Bedtime Storytelling: A Method to Enhance Early Childhoods' Language Development

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A B S T R A K

Secara psikologis, umumnya anak usia dini senang mendengarkan cerita yang diceritakan oleh kedua orang tuanya. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis dampak mendongeng sebelum tidur yang dilakukan oleh orang tua dalam rangka meningkatkan perkembangan bahasa anak usia dini. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan pendekatan studi kasus. Responden penelitian ini adalah 15 orang ibu dan 15 anak usia 5-6 tahun. Metode yang digunakan untuk mengumpulkan data yaitu wawancara secara mendalam dan observasi. Teknik analisis data menggunakan deskriptif kualitatif dan kuantitatif. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa mendongeng sebelum tidur berdampak kepada kefasihan anak dalam mengucapkan kata-kata, penguasaan kosakata anak, rasa percaya diri anak, dan kreativitas anak dalam menceritakan ulang dongeng yang didengar. Kesimpulannya, mendongeng sebelum tidur secara empiris mampu meningkatkan perkembangan bahasa anak secara signifikan. Selain itu, penelitian ini berimplikasi pada proses belajar mengajar pada satuan PAUD yang mana guru disarankan menggunakan metode bercerita selama proses belajar mengajar, dan juga orang tua disarankan untuk membiasakan mendongeng sebelum tidur sebagai salah satu metode yang digunakan dalam mengembangkan perkembangan bahasa anak usia dini terutama usia 5-6 tahun.

A B S T R A C T

Psychologically, young children generally enjoy listening to stories told by their parents. This study aims to analyze the impact of storytelling before bed by parents in order to improve early childhood language development. This research uses a qualitative method with a case study approach. The respondents of this study were 15 mothers and 15 children aged 5-6 years. The methods used to collect data were in-depth interviews and observation. Data analysis techniques use qualitative and quantitative descriptive. The results of the research show that storytelling before bed impacts children's fluency in pronouncing words, vocabulary mastery, self-confidence, and creativity in retelling the stories they hear. In conclusion, storytelling before bed can empirically improve children's language development significantly. Apart from that, this research has implications for the teaching and learning process in PAUD units, where teachers are advised to use the storytelling method during the teaching and learning process. Parents are also advised to get into the habit of telling stories before bed as one of the methods used in developing language in early childhood, especially for young children. 5-6 years.

1. INTRODUCTION

Early childhood education is the first and main foundation in developing children's personal development, both in terms of characters, physical abilities, cognitive, language, art, social, emotional, spiritual, self-concept and independence (Andriani, 2022; Knauer et al., 2020). Therefore, education is very important for early childhood as the main basis for developing the aspects of children's basic development. This statement in line with the Minister of National Education Regulation Number 137 of 2014 which states that early childhood education should cover and develop six aspects of development, those are: (1) aspect of religious and moral values, (2) aspect of physical-motor, (3) aspect of cognitive, (4) aspect of language, (5) aspect of social-emotional, and (6) aspect of art (Silvia et al., 2021; Hidayat & Nurlatifah, 2023).

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The six aspects of development aforementioned should be optimally developed by parents, teachers, and the environment. One of the aspects that should be developed earlier within early childhood's personal development is language (Supriatna & Wismaliya, 2019; Andriani, 2022; Bhatti et al., 2022). Through language, early childhood is able to interact among parents, family members, teachers, friends, classmates, and the environmental society. Thus, early childhood's life would grow and develop naturally, normally, and easily affiliated with their socio-cultural. In using language, early childhood would experience step by step process. Naturally, the first step is listening, then the second step is speaking. Next, the third step is reading and the last is writing. These gradual steps of language development are in line with the theory proposed by Bromley who argues that at the beginning of life, human firstly learns to listen, after that learns to speak, then learns to read, finally learns to write (Nichols, 2000; Rosanda et al., 2022; Safei, 2020). Each of these developments would be experienced naturally based on the age development and treatment guided by parents, teachers, social interaction, and habitual action. As Bromley's statement mentioned earlier, the listening step becomes the initial process for early childhood to acquire language skills. Thus, listening has to be habitually socialized since early age (Hamilton, 2014). For early childhood, listening has an urgent function to develop language skills, one of them is speaking.

In the reality, based on the researchers' observation at the research site, there are still many early childhoods having difficulty in developing their language skill. It is proved by their difficulty in telling stories related to their daily habitual action. In addition, there are early childhoods who are still embarrassed to talk to teachers or their classmates. Besides, there are also early childhoods who do not want to talk at all when he/she is asked to answer questions related to the story given. These difficulties are also in line with the results of the research conducted by (Jurkic et al., 2023; Szabó-Morvai et al., 2023). After confirming to their parents particularly to their mothers, the aforementioned phenomena are caused by several reasons such as parents are busy in the workplace at which they work from morning into evening, so that they feel tired and immediately take a rest without paying attention to tell bedtime stories to their early childhood (Zhang, 2023). In the other hands, not all mothers know how to tell bedtime stories through adjusting their early childhood's learning style, mothers have not made literacy activities as the habit at home, and millennial mothers spend their time to use gadget than communicating with their early childhood to tell bedtime stories (Sufiati & Paramita, 2021; Wahyundari & Handayani, 2021).

To overcome the difficulties aforementioned, parents especially mothers have to select the best method to make early childhood enjoy listening. One of the methods is telling story, particularly telling bedtime stories (Al-mansour & Al-shorman, 2011; Sufiati & Paramita, 2021; Yanti & Tirtayani, 2023; Zalukhu et al., 2023). Telling bedtime stories to early childhood must be very useful in developing the language skills and also language aspects (Hidayat et al., 2022). Telling bedtime stories to early childhood before going to bed is very important to be habitualized by parents especially by mothers as therapy to develop their early childhood's speaking skills. Besides feeling entertained, early childhood also acquire experience in imagination related to the content of telling bedtime stories delivered. In addition, early childhood acquires new vocabularies, imitating to pronounce them, and retelling the stories they listened to others (Hidayat et al., 2021; Yanti & Tirtayani, 2023; Zhang, 2023). Apart from these benefits, there is another urgent benefit of telling bedtime stories such as connecting very close emotional relationship between parents and early childhood. Thus, this emotional connection becomes stronger and more harmonious (Purnama et al., 2022).

The present study is underpinned by three previous studies. The first previous study entitled, "Internalizing the Value of Patience in Telling Bedtime Stories Activity in Sundanese Societies" (Supriatna & Wismaliya, 2019). The results of the study showed that storytelling activities before sleeping becomes an appropriate time to internalize the value of patience. This patience value is internalized to be the children's character in the real life. The second previous study entitled "The Benefits and Purpose of Storytelling for Early Childhood Education" (Farantika et al., 2022). The results of the study showed that the benefits of storytelling for early childhood include training concentration, sharpening memory sharpness, developing language skills, fostering interest in reading, improving critical thinking skills, and bringing closer emotional relationships between teachers and students. The last previous study entitled "Bedtime stories from inside – family practices and affinities in families with incarcerated fathers" (Andersson & Björkhagen Turesson, 2023). The results of the study showed that there is possible connection emotionally between father and children through giving regular bedtime stories.

Based on the three previous studies aforementioned, the first and the third previous studies focus on the implementation of bedtime story to internalize the childhood's value of patience and the connection emotion between father and his early childhood at which those are dissimilar to the focus of the present study (Andersson & Björkhagen Turesson, 2023; Supriatna & Wismaliya, 2019). Meanwhile the second previous study has similarity to the present study which focuses on the implementation of bedtime story to enhance the early childhoods' cognitive and language development (Farantika et al., 2022). As for the

novelty of the present research is that the implementation of telling bedtime stories impacts on the early childhoods' fluency in saying words, the early childhoods' vocabulary mastery, the early childhoods' self-confidence, and the early childhoods' creativity to retell what they heard to others. Besides, the implementation of telling bedtime stories is also able to enhance significantly the early childhoods' language development. Thus, telling bedtime stories becomes the suitable habit carried out by the parents especially mothers to their early childhood as the routine activity before going to bed. Nevertheless, the three previous studies are used as the references of the present study. Furthermore, the researchers are interested in conducting further research regarding the implementation of telling bedtime stories in enhancing language development of the early childhoods aged 5-6 years old. The aim of this research is to analyze the impact of bedtime stories on early childhood language development.

2. METHOD

The method employed in the present study is a qualitative method under a case study. A case study is an approach used to know a series of decisions about why it was taken, how it was implemented, and what the outcome was (Fraenkel et al., 2012; Hancock & Algozzine, 2006; Yin, 2018). In addition, a case study is understood as an approach of research concerning an empirical inquiry that investigates cases through addressing 'how' and 'why' questions related to the certain phenomenon (Fraenkel et al., 2012; Puspa & Sinaga, 2023; Yazan, 2015). In the present study, the researchers involved 15 mothers and 15 early childhoods as the respondents. They were parents and students at KOBER Daarul Muslihun located in Ciamis Regency, West Java. The selection of the respondents was carried out through purposive technique at which the early childhood aged 5-6 years who learns at class B with middle to lower language skills were selected as the subject of this research. The total of the subject of this research is 15 early childhoods.

The data were gathered through interview and observation. Interview was done to 15 mothers conducted bedtime storytelling routines for a month during January 2023. The interview consisted of 4 questions in line with pre-bedtime storytelling routine, whilst-bedtime storytelling routine, and post-bedtime storytelling routine. Meanwhile, observation was done to 15 early childhoods aged 5-6 years old before and after conducting the activity of bedtime storytelling routine. Then, the early childhoods were asked for telling story in front of the teachers and their classmates before and after getting treatment for a month by their mother at home. The early childhoods' performance in telling story was done to check the early childhoods' language development. Then, the data gathered were analyzed qualitatively. Referring to the instruments used, interview guidelines, observation, and scoring rubric can be seen in the Table 1, Table 2, and Table 3. Data analysis techniques use qualitative and quantitative descriptive.

Tabel 1. The Interview Guidelines

No.	Questions	Answer Description
1.	What kind of preparation do you do before beginning the bedtime storytelling activity?	The answer is regarding the preparation of the bedtime storytelling activity done by the-parents.
2.	How do you implement the bedtime storytelling activity?	The answer is regarding the implementation of the bed time storytelling activity.
3.	What effect does the bedtime storytelling activity occure on your son's/daughter's language development?	The answer is regarding the effect of the-bedtime storytelling activity on the early-childhood's language development.
4.	How do you evaluate the implementation of the bedtime storytelling activity on your son/daughter?	The answer is regarding the evaluation of the implementation of the bedtime storytelling activity on the early childhoods.

Modified from (Hidayat et al., 2023)

Tabel 2. The Observation Instrument

No.	Basic Competences	Observed Aspects	Indicators
1.	3.5/4.5	The early childhood is able to say words fluently.	fluency in saying words
2.	3.6/4.6	Besides saying words fluently, the early childhood is also able to master vocabulary.	vocabulary mastery

No.	Basic Competences	Observed Aspects	Indicators
3.	3.5/4.5	Besides saying words fluently and master vocabulary, the early childhood is also able to have self confidence.	self-confidence
4.	3.11/4.11	Besides saying words fluently, mastering vocabulary, and having self-confidence, the early childhood is also able to retell the story they heard.	retelling the story they heard

Modified from (Khotimah et al., 2023)

Tabel 3. The Scoring Rubric

Assessment score (1-4)		Early Childhood's Ability Level
4	BSB = Very well-developed	If the early Childhood is able to carry out activities according to orders-independently, properly, and correctly as the expected target.
3	BSH = Developed as expectation	If the early Childhood is able to carry out activities according to orders-independently.
2	MB = Start to develop	If the early Childhood is able to carry out activities according to orders, but with stimulation or assistance provided by the teacher.
1	BB = Undeveloped	If the early Childhood cannot or does not want to carry out activities according to orders.

Adapted from (Khotimah et al., 2023)

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

After conducting the bedtime storytelling routine held during January 2023, 15 mothers as the respondents of the early childhoods aged 5-6 years were interviewed. From 15 respondents, only 10 were able to complete the answer. This is because the answers given by 5 mothers are incomplete and lately submitted to the researchers. Therefore, these 5 answers did not included in the data of this study. The interview consisted of 4 questions. Those are: (1) What kind of preparation do you do before beginning the bedtime storytelling activity? (2) How do you implement the bedtime storytelling activity? (3) What effect does the bedtime storytelling activity occur on your son's/daughter's language development? (4) How do you evaluate the implementation of the bedtime storytelling activity on your son/daughter? To see the data gathered from the interview, the researchers presented them in the Table 4 up to Table 7.

Question 1: What kind of preparation do you do before begining the bedtime storytelling activity?
Table 4. Respondents' Answers to the First Question

No.	Respondent Code	Respondents' Answers
1.	M. 01	Kissing and caressing the child
2.	M. 02	Hugging a child
3.	M. 03	Hugging a child
4.	M. 04	Kissing a child
5.	M. 05	Hugging and kissing children
6.	M. 06	Stroking, kissing while hugging the child
7.	M. 07	Kissing a child
8.	M. 08	Hugging a child
9.	M. 09	Hugging a child
10.	M. 010	Stroking the child

Question 2: How do you implement the bedtime storytelling activity?

Table 5. Respondents' Answers to the Second Question

No.	Respondent Code	Respondents' Answers
1.	M. 01	At first it was a little difficult, after one week, the storytelling became easy and fun.
2.	M. 02	Because he is used to it, the implementation of storytelling is not hampered.

No.	Respondent Code	Respondents' Answers
3.	M. 03	At first it was a little difficult, then after getting used to the storytelling it became fun.
4.	M. 04	At first it was a little difficult, then after getting used to the storytelling it became fun.
5.	M. 05	At first it was a little difficult, then after getting used to the storytelling it became fun.
6.	M. 06	From the start, my child really liked the activity of telling stories before bed, so the activity went well and was fun.
7.	M. 07	Because I am used to telling stories to my children before bed, the implementation of storytelling activities for one month went smoothly and was enjoyable.
8.	M. 08	Because he is used to it, the implementation of storytelling is not hampered.
9.	M. 09	From the start, my child really liked the activity of telling stories before bed, so the activity went well and was fun.
10.	M. 010	Because he is used to it, the implementation of storytelling is not hampered.

Question 3: What effect does the bedtime storytelling activity occur on your son's/daughter's language development?

Table 6. Respondents' Answers to the Third Question

No.	Respondent Code	Respondents' Answers
1.	M. 01	The impact of implementing storytelling before bed for my child generally helps fluency in pronouncing words, increases vocabulary mastery, increases self-confidence, so that my child wants to retell the stories he has heard.
2.	M. 02	The impact of storytelling before bed can help develop my child's vocabulary mastery and speaking fluency.
3.	M. 03	The impact of carrying out storytelling before bed can develop my child's self-confidence in speaking and interacting with friends and the people around him.
4.	M. 04	Carrying out storytelling before bed helps develop my child's fluency in speaking.
5.	M. 05	Carrying out storytelling before bed makes my child want to retell what he has heard, so that his self-confidence increases.
6.	M. 06	The impact of implementing storytelling before bed for my child generally helps fluency in pronouncing words, increases vocabulary mastery, increases self-confidence, so that my child wants to retell the stories he has heard.
7.	M. 07	The impact of carrying out storytelling before bed can help develop my child's vocabulary mastery, so that his confidence in interacting with his friends increases.
8.	M. 08	Carrying out storytelling before bed helps develop my child's fluency in speaking.
9.	M. 09	The impact of implementing storytelling before bed for my child generally helps fluency in pronouncing words, increases vocabulary mastery, increases self-confidence, so that my child wants to retell the stories he has heard.
10.	M. 010	Carrying out storytelling before bed makes my child want to retell what he has heard, so that his self-confidence increases.

Question 4: How do you evaluate the implementation of the bedtime storytelling activity on your son/daughter?

Table 7. Respondents' Answers to the Fourth Question

No.	Respondent Code	Respondents' Answers
1.	M. 01	Repeating the fairy tale that has been given and asking the child to retell the fairy tale that he has heard to me, his father, and other family members.
2.	M. 02	I ask questions about the content of the story. If the child can answer, it means the storytelling activity has been successful.
3.	M. 03	I ask questions about the content of the story. If the child can answer, it means the storytelling activity has been successful.
4.	M. 04	I ask questions about the content of the story. If the child can answer, it means the storytelling activity has been successful.

No.	Respondent Code	Respondents' Answers
5.	M. 05	I ask questions about the content of the story. If the child can answer, it means the storytelling activity has been successful.
6.	M. 06	I asked the child to retell me the story he had heard. Then, I asked several questions about the content of the fairy tale. If he can answer, it means that the storytelling activity that I have provided is considered successful.
7.	M. 07	I evaluate my child's success based on a comparison of his abilities before and after getting used to storytelling activities before bed. If there is even a slight increase, it means that the storytelling activity before bed that I did was successful.
8.	M. 08	I evaluate my child's success based on a comparison of his abilities before and after getting used to storytelling activities before bed. If there is even a slight increase, it means that the storytelling activity before bed that I did was successful.
9.	M. 09	I asked the children to retell the fairy tales they had heard. If my child can tell the story again, then the storytelling activity that I have carried out has been successful.
10.	M. 010	I asked the child to retell the fairy tale he heard to his father. If the child is able to tell the story again, then the storytelling activity carried out by me can be said to be successful.

After presenting the data from interview, the researchers also present the data from observation. The data are referring to the results of early childhoods' performance of telling story before and after getting treatment by their mother in line with the implementation of the bedtime storytelling activity at home during a month. The data from the observation are presented in the Table 8 and Table 9.

Table 8. The Results of the Early Childhoods' Performance before Getting Treatment of the Bedtime Storytelling Activity

No.	BB	MB	BSH	BSB	Number of Students
1.	3	10	1	1	15
2.	20%	66,6%	6,7%	6,7%	100%

Table 9. The Results of the Early Childhoods' Performance after Getting Treatment of the Bedtime Storytelling Activity

No.	BB	MB	BSH	BSB	Number of Students
1.	-	3	10	2	15
2.	-	20%	66,6%	13,4%	100%

Discussion

After presenting the data from interview and observation, in this discussion section the researchers answered the research questions proposed. The first research question is: "What does bedtime storytelling impact on the early childhoods' language development?" Based on the data taken from the interview, the respondents answer that the implementation of bedtime storytelling impacts on: (1) the early childhoods' fluency in saying words, (2) the early childhoods' vocabulary mastery, (3) the early childhoods' self-confidence, and (4) the early childhoods' creativity to retell what they heard to others. In addition, the second research question is: "To what extent does the implementation of bedtime storytelling impact on the early childhoods' language development?" Based on the data taken from the observation, there is significant improvement before and after treatment given by their parents in the form of bedtime storytelling routine for a month. The data show that before giving the treatment of bedtime storytelling, the early childhoods' language development asserts 20% BB, 66.6% MB, 6.7% BSH, and 6.7% BSB. Furthermore, after giving the treatment of bedtime storytelling, the early childhoods' language development is increased at which the score asserts 20% MB, 66.6% BSH, 13.4% BSB.

After answering the two research questions aforementioned, the researchers then compare between the results of the present study with the results of previous studies. The results of the first previous study show that the implementation of bedtime storytelling is able to internalize the childhood's value of patience (Supriatna & Wismaliya, 2019). In addition, the results of the second previous study show that there is connection emotion between father and his early childhood because of the regular bedtime storytelling given (Farantika et al., 2022). Further, the results of the third previous study show that there

is significant enhancement from the implementation of bedtime storytelling on the early childhoods' cognitive and language development (Andersson & Björkhagen Turesson, 2023). Besides those three previous studies, the researchers also compare with other previous studies conducted by previous researchers which assert the result that the implementation of bedtime storytelling to the early childhoods is able to enhance their language skills such as acquiring new vocabularies, pronouncing the vocabularies fluently, understanding new words' meaning, and having self-confident to retell what is heard (Al-mansour & Al-shorman, 2011; Otoluwa et al., 2022; Sufiati & Paramita, 2021; Yanti & Tirtayani, 2023; Zalukhu et al., 2023). The result aforementioned is in line with the results of the present study. Those show that the implementation of bedtime storytelling impacts on: (1) the early childhoods' fluency in saying words, (2) the early childhoods' vocabulary mastery, (3) the early childhoods' self-confidence, and (4) the early childhoods' creativity to retell what they heard to others. Besides, the implementation of bedtime storytelling is also able to enhance significantly the early childhoods' language development. Thus, there is the difference between the results of the present study and the results of previous studies in the case of increasing the early childhoods' self-confidence and retelling the story they heard to other people. Besides, the bedtime storytelling becomes the suitable habit carried out by the parents to their early childhood as the routine activity before going to bed. This difference becomes the novelty of the present study.

Furthermore, the present study implicates to the teaching and learning in early childhood education that the ECCE teachers are recommended to use storytelling as the method during the teaching and learning process, and also the parents are recommended to habituate bedtime storytelling as one of the methods used in developing early childhood's language development especially aged 5-6 years. As for the limitation for the present research is due to the limitation of the respondents which is only 15 mothers and 15 early childhoods, therefore the data gathered were not maximal. Thus, it is recommended for further research to determine larger respondents in order to acquire maximal data and also the result of the research.

In addition, the present study implicates to the teaching and learning in early childhood education that the ECCE teachers are recommended to use storytelling as the method during the teaching and learning process, and also the parents are recommended to habituate bedtime storytelling as one of the methods used in developing early childhood's language development especially aged 5-6 years. As for the limitation for the present research is due to the limitation of the respondents which is only 15 mothers and 15 early childhoods, therefore the data gathered were not maximal. Thus, it is recommended for further research to determine larger respondents in order to acquire maximal data and also the result of the research. Besides, this research are also recommended for parents especially mothers to habituate implementing bedtime storytelling before going to bed regularly to acquire the maximal results for the early childhoods' language development.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results and discussion of the present study, those can be concluded that: firstly, the implementation of bedtime storytelling impacts on the early childhoods' fluency in saying words, the early childhoods' vocabulary mastery, the early childhoods' self-confidence, and the early childhoods' creativity to retell what they heard to others. Secondly, the implementation of bedtime storytelling is able to enhance significantly the early childhoods' language development.

5. ACKNOWLEDGE

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