


## Developing Indonesian Language Literacy through Storytelling Activities for Elementary School Students at Pandeglang Regency

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Article Info	ABSTRACT
<b>Keywords:</b> literacy, Indonesian, storytelling, elementary school, Pandeglang	The problem of Indonesian language literacy skills in elementary school students is: low interest in reading, limited comprehension, and the lack of ability to critically comprehend reading content. Language learning activities tend to focus solely on cognitive aspects, so that students do not get a fun, contextual, and creative learning experience. Storytelling as a form of traditional literacy rich in cultural and linguistic values, has not been optimally utilized in school learning. Therefore, research is needed on the development of Indonesian language literacy through storytelling activities to improve language skills, imagination, and the ability to understand and appreciate texts. This study aims to analyze the effectiveness of storytelling activities in improving Indonesian language literacy skills among elementary school students at Pandeglang Regency. The research method used a descriptive qualitative approach involving classroom teachers, school librarians, and students in grades III–V from several elementary schools. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and document analysis. The results indicate that storytelling activities contribute positively to vocabulary enrichment, improved listening skills, and the ability to understand and re-express story content. Supporting factors include teacher creativity, parental involvement, and the availability of reading materials. However, barriers were also identified, such as limited time, supporting facilities, and a lack of teacher training in storytelling techniques. This study recommends integrating storytelling into structured Indonesian language learning, teacher training, and providing local story sources relevant to the Pandeglang cultural context.
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### INTRODUCTION

Several studies have shown that the literacy skills of elementary school students in Indonesia remain relatively low, particularly in reading comprehension, writing skills, and the ability to express ideas orally (Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, 2022). Literacy learning in schools generally emphasizes cognitive aspects using conventional methods, thus failing to fully foster students' interest and motivation in reading and writing (Suhartono, 2019).

On the other hand, storytelling activities have been shown to have significant potential in developing language skills, enriching understanding, and fostering students' imagination

and appreciation of literary and non-literary texts (Yuliani & Arifin, 2020). However, the application of storytelling in literacy learning has yet to receive optimal attention, both from the perspective of teachers' strategies and its integration with the elementary school literacy curriculum. This gap highlights the need for more in-depth research on how storytelling can be used as an effective literacy learning approach.

Literacy is a fundamental skill that underpins student learning success. In the context of Indonesian, literacy encompasses not only reading and writing skills but also listening and speaking skills. Storytelling is a proven effective learning method for developing these skills in an integrated manner. Pandeglang Regency, as a region in Banten Province, boasts a rich culture and folklore that can be utilized as storytelling material. However, not all schools have optimally utilized this potential. Challenges such as limited learning media, time, and teacher skills are hindering factors.

Literacy is a basic skill that every student must possess starting in elementary school. Literacy is not limited to reading and writing, but also encompasses the skills of understanding, processing information, and communicating ideas critically and creatively (Kusumaningpuri, 2023). The government, through the School Literacy Movement (GLS), emphasizes the importance of developing a culture of literacy from an early age so that students become accustomed to reading, thinking critically, and expressing themselves through language (Faizah et al., 2016).

One effective learning strategy for improving language literacy is through storytelling. Storytelling serves not only as entertainment but also as a learning tool that can enrich vocabulary, improve listening skills, and foster students' imagination (Sufitri & Setyowati, 2019). Furthermore, storytelling can instill moral values and local wisdom relevant to children's lives, thus playing a role in character formation (Yusnita & Rahayu, 2018).

Previous research has shown that storytelling activities can increase reading interest and literacy skills in elementary school students. For example, the use of storytelling media based on local wisdom has been proven effective in stimulating literacy skills in lower-grade students (Khotimah & Sari, 2021; Lestari & Maryani, 2022). Furthermore, the use of visual media such as pop-up books in storytelling can also improve students' reading comprehension (Yahzunka & Astuti, 2022).

In Pandeglang Regency, elementary school student literacy still faces challenges. Data from the Education Office shows that student reading interest is relatively low compared to urban areas in Banten Province (Pandeglang Regency Government, 2021). Limited access to engaging reading materials, a lack of innovative Indonesian language learning methods, and low utilization of storytelling activities are contributing factors (Wulandari & Maulida, 2022). Therefore, developing Indonesian language literacy through storytelling activities is a crucial strategy for improving the quality of learning in elementary schools.

This research focuses on examining the implementation of storytelling activities as a strategy for strengthening Indonesian language literacy at the elementary school level, specifically within the local social and cultural context of Pandeglang.

## METHOD

The research method used a qualitative descriptive approach, aiming to describe in depth the process and results of implementing storytelling activities in developing elementary school students' literacy. This approach was chosen so that researchers could understand the natural phenomena of literacy learning, emphasizing the importance of meaning, experience, and interactions that emerge during the learning process. The subjects were class teachers, librarians, and students in grades III–V at five public elementary schools in Pandeglang Regency.

1. Research Subjects and Location. The research subjects were elementary school students at the lower/higher grade levels (adjusted to the research focus) and classroom teachers involved in storytelling activities. The research locations were purposively selected in schools that have literacy programs but have not yet intensively utilized storytelling activities in their learning.
2. Data Collection Techniques. They are: a) Participatory Observation: Researchers directly observe the storytelling process in the classroom, recording student interactions, expressions, participation, and learning dynamics; b) In-depth Interviews: Conducted with teachers and students to explore their perceptions, experiences, and perspectives on storytelling activities in supporting literacy; c) Documentation: Collecting supporting documents such as lesson plans, teacher reflection notes, student writing, and photos or videos of storytelling activities.
3. Research Instruments. The primary instrument is the researcher herself, who serves as the key instrument (human instrument), equipped with observation guidelines, interview guidelines, and field note formats to ensure systematic data collection.
4. Data Analysis. Data analysis was conducted qualitatively and descriptively using the Miles & Huberman interactive model, which included: 1) data reduction: sorting data from observations, interviews, and documentation relevant to the focus of storytelling literacy; 2) data presentation: compiling observation results in the form of narrative descriptions, summary tables, or interview quotations; 3) drawing conclusions/verification: identifying patterns, themes, and meanings related to the effectiveness of storytelling activities on student literacy development; 3) data validity: to ensure data validity, the study used triangulation techniques: (a) source triangulation (teachers, students, documents); (b) technical triangulation (observation, interviews, documentation); (c) member checking, by reconfirming findings with respondents to ensure they align with reality on the ground.
5. Research steps, are: a) pre-research stage: initial observations, site selection, and permitting; b) data collection stage: conducting observations, interviews, and documentation of storytelling activities; c) data analysis stage: reducing, presenting, and drawing conclusions; and d) reporting stage: compiling a comprehensive description of the research results.

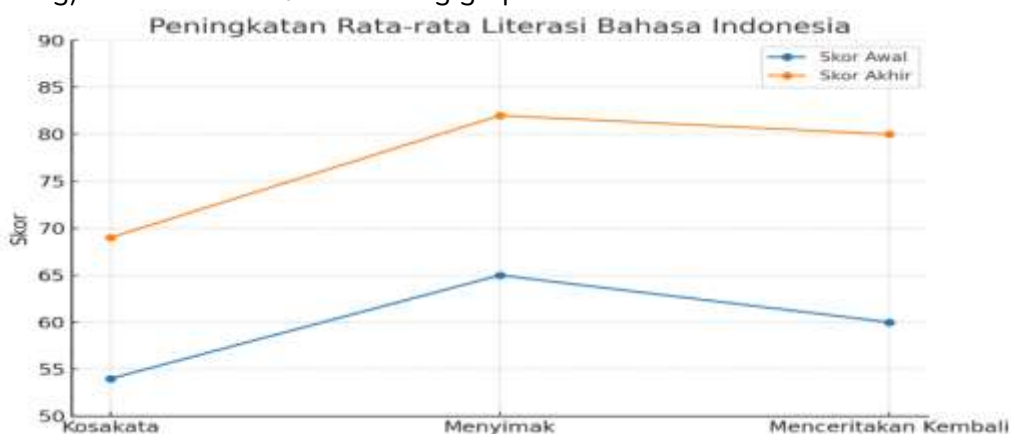
## RESULTS

This research makes a significant contribution to the development of literacy studies while strengthening the local context of Pandeglang. From a literacy perspective, this study broadens the understanding that literacy is not limited to reading and writing skills but also encompasses oral literacy through storytelling activities. This enriches the academic perspective that oral narrative-based literacy plays a crucial role in fostering language skills, developing imagination, and fostering critical thinking skills in students. Thus, this research adds to the wealth of Indonesian literacy studies, which has so far focused primarily on the cognitive aspects of reading and writing.

In the local context of Pandeglang, this research contributes to the preservation and revitalization of oral traditions that are part of the cultural identity of the Bantenese people. By integrating local folktales and fairy tales into learning activities, this research helps reintroduce moral, social, and cultural values to the younger generation. This aligns with the importance of local wisdom-based education, which emphasizes not only academic mastery but also character building and cultural identity.

Furthermore, this research has practical implications for the education ecosystem in Pandeglang. For teachers, the results offer alternative literacy strategies that are creative, contextual, and tailored to student characteristics. For schools, this research can strengthen the School Literacy Movement (GLS) program through storytelling activities based on local culture. For local governments, this research can serve as a reference for developing educational policies oriented towards preserving local wisdom while improving the quality of student literacy.

Thus, this research contributes not only theoretically to broaden literacy studies but also practically to strengthen cultural identity and the quality of education in Pandeglang Regency. The average increase and literacy scores of storytelling in Indonesian (Vocabulary, listening and retelling) can be seen in the following graph:



**Graph 1.** Increase in average Indonesian Language Literacy

1. Implementation of Storytelling at Elementary School Level at Pandeglang: a) held weekly during literacy hours; b) story material comes from Bantenese folklore books and modern moral stories; c) teachers utilize simple media such as hand puppets, picture boards, and props.

2. Impact on Indonesian Literacy: a) vocabulary enhancement: students learn new terms from stories b) listening skills: improved through listening to stories; c) speaking skills: developed when students are asked to retell stories; d) reading comprehension: improved because the stories are presented in an engaging manner.
3. Supporting Factors: a) teacher creativity in storytelling; b) parental support for reading stories at home; c) the existence of a school library, although the collection is limited.
4. Obstacles: a) Limited storytelling time in competitions; b) Teachers have never participated in formal storytelling training; c) teachers have not received adequate storytelling training; and d) lack of local storybooks.

## Discussion

These findings align with research by Nurgiyantoro (2016), which states that storytelling effectively improves language skills in an integrated manner. Increased vocabulary indicates that students learn new terms through storytelling. Furthermore, listening and retelling scores increased significantly, indicating that students' receptive and productive skills are developing equally. Parental involvement is a key success factor, supporting the family literacy theory that fostering a reading habit at home strengthens school literacy outcomes. However, identified barriers need to be addressed through school and local government policies, such as increasing literacy time allocation and providing Pandeglang folklore books.

### 1. Indonesian Language Literacy in Elementary Schools

Language literacy in elementary school students is a crucial foundation in the educational process. Literacy is not only defined as the ability to read and write, but also includes critical thinking skills, reading comprehension, and the ability to communicate ideas (Faizah et al., 2016). In Pandeglang Regency, according to a report from the Education Office, student literacy achievement is still below the Banten Province average, as indicated by low reading interest and difficulty understanding long texts (Pandeglang Regency Government, 2021). This situation demands innovation in Indonesian language learning to motivate students and enable them to develop literacy skills.

### 2. Storytelling as a Medium for Literacy Development

Storytelling is a traditional method with pedagogical power in developing children's literacy. Through storytelling, students are trained to listen, understand the plot, recognize characters, expand their vocabulary, and re-express the story's content (Sufitri & Setyowati, 2019). Storytelling can also develop speaking and writing skills because students are encouraged to retell, rewrite, or even create new stories based on their imagination (Yusnita & Rahayu, 2018). Research shows that storytelling activities can increase reading interest and strengthen reading comprehension in elementary school students (Khotimah & Sari, 2021). Moreover, the use of innovative media such as pop-up books or videos based on local wisdom makes storytelling more engaging and relevant to students' lives (Yahzunka & Astuti, 2022; Lestari & Maryani, 2022).

### 3. Implementation of Storytelling Activities in Pandeglang Regency

In Pandeglang Regency, storytelling has begun to be utilized as a strategy in school literacy programs. However, its implementation has not been optimal due to teachers' limited competence in integrating storytelling into Indonesian language learning (Wulandari & Maulida, 2022). Some schools only use storytelling in extracurricular activities or special commemorations, rather than as part of regular learning. Storytelling can be integrated into various learning activities, for example: a) listening to stories to practice listening skills; b) discussing characters and plots to improve reading comprehension; c) rewriting stories to practice writing skills; and d) retelling stories to develop speaking skills. If these strategies are implemented consistently, storytelling can directly contribute to strengthening the four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Isnaini & Pratama, 2020).

#### 4. Local Wisdom as Storytelling Content

One of the great potentials of Pandeglang Regency is the richness of local folklore, such as legends, myths, and cultural stories from South Banten. Using stories based on local wisdom can increase students' emotional connection to the texts while also instilling regional moral and cultural values (Lestari & Maryani, 2022). Thus, storytelling serves not only as a medium for literacy but also as a vehicle for preserving Pandeglang's local culture.

#### 5. Contribution of Storytelling Activities to Literacy

Overall, storytelling can be an effective strategy for developing literacy among elementary school students in Pandeglang Regency. With the right approach, storytelling can: a) increase interest in reading; b) strengthen listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills; c) instill local moral and cultural values; and d) make learning Indonesian more enjoyable and meaningful.

## CONCLUSION

Storytelling activities in elementary schools at Pandeglang Regency have proven effective in improving students' Indonesian literacy, particularly in vocabulary, listening, speaking, and reading comprehension. For optimal implementation, the following are needed: 1) structured integration of storytelling into the curriculum; 2) teacher training in creative storytelling techniques; and 3) procurement of local storybooks appropriate to the Pandeglang cultural context. Storytelling literacy plays a significant role in the development of children's language, character, and multiliteracies. However, critical analysis shows that its practice still faces challenges in terms of curriculum, content relevance, and technology penetration. To be effective, storytelling literacy needs to be managed in an integrated manner between teachers, parents, and the community, with content adaptations appropriate to current developments.

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