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Picture Book-Based Storytelling to Enhance Literacy Among 5–6-Year-Old Children at RA Nurul Islam

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ABSTRACT

The literacy development of children aged 5-6 years is an important foundation for learning readiness at the next level, but in RA Nurul Islam, the ability to listen, understand stories, answer questions, retell, and enrich vocabulary still requires more directed, interesting, and developmental stimulation. This research aims to analyze and improve children's literacy skills through the application of picture-book-based storytelling in literacy corners. The research uses the Classroom Action Research approach combined with descriptive qualitative analysis in two to three cycles, including the stages of planning, implementation of actions, observation, and reflection; The subjects of the study were 16 children of group B RA Nurul Islam aged 5–6 years, with data collected through structured observation, field notes, interviews, audio-visual documentation, and assessment of children's performance based on early literacy indicators. The results of the study show that the application of storytelling based on picture books increases children's involvement in learning and improves the ability to listen, answer questions, retell, mention characters, recognize new vocabulary, and recognize simple symbols gradually intercycle. Thus, storytelling based on picture books is effectively used as a learning strategy to strengthen early childhood literacy in the AR environment, while creating a more participatory, communicative, reflective, consistent, sustainable, and practical learning atmosphere.

KEYWORDS

Early Childhood; Picture Books; Literacy; Literacy Corner; Storytelling

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INTRODUCTION

The development of early childhood literacy is the main foundation for readiness to learn at the next level, especially at the age of 5-6 years when the ability to speak, recognize symbols, understand meaning, and express ideas develops very rapidly. In early childhood education, literacy is understood not only as the ability to read and write formally, but also the ability to listen, speak, understand stories, recognize signs, and use language simply in a meaningful context (Thahir, Rachmaniar, & Tamam, 2025). Therefore, teachers need to be realized through learning experiences that are fun, interactive, and appropriate to the stage of child development. This study advances previous studies because it not only confirms that storytelling is effective in improving children's early literacy, reading, communication, and oral literacy, but also places storytelling as a holistic literacy strategy that is integrated with the school language environment and collaborative meaningful learning practices to strengthen children's participation, story comprehension, courage to speak, and continuity of stimulation in the classroom.

Storytelling is now seen as an effective pedagogical approach in early childhood learning because it integrates language, emotions, imagination, and social interaction in a wholesome learning experience (Ahmadi & Wati, 2025). Through stories, children not only hear, but also

Marlis Simarni, Feerlie Moonthana Indhra, Ani Pajrini

interpret, respond, and build meaning from the characters, plots, conflicts, and messages conveyed. This process helps children expand vocabulary, practice attention, understand the sequence of events, increase the courage to speak, and foster empathy and memory. The theoretical framework of this research rests on Vygotsky's sociocultural theory which emphasizes the role of interaction and scaffolding, as well as the emergent literacy model which views early literacy developing gradually through meaningful experiences (Ihsan & Artika, 2025). Within this framework, storytelling is positioned as an educational communication practice, picture books as a medium of visual-verbal representation, and literacy-rich environments as a context that provides stimulation of language, symbols, and reading habits. Thus, this study not only examines storytelling activities, but also between components that support the development of early literacy.

The use of picture books in early childhood literacy learning is increasingly seen as strategic because it is able to bridge children's concrete world with language symbols through a combination of simple texts, illustrations, colors, and storylines that are close to their experiences (Saflitha, Wahyuni, & Siregar, 2023). At the age of 5–6, visual support helps children understand characters, follow the sequence of events, interpret messages, enrich vocabulary, improve listening skills, and encourage courage to speak and retell simple. However, a critical review of previous research shows that many studies still place picture books as a medium for reading aids, but have not examined in depth the interaction between the quality of illustrations, teacher strategies, and children's verbal responses in real learning situations (Juwariah, 2024). A number of studies also tend to focus on general outcomes, so they have not adequately answered how picture books contribute to the development of early literacy in a contextual, participatory, and sustainable manner in the early childhood classroom environment. This gap is an important basis for current research.

In addition to learning strategies and media, a supportive physical environment plays an important role in early childhood literacy habituation. One of the forms is the literacy corner, which is a classroom corner that is designed to be comfortable, attractive, and easily accessible so that children are familiar with reading materials and language activities (Wahyuni, 2024). When equipped with age-appropriate picture books, the literacy corner becomes an interactive space to listen to stories, observe illustrations, ask questions, discuss, and retell the content of reading. In this relationship, storytelling functions as a pedagogical strategy, picture books as a visual-verbal medium, and a literacy corner as a supportive environment that brings the two together in a meaningful learning experience. The synergy of these three elements strengthens the development of early literacy because children gain stimulation of listening, vocabulary, story comprehension, courage to speak, and the habit of interacting with texts repeatedly. Thus, literacy develops not in isolation, but through the integration of methods, media, space, and active involvement of children in the context of daily learning in the classroom.

Recent research shows that early childhood literacy development is more effective when storytelling, picture books, and literacy corners are integrated into one contextual learning experience (Thahir et al., 2025). Storytelling provides auditory and verbal stimulation through listening, asking, and responding activities; picture books provide visual support to understand characters, events, and meanings; Meanwhile, the literacy corner presents a comfortable and easily accessible space to strengthen children's involvement. Theoretically, this integration can be explained through Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, which emphasizes the role of interaction, language, and scaffolding in cognitive development, as well as the emergent literacy model that views literacy growing gradually through meaningful experiences (Ihsan & Artika, 2025). Therefore, a combination of methods, media, and literacy learning environments should improve

vocabulary, story comprehension, courage to speak, and habits of interacting with texts. In the context of RA Nurul Islam, this approach is relevant to build a fun, directed literacy experience according to the optimal developmental needs of 5-6 year olds.

Although various studies have discussed storytelling, picture books, and the development of early childhood literacy, there are still research gaps that need to be considered. First, many studies examine storytelling as a single method without placing it specifically in a supportive learning space ecosystem, such as literacy corners (Fauziah & Ramadhan, 2023). Second, some research on picture books emphasizes the function of the media, but has not examined in depth how the media is operationalized through systematic pedagogical interaction. Third, studies on literacy of children aged 5–6 years often focus on the general outcomes of language development, not yet detailing early literacy indicators such as listening, answering questions, retelling, and recognizing vocabulary in a single classroom action design. Fourth, the institutional context of RA still receives relatively less attention than general kindergartens (Bunayyah et al., 2025). Therefore, a study is needed that specifically tests the effectiveness of storytelling based on picture books in literacy corners to improve the literacy of children aged 5–6 years at RA Nurul Islam.

The novelty of this research lies in the design of an early literacy learning model that integrates storytelling as a pedagogical strategy, picture books as a multimodal media, and literacy corners as a deliberately conditioned learning environment for children aged 5–6 years. Different from previous research that tended to test the three elements separately, this study combined them in a design of classroom action that mutually reinforcing and contextual in RA Nurul Islam. Another novelty appears in the establishment of operational and measurable early literacy indicators, including the ability to listen, understand stories, answer questions, retell, and enrich vocabulary. Theoretically, the proposed model advances the theory of early literacy learning by asserting that literacy development is not only determined by methods or media, but by the dynamic interaction between strategies, multimodal representations, literacy spaces, and children's active participation in the context of religious-based learning that is aligned with the developmental needs and learning culture of students.

Based on this conceptual and empirical foundation, this study aims to analyze and improve the literacy skills of children aged 5-6 years through the application of storytelling based on picture books at RA Nurul Islam. In particular, this study is directed to describe the implementation of storytelling in literacy corners, identify changes in children's involvement during activities, and measure the improvement of early literacy in the aspects of listening, speaking, understanding the content of stories, retelling, and recognizing simple vocabulary. Thus, the formulation of research problems includes three things, namely the implementation of storytelling based on picture books, children's activities while participating in activities in the literacy corner, and improving literacy skills after the action is implemented. Scientifically, this research is expected to contribute to strengthening an integrative, measurable, and contextual early literacy learning model for religion-based early childhood education institutions, as well as clarify the relationship between storytelling strategies, visual media, literacy environment, and children's involvement in the formation of early literacy in the classroom comprehensively.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study uses a Classroom Action Research (PTK) approach with a quasi-experimental design combined with descriptive qualitative analysis to examine and improve the literacy skills of children aged 5–6 years through storytelling based on picture books in the literacy corner of RA Nurul Islam. This approach is functionally integrated because PTK provides a cyclical framework

in the form of planning, implementation of actions, observation, and reflection; quasi-experimental elements allow researchers to assess changes in intercyclical literacy achievement; Meanwhile, descriptive qualitative analysis is used to interpret the interaction process of children, teachers, and the media during learning (Isnur & Alrasi, 2026). The research was designed in two to three cycles, with storytelling activities twice weekly and 20–30 minutes per session, to keep the intervention appropriate to the early childhood attention span. With this design, quantitative and qualitative data complement each other to provide a complete picture of the effectiveness of actions, classroom dynamics, and continuous learning improvement based on empirical findings in each learning cycle.

The subjects of the study were all children of group B of RA Nurul Islam aged 5–6 years aged 16 years, who were selected based on inclusion criteria: present during the research period, did not have significant developmental disorders, and obtained written permission from parents/guardians. Data collection instruments include (Purba, 2022)(1) a structured systematic observation sheet that contains indicators of early literacy in listening, speaking (answering and expressing opinions), understanding the content of stories, the ability to retell, and mastery of vocabulary with a BB-MB-BSH-BSB assessment scale; (2) field notes and audio/video recordings for qualitative analysis of storytelling interactions; (3) a brief, semi-structured interview with the teacher to gain a professional perspective on the process and barriers; and (4) photo documentation of literacy corners and picture book materials used. The validity of the instrument was strengthened through content validation by PAUD experts and interrater reliability tests at the piloting stage.

Data analysis was carried out quantitatively and qualitatively to obtain a comprehensive picture of the effectiveness of storytelling interventions based on picture books. Quantitative observation data was converted into the percentage of achievement of each initial literacy indicator, then analyzed descriptively in each cycle; If the prerequisites are met, intercycle changes are tested with relevant nonparametric techniques. Qualitative data from field notes, interviews, and audio-visual documentation were analyzed through thematic coding to identify patterns of child engagement, effective teacher strategies, and barriers to implementation. Both types of findings are integrated through triangulation and convergent interpretation by comparing, confirming, and complementing the results between sources, so that the increase in literacy appears to be quantitatively obtained a procedural explanation from qualitative data. This integration strengthens the validity of inference, clarifies the context of change, and supports the development of more credible, reflective, and relevant research conclusions for the development of early childhood literacy learning in the RA environment on a sustainable basis and based on the improvement of classroom practices.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The relevant theory in this study is the theory of early childhood literacy which places literacy as the ability to develop gradually through meaningful language experiences. At the age of 5–6 years, literacy is not solely understood as formal reading and writing, but includes the ability to listen, understand the content of conversations, answer simple questions, recognize symbols, enrich vocabulary, and re-express experiences or stories orally (Yang, Shi, Lu, & Huang, 2021). The development of literacy at this stage is greatly influenced by the quality of stimulation provided by teachers through warm interactions, simple language, and contextual activities (Jago, Monaghan, Alcock, & Cain, 2025). Therefore, storytelling is a relevant strategy to develop early literacy, because this activity encourages children to actively listen, understand the storyline, process information, and respond verbally. Thus, storytelling based on picture books has a strong theoretical

foundation in supporting the literacy development of children aged 5–6 years in the RA environment.

The basis of this research is multimodal learning and literacy environment, which emphasizes that children's literacy development takes place more effectively when visual, auditory, and interactive stimuli are presented in an integrated manner in a meaningful learning experience. In this context, picture books serve as a multimodal medium because they combine simple text, illustrations, colors, and visual symbols to help children understand stories concretely, while literacy corners provide a familiar, structured, and accessible learning space (Cheng, Powell, & Davis, 2025). Storytelling further acts as a pedagogical bridge that connects the media, the environment, and teacher-child interaction. Operationally, this theory is directly related to the indicators measured, namely the ability to listen, understand the content of the story, answer questions, retell, and enrich vocabulary. Thus, each indicator represents a measurable manifestation of the multimodal learning process that takes place gradually, contextually, and according to the child's developmental stage. This relationship confirms the alignment between the theoretical foundations, instruments, and focus of research evaluation.

In the pre-action stage, the literacy ability of children aged 5-6 years in Group B of RA Nurul Islam showed conditions that were not optimal, especially in the aspects of listening to stories, answering simple questions, and retelling the content of the story sequentially. Most children still show distracted attention when the teacher tells a story, while the ability to re-express characters, simple plots, and new vocabulary is also limited (Kawar, Saiegh-Haddad, & Armon-Lotem, 2023). This condition can be seen from the low verbal involvement of children during learning activities and the still dominant role of teachers in guiding children's responses. These preliminary findings indicate that literacy learning that takes place before action has not fully provided an interactive, concrete, and engaging language experience according to the characteristics of early childhood development (Lindgren, 2023). Therefore, the application of storytelling based on picture books in literacy corners is designed as a pedagogical intervention to strengthen children's attention, story comprehension, and courage in expressing language orally.

The implementation of the action shows that storytelling based on picture books in the literacy corner forms a more participatory, communicative, and in accordance with the developmental characteristics of children aged 5-6 years. In cycle I, improvement began to be seen through the child's more focused attention when listening to the story, the courage to answer simple questions, and the ability to mention characters or parts of the story, although some still require the guidance of the teacher. In cycle II, children's participation became more consistent, characterized by increased verbal responses, courage to express opinions, and efforts to retell the content of the story with simple sentences. This cycle-by-cycle comparison shows that the reported improvements are supported by gradual changes in child engagement, the quality of interactions, and the effectiveness of teacher strategies. Thus, the integration of methods, media, and learning environments has been proven to support the development of early literacy in a progressive, reflective, and sustainable manner in the classroom and strengthens the basis of interpretation that actions taken result in consistent learning improvements

In general, the results of the study show that the application of storytelling based on picture books in the literacy corner of RA Nurul Islam improves the literacy skills of children aged 5-6 years in all observed indicators. The increase can be seen in listening skills which increased from 37.5% to 87.5%, answering questions from 31.25% to 81.25%, retelling from 25% to 75%, mentioning figures from 43.75% to 87.5%, mentioning new vocabulary from 28.13% to 78.13%, and recognizing letters or symbols from 34.38% to 84.38%. The magnitude of the change showed

an increase of 50 percentage points in five indicators, namely listening, answering questions, retelling, mastery of vocabulary, and recognition of letters or symbols, as well as 43.75 points in indicators mentioning figures. These findings confirm the shift in achievement from the undeveloped category to developing as expected and developing very well, thereby strengthening the relevance of multimodal and interactive learning in improving early childhood literacy.

Table of Results for Improving Children's Literacy Ability

No	Literacy Ability Indicators	Pre-Actions	Cycle I	Cycle II
1	Listen to stories with focus	37,5%	62,5%	87,5%
2	Answer simple questions about stories	31,25%	56,25%	81,25%
3	Retelling the content of a simple story	25%	50%	75%
4	Naming characters in the story	43,75%	68,75%	87,5%
5	Mentioning new vocabulary from a story	28,13%	53,13%	78,13%
6	Getting to know simple letters/symbols in storybooks	34,38%	59,38%	84,38%

Development Category Recapitulation Table

Stages	BB	MB	BSH	BSB
Pre-Actions	43,75%	37,50%	18,75%	0%
Cycle I	12,50%	31,25%	43,75%	12,50%
Cycle II	0%	12,50%	50,00%	37,50%

The results of the study showed that there was an increase in the literacy skills of children aged 5-6 years after the implementation of storytelling activities based on picture books in the literacy corner of RA Nurul Islam. In the pre-action stage, children's literacy ability is still relatively low in almost all indicators. The most prominent aspect is still in the less developed category, especially in the ability to answer simple questions, retell the content of the story, and get to know new vocabulary from the story. Children tend to be passive, easily lose focus when listening to stories, and still rely on the teacher's help in understanding the content of the reading. This condition shows that the initial literacy stimulation given before the action has not run optimally and has not been able to build active involvement of children in language activities.

After the implementation of the action in Cycle I, there was a noticeable increase in all literacy indicators. Children begin to show greater interest in listening to stories, especially because of the support of picture books that make it easier for them to understand the storyline. Children's ability to name characters, answer simple questions, and recognize letters or symbols in books has also improved. However, in Cycle I there are still some children who are in the category of starting to develop, so interventions still need to be strengthened. This shows that the process of adapting children to storytelling strategies based on picture books takes place gradually and requires repetition of activities so that the results are more stable.

In Cycle II, the improvement of children's literacy skills becomes more optimal and even. Most children have been able to listen to stories with focus, answer simple questions, mention characters, reveal new vocabulary, and retell the content of the story in simple language. The number of children who reach the expected and very good development category has increased significantly, while the undeveloped category has decreased to the point where it does not appear on several indicators. These findings confirm that the integration of storytelling, picture books, and literacy corners is effective in creating a fun, interactive, and appropriate learning experience that is appropriate to the characteristics of early childhood development. Thus, the actions taken have succeeded in improving the literacy skills of children aged 5-6 years at RA Nurul Islam.

The implementation of storytelling based on picture books in the literacy corner for children aged 5-6 years at RA Nurul Islam shows that literacy learning can take place more effectively when it is designed in a fun, communicative, and close atmosphere to the children's world. This activity began with the arrangement of a literacy corner that was made attractive through the display of picture books, comfortable seating mats, and a classroom atmosphere that supports children's focus. The teacher then opens the activity with a brief perception to build the child's mental readiness before listening to the story (Rosiani et al., 2025). This stage is important because early childhood requires a gentle transition from play activities to literacy activities. After that, the teacher reads the story with various intonations, expressions, and gestures so that the child's attention is maintained. Picture books play an important role as visual media that help children understand the storyline concretely (Widayawan, Budiman, & Fidrayani, 2024). Thus, the implementation of storytelling is not only an activity of listening to stories, but also an interactive and meaningful literacy learning experience.

Pedagogically, storytelling activities based on picture books in the literacy corner have shown high suitability with the developmental characteristics of children aged 5-6 years. At this age, children are at the stage of early literacy which is greatly influenced by visual, verbal stimulation, and direct interaction with teachers. Therefore, the use of picture books is appropriate because it can bridge children's understanding of the message of the story through attractive illustrations and simple language (Improve et al., 2024). The literacy corner also strengthens this process because it creates a learning environment that specifically facilitates children's interest in reading and curiosity. In the activities carried out, children not only listen to stories, but are also given the opportunity to point to pictures, guess the content of the story, mention characters, and respond to the teacher's questions. This pattern of interaction shows that storytelling does not run in one direction, but rather becomes a dialogical process that places children as active subjects in learning (Fatimah & Maryani, 2018). This condition is in line with the principle of child-centered learning which is an important feature of early childhood education.

The results of observations show that the implementation of storytelling based on picture books in the literacy corner has developed quite well from cycle to cycle. At the beginning of the action, some children still look passive, easily distracted, and have not been used to listening to stories for a relatively longer time. However, after the teacher made adjustments to the way of delivery, book selection, and the provision of question and answer stimulation, the child began to show higher involvement. Children are more focused on paying attention to pictures, responding to simple questions, and showing enthusiasm when the story is read. This development indicates that the success of storytelling is not only determined by the content of the story, but also by the teacher's strategy in building a safe, fun, and meaningful learning atmosphere (Puspitasari, Lim, Evelina, & Setia, 2023). In other words, the implementation of storytelling based on picture books in literacy corners becomes more effective when teachers are able to integrate media functions, methods, and learning spaces in an integrated manner. This makes literacy activities more lively and relevant to children's developmental needs.

The success of the implementation is also influenced by the consistency of teachers in providing reinforcement during the activity. Teachers not only tell stories, but also provide praise, feedback, and triggering questions that encourage children to think and speak. This kind of interaction is especially important because early childhood learns through repetition, concrete examples, and positive social responses. In the context of this research, picture-book-based storytelling in the literacy corner has served as a means to build emotional closeness between teachers and children while strengthening children's attention to spoken language (Lero, Laksana,

Ita, & Ngura, 2025). In addition, picture books provide visual support that makes it easier for children to understand the characters, plots, and events in the story without having to rely entirely on formal reading skills. Thus, the literacy process that occurs is more natural development than rigid academic learning. This approach is particularly relevant to the developmental stage of children aged 5–6 years who need a concrete and enjoyable learning experience.

From a theoretical perspective, the results of this storytelling implementation support the view that early literacy develops optimally through multimodal and meaningful language experiences (Taylor & Leung, 2020). The combination of oral stories, image visualization, and literacy corner environment creates complementary stimulation in building children's understanding. Children not only passively receive information, but also engage in the process of listening, observing, interpreting, and responding. This activity shows that storytelling based on picture books is not just a method of delivering material, but a learning strategy that is able to activate various aspects of children's language development (Björk, 2025). In the implementation at RA Nurul Islam, children seem to be more courageous to speak and more easily remember the content of the story when supported by clear illustrations and expressive delivery. This strengthens the belief that the literacy corner can be an effective space to cultivate literacy habits from an early age. With proper management, this small space is able to become a hub for a rich and enjoyable language experience.

Overall, answering the formulation of the first problem, it can be emphasized that the implementation of storytelling based on picture books in the literacy corner for children aged 5–6 years at RA Nurul Islam takes place in a structured, interesting, and in accordance with the principles of early childhood learning. The stages of the activity which include spatial planning, perception, story reading, question and answer interaction, and teacher reinforcement show that this process is designed to build an active and enjoyable literacy experience. The compatibility between methods, media, and learning environments makes storytelling able to be an effective means of developing children's attention, interest, and participation. These findings confirm that when teachers are able to integrate picture books and literacy corners in storytelling activities, literacy learning is no longer abstract, but becomes a concrete experience that is easy for children to accept. Therefore, the implementation of storytelling based on picture books should be seen as a relevant and potential learning strategy to improve early childhood literacy in RA institutions.

The literacy skills of children aged 5–6 years before the implementation of storytelling based on picture books at RA Nurul Islam are in the early stages that still require directed and continuous stimulation. The pre-action condition shows that some children are not able to concentrate consistently when the teacher tells the story, are not fluent in answering simple questions, and still have difficulty in retelling the content of the story in a coherent manner (Duthois, Montero-Perez, Van Avermaet, & Vanderlinde, 2025). At this stage, the child's verbal response is still limited and tends to appear after direct help from the teacher. This situation shows that the literacy experience received by children previously is not strong enough to develop the ability to listen, understand the content of stories, and express understanding orally (Phillips et al., 2021). From the perspective of early literacy, this condition can be understood because children aged 5–6 years are still in the language development phase which is greatly influenced by the quality of interaction, learning media, and learning atmosphere. Therefore, interventions are needed that are able to provide a concrete, fun, and developmental language experience for children.

After the action was implemented, the child's literacy ability showed a gradual but clear change in almost all of the observed indicators. In the first cycle, children begin to show increased attention when listening to stories because the support of picture books provides visual assistance that makes it easier for them to follow the flow. The ability to answer simple questions is also

beginning to develop, although most children still need the teacher's direction to formulate answers that are in accordance with the content of the story. In addition, some children begin to be able to name the main character and recognize new vocabulary that emerges during the storytelling process. Improvements at this stage suggest that the combination of oral stories, visual illustrations, and literacy corner environments begins to work as an effective stimulus for early literacy development (Cheng et al., 2025). In other words, the changes in the first cycle have not been fully optimal, but have marked a shift from a passive state to a more active and responsive learning engagement to a given language experience.

A stronger change was seen in the next cycle when children began to get used to the pattern of storytelling activities based on picture books in the literacy corner (Bunayyah et al., 2025). Children not only listen with better attention, but also become more courageous in answering questions, expressing simple opinions, and trying to retell the content of the story with a clearer structure. At this stage, children's involvement in learning activities becomes more even, so that literacy skills no longer develop only in certain children, but begin to appear in most students. These results show that the repetition of actions in PTK provides space for children to gradually adapt to the learning strategies used. In the context of multimodal learning theory, this increase can be explained by the integration of visual, verbal, and social stimuli that support more complete processing of meaning. Thus, storytelling based on picture books has been proven to not only attract children's attention, but also help them build a deeper understanding of the language.

When examined based on literacy indicators, the most noticeable improvements can be seen in the aspects of listening, the ability to answer simple questions, and the ability to mention characters or story elements. These aspects tend to develop faster because they are directly related to the child's experience of listening to stories and looking at the illustrations that accompany the text (Harefa, Mustapa, Kurniati, & Wardhani, 2025). Meanwhile, the ability to retell the content of a story and mention new vocabulary is also developing, but it requires more intensive support because it demands a more complex process of thinking, remembering, and expressing language. The difference in the rate of development between these indicators shows that early literacy is a skill that grows gradually and does not always increase uniformly. However, in general, there is a shift in achievement from the category of not yet developed and starting to develop towards developing as expected, even in some children achieving very good development. This shift shows that the actions taken have succeeded in improving the quality of children's literacy experience in real terms in the context of learning at RA Nurul Islam.

From a theoretical point of view, the improvement of children's literacy skills after action reinforces the view that early literacy grows through meaningful interactions, age-appropriate media, and supportive learning environments. Storytelling presents lively spoken language, picture books provide visual aids to understand meaning, while literacy corners create a comfortable learning context and encourage children's participation (Deliman, 2025). These three form a multimodal experience that allows children to learn not through memorization, but through active involvement in understanding and responding to stories. In this framework, the improvement of children's abilities is not only the result of listening to stories frequently, but also the result of the quality of pedagogical interaction built during the action process. The teacher acts as a facilitator who directs the child's attention, reinforces, and opens up a space for simple dialogue during activities (Cheng et al., 2025). Therefore, the changes in literacy abilities that appear after action can be understood as a result of child-centered learning and are in harmony with the principles of early language development.

Overall, answering the formulation of the second problem, it can be affirmed that the literacy ability of children aged 5-6 years at RA Nurul Islam has improved after the implementation of storytelling based on picture books in the literacy corner. Before action, children's abilities are still dominated by limitations in the aspects of listening, answering questions, and retelling the content of the story. After the action is carried out gradually through several cycles, the ability develops in a better direction, characterized by increased attention, understanding of the content of the story, vocabulary, and the courage of the child in expressing the results of his or her understanding orally. These findings show that changes in literacy skills do not occur instantaneously, but through a consistent, adaptive, and planned learning process. Thus, storytelling based on picture books in the literacy corner can be seen as an effective strategy to strengthen early childhood literacy. These results also confirm the relevance between the research title, theoretical foundation, PTK method design, and empirical findings obtained in the field.

Based on the results of the research, it can be emphasized that storytelling based on picture books in the literacy corner is able to improve the literacy skills of children aged 5-6 years at RA Nurul Islam in a real and gradual manner. The increase can be seen from changes in children's learning behavior during the action process and from shifts in developmental achievement in the literacy indicators observed (Ratnasari, 2020). In the initial condition, most children still show limitations in concentrating, understanding the content of the story, and reexpressing the information heard. After the action is given through several cycles, the child begins to show positive changes, both in engagement during learning and in verbal language skills. This indicates that storytelling strategies combined with picture books and supported by literacy corner atmosphere are able to provide a more meaningful learning experience. Thus, empirically, this study shows that the designed actions actually contribute to improving children's early literacy in accordance with the research objectives that have been formulated.

The increase in literacy skills does not occur by chance, but is the result of the suitability between the learning methods, the media used, and the developmental characteristics of children aged 5–6 years. Storytelling provides an auditory experience that enriches listening and understanding the ability to listen and understand spoken language, while picture books provide visual support that helps children capture the meaning of stories in a more concrete way (Lepola, Kajamies, Laakkonen, & Collins, 2023). The literacy corner, at the same time, serves as a comfortable and conducive learning environment to build children's attention and curiosity. When these three elements are combined, children not only passively receive information, but are also involved in the process of understanding, interpreting, and responding to stories (Xiao, Amzah, & Rong, 2023). This process is what makes learning more effective than learning patterns that are only centered on the teacher's explanation. Therefore, the improvement of children's literacy skills in this study can be understood as a direct result of the design of actions that are in line with the principles of early childhood learning.

If analyzed based on indicators, the increase that occurred shows that storytelling based on picture books affects children's receptive and expressive literacy skills. In the receptive aspect, children become more able to listen to stories with focus and understand the content of the story conveyed by the teacher. In the expressive aspect, children begin to be able to answer simple questions, mention the characters in the story, use new vocabulary, and retell the content of the story with more concise sentences (Nicolopoulou, Hale, Leech, Weinraub, & Maurer, 2023). This change indicates that the actions given not only improve one side of language skills, but also expand the entire experience of early childhood literacy in a more integrated manner. In the context of early literacy theory, these developments show that children learn language optimally when they

gain meaningful and interaction-rich experiences. In other words, the success of storytelling based on picture books in the literacy corner lies in its ability to activate children as the main actors in the process of understanding and communicating the meaning of stories.

The results of this study also reinforce the theoretical view that multimodal learning is very effective for early childhood. Children at the age of 5–6 years are not yet fully able to understand language symbols in the abstract, so they need concrete help in the form of pictures, teacher expressions, and interactive activities so that the message of the story can be received in its entirety. Picture-book-based storytelling meets these needs because it combines verbal, visual, and social elements simultaneously. In its implementation at RA Nurul Islam, this combination has been proven to be able to build attention, increase enthusiasm, and encourage children to actively participate in literacy activities (Cheng et al., 2025). These findings are in line with a theoretical framework that places early literacy as the result of interactions between children, language, media, and the learning environment. Therefore, the improvement of literacy skills in this study is not only relevant practically, but also has a strong theoretical basis as a learning model that is suitable for the context of early childhood education.

Viewed from a methodological perspective, the success of the action also shows that the design of the Classroom Action Research used is appropriate to answer learning problems at RA Nurul Islam. Through the stages of planning, implementation, observation, and reflection, teachers can improve learning strategies from one cycle to the next based on field findings. This reflective process is very important because improving children's literacy skills does not always occur in a linear manner, but requires adjustments in the way of storytelling, book selection, and interaction patterns during activities (Maureen, Van Der Meij, & De Jong, 2020). Thus, the increase in results obtained is a consequence of systematically designed actions, not merely spontaneous changes in the child. This shows that storytelling based on picture books is not only effective as a method, but also flexible to be developed within the framework of PTK. Therefore, this study provides evidence that planned pedagogical interventions can produce real changes in early childhood literacy skills.

Overall, answering the formulation of the third problem, it can be emphasized that storytelling based on picture books in the literacy corner is effective in improving the literacy skills of children aged 5-6 years at RA Nurul Islam. This effectiveness can be seen from the increased attention of children when listening, increased understanding of the content of the story, the development of courage to answer questions, and the increase in the ability to retell and enrich vocabulary. This improvement shows that literacy learning in early childhood will be more successful if it is carried out through an interactive, fun, and developmental approach (Lenhart, Lenhard, Vaahtoranta, & Suggate, 2020). The findings of this study also affirm the integration between the research title, introduction, theory, method, and results, because all of these components lead to the same conclusion, namely the importance of integrating storytelling methods, picture book media, and literacy corner environments. Thus, this research makes a practical contribution for RA teachers in developing literacy learning strategies that are effective, contextual, and oriented to the needs of early childhood.

The analysis of this study shows that storytelling based on picture books in the literacy corner is an intervention that is pedagogically aligned with the characteristics of the literacy development of children aged 5–6 years. The integration of storytelling methods, visual media in the form of picture books, and learning spaces in the form of literacy corners creates a multimodal learning experience that strengthens children's attention, understanding, and verbal responses. In the context of the research results, improvements were seen in the ability to listen, answer questions, retell the content of the story, and recognize simple vocabulary and symbols. These findings reinforce the

theory of early literacy that places language as a developmental process that grows through social interaction, rather than through rigid academic learning. Thus, the effectiveness of action lies not only in the content of the story, but in the way the teacher builds a participatory, concrete, and fun learning atmosphere. This explains why children are more likely to be actively involved when stories are conveyed expressively with the support of attractive illustrations and a conducive literacy environment.

Methodologically, the results of the study also show that Classroom Action Research is the right approach to develop children's literacy skills gradually and reflectively. The cycle of planning, action, observation, and reflection provides an opportunity for teachers to adjust learning strategies based on the child's response at each stage (Pinova & Maulana, 2025). In terms of results, the increase in achievement from pre-action to the next cycle shows that children need consistent repetition, reinforcement, and visual stimulus so that literacy skills develop more optimally. This analysis confirms that the success of literacy learning in early childhood is not determined by a single factor, but by the synergy between methods, media, environment, and the quality of teacher-child interaction. Therefore, storytelling based on picture books in the literacy corner can be seen as an effective, applicative, and relevant learning model for RA Nurul Islam. These findings also strengthen the continuity between the title, introduction, theory, method, results, and discussion of the research.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that storytelling based on picture books in the literacy corner is an effective learning strategy to improve the literacy skills of children aged 5–6 years at RA Nurul Islam. The implementation of actions designed through the stages of planning, implementation, observation, and reflection within the framework of Classroom Action Research is able to create a learning process that is more interactive, fun, and in accordance with the characteristics of early childhood development. The results of the study show that before the action is given, children's literacy skills are still at a suboptimal level, especially in the aspects of listening, answering simple questions, retelling the content of stories, and recognizing simple vocabulary and symbols. After the implementation of storytelling based on picture books in the literacy corner, there was a real increase in almost all indicators of children's literacy ability, both in receptive and expressive aspects. These findings confirm that the integration of storytelling methods, picture book media, and literacy corner environments can strengthen concrete, meaningful, and participatory language learning experiences. Thus, this research makes a practical contribution for RA teachers in developing an early literacy learning model that is contextual, applicative, and relevant to the needs of early childhood development.

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