


# The Effect of Relay Storytelling on the Receptive Language Skills of Children Aged 5–6 Years

Lailatul Fajriyah<sup>1</sup>, Khusnul Laely<sup>2</sup>, Febru Puji Astuti<sup>3</sup>

Pendidikan Guru Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini, Fakultas Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan, Universitas Muhammadiyah Magelang, Magelang

Article Info	ABSTRACT
<p><b>Keywords:</b> Relay storytelling, Children's language, Early childhood, Language stimulations.</p>	<p>The study aims to examine the effect of relay storytelling activities on the receptive language skills of children aged 5-6 years at RA Ulumuddin Ngargosoko. Kaliangkrik District, Magelang Regency. This research employed a quantitative approach with a one-group pretest–posttest experimental design. The subjects were 30 children from Group B (5-6 years), selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected using an observation sheet and analyzed using parametric statistics with the Paired Sample t-test method. The statistical test results showed an increase in the average receptive language score from 11.29 (pretest) to 15.39 (posttest). The hypothesis test using the Paired Sample t-test yielded a t-value of –10.353 with a significance level of 0.000, indicating that relay storytelling activities had a significant effect on the receptive language skills of children aged 5–6 years.</p>
<p>This is an open access article under the <a href="https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/">CC BY-NC</a> license</p> 	<p><b>Corresponding Author:</b> Lailatul Fajriyah Muhammadiyah University Of Magelang Magelang, Jawa Tengah, Indonesia <a href="mailto:Lailatulfajj104@gmail.com">Lailatulfajj104@gmail.com</a></p>

## INTRODUCTION

Language skills in children are abilities that must be developed optimally. Carrol (Bawono, 2017) states that there are four basic skills in language development: listening, reading, speaking, and writing. Children's language development does not occur in isolation but is influenced by various interrelated factors, such as lack of language stimulation, environment, developmental delays, parental involvement, as well as social and economic factors within the family.

One aspect of language skills is receptive language, which refers to a person's ability to receive and understand the language they are exposed to. According to the Minister of Education and Culture Regulation on the Standards of Early Childhood Education, children's receptive language includes skills in understanding narratives, following instructions, recognizing rules, and developing awareness toward reading. Receptive language encompasses the ability to receive and comprehend messages conveyed through listening and reading.

Bromley explains that receptive language is the ability to receive information from various sources through sight, hearing, and touch (Alfin and Pangastuti, 2020). Children with receptive language skills are those who are able to capture information through multiple senses. Satibi argues that receptive language is a child's ability to analyze and respond to

others, understand situations, and grasp intentions based on facial expressions or tone of voice (Indriani, 2023). The *Minister of Education and Culture Regulation No. 137 of 2014 on National Standards for Early Childhood Education* (Kementrian Pendidikan Nasional RI, 2014), states that examples of receptive language are listening and reading. According to Poerwadinata, listening is the ability to comprehend what others convey, while reading is the ability to interpret written text. In other words, reading in receptive language means gaining information from written material (Elan, Gandana and Fauziah, 2023) .

The same regulation also explains that children's developmental milestones represent growth and development expected within a certain age range. One of the indicators of receptive language achievement for children aged 5–6 years includes understanding oral instructions, identifying and understanding stories they hear, retelling those stories, comprehending sentence meanings, and enjoying as well as appreciating reading.

Hasiana (2020) points out that receptive language disorders are difficulties experienced by children in understanding messages or information delivered verbally or through sounds. Some observable symptoms in children with receptive language disorders include lack of attention to the speaker, inability to respond when read a storybook or when listening to stories, difficulty understanding words or sentences, and inability to follow oral instructions properly. Therefore, receptive language development is crucial to prevent it from affecting other areas of language development. Poorly developed receptive language skills may cause language-related problems, such as lack of focus in listening, difficulties in comprehension, or even speech delays.

Initial observations conducted in Group B of RA Ulumuddin Ngargosoko showed that 10 out of 30 children experienced problems in receptive language development. This was indicated by children's inability to follow instructions accurately, lack of responsiveness to verbal information, inability to repeat information, and lack of interest in storybooks available in the reading corner. Learning activities in RA Ulumuddin Ngargosoko were designed entirely by teachers, focusing on singing, coloring, and sticking activities. Other activities that could stimulate children's language development were not optimally implemented, usually limited to singing or storytelling by teachers.

In general, various efforts have been made to improve receptive language in early childhood, such as using Big Books in learning, picture-guessing games, and role-playing methods. While these efforts have been widely applied in schools, innovations are still needed to diversify activities that stimulate children's receptive language skills. Therefore, collaborative storytelling (storytelling bersambung) is designed as a new innovation in early childhood education, serving as an alternative to enhance children's language development. According to Sénéchal, repeated story listening (repeated-reading) facilitates children's acquisition of expressive and receptive vocabulary, which demonstrates that story repetition techniques are relevant to improving receptive language skills (Handayani *et al.*, 2024).

Salsabila *et al.*, (2021) explain that the term *storytelling* originates from English, referring to the activity of orally delivering stories. This activity involves narrating to listeners, either by reading books or directly without media. In practice, the storyteller seeks to build emotional engagement and audience comprehension of the story's flow. Herral adds that

storytelling captures children’s attention by directing their focus to the story, entertaining them, evoking emotions, broadening their knowledge, and conveying moral values (Ramdayany and Maswati, 2020).

Relay storytelling is a storytelling activity delivered not by a single person but collectively, where the story is continued by several people in turn. In classroom practice, teachers and children create or tell stories together. This is an improvisation of conventional storytelling. Such a modification is expected to enhance children’s receptive language skills because it requires their active participation. Children do not only listen but also pay close attention in order to correctly continue the story. Hence, collaborative storytelling is expected to stimulate children’s language development, particularly receptive language skills. The purpose of this study is to examine the effect of collaborative storytelling on receptive language ability among children aged 5–6 years before and after the treatment.

## METHODS

This study employed a quantitative approach using a quasi-experimental method with a one-group pretest–posttest design. The purpose of this research was to examine the effect of collaborative storytelling activities on the receptive language skills of children aged 5–6 years.

The research subjects consisted of 30 children aged 5–6 years from Group B at RA Ulumuddin Ngargosoko, Kaliangkrik District, Magelang Regency, selected through purposive sampling, which is a technique based on the researcher’s subjective judgment (Sumargo, 2020). The criteria for selecting participants were that children in Group B (aged 5–6 years) are in a phase of rapid language development and are capable of demonstrating more complex responses in listening, understanding, and reacting to information. According to Santrock (Talango, 2020), children aged 5–6 years show significant improvements in both receptive and expressive language abilities.

Data collection was conducted through direct observation using a receptive language observation sheet developed based on indicators of listening, understanding, and responding to oral information. The data obtained were analyzed using descriptive statistics and inferential statistics with the Paired Sample T-Test. The Paired Sample T-Test was employed to compare two means from the same group, before and after receiving the treatment (Sugiyono, 2018). The analysis was carried out with the assistance of SPSS version 26, following prerequisite normality testing using the Shapiro–Wilk test.

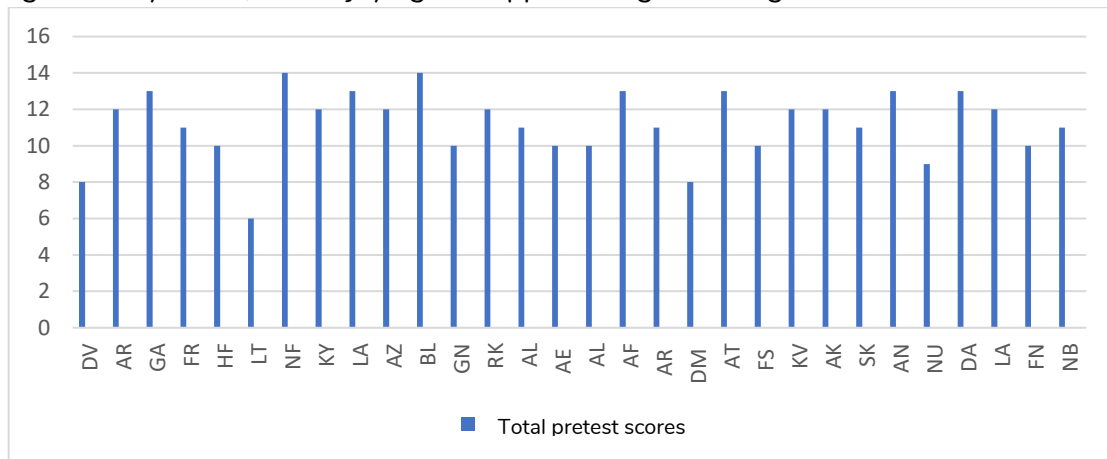
**Table 1.** Research Instrument Grid for Receptive Language Skills

Aspect	Indicator
Listening comprehension	Understanding oral instructions
	Identifying and being able to grasp the story that is heard
Reading	Retelling the story that has been heard
	Understanding the meaning of a sentence
	Enjoying and appreciating reading

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

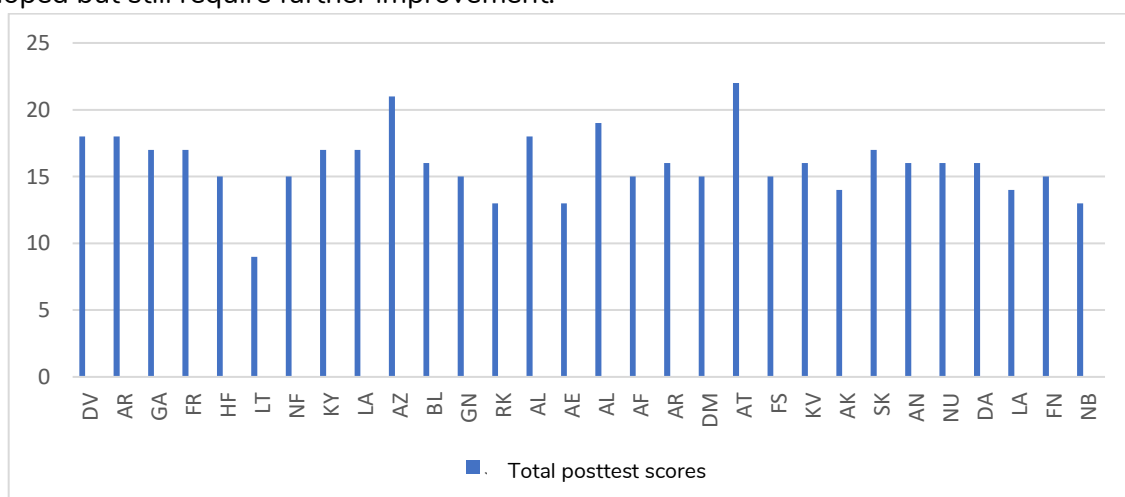
### Result

The research findings in this study were obtained from the pretest and posttest. The pretest aimed to examine the extent of the development of children’s receptive language skills in listening, understanding, and responding to stories delivered before receiving the treatment in the form of chain storytelling activities (see figure 1). The assessment was based on four indicators: understanding oral instructions, identifying and comprehending the story heard, retelling the story heard, and enjoying and appreciating a reading .



**Figure 1.** Total pretest scores

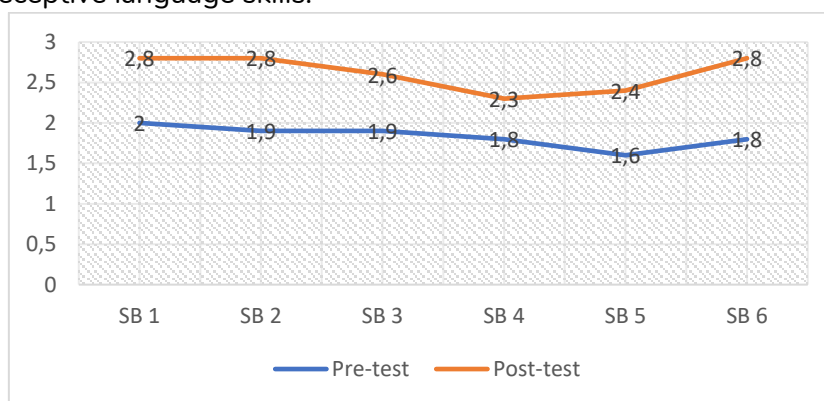
The pretest results presented in the bar chart (Figure 1) show the total measurement scores for each child. Two children obtained the highest score of 14, indicating that their receptive language skills were relatively optimal compared to their peers in the class. Meanwhile, the lowest score was 6, which reflects that the receptive language skills of the child still need to be further developed to reach an optimal level. The majority of children obtained scores between 10 and 13, suggesting that their receptive language skills have developed but still require further improvement.



**Figure 2.** Total Posttest Scores

Based on the bar chart (Figure 2), the posttest results show an improvement in children’s receptive language skill scores. The data also indicate that the final measurement scores of children’s receptive language skills after the treatment varied, with the lowest score being 9 and the highest 22. The majority of posttest scores ranged between 10 and 20, which demonstrates changes in children’s receptive language skills, although not substantially high. Nevertheless, these results indicate that children experienced better development in their receptive language skills.

Based on the results obtained regarding children’s receptive language skills before and after the treatment, the following data present a comparison between the pretest and posttest results of children’s receptive language skills (Figure 3). This comparison aims to determine the differences in scores before and after the treatment through chain storytelling activities, thereby showing the extent to which the intervention influenced the development of children’s receptive language skills.



**Figure 3.** Comparison of Mean Pretest and Posttest Scores

Based on the graph in Figure 3, which compares the mean pretest and posttest scores for each sub-indicator of receptive language skills, there is a significant improvement across all observed aspects. The sub-indicator with the highest initial mean was “*understanding and following agreements during activities*”, which increased from 2.0 to 2.8. Meanwhile, the indicator with the lowest initial mean was “*completing a story with their own sentences*”, which rose from 1.6 to 2.4, indicating that children began to construct sentences based on their own understanding.

Two other sub-indicators, namely “*answering questions based on the story content*” and “*showing interest in the story*”, also experienced substantial increases, from 1.8 and 1.9 respectively to 2.8. This suggests that chain storytelling activities enabled children to become more responsive and enthusiastic toward stories. Overall, these results reflect that chain storytelling provides a positive contribution in stimulating receptive language skills of children aged 5–6 years, both in listening and in comprehending reading materials. In addition to the mean pretest and posttest data, Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics comparing the two results.

**Table 2.** Descriptive Statistics of Pretest and Posttest Results

	Number of subject	Lowest Score	Highest Score	Mean
<i>Pretest</i>	30	6	14	11,29

	Number of subject	Lowest Score	Highest Score	Mean
<i>Posttest</i>	30	9	22	15,93

Table 2 presents the results of the descriptive statistical comparison, showing differences in scores before and after the treatment on the same subjects. Prior to the treatment, the lowest score was 6 and the highest was 14, with an average of 11.29. After the treatment, the scores increased, ranging from 9 to 18, with the mean rising to 15.93. These data indicate that the relay storytelling activity had a positive effect on the receptive language skills of children aged 5–6 years, as reflected in the improvement between the pretest and posttest results.

After obtaining the pretest and posttest data, the next step was to conduct prerequisite tests before hypothesis testing. The data were first examined for distribution to ensure the appropriateness of applying certain statistical techniques. This test was carried out to verify whether the data were normally distributed, using the total receptive language ability scores of each child. The normality test employed in this study was the Shapiro-Wilk test.

**Table 3.** Results of the Shapiro-Wilk Normality Test

	Statistic	df	Sig.	Description
<i>Pre-test</i>	0,931	30	0,052	Normal
<i>Post-test</i>	0,945	30	0,124	Normal

Table 3 presents the results of the Shapiro-Wilk normality test for both the pretest and posttest data. The significance values obtained were 0.052 for the pretest and 0.124 for the posttest, both of which are greater than 0.05. This indicates that the data for both pretest and posttest are normally distributed. Therefore, the data meet the prerequisite for conducting parametric statistical analysis in the next stage.

**Tabel 1.** Hasil Uji *Paired Sample T-Test*

	t	df	Sig.
<i>Pre-test and post-test</i>	-10,353	29	0,000 (2-tailed)

Table 4 shows the results of the Paired Sample T-Test comparing the pretest and posttest scores. The analysis produced a t-value of -10.353 with df = 29 and a significance value of 0.000 (< 0.05). These results indicate a significant difference between the pretest and posttest scores. Thus, it can be concluded that the relay storytelling activity had a significant positive effect on the receptive language skills of children aged 5–6 years.

## Discussion

The purpose of this study was to determine whether relay storytelling activities affect receptive language skills in children aged 5–6 years. The subjects were 30 children from Group B at RA Ulumuddin Ngargosoko. Based on the results of the data analysis, the significance value (p) was 0.000. Since this value is smaller than 0.05, it can be interpreted that there is a significant difference before and after the treatment. Therefore, according to the hypothesis testing criteria,  $H_0$  is rejected and  $H_a$  is accepted. This leads to the conclusion that relay storytelling activities have an effect on the receptive language skills of children aged 5–6 years.

This positive effect is evident from the comparison of the mean pretest score of 11.29 to the mean posttest score of 15.93. This difference demonstrates a clear development in the children's ability to understand oral instructions, identify story content, retell the stories they heard, and show interest in reading. Sub-indicator analysis also revealed consistent improvements across all measured aspects. The highest increases were observed in the items "answering questions based on story content" and "showing interest in stories by asking questions," which reflect the children's active engagement in listening to and understanding the stories presented repeatedly.

These findings are consistent with the opinion of Saodi *et al.*, (2021), who stated that the storytelling method can effectively develop children's listening and speaking skills, especially when combined with engaging media or methods. Similarly, Mardiono suggested that storytelling is one of the most favored approaches by children because of its enjoyable and interactive nature (Aryani and Putra, 2024). The relay storytelling activity used in this study reinforces these previous findings, as it actively involves children in the process of collaboratively constructing stories, making them not merely passive listeners.

Relay storytelling allows children to practice listening, recalling, and reorganizing information into verbal form. In this process, continuous storytelling stimulates important aspects of receptive language development, such as comprehension, attention, and emotional engagement. This is evident in the improvement of the sub-indicator "*completing the story with their own sentences*" which, despite having the lowest average score, showed a substantial increase from 1.6 to 2.4. This indicates that continuous storytelling also helps children develop language structures independently, although it requires more time and intensive practice.

The results are also supported by research conducted by Salsabil and Susanti, who found that storytelling has a positive and significant relationship with the enhancement of children's receptive language (Sukmakarti, 2024). The storytelling activities in this study included various forms of stimulation within a single activity, such as listening to picture stories, repeating story information, and engaging in simple discussions, which altogether encompassed multiple aspects of receptive language skills.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the analysis and discussion, it can be concluded that continuous storytelling activities have a significant effect on the receptive language skills of children aged 5–6 years. This is evidenced by the increase in mean scores between the pretest and posttest, as well as the statistical test results showing a meaningful difference. The findings of this study demonstrate that continuous storytelling is not only effective in improving young children's receptive language skills, but also makes a valuable contribution to the development of learning strategies that are enjoyable, meaningful, and experience-based. Thus, through this study, the researcher hopes to provide further insights and academic references in the field of early childhood education, particularly in relation to children's language development. Considering the results and the limitations discussed, it can be stated that continuous storytelling is a positively influential method and has the potential to become

a viable option for developing children's receptive language skills. However, further renewal and incorporation of more varied methods could lead to more optimal outcomes. Therefore, future research may combine this method with other variations to examine deeper effects on children's language development.

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