

Enhancing Kindergarten Students' Speech Skill Through the Use of Picture Stories

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ABSTRACT

Action research was done to find out if employing picture stories helped Mardisiwi Islamic students in Surakarta become more proficient speakers. As the study's subject, fifteen students took part. Four sessions and two cycles were used to complete this investigation. Planning, doing, analyzing, and reflecting were the four processes it underwent. details regarding the usage of picture books in education and learning, as well as the speech communication abilities of the pupils. Data for the study were acquired by interviewing, observing, and documenting. Two cycles, with two meetings in each, were used to collect them. The results of the actions completed in Cycles I and II determine how well the pupils speak Mardisiwi Islamic kindergarten. The speaking abilities of the students at the Mardisiwi Islamic Kindergarten improved as a result of the measures conducted in Cycles I and II. Prior to the action's execution, just 40% of students were Developing as Expected (DAE), according to the statistics; however, in Cycles I and II, that percentage rose to 86.6% and 73.3%, respectively. The results of this study showed that the use of picture story media improved the language comprehension of the students at Mardisiwi Islamic Kindergarten in Surakarta, Indonesia. In addition to documenting the pedagogical benefits of picture story media, this research introduces a novel perspective on enhancing speaking abilities among kindergarten students, offering valuable insights for educators and researchers alike.

Keyword: Action Research, Children's Speaking Skill, Picture Story

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INTRODUCTION

Early childhood education is the first level of formal education a kid receives when they start school. According to Regulation No. 146 of 2014 (Kemendikbud, 2014) issued by the Ministry of Education and Culture, early childhood education in Indonesia is a developmental program aimed at children under the age of six. This endeavor is carried out by providing intellectual stimulation to the youngsters in order to aid in their physical and spiritual growth and to prepare them for further study (Melania et. at., 2024) . Sometimes referred to as the "golden age," this early period of life is critical for the development of the brain, intelligence, personality, memory, and other developmental aspects (Suwarsih et.al., 2019; Bai, 2018; Bancha & Tongtep, 2021; Wong & Yunus, 2020). At this age, the child's brain is very capable of assimilating new information. In order to provide children with new information or language in this context, appropriate learning is required.

There are several ways to approach learning effectively, including through the use of resources, methods, models, and media.

Media is a type of mediation that people use to convey or spread ideas, thoughts, or opinions in order to enable them to reach their intended audience (Ayar & Kiziltan, 2020; Hao et al., 2021; Ocampo & McNeill, 2019; Fatimah et al., 2019). The media has a lot of benefits. These are the ways in which it capitalizes on the brain's capacity to draw connections between spoken and visual information representations, resulting in a more profound comprehension and facilitating the application of learning to other contexts (Sasmita et al., 2021). Children's curiosity and desire can be piqued, their creativity can be stimulated, and their learning may be increased through the usage of engaging learning materials (Calisto et al., 2018; Yang et al., 2021). The teachers' delivery of the lesson materials to the pupils will be aided by their choice and application of relevant media. Cultural and local ways of life should be given careful consideration when creating educational learning media tools for ethnic minorities (Purba and Rini, 2021). The creation of media that can be used in the teaching and learning process can take many forms: audio-based media like voicemail, podcasts, radio broadcasts, internet radio, and signs; visual-based media like typography, drawings, graphic design, and illustrations; and audio-visual-based media like web streaming, video conferencing, and live broadcast services. Of those, educators may quickly find, search for, and create visual-based media.

An environment rich in visual stimulation is necessary for a successful visual development (Belinda et al., 2023; Darwin et al., 2021). One useful kind of visual media is emoji, for instance. Emoji was also employed as a visual research tool to elicit the understandings and experiences of well-being of young children (aged three to five years), as Fane et al., (2018) noted. One of the key tools frequently utilized in classroom instruction is high-quality visual media.

It is crucial that students learn to read and write in school. Early childhood education, from infancy to age eight, is seen to be a critical time for literacy development (Odinokaya et al., 2021; Yusriani & Septiyanti, 2021). The evolution of language is one aspect of literacy development. Early childhood language development is typified by children's capacity to both hear and make sounds, which subsequently develops into language expressed through words. According to Madya (2019), environmental education, assistance from the environment, and the setting of cell maturity all affect language development. According to Burns (2019) and Yeomans et al., (2021), the most crucial component of language development is the capacity for accurate auditory perception, which allows one to distinguish between various speech patterns and the emotional tones of others. Youngsters need to comprehend this procedure, attempt to mimic it, and then attempt to communicate their emotions and wants. The children had saved almost 14,000 words on average for their age (Refika & Devi, 2018). They are also capable of creating negative sentences, compound sentences, questions, and other types of sentences (Lim et al., 2019). Additionally, Kasami (2018) contended that the earlier a child learns a foreign language, the faster he acquires the language according to second language acquisition theory. This is due to children's longer memories being superior to those of adults. Furthermore, acquiring a language does not cause psychological stress in kids.

The observation in the Mardisiwi Islamic Kindergarten showed that many children had not developed optimally in their speaking skill. This occurred because the teachers mostly used blackboard in the language learning. The language learning includes vocabulary introduction or word reiteration without using any games and other attractive media. So, this problem should be solved. The limitation of the existing learning media in the kindergarten, made the students less joyful in the learning. Instead of using visual media, teachers relied much on the use of the blackboard and student's worksheet. Actually, by using blackboard the instructor can write and explain the subject matter effectively and efficiently. However, it seems that the blackboard has flaws as well. Some of these weaknesses include: 1) The teacher's discomfort when using a blackboard due to his lack of artistic writing and drawing abilities; 2) The learner may own many textbooks rather than recording the lesson from the blackboard; and 3) The teacher's front-of-class position makes it difficult to capture demonstrations and illustrations and may even make them difficult to understand. 4) Lime dust has the potential to aggravate respiratory, skin, cramping, and lung conditions (Razak et al., 2019; Olufunke et al., 2022). There are benefits to the children's worksheet as well. These are the student worksheets that are frequently used in the classroom. They are useful, reasonably priced, and require no energy, allowing students to use them

as independent learning tools. This worksheet, however, contains a number of flaws. Among the flaws are the fact that children's worksheets frequently have repetitive questions, publisher-issued worksheets frequently don't align well with the concepts being taught, and print media mostly focuses on cognitive subjects' emotions and attitudes are rarely given as much attention (Kaeophanuek et. al., 2019). Even visual story media, which was actually quite easy to utilize for language acquisition, was never employed by them. Instructors occasionally limited their usage of visually appealing materials to avoid stimulating the interests of children's language ability. There are benefits to the children's worksheet as well. These are the student worksheets that are frequently used in the classroom. They are useful, reasonably priced, and require no energy, allowing children to use them as independent learning tools. This worksheet, however, contains a number of flaws. Among the flaws are the fact that children's worksheets frequently have repetitive questions, publisher-issued worksheets frequently don't align well with the concepts being taught, and print media mostly focuses on cognitive subjects emotions and attitudes are rarely given as much attention (Kharis et. al., 2020; Haryanti, 2022). Even visual story media, which was actually quite easy to utilize for language acquisition, was never employed by them. Instructors occasionally limited their usage of visually appealing materials to avoid stimulating the interests of children. They were not the English teachers; they were the ones in charge of the class each day. In actuality, taking into account one's surroundings can also aid in learning (Hillson et. al., 2019). Additionally, teacher-student cohesion can be applied even when language development is taking place. In the function of relevant feedback, teacher and student participation was crucial (Hilal, 2018; Muliana, 2022; Adityarini, 2022). As a result, the researcher uses strip stories in visual media.

The image strip narrative is a modified version of the scramble sentence exercise, where students are required to memorize one line from a story whose correct order is unknown. Picture strip stories can be used for a variety of teaching-learning activities, according to Liu et. al., (2019) and Katoningsih (2021). One approach is to tell a strip story to a small number of people. In one group, a student will show the other member of the group the first picture and ask him to guess what the second picture looks like. This method was used to support pupils in investigating their opinions around a certain comic strip. Certain studies have demonstrated a connection between vocabulary growth and strip stories. By employing this comic strip, Castillo (2022) discovered that children are given the opportunity to express themselves. They are able to utilize the vocabulary associated with the comic strip and explain the visual in the story. They are able to ascertain their beliefs and positions on many topics. Additionally, Hassanirokh & Yeganehpour (2018) examined how comic strips affected Turkish EFL learners' comprehension of what they read. Students in his study read the assigned material and noted on a separate answer sheet what they recalled from the text. Regardless of ability or text level, children with a comic strip effect outperformed those without one, according to the findings of the quantitative analysis. Furthermore, Yuliani (2019) discussed the impact of comic strips on the reading comprehension of ESL students in his article. With and without a comic strip, his children's competency levels are divided into two categories: low and high. According to this study, the comic strip's repetition of the text's content significantly improved the low-level children's reading comprehension. The experimental group learners nearly outperformed the control group learners, according to Mubarak et. al., (2023), who also reported a significant difference between the experimental and control groups. These findings suggest that reading stories with comic photos can have a notable impact on incidental vocabulary learning.

However, there are benefits and drawbacks to employing picture strip stories in the classroom, according to Purnama et.al., (2023). The following are some benefits of using picture strip stories in teaching-learning processes: 1) They are widely available and reasonably priced; 2) They offer shared experiences for a group; 3) The visual details enable clear study of the subject; 4) They serve as a stimulus for additional research because research indicates that visual evidence is an effective tool; 5) They aid in attentional focus and the development of critical judgment; 6) It is easy to manipulate them. In addition to these benefits, the following are some drawbacks of using picture strip stories to educate and learn speaking (Turnip, 2020) 1) Students focus more on the picture than the content they are supposed to learn; 2) Creating visually appealing pictures requires resources and time; 3) Small, ambiguous pictures can lead to misinterpretations during the teaching-learning process; and 4) When students work in groups at the same time, the classroom can become noisy.

The research question was, "Is the picture story able to improve the children's speaking skill at Mardisiwi Islamic Kindergarten in Surakarta?" based on the background information provided in the introduction. Therefore, the goal of the study was to determine whether or not the Mardisiwi Islamic Kindergarten in Surakarta's young audience could talk more fluently after employing picture stories.

METHOD

Classroom Action Research was used in this study (CAR). With the intention of raising the caliber of instruction in the classroom, teachers carried out this study through self-reflection in their own classrooms (Daryanto, 2011: 4). Four cycles made up the structure of CAR (Pahleviannur et al., 2022; Noor, 2021). The planning phase, the implementation/action phase, the observation phase, and the reflection phase made up one cycle. The Mardisiwi Islamic Kindergarten served as the site of this investigation. This occurred because the researcher observed that the kindergarten was experiencing issues, and the kindergarten principal had given permission for the researcher to conduct research there. The kindergarten was situated in Surakarta, Indonesia. This study was carried out with level B, fifth- and sixth-grade children in mind. There were fifteen children in all. They are a part of level B.

The study's data were primary data. Direct data collection from the field was done by the researcher. Pre- and post-test results were obtained, with the goal of enhancing children's speaking abilities using visual media. Prior to addressing the instructional cycle, the pre-test was carried out in the initial research. At the conclusion of the cycle, a post-test was administered subsequent to the instruction. The data was gathered using a study methodology designed to obtain information relevant to the real-world circumstances. This study included a variety of data collection strategies, such as observation, interviews, and documentation.

According to Subagyo et al. (2023), observation is the process of documenting an item with an emphasis on particular behaviors. Conversely, according to Parnawi (2020) and Arifin (2020), observation is a method of gathering data through the systematic observation and documentation of all ongoing events. The data were viewed and scrutinized through the use of observation. All of the things heard and observed during the observation were documented using field notes, observation sheets on language skill development, and observation sheets on the learning process using Picture Story medium.

Pahleviannur et al., (2022) stated that the researcher conducted face-to-face interviews with respondents or the subject of the study, asking predefined questions of the respondents. The interview's outcomes were noted as crucial data for the investigation. Teachers and students of Mardisiwi Islamic were interviewed. The field note was one of the papers used in this investigation. According to Otajonova (2022), a field note is an exhaustive collection of field data records gleaned from field notebooks, tape recorder recordings, photographs, or video recordings. Written notes were used as field notes in this investigation. After learning, they were gathered as quickly as feasible. These included the content of visual media that draws in students, the careless or uncontrollably acting researchers, the actions of students who pay less attention to researchers, the inappropriate use of media, specific student behaviors that disrupt the learning environment, and unplanned events.

Two cycles of two meetings each were used to perform this classroom action research project. The four steps of the process were analysis, reflection, planning, and implementation in each cycle. The first cycle was implemented as a preliminary measure to enhance the children's speaking abilities through the use of picture story media in the learning process. In order to maximize target achievement and address the flaws and weaknesses identified in the first cycle, a second one was carried out.

Conversation activities constituted the first cycle of the media-using activity. Using the writings and pictures on the paper, the researcher repeated the reading of the writings and identified the voices they heard, repeated the reading of four-to-five-word sequences, and played a game to find groups based on the word sequence order from the writings and pictures on the paper. Additionally, the researcher connected and mentioned simple writings with pictorial symbols during the learning activity by using picture story media. Using image story media while learning, children appeared content.

With increased expertise and newly acquired knowledge, the second cycle saw a notable improvement. The image story mediums utilized in the second activity cycle were mostly similar to those in the first. They used writings and pictures on pieces of paper to have conversations, repeating the reading of writings and differentiating between the voices they heard, repeating four-to-five-word sequences, and playing to find groups based on word sequence order from writings and picture-containing pieces of paper. They also connected and mentioned simple writings with pictorial symbols during the learning activity by using the picture story media. The children started enthusiastically repeating the teacher's voices during this exercise. When using the picture story medium, children had started off more eagerly and were paying attention to the teacher. Youngsters also started to develop the bravery to voice their opinions. Following the completion of the task, children used picture story media to share what they had learned and the action they had done.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research's findings and analysis are shown below. Table 4.1 demonstrates that every child's development and aptitude were unique. While Student 13 and Student 14 were unable to reach the target score, the other children were able to surpass the goal set by the researcher. This resulted from the child's inability to concentrate on the teacher while yet regularly helping to finish the tasks. Those children were still afraid and perplexed. When the researchers implemented learning, they always encouraged children to be self-assured and capable of doing tasks on their own.

Table 4.1 Summary Recapitulation of Improvement of Children's Speaking Skill

Aspect	Pre cycle	Cycle I	Cycle II
The Percentage of achievement Of the development of children's Language skills in one class	40%	73,3%	86,6%
Indicators of research Achievements	-	70% of children reach at least as Expected (BSH)	80% of children achieve at least. expected (BSH)

Six of the fifteen students in a class were Developing as Expected (DAE), and nine were Start Developing (SD), according to Table 4.1 of the pre-cycle column. As a proportion, forty percent of the children were developing normally. The achievement indicator in cycle I was the focus of the researcher, who aimed to ensure that at least 70% of children could develop according to plan. As a consequence, four students in one class had begun to develop (SD), and eleven had developed as expected (DAE). In total, they made up 73.3%. The achievement indicator, which states that at least 80% of children are progressing as expected, was the focus of the researcher's attention in cycle II (DAE). As a result, two children (SD) began to develop, nine children (DAE) were developing as expected, and four children (DVW) were developing extremely well. In total, it was found that 86.6% of children were growing according to plan (DAE). Table 4.2 shows the comparison between each cycle's achievement outcome and the research achievement indicator.

Table 4.2 Comparison of the Total Score for Improving Children's Speaking Skill in Each Cycle

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No.	Name	Development Score and Status		
		Pre cycle	Cycle I	Cycle II
1.	Bg	20	21	27
2.	Ca	22	25	33
3.	Ga	22	25	33
4.	Ai	14	19	20
5.	Ah	14	18	21

6. Eo	20	27	31	
7. Xa	20	22	33	
8. Za	20	25	33	
9. Aa	19	25	33	
10. Ja	18	26	32	
11. Yn	22	28	37	
12. Si	17	25	33	
13. Bk	23	25	38	
14. Ha	24	27	35	
15. Gr	28	26	37	
<u>Percentage of achievement $\frac{\sum \text{BSH \& BSB} \times 100}{\sum \text{Children}}$</u>		40%	73,3%	86,6%
Researcher Indicator		-	70%	80%

The achievement percentages from cycles I and II improved by 13.3%, as shown in table 4.2. This is because picture story media were used in the learning process in cycle II in a more conducive, effective, and efficient manner. It is evident that the children's speaking abilities have reached their full potential.

The aforementioned study's findings demonstrated that the children's speaking abilities had improved prior to being put through the action cycle I. This resulted from the usage of picture story media that was suitable and compliant with the educational framework for young children. The term "learning activities through picture story media" refers to the researcher's division of indicators into observation items. Table 4.3 shows the observation item achievement for each cycle in detail.

Table 4.3 The Comparison of Research Achievement Indicators with Achievement Results for Every Cycle

Cycle	The Percentage of The Achievement for Every Cycle	The Percentage of the Achievement the Indicators	The Percentage of the Achievement Indicators
I	73,3%	70%	Already reach
II	86,6%	80%	Already reach

Table 4.3 presents the findings from an observation of fifteen students in a single lesson. Eleven observation items showed that the introduction of stimulation improved each cycle, allowing the children to develop their speaking skills to the fullest. Pre-cycle 4 results showed that four observation items had reached DAE. These included the children's ability to: (1) repeat voices they had heard; (2) repeat sequences of four to five words; (3) link simple writings with pictorial symbols; and (4) connect and mention simple writings with pictorial symbols.

The children can (1) repeat 4-5-word sequences; (2) tell about the pictures provided with proper sequence; (3) tell about the pictures provided with clear language; (4) tell about the pictures provided with proper sequence and with clear language; (5) connect simple writings with pictorial symbols; (6) mention simple writings with pictorial symbols; and (7) connect and mention simple writings with pictorial symbols. These are the eight observation items that the children can complete in cycle I to achieve DAE.

Eleven of the observation items in cycle II achieved DAE. The children demonstrated the following skills: (1) identification of voices; (2) repetition of voices; (3) repetition of 4-5 word sequences; (4) correct comprehension and performance of 3-5 sequential instructions; (5) performance of 3-5 sequential instructions correctly; (6) description of pictures with proper sequence; (7) description of pictures with clear language; (8) description of pictures with proper sequence and clear language; (9) connection between simple writings and pictorial symbols; (10) mention of simple writings with pictorial symbols; and (11) connection and mention of simple writings with pictorial symbols.

According to the above statement, learning through picture story media might encourage language skills so that children's speaking abilities could develop to their full potential. This provided credence to the theory that suggested children's speaking abilities could be enhanced by picture story media. One may say that the Mardisiwi Islamic Kindergarten Laweyan, Surakarta children's language capacity enhancement using picture story media was deemed successful.

CONCLUSION

The following conclusions can be drawn from this classroom action research project, "Enhancing Kindergarten Students' Speech Skill Through the Use of Picture Stories": 1) The usage of picture story media could help the students at Mardisiwi Islamic Kindergarten Laweyan, Surakarta, become more proficient speakers. 2) Children's comprehension of language learning is facilitated by the use of picture story media; and 3) The percentage of children who increase their speaking abilities and reach the predicted status and beyond in conclusion, it is claimed that the Mardisiwi Islamic Kindergarten in Surakarta's picture story media can help children develop their speaking abilities.

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