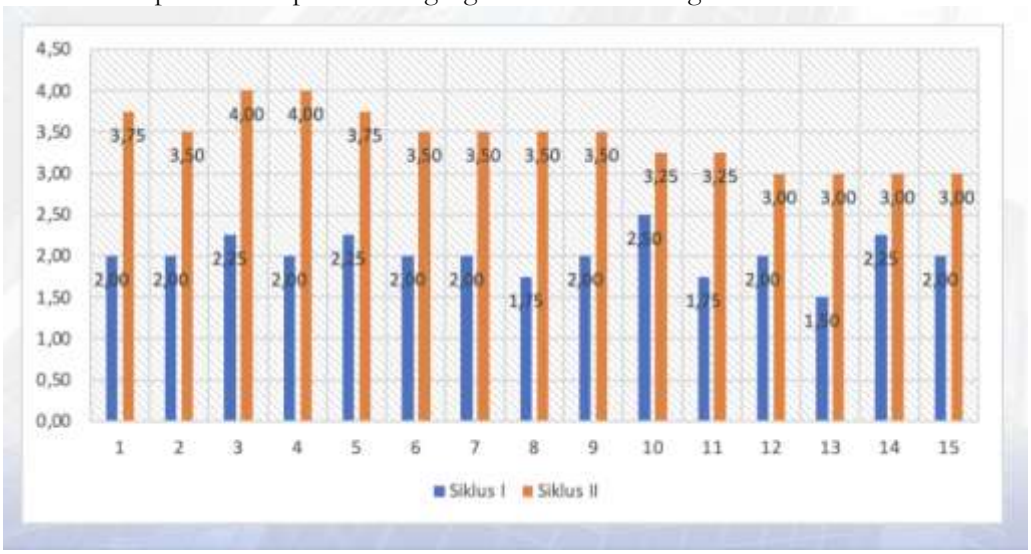

Figure 1. Comparison of Cycle-1 and Cycle-2 Data

A comparison between the observation results in Cycle 1 and Cycle 2 showed a significant improvement in the children's receptive and expressive language skills. In Cycle 1, the average score for each indicator was in the low category, with the overall average score reaching 2.07. This reflected that the majority of children still struggled with using richer vocabulary, following complex commands, and communicating with simple sentences.

However, in Cycle 2, there were very positive changes. The average score for each indicator increased substantially, with the overall average reaching 3.53, which falls into the very high category. Children showed significant improvement in retelling what they heard, executing complex commands, and expressing their wishes and opinions. The use of interactive media, such as hand puppets, proved effective in encouraging children to actively participate, increasing their confidence, and enriching their communication skills.

Overall, Cycle 2 recorded much better success compared to Cycle 1, thanks to the application of more interactive methods and involving children directly. The findings confirm that with the right approach, such as the use of props that support children's engagement, learning can be more effective in improving early childhood language skills.

The next procedure is to test the effectiveness of storytelling learning in stimulating children's receptive and expressive language through the N Gain Score test as in Table 3 below:

Table 3. *Descriptive N Gain Score*

No	Cycle I	Cycle II	N Gain	Category
1	2.00	3.75	0.88	high
2	2.00	3.50	0.75	high
3	2.25	4.00	1.00	high
4	2.00	4.00	1.00	high
5	2.25	3.75	0.86	high
6	2.00	3.50	0.75	high
7	2.00	3.50	0.75	high
8	1.75	3.50	0.78	high
9	2.00	3.50	0.75	high
10	2.50	3.25	0.50	medium
11	1.75	3.25	0.67	medium
12	2.00	3.00	0.50	medium
13	1.50	3.00	0.60	medium
14	2.25	3.00	0.43	medium

No	Cycle I	Cycle II	N Gain	Category
15	2.00	3.00	0.50	medium
	Category		**0.71**	**high**

The comparison between Cycle I and Cycle II showed a significant increase in the development of children's language skills based on the N-Gain calculation. N-Gain is a measure that describes the improvement in ability between two learning cycles. In Cycle I, the average score of children's language skills was in the low category, with scores between 1.5 and 2.5. However, after the implementation of improvements in Cycle II, the scores increased significantly, with the average results in Cycle II reaching the high category, which is between 3.0 and 4.0.

Out of the 15 children observed, 10 achieved a High N-Gain score of more than 0.7, indicating a substantial improvement in their receptive and expressive language abilities. The remaining five children had a Moderate N-Gain score ($0.3 \leq g \leq 0.7$), which, while showing progress, still requires additional attention to achieve more optimal development. Overall, the average N-Gain for all the children was 0.71, categorized as High, demonstrating that most children experienced significant improvement after participating in learning activities using interactive media such as hand puppets. This improvement confirms that the use of interactive media successfully enhanced children's engagement and communication skills substantially.

4. Discussion

The research focuses on TRUE storytelling (Tonton Cerita (Watch the Story) – Ulas Cerita (Review the Story) – Ekspresikan Cerita (Express the Story)), a method that aims to enhance children's receptive and expressive language development through interactive, engaging, and emotionally stimulating activities. This approach is particularly valuable in the early stages of language acquisition, as it integrates the foundational aspects of language development—receptive language (understanding), expressive language (articulation), and emotional expression. This expanded discussion explores the application of this method in the context of existing research on language development and offers deeper insights into how this storytelling method can be optimized for diverse learning environments.

4.1. Watch the Story (Tonton Cerita): Receptive Language Development through Visual and Auditory Engagement

The first phase of the TRUE method, "Watch the Story," focuses on receptive language skills, which involve the child's ability to understand and process spoken language. According to Putri et al. (2020), receptive language skills form the foundation of effective communication and academic success as children learn to decode verbal instructions and process social cues. Watching a story provides a rich linguistic environment where children are exposed to new vocabulary, sentence structures, and narrative logic. These elements contribute to a child's growing ability to understand not only the words but also the context in which they are used.

Research also indicates that interactive media, such as digital videos or storytelling apps, can significantly enhance receptive language abilities by offering children engaging and flexible learning opportunities (Zwitserlood et al., 2022). In this context, digital storytelling tools can be an effective supplement to traditional methods like reading books aloud. For instance, the use of animated videos or interactive apps provides dynamic visuals and auditory cues that reinforce language understanding. These resources are particularly helpful in engaging children who may have different learning styles or attention spans, providing a multi-sensory experience that can aid comprehension.

Moreover, technology-based interventions have the flexibility to cater to diverse linguistic needs, especially for bilingual children or those with developmental language disorders (DLD). As Kim & Yim (2022) suggest, vocabulary-based strategies, such as semantic networks, can be integrated into digital platforms to support children's receptive language development. Therefore, incorporating technology into the "Watch the Story" phase of TRUE storytelling can offer an enhanced, individualized learning experience.

4.2. Review the Story (Ulas Cerita): Strengthening Expressive Language Skills through Reflection and Analysis

The second phase, "Review the Story," encourages children to actively reflect on and verbalize their understanding of the narrative. This step involves expressive language, which is the ability to articulate thoughts, feelings, and ideas clearly and coherently. Expressive language skills are closely linked to a child's emotional regulation and social competence (Mues et al., 2023; Susanti et al., 2020). By reviewing the story, children practice formulating responses that go beyond simple recall—they analyze characters, plot developments, and themes and express their opinions or feelings about the story.

This step also allows children to expand their vocabulary and improve sentence structure. For example, children can be encouraged to describe the actions of the characters, explain how a character might feel in a given situation, or predict what might happen next. This kind of language production fosters their ability to communicate more fluently and effectively. As Salter et al. (2023) indicate, children benefit from caregiver-initiated interactions that prompt them to think critically and express their ideas in more complex forms. During this phase, caregivers or teachers can guide children by asking open-ended questions, which encourage elaboration and help children organize their thoughts.

In addition, reviewing stories provides an opportunity for emotional expression, a key component of expressive language. When children talk about their feelings toward the characters or events in a story, they also practice emotion regulation—an essential skill for social interactions and personal well-being (Ozerova et al., 2023). For example, after watching a story about a character overcoming a challenge, children can be prompted to express how they would feel in a similar situation or how they might have acted differently. This not only reinforces language use but also helps children build empathy and emotional intelligence.

4.3. Express the Story (Ekspresikan Ceriat): Active Expression through Creativity and Play

The final phase of the TRUE method, "Express the Story," emphasizes the importance of creative expression in language development. This phase encourages children to take ownership of the story by reenacting it through drama, role-play, drawing, or even using props like hand puppets. This phase extends beyond verbal language to incorporate non-verbal communication, which includes body language, facial expressions, and gestures. These forms of expression are essential for developing children's social-emotional skills as they learn to communicate not just through words but also through physical and emotional cues (Rankin et al., 2022).

Creative storytelling activities have been shown to enhance children's narrative skills—their ability to organize and convey a sequence of events coherently. This, in turn, strengthens their overall language competence (Yin et al., 2021). For instance, when children are asked to act out parts of the story using props or puppets, they must organize their thoughts, remember details, and produce appropriate speech for their characters (Nasaruddin & Sadaruddin, 2019). This requires a complex interaction between receptive language (understanding the story), expressive language (articulating thoughts), and emotional expression (conveying feelings through actions).

Using props such as puppets or interactive technologies in this phase can also make the learning process more inclusive. Children with special needs or developmental disorders can benefit from these tools, as they provide a means to engage in the storytelling process, even if verbal communication is a challenge (Ismawati et al., 2023). The use of props and physical expression in storytelling makes the activity accessible to children with diverse abilities, fostering an inclusive learning environment.

4.4. The Role of Caregivers, Teachers, and Technology in Supporting Language Development

Throughout the TRUE storytelling process, the involvement of caregivers and teachers plays a pivotal role in ensuring the effectiveness of the method. Research has consistently shown that caregiver-initiated conversations, where the caregiver actively engages the child in dialogue, significantly contribute to the development of both receptive and expressive language skills (Mance & Lamot, 2023). In this context, caregivers who encourage children to talk about the stories they watch and review can provide valuable scaffolding that supports language growth.

Furthermore, the integration of technology in the storytelling process enhances the learning experience. As Adetokun et al. (2023) highlight, digital tools like educational apps and videos not only capture children's attention but also provide interactive opportunities to reinforce language skills. These tools can be used to supplement the TRUE method, making the learning process more engaging and accessible. However, it is important to balance screen time with direct, face-to-face interaction, as excessive screen time can hurt language development, especially when it replaces meaningful social interactions (Najiha et al., 2023; Tatar & Gerde, 2023).

4.5. Implications for Educators and Future Research

The findings of this study highlight the potential of the TRUE storytelling method as an effective tool for enhancing language development in young children. To optimize the impact of this method, educators and caregivers need to create an environment that supports active participation and engagement. This means offering opportunities for children to interact with stories in a variety of ways—through watching, reviewing, and expressing.

For children with special language needs or developmental language disorders, the TRUE storytelling method can be further adapted to cater to their specific needs. Tailored interventions that incorporate personalized feedback, emotional support, and the use of appropriate technological tools can help these children develop their language skills more effectively (Riad et al., 2023). Future research should continue to explore how the TRUE method

can be adapted for diverse contexts and children with varying language development profiles, including bilingual children or those with DLD.

In conclusion, the TRUE storytelling method offers a comprehensive approach to supporting children's receptive and expressive language skills, incorporating both traditional and digital strategies. By integrating these elements, educators can create a holistic learning environment that nurtures both cognitive and emotional development, ensuring that children are equipped with the language skills needed for success in school and social life.

5. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that integrating video-visual media with interactive elements, such as hand puppets, can significantly enhance children's receptive and expressive language skills. This approach not only enriches vocabulary but also fosters emotional expression and the ability to follow instructions. The use of visual aids in storytelling helps children grasp more complex concepts and contributes to the overall development of their communication skills. Interactivity in learning, whether through media or physical elements like hand puppets, encourages cognitive engagement and strengthens the learning process. While the benefits of multimedia and interactivity have proven effective, challenges related to dependency on technology and the appropriateness of its contextual use must be taken into account. Therefore, this approach can make a substantial contribution to the language development of young children, provided it is complemented by traditional teaching methods that remain relevant.

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