

## IMPROVING LANGUAGE LITERACY SKILLS OF 5 AND 6-YEAR-OLD CHILDREN THROUGH PICTURE STORY METHOD AT SCHOOL

Deky Magay<sup>1</sup>, Elizabeth Lanny<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Universitas Kristen Satya Wacana, Indonesia

\*Corresponding Address: 272018402@student.uksw.edu

*Received: 08 August 2022 / Approved: 16 November 2022 / Published: 29 December 2022*

**Abstract:** This study aims to improve the language literacy skills of children aged 5-6 through the media of illustrated story series in Shabat Getasan school children of Semarang Regency. This research is urgent to determine the improvements to children's language literacy skills. This research is a class action research (PTK). This research consists of two cycles, and each cycle is held in two meetings. The subjects of this study were 12 children of Shabat Getasan School, Semarang Regency. The data was collected through observation and documentation. The observation results before the action (pre-cycle) showed language skills in children with Good criteria of 0%, and cycle I of children's oral language skills who entered the Good criteria of 0% and cycle II of 80-90%. The results showed that the media of picture stories could improve language literacy skills in children aged 5-6 years. Thus, it can be concluded that the media of picture stories can improve language literacy skills in Shabat Getasan school children, Semarang Regency.

**Keywords:** Improving Language Literacy Skills, Picture Story Media, Children Aged 5-6 Years

## **INTRODUCTION**

Early Childhood Education (ECE) plays a crucial role in developing children's moral character, creativity, innovation, and independence (Harun et al., 2020). Early childhood education is an education that helps facilitate the growth and development of young children according to their characteristics to prepare them to become the future generation and leaders for the nation of Indonesia. (Rinta, Febriana, and Wulandari 2022) (Keumala, Yoestara, and Putri 2018).

The new curriculum policy emphasizes the importance of strengthening literacy and numeracy skills for early childhood children (Yang et al., 2022). With good literacy skills, a child can easily communicate with their peers and express their feelings more effectively. Similarly, Muhammad Sunaryanto, as cited in (Harjono, 2019) describes the speaking characteristics of 5-6-year-old children as follows: they enjoy speaking and usually direct their speech to someone, they are interested in using new and extensive vocabulary, they ask many questions, their grammar is accurate and logical, they use language appropriately, they can define things using simple language, they use language assertively, and they actively ask questions and engage in conversation (Sunaryanto, 2015). According to the Indonesian Ministry of Education, literacy is the ability to access, comprehend, and intelligently utilize something through various activities, including reading, observing, listening, writing, and speaking (Muchtar & Suryani, 2019) (Ati & Widiyanto, 2020).

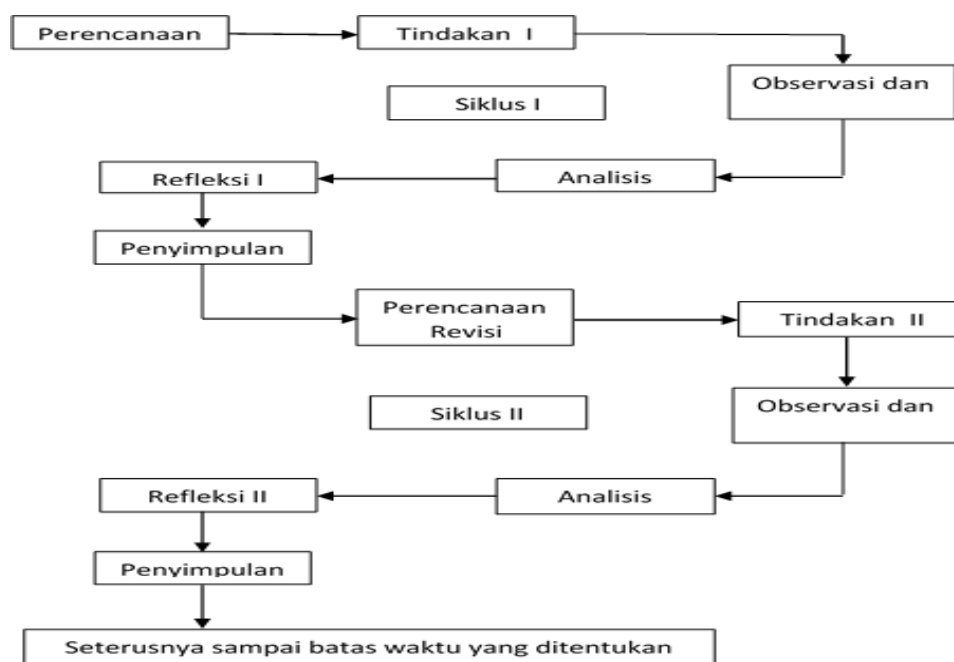
Indeed, literacy is often defined as the ability of an individual to read, write, and interpret information. It is closely intertwined with education. Education plays a crucial role in developing and enhancing literacy skills, providing the necessary knowledge, guidance, and practice for individuals to become literate. Literacy is not only about the technical skills of reading and writing but also involves critical thinking, comprehension, and the ability to effectively communicate and engage with various forms of information. Education systems worldwide prioritize literacy as a fundamental aspect of learning and personal development (Liu et al., 2020). Literacy has become extremely important today, particularly in education (Ningsih et al., 2021). Education cannot be separated from literacy because literacy hones students' abilities and makes them creative and critical thinkers (Din, 2020). Understanding language in children needs to be provided from an early age using methods that young children easily understand. This becomes a shared focus in creating strategies to enhance reading interest through literacy activities.

According to Abuddin's theory (2019), the storytelling method has an appeal that can touch children's feelings, which can educate children by relying on spoken and written language. Defeng's research (2023) also shows that children have rich and varied reading responses that consist primarily of language descriptions and emotional experiences rather than careful observation of picture books

and a deep understanding of the relationship between images and text. Reading picture books has attracted much attention, while responses to reading children's books have been almost unnoticed. Therefore, the problem in this study is that preschool children lead to the development of their storytelling and drawing skills, and it can be predicted that this will ultimately support the long-term development of their language, cognitive, and socio-emotional skills.

## METHODS

This research is a classroom action research (CAR) study. This research is a type of classroom action research (CAR). This research design uses an experimental research design. This research is a type of classroom action research (Azizah, 2021). Classroom action research (CAR) is a reflective approach (Ulfa, 2022). The steps of the research design procedure for each cycle of language learning treatment can be illustrated as follows:



Based on the illustration above, some cycles consist of four essential components in each cycle, which rotate sequentially. They start with the planning component, followed by action, observation, and reflection (Haryanti et al. 2019). The subjects in this study are 12 children of Shabat Kopeng School, consisting of 8 males and four females. The data collection techniques used in this study include observation, interviews, and documentation. The data were analyzed descriptively and quantitatively using an interactive analysis approach, which includes data reduction (simplification of data), data presentation, and conclusion. This analysis was conducted interactively, with cyclical data collection (Cresswell, 2018).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This study focused on the Shabat Kopeng School group in the odd semester of the academic year 2023/2024, which consisted of 12 children, comprising eight boys and four girls, with varying ages. After conducting four teaching sessions, only 2 out of the 12 children became research participants. Both of these children still lacked literacy skills, particularly in language proficiency.

Description of the Initial Condition

This study focuses on a group of 12 children in a Shabat School, consisting of 8 boys and four girls, with varying ages. However, after conducting four teaching sessions with the research subjects, it was found that two children still needed to achieve language literacy skills. Initially, the speaking abilities of these two subjects were very low, as observed during the learning process. When the teacher taught and explained, the classroom atmosphere was quiet because the children remained silent and focused on the teacher without engaging in reciprocal interaction to answer the teacher's questions. The language development of 5-6-year-old children, according to STPPA (Early Childhood Education and Development Center), as mentioned in Sabyan PAUD (2020), includes 1) Understanding language, 2) Expressing language, and 3) Literacy skills.

In the initial condition, the speaking abilities of the two subject children were very low, which could be observed during the teaching sessions. When the teacher taught and explained, the classroom atmosphere was very quiet because the children remained silent and only focused on the teacher without any feedback to answer the questions posed by the teacher. This indicates that the children's ability to communicate and speak was not yet at its maximum. The two subject children needed help answering questions in the first and second teaching sessions. The following are the results of the initial reflection used as pre-cycle data:

Table 1. Initial data on children's literacy skills

Indicator	Score					
	BB		MB		BSB	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
1	2	100%	2	0%	2	0%
2	2	100%	2	0%	2	0%

Based on table 4.1 above, it can be observed that both subject children received a score of BB with a percentage of 100% in the first indicator, indicating no development at all. This is because, during the question-and-answer session, the children remained silent and solely focused on the teacher, without any of them receiving a score of MB (Moderately Developed) or BSB (Highly

Developed) in the first indicator. Furthermore, both subject children received a score of BB with a percentage of 100% in the second indicator, indicating no development at all. This is because the children faced difficulties responding to the teacher's questions and expressing their feelings through storytelling. Similarly, none of the children scored MB or BSB in the second indicator. The conditions described above can be depicted in the following diagram.

### Description of the First Action in Cycle I

In Cycle I, each of the first and second sessions had different activities but still focused on achieving the desired indicators to improve the children's language literacy skills, as observed during each learning activity. The cycle in cycle I started with planning, implementation, observation, and reflection stages.

During the observation stage, the researcher noted an improvement or an increase in children's language literacy skills. This improvement can be seen from the data obtained in the first action of Cycle I.

**Table 2.** Observation Results in Cycle I, First Meeting

Indicator	Score					
	BB		MB		BSB	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
1	2	60%	2	41%	2	0%
2	2	50%	2	41%	2	0%

From the results of the data in Cycle I in the table above (Table 4.2), compared to the initial condition in the cycle with the criteria of BB and a percentage of 100%, it can be observed that there have been changes and improvements. In Indicator 1, the children's language development showed some changes, with the criteria of BB indicating no development and a percentage of 60%. This means that the children could only answer questions with assistance from the teacher, although they were able to provide some answers with guidance or prompts from the teacher. In Indicator 2, the language development of the two subject children slightly improved, as they could narrate less than three questions without assistance from the teacher, resulting in the criteria of BB indicating no development, with a percentage of 50%.

Compared to the initial condition in the cycle with the criteria of MB and a percentage of 0%, in Indicator 1, there was progress in language development as the children started to answer questions from the storybook with reminders or without assistance from the teacher, resulting in the criteria of MB indicating some development, with a percentage of 41%. In Indicator 2, there was progress in

language development as the children could narrate from the storybook with reminders or without assistance from the teacher and their peers, resulting in the criteria of MB indicating some development, with a percentage of 41%.

However, the subject children still needed to achieve the BSB (Highly Developed) criteria and needed did not reach the target indicators with a percentage of 0%. The table above (Table 4.2) shows that the language literacy level in children is still veThe researcher will use this data searcher to plan for the second meeting of Cycle 1 to improve the language literacy skills of the children in Shabat Kopeng School.

Considering the results from Cycle, I'm the first meeting. There were still many things that could have been improved. Therefore, the researcher will develop improvement plans for the second meeting of Cycle I. The cycle implementation began in the first and second weeks of February 2023, with two meetings. In Cycle I, each first and second meeting had different activities but remained focused on the indicators aimed at improving the children's language literacy skills. The learning process in cycle I followed the stages of planning, implementation, observation, and reflection.

During the observation stage, the researcher observed an improvement or an increase in children's language literacy skills. This can be seen from the data obtained in the second act of Cycle I.

**Table 3.** Observation Results in Cycle I, Second Meeting

Indicator	Score					
	BB		MB		BSB	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
1	2	40%	2	60%	2	0%
2	2	40%	2	60%	2	0%

From the results of the data in the second meeting of Cycle I in the table above (Table 4.2), compared to the initial condition in Cycle I with the BB criteria and a percentage of 50-60%, it can be observed that there have been changes and improvements after the implementation of the action in Cycle I.

In Indicator 1, there was a slight improvement in the children's language development, with the BB criteria indicating no development and a percentage of 40%. This means that the children could still only answer questions with assistance from the teacher, although they provided some answers with guidance or prompts from the teacher. In Indicator 2, the language development of the two subject children slightly improved, as they could narrate less than three questions without assistance from the teacher, resulting in the BB criteria indicating no development, with a percentage of 40%.

Compared to the initial condition in Cycle I, where the MB criteria and a percentage of 41% were observed, in Indicator 1, there was progress in language development as the children started to answer questions from the storybook with reminders or without assistance from the teacher, resulting in the MB criteria indicating some development, with a percentage of 60%. In Indicator 2, there was progress in language development as the children could narrate from the storybook with reminders or without assistance from the teacher and their peers, resulting in the MB criteria indicating some development, with a percentage of 60%.

Then none of the two child subjects who got the BSB criteria developed very well because they had yet to reach the expected indicator goals. Although a little was achieved, they still had to be reminded, so it was still considered very minimal, with a percentage of 0%.

After implementing the improvement process, it can be observed that the use of picture story methods has enhanced the speaking and communication abilities of the children (Saribu & Hidayah, 2019). Although the children can answer the questions given by the teacher, it is because they are still provided with motivation and reminders from the teacher. Additionally, using the picture method can make children more interested in paying attention to the learning process. As a result, when the teacher engages in question-and-answer activities, the children can respond according to the questions asked (Brodin & Renblad, 2020).

## Description of the First Meeting in Cycle 2

Based on the data from Cycle I, the first and second meetings, many shortcomings and weaknesses were identified. Therefore, the researcher has developed a plan for improvement in the first meeting of Cycle II. The implementation of Cycle II began in the third and fourth weeks of February 2023, with a total of 2 meetings. In Cycle II, each first and second meeting had different activities but remained focused on the indicators aimed at improving the language literacy skills of the children. The learning process in Cycle II followed the stages of planning, implementation, observation, and reflection.

**Table 4.** First Meeting Cycle II Observation Results

Indicator	Score					
	BB		MB		BSB	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
1	2	0%	2	40%	2	60%
2	2	0%	2	40%	2	60%

Based on the table above, it can be observed that in Cycle 1, the BB criteria had a percentage of 40%, the MB criteria had a percentage of 60%, and the BSB criteria had a percentage of 0%. From the results of the data in the first meeting of Cycle 2 in the table above, compared to the initial condition in the first and second meetings of Cycle 1, it is evident that there have been changes and improvements after implementing the actions in Cycle 2.

In Indicator 1, both subject children no longer met the BB criteria or showed no development, with a percentage of 0%. This indicates that their abilities have reached the MB criteria or started to develop, and they can answer questions. Similarly, in Indicator 2, both subject children no longer met the BB criteria or showed no development, with a percentage of 0%. This indicates that their abilities have reached the MB criteria or started to develop, and they can narrate a few questions.

Furthermore, in Indicator 1, there was progress in language development as the children started to answer questions from the storybook with reminders or without assistance from the teacher, resulting in the MB criteria indicating some development, with a percentage of 40%. Similarly, in Indicator 2, there was progress in language development as the children could narrate from the storybook with reminders or without assistance from the teacher and their peers, resulting in the MB criteria indicating some development, with a percentage of 40%.

Furthermore, in Indicator 1, both subject children achieved the BSB criteria, indicating significant development, and could answer questions from the teacher, with a percentage of 60%. Similarly, in Indicator 2, both subject children achieved the BSB criteria, indicating excellent development, and could narrate and recall the material, achieving the expected indicator, with a percentage of 60%.

After implementing the improvement process in the first meeting of Cycle 2, it can be concluded that there is visible progress in the children's speaking abilities. Their engagement in storytelling about God Yeshua's blessings and love for children and their active participation in answering simple questions posed by the teacher indicates improvement.

### **Description of the Second Meeting in Cycle 2**

Before implementing the second action in Cycle 2, the researcher planned appropriate indicators based on the age of the children in the class to guide their development. After determining the indicators as a reference, the researcher will design the Lesson Plan (RPPH) for the second act of Cycle 2 (attached) (Sofyan et al., 2020). The second meeting of Cycle 2 took place on Saturday, February 25, 2023, from 04:30 to 05:00. During the implementation phase, the planned activities



were conducted as previously designed. In this observation stage, the improvement in the children's speaking abilities using the picture story method can be seen, as shown in the table below.

**Table 5.** Observa Results of Second Meeting Cycle II

Indicator	Score					
	BB		MB		BSB	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
1	2	0%	2	10%	2	90%
2	2	0%	2	20%	2	80%

From the data in Cycle 2, the second meeting, in the table above (Table 5), compared to Cycle 1 with the BB criteria at a percentage of 40%, the MB criteria at a percentage of 60%, and the BSB criteria at a percentage of 0%, it can be observed that the language proficiency of the children has significantly improved in Cycle 2.

In Indicator 1, both subject children no longer met the BB criteria or showed no development, with a percentage of 0%. This indicates that their abilities have reached the MB criteria or started to develop, and they can answer questions. Similarly, in Indicator 2, both subject children no longer met the BB criteria or showed no development, with a percentage of 0%. This indicates that their abilities have entered the MB criteria or started to develop, and they can narrate a few questions.

Furthermore, in Indicator 1, there was progress in language development as the children started to answer questions from the storybook without being reminded or assisted by the teacher, resulting in the MB criteria indicating some development, with a percentage of 10%. Similarly, in Indicator 2, there was progress in language development as the children could narrate from the storybook without being reminded by the teacher, resulting in the MB criteria indicating some development, with a percentage of 20%.

Moreover, in Indicator 1, both subject children achieved the BSB criteria, indicating excellent development, and could answer questions from the teacher, with a percentage of 90%. Similarly, in Indicator 2, both subject children achieved the BSB criteria, indicating excellent development, and could narrate the material in repetition, achieving the expected indicator with a percentage of 80-90% (Dewi & Fitria, 2019).

Based on the table above (Table 4.5), it can be seen that the children's speaking abilities have started to develop optimally. This can be observed from the percentage of the BSB criteria, indicating excellent development in each indicator, which has shown a significant increase. Tuded that children prefer learning activities that involve picture storytelling methods.

Based on the observer's observations regarding the children in the Sekolah Shabat group, it can be seen that the children's language abilities have reached the target of 80-90% development in both subjects using the picture, the storytelling shows that the children's oral language skills have improved. This achievement is also attributed to the efforts of the teacher, who consistently provides motivation and reinforcement to the children, resulting in their increased interest and concentration in the lessons. Therefore, this classroom action research has been successful.

## **Discussion**

Based on the results of the research in Cycle I and Cycle II, it can be concluded that the use of picture storytelling media can improve the oral language skills of children aged 5-6 years in Sekolah Shabat Yeshua Generation Kopeng (Setyarini et al., 2018). Before the intervention, many children had difficulties expressing themselves orally. Their language could have been more fluent, and their words were often hard to understand. Some children tended to be quiet and only focused on the teacher. They had difficulty expressing their feelings. However, improvements were observed after receiving the researcher's interventions in Cycle I and Cycle II (Dewi et al., 2021). The oral language literacy skills of the children have shown improvement, indicating that their oral language abilities have developed in a better direction than before (Lervåg et al., 2018). Thus, this research can be considered successful as the success indicators that were aimed for have been achieved and, in some cases, even exceeded the predetermined indicators (Tomblin et al., 2020). The results of this research support the idea that picture storytelling improves children's speaking abilities. In this study, 80-90% of the two children improved their speaking development. This surpasses the initial target set by the researcher, which aimed for a 75% improvement in speaking abilities for the two children. The observed improvement makes it easier for children to engage in conversations and communicate effectively. It answers the purpose of this research, LANGUAGE LITERACY ABILITY OF CHILDREN 5 AND 6 YEARS THROUGH THE STORY METHOD has a positive impact, children's language literacy skills that are well developed have an impact on increasing children's speaking abilities, language production that is more lexically and grammatically accurate in preschool children. Therefore, the hypothesis of this research has been proven, demonstrating that using the picture storytelling method can enhance children's speaking abilities in Sekolah Shabat Yeshua Generation Kopeng.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the results of the research and discussion presented, it can be concluded that pictorial storytelling activities have improved the language and communication skills of the children of the

Generation of Shabat Yeshua School in the Getasan Kopeng district. Well-developed children's language literacy skills improve children's speech skills and language production that is more lexically and grammatically accurate in preschoolers. Improvement of children's language skills is optimal, as evidenced by the 80-90% percentage in Cycle II. Children can communicate effectively. Therefore, it can be concluded that children prefer learning activities that involve picture-telling methods. Thus, this classroom action research is successful and has a positive value. Parents should play an active role in the development of their children by paying attention and meeting their needs, including learning materials that support brain development according to their needs, ensuring that they are safe for children, and using picture storybooks to improve communication and communication. Language skill. It is suggested to develop the storytelling method further using picture books with different content to make it more interesting and useful based on the findings of this study.

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