



## Application of Storytelling Methods in Increasing Children's Interest in Learning English in Literacy Communities

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**Abstract:** This study investigates the application of storytelling methods to enhance children's interest in learning English within a literacy community. Given the increasing importance of early English proficiency and the challenge of engaging children in non-formal settings, this research explores how storytelling fosters a more enjoyable and effective learning experience. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, data were collected through observations, interviews, and documentation involving children aged 6–9 in a local literacy program. The findings reveal that storytelling significantly improves children's engagement, focus, and confidence, as demonstrated by their active participation in discussions, imitation of expressions, and story retelling in English. Moreover, storytelling promotes an imaginative and inclusive environment that supports vocabulary acquisition and language use. These results support the notion that storytelling serves as a powerful and adaptable method for English instruction in informal education contexts

**Keywords:** Storytelling, Learning Interest, English, Literacy Community, Non-Formal Learning

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

English is an international language that is very important to master, especially in the era of globalization like today (Subiyati, 1995). Mastery of English from an early age is one of the important foundations in preparing the younger generation to face global challenges, both in the fields of education, technology, and communication. However, in practice, increasing children's interest in learning English is not easy, especially in informal environments such as literacy communities. Children in these communities generally have limited access to varied and interactive learning methods. In addition, the learning methods used are often still conventional and less able to attract children's attention. In fact, children need a fun approach to learning, according to their age and developmental characteristics. Therefore, a learning method is needed that not only conveys material, but is also able to arouse children's interest and

enthusiasm for learning actively and creatively.

Interest in learning is one of the key factors in the success of the learning process, including in learning English (Fitriana, 2018). When children have a high interest in a lesson, they will be more motivated to actively engage and enjoy the learning process. Therefore, it is important for teachers or researchers to choose a learning method that is not only informative, but also capable of arousing students' interest. According to Purnia et al. (2024), one of the methods that is considered effective in increasing children's interest in learning is storytelling. This method is creative and fun, and is able to present a more contextual learning experience through relevant and entertaining stories. Storytelling is also very suitable for children's world full of imagination, because stories can evoke emotions, build critical thinking, and naturally enrich vocabulary and language structure. Thus, the application of the

storytelling method in English learning is expected to be a solution to overcome children's low interest in learning, especially in the literacy community.

Storytelling or the storytelling method is one of the learning approaches that uses stories as a medium to convey teaching materials. According to Brewster and Ellin (2002), storytelling in language learning can help children understand language structure, expand vocabulary, and improve listening skills naturally. As a narrative-based method, storytelling allows teachers to convey learning messages in a way that is engaging and easy for children to understand. Several previous studies such as Lisnawati (2023), Oktanisfia and Susilo (2021), and Rizky and Suharmoko (2019) have also shown that storytelling has been proven to be effective in improving children's language skills, both in terms of listening and speaking skills, and in fostering their confidence when using foreign languages. In addition, there is a close relationship between learning interests and student learning outcomes. Children who have a high interest in learning tend to show better academic performance, because they are more active, focused, and enthusiastic about following the learning process. Thus, the use of the storytelling method not only provides a pleasant learning experience, but also has the potential to significantly improve English learning outcomes.

This research was conducted in one of the literacy communities in an environment with a middle-to-lower socio-economic background, where access to adequate educational resources is still limited. This literacy community plays an important role as an alternative space for children to learn outside of formal school, especially in terms of improving basic literacy and English skills. Although the children's enthusiasm in participating in learning activities is quite high, they often have difficulty in

understanding English material because the teaching methods used are still conventional and less interesting. This condition shows that there is an urgent need to present a more targeted and fun learning method, which is able to arouse children's curiosity and interest in learning. Therefore, the application of the storytelling method is seen as relevant to be used in this community as an effort to increase children's involvement and learning motivation in learning English.

One of the main problems faced in the learning process in the literacy community is the low motivation of children in learning English. Although English is an important skill that needs to be mastered from an early age, many children find it difficult and lack interest in learning it. This is because the learning methods used so far are still conventional, tend to be monotonous, and do not involve children's active participation. As a result, the learning process becomes less enjoyable and unable to foster a significant interest in learning. This condition shows the need for a more creative, interesting, and appropriate learning approach to children's world, so that they can be more motivated and actively involved in the English learning process.

The purpose of this study is to find out how the storytelling method is applied in the English language learning process in the literacy community. This study also aims to analyze the extent of the effectiveness of the storytelling method in increasing children's interest in learning English. By understanding the implementation process and its impact, it is hoped that the results of this study can provide a clear picture of the potential of storytelling as a learning strategy that suits the characteristics of children, especially in non-formal learning environments such as literacy communities.

This research is expected to make a practical contribution for teachers,

volunteers, and researchers involved in learning activities in the literacy community, especially in choosing English teaching methods that are more effective and attractive to children. By exploring the application of storytelling methods, this research also provides learning alternatives that are fun and in accordance with the characteristics and imaginative world of children. In addition, the results of this research can be a reference in designing English learning strategies that are more contextual, interactive, and able to arouse children's interest in learning in non-formal environments.

## 2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with the aim of describing in depth the application of the storytelling method in English learning and its influence on children's learning interests in the literacy community (Sitanggang et al. 2025). This approach was chosen because it is able to describe the process, response, and learning experience of children in a comprehensive and naturalistic manner.

The research was carried out in one of the literacy communities, namely the Oesapa Mangrove Reading Park which actively organizes learning activities, including English for children, which is located in Oesapa, Kelapa Lima District, Kupang City. The subjects of the study are children who are participants in learning activities, as well as researchers or volunteer teachers in the community. The number of child participants observed in this study was 10–15 children, with an age range of 7–10 years.

According to Kristanto (2018), data collection techniques are a method used by researchers to collect research data from data sources (research subjects and samples). In this study, data was collected through several techniques, namely:

1. Participatory observation is carried out during the learning process to observe the implementation of storytelling methods and children's responses directly.
2. Semi-structured interviews, conducted with researchers/teachers and several children to explore their perceptions, experiences, and interests in learning English using the storytelling method.
3. Documentation, in the form of photos, videos, and notes of learning activities used to strengthen observation and interview data.

The data obtained was analyzed qualitatively with steps: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawn. The analysis was carried out by identifying the main themes related to the implementation of the storytelling method and changes in children's learning interests during the activity.

According to to maintain the validity of the data, source triangulation techniques and techniques are used, namely comparing the results of observations, interviews, and documentation to obtain valid and reliable data. In addition, member checks are carried out on informants to ensure the correctness of the data that has been collected.

## 3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The application of the storytelling method in English learning in the literacy community shows an increase in children's enthusiasm during the learning process. This can be seen from their active response from the beginning of the activity, such as showing curiosity about the story to be told, following the storyline attentively, and giving expressions of joy when the characters in the story are demonstrated by the Researcher. The children appeared more lively and vibrant compared to previous learning sessions using conventional methods. Stories that are presented with interesting intonation, gestures, and visual media such

as pictures or puppets make them more engaged and motivated to learn. This increase in enthusiasm is an early indicator that the storytelling method is able to create a fun learning atmosphere and encourage children's involvement in the English learning process.

The active involvement of children during the learning process using the storytelling method is very prominent. Children not only become passive listeners, but also actively respond to the stories being told. They enthusiastically answered questions asked by the researcher regarding the content of the story, and tried to imitate the simple sentences in English they heard. Some children even show initiative to retell parts of their favorite stories using the vocabulary they have learned. Activities like this show that children not only enjoy stories, but also start to actively build language skills. The active response is proof that the storytelling method is able to facilitate two-way interaction in the learning process, as well as strengthen children's understanding and courage in using English.

The increased focus and attention of children is evident when learning English using the storytelling method. When the researcher begins to read or perform stories with vivid facial expressions, varied sound intonation, and using auxiliary media such as pictures or dolls, children seem more focused on the storyline. They sit quietly, paying attention to each part of the story, and showing expressions of interest or curiosity. Compared to conventional learning methods that tend to make children easily lose focus, storytelling is able to create a more interactive and fun atmosphere. The clarity of the storyline, interesting characters, and imaginative conflicts make it easier for children to concentrate and understand the material presented. This shows that storytelling is not only effective in attracting attention, but also in maintaining

the child's focus on learning during the learning process.

Children responded very positively to learning English with the storytelling method. They revealed that learning through stories felt more fun and not as boring as the previous method. The stories presented make them feel like they are playing or watching a show, rather than taking a formal lesson. Many children laugh, engage emotionally with the characters in the story, and even ask for a learning session with the story to be repeated at the next meeting. This response shows that the storytelling method is able to change children's perception of learning English, from something difficult or burdensome to an exhilarating and anticipated experience. This sense of pleasure is an important factor in building continuous learning motivation.

The researcher noted that there was an increase in children's motivation and courage in using English vocabulary after the application of the storytelling method. Children begin to show initiative to say the words they hear in the story, both when responding to questions and when role-playing with their friends. They no longer feel afraid or embarrassed to try to speak in English, even if it's still with simple pronunciation. Some children even confidently imitate short sentences delivered by the story characters. This shows that storytelling not only passively enriches children's vocabulary, but also encourages them to actively use language in meaningful contexts. The courage to try and increased motivation are important indicators that this method is able to build a strong foundation in the process of learning children's English in a literacy community environment.

The storytelling method creates an imaginative and fun learning atmosphere, perfectly in keeping with the characteristics of children's world full of imagination and curiosity. With engaging storylines, lively

characters, and emotionally charged conflicts and resolutions, children feel emotionally and cognitively engaged in learning. Stories are told through varied voice intonation, expressive facial expressions, and visual media such as pictures or puppets, making learning feel like an exciting adventure, not just a process of memorizing vocabulary. This helps to create a conducive atmosphere, where children feel free to explore, imagine, and express themselves. This fun learning atmosphere not only increases their comfort in learning English, but also fosters a love for the learning process itself.

The storytelling method makes it easier for children to understand English vocabulary and sentence structure because it is presented in a meaningful and relevant context. Through storylines, words and sentences are no longer learned separately or abstractly, but rather appear naturally in situations that are easy for children to understand. For example, verbs, objects, or expressions used by characters in the story will be easier to understand because they are directly related to the action or situation in the story. Thus, children not only memorize vocabulary, but also understand their use in sentences and everyday contexts. This approach helps build a deeper and more lasting understanding, while improving their ability to apply language functionally.

This research is in line with the theory put forward by Ellis and Brewster (2002), which states that storytelling is an effective method in teaching language to children. According to them, stories are not only able to attract children's attention, but also provide a rich and meaningful context to introduce and reinforce language vocabulary and structure. Stories help children understand the meaning of words and sentences through context, images, and sound intonation, making learning more natural and fun. The results of this study

strengthen this view, where the storytelling method has been proven to be able to increase children's interest in learning, active involvement, and language skills in the literacy community. The alignment between the field findings and the theories of Ellis and Brewster suggests that story-based approaches have a strong theoretical basis in children's language learning.

Story-based learning activities have been proven to be able to foster children's confidence to actively participate and speak English. When stories are told in an engaging and fun way, children feel more comfortable and safe to express themselves without fear of making mistakes. The characters in the story are often the inspiration for them to imitate certain speeches or scenes, so they are indirectly encouraged to use English in the context they understand. In addition, a more relaxed and less rigid learning atmosphere makes children more courageous to try to speak, even with a simple vocabulary and structure. With the support of researchers who gave positive appreciation for their efforts, the children's confidence grew, which ultimately strengthened the overall English learning process.

In the context of an informal literacy community, the storytelling method not only plays a role in developing language skills, but also strengthens social relations between children and between children and researchers. The stories presented interactively create a space for children to share their opinions, work together in answering questions, or even role-play together. This activity builds a sense of togetherness and solidarity among them. In addition, the warm and non-judgmental atmosphere makes every child feel valued and involved, regardless of social background, ability level, or courage to speak. Thus, storytelling helps create an inclusive learning environment, where every

child feels safe to learn and develop according to their abilities. This approach is very important in the non-formal literacy community, because it is able to bridge differences and foster a spirit of collective learning.

The storytelling method can be an alternative to a fun and applicable English learning strategy, especially in non-formal learning environments such as literacy communities. In an atmosphere that is less bound by a formal curriculum, a story-based approach allows the learning process to take place more flexibly, interactively, and close to the children's world. Children can learn through the experience of actively listening, imitating, and responding to stories, without excessive academic pressure. In addition to providing entertainment, storytelling also inserts elements of language learning such as vocabulary, sentence structure, and pronunciation in a real and easy-to-understand context. Therefore, this method is very suitable to be applied as an effective alternative to increase interest in learning and English language skills, especially for children who study outside of formal school.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that the storytelling method is effective in enhancing children's interest in learning English within literacy community settings. The method supports an engaging and imaginative learning atmosphere that aligns well with children's developmental characteristics. It fosters active participation, improves focus, and builds children's confidence in using English vocabulary through contextual storytelling activities. Moreover, in non-formal learning environments, storytelling not only facilitates cognitive and language development but also encourages social interaction and inclusivity. This study highlights the value of storytelling as a

practical and enjoyable teaching strategy in informal education. Future studies may examine its long-term effects or implementation across different learning contexts to expand its applicability.

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