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## Efforts to Improve Storytelling Techniques in 5-6 Year Old Children Through Local Story Books from North Sumatra

*Upaya Meningkatkan Teknik Storytelling Anak Usia 5-6 Tahun Melalui Buku Cerita Lokal Sumatera Utara*

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### Abstract

Children's storytelling skills at TK Nurul Ilmi are still relatively low, characterized by a lack of courage and limited language in conveying a coherent storyline. This study aims to determine the improvement in children's storytelling skills before and after using local storybooks from North Sumatra. The study used Classroom Action Research with a cyclical model consisting of planning, implementation, observation, and reflection. The subjects were 19 children from Group B of TK Nurul Ilmi, while the object was their storytelling skills through local storybooks. The research instrument used was an observation sheet compiled based on indicators of storytelling techniques and the instillation of cultural values. Data analysis was conducted using descriptive and quantitative methods to calculate the percentage of achievement in each stage of child development. Findings in Cycle I showed an increase in children's skills to 36% in the developing category as expected, but had not yet reached the success criteria. In Cycle II, this percentage reached 79% after integrating the tor-tor dance into the lesson. Teachers are advised to implement local culture-based storytelling methods combined with movement elements to create more interactive and meaningful learning.

**Keywords:** early childhood; language behavior; local story book; storytelling technique; tor-tor dance

### Abstrak

Kemampuan teknik storytelling anak di TK Nurul Ilmi masih tergolong rendah, yang ditandai dengan kurangnya keberanian serta keterbatasan bahasa anak dalam menyampaikan alur cerita secara runtut. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui peningkatan kemampuan storytelling anak sebelum dan setelah penggunaan media buku cerita lokal Sumatera Utara. Jenis penelitian yang digunakan adalah PTK model siklus melalui tahapan perencanaan, pelaksanaan, observasi, dan refleksi. Subjek penelitian yaitu 19 anak kelompok B TK Nurul Ilmi, objeknya adalah kemampuan teknik storytelling melalui buku cerita lokal. Instrumen penelitian yang digunakan berupa lembar observasi yang disusun berdasarkan indikator teknik storytelling dan penanaman nilai budaya. Analisis data dilakukan secara deskriptif kuantitatif dan kuantitatif untuk menghitung presentase pencapaian kategori perkembangan anak pada setiap tahapan. Temuan pada siklus I menunjukkan peningkatan kemampuan anak menjadi 36% pada kategori berkembang sesuai harapan, namun belum mencapai kriteria keberhasilan. Pada siklus II persentase mencapai 79% setelah dilakukan integrasi kegiatan tarian tor-tor kedalam pembelajaran. Guru disarankan untuk menerapkan metode storytelling berbasis budaya lokal yang dipadukan dengan unsur gerak untuk menciptakan pembelajaran yang lebih interaktif dan bermakna.

**Kata kunci:** anak usia dini; buku cerita lokal; kemampuan bahasa; teknik bercerita; tarian tor-tor

## A. INTRODUCTION

Early childhood is a golden age period where children have extraordinary abilities in absorbing various environmental stimuli, making it the most appropriate time to lay the foundation of character and self-identity (Munawaroh, 2017). Early Childhood Education (PAUD) has a great urgency to not only focus on cognitive aspects, but also on instilling religious, moral, and social values that can shape children into individuals with noble character. Amid the current of globalization and the dominance of digital media that brings foreign cultural influences, PAUD is responsible for fortifying children so that they do not lose their identity and maintain a strong understanding of the values of local wisdom in their own environment (Khadijah, 2015).

In that context, the storytelling techniques or storytelling plays a crucial role as an effective pedagogical method (Lubis & Ardilla, 2023). Conceptually, storytelling is a storytelling process that involves interaction between the storyteller and listener to develop children's cognitive, affective, and social aspects (Joniton et al., 2025). The urgency of using this method lies in its ability to translate abstract moral values into a more concrete and understandable context for children. Through stories, children not only hear but also learn to imitate the good behavior of characters, recognize moral messages, and understand prosocial concepts such as mutual cooperation and helping each other more meaningfully (Khoiruzzadi et al., 2020). Cultural values are abstract concepts regarding basic and important issues in human life that serve as guidelines for behavior (Ramdhani et al., 2020). According to Koentjaraningrat, cultural values consist of conceptions that live in the minds of most citizens regarding things they should consider highly valuable in life (Kartikasari, 2025).

However, the reality on the ground shows that there are obstacles to children's communicative abilities. Based on a preliminary study through observations at Nurul Ilmi Kindergarten, it was found that technical abilities storytelling Children's comprehension is still relatively low. This phenomenon is evident in the inability of most children to retell a story coherently, their very limited use of language, and their low self-confidence when asked to express their stories in front of their peers. Children tend to have difficulty remembering the characters and sequence of events in stories they have heard. This low

level of competence indicates a gap in the learning media and strategies used (Nuruddin, 2019). Currently, learning tends to provide less opportunity for children to explore their speaking skills optimally, and there is minimal use of engaging and contextual teaching materials for children's lives. The lack of integration of local culture-based media is one of the inhibiting factors in developing children's language and character aspects in these institutions.

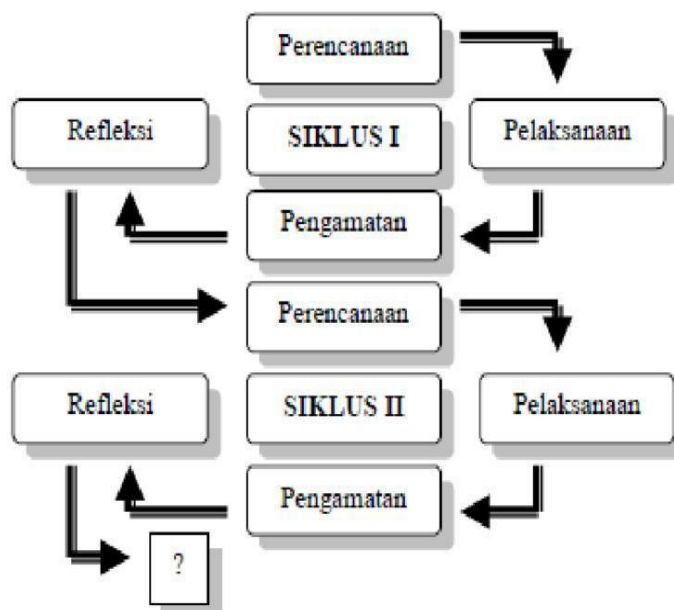
To address this issue, the use of local North Sumatra storybooks as learning media is necessary. Previous research by Yusuf & Rahmat (2019) has shown that media based on local wisdom, such as folktales, can be an effective solution for increasing the appeal of learning and increasing children's enthusiasm. Stories that are close to everyday life make it easier for children to connect the content to their real-life experiences. The advantages of this solution are reinforced by the view that contextual learning based on local culture can strengthen children's moral identity and understanding of the values of tolerance in a more relevant way.

In this study, compared to similar studies, the integration of techniques is storytelling Using local storybooks with physical activity in the form of the Tor-Tor dance. The addition of dance movement elements is not merely a variation, but a strategy to strengthen children's memory of the storyline through direct experience.(learningbydoing), as well as to practice non-verbal expression and increase children's confidence in presenting stories. According to Khadijah et al. (2022), language learning is divided into two categories: learning communication and learning literacy (reading and writing). Language learning should be fun, with direct, and contextual experiences for children, such as storytelling using local story books.

Based on the description, the formulation of the problem in this research is focused on: "How can the application of local North Sumatra storybook media combined with the Tor-Tor dance improve the technical abilities of the students?" storytelling in group B children at Nurul Ilmi Kindergarten?". This study aims to describe the process and measure the extent to which children's storytelling skills have improved through this culture-based learning innovation.

**B. RESEARCH METHODS**

This research uses the Classroom Action Research (CAR) type or Classroom Action Research (Inanna, 2024). The PTK model applied refers to the model developed by Kemmis and McTaggart, which consists of four main components in each cycle, namely: (1) Planning, (2) Implementation of Action, (3) Observation, and (4) Reflection. The Kemmis & McTaggart PTK model is presented in Figure 1:



**Figure 1. Kemmis & McTaggart PTK Model (Azizah, 2020; Hilal & Sit, 2025)**

The subjects of this study were children in Group B at Nurul Ilmi IT Kindergarten, aged 5-6 years. The total number of subjects was 19, consisting of boys and girls. The school has one Group B, where all students were used as research subjects to improve their technical disabilities. storytelling which was found during initial observation.

The main instrument used in this study is the Observation Sheet Checklist (Nurlaili, 2019). This instrument to measure the development of engineering techniques. storytelling children through established indicators (Rahmi et al., 2022). The assessment scale used refers to the Early Childhood Education assessment standards, namely:

**Table 1. Early Childhood Development Assessment Scale**

<b>Information</b>	<b>Percentage Score</b>
BB (Undeveloped)	0% - 25%
MB (Starting to Develop)	26% - 50%
BSH (Developing According to Expectations)	51% - 75%
BSB (Best Developing)	76% - 100%

The observation activities were then conducted collaboratively. The researcher acted as the implementer (providing local story material and the tor-tor dance instructor), while the class teacher, who understood the students' daily characteristics, acted as observer. This was done to maintain the objectivity of the assessment and ensure that all children's behavior was accurately documented using available instruments.

The indicators in this instrument are arranged based on the syntax of the technique. storytelling and local cultural values. The instrument grid was developed by referring to the theory of child language development according to (Aniswita, 2020) and the theory of storytelling According to (Dewi et al., 2023), because this instrument was independently developed by the researcher to suit the needs of local storybook media in North Sumatra, the researcher conducted a Content Validity Test (ContentValidity) through expert judgment by supervising lecturers and PAUD practitioners to ensure that the observation items are relevant to the research objectives. Instrument reliability was ensured through continuous observation techniques and triangulation of data sources to ensure the accuracy of data collection results.

Observation data were analyzed using the average score percentage formula. This study set a Success Indicator of 75%. This means that the action is considered successful if at least 15 of the 19 children have achieved the Development According to Expectations (BSH) or Very Good Development (BSB) category (Manullang et al., 2025). If the target is not achieved in cycle I, improvements will be made in the next cycle until the success criteria are met. The researchers packaged these indicators in a research instrument grid, which also serves as material for observing the technique. storytelling children (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2023).

**Table 2. Variable and Indicator**

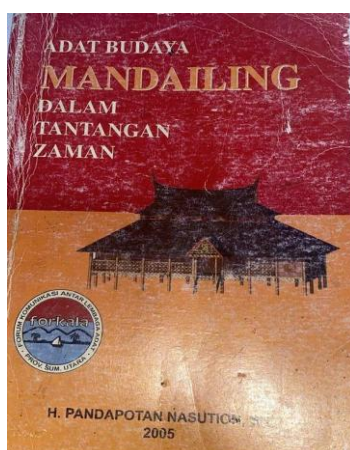
No.	Variable	Indicator
1	storytelling techniques based on local story books	a. Children listens to the story attentively
		b. Children is able to name the characters in the story
2	Instilling cultural values	a. Children are able to identify moral messages/cultural values in the story.
		b. Children demonstrate politeness and respect.
		c. Children demonstrate helpful/mutual cooperation behavior.
		d. Children imitate the good behavior of the story characters.
		e. Children are able to relate the story's content to everyday life.

In this study, the researcher intentionally integrated technical indicators storytelling with local cultural values in the assessment instrument. This is based on the logical reason that the storytelling techniques Early childhood storytelling is inseparable from the content of the stories being told. Given that the study focused on the use of North Sumatra local storybooks, children's storytelling abilities were measured not only by linguistic aspects (fluency and flow) but also by their understanding of the story's substance, which is rich in cultural values. Cultural values are implicit in the narratives of the local storybooks used.

Therefore, to find out whether the child has really mastered the storytelling techniques In a comprehensive manner, children must be able to grasp and re-express the moral messages and cultural identities (such as characters, settings, and good behavior) contained in the story. Thus, the cultural value indicator functions as a measure of the depth of children's understanding (comprehension) of the story material, while the storytelling measuring their technical delivery skills. This integration ensures that children's storytelling skills are enhanced in tandem with the strengthening of their local cultural identity.

### C. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Research to improve techniques storytelling The study was conducted at an early childhood Islamic educational institution in Medan. The study was conducted from February 23 to March 14, 2026. This study began with initial observations and interviews, where researchers observed that the teaching and learning techniques were not developing well. storytelling children. Therefore, action is needed to improve these obstacles. In this case, the researcher used classroom action research which was carried out in two cycles to improve the teaching techniques. storytelling children through local North Sumatra storybooks. The following media are used:



**Figure 2. Local Story Book Media from North Sumatra**

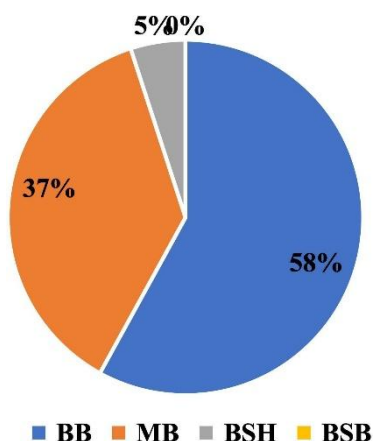
Researchers started with a pre-cycle to see how far the storytelling techniques The child has developed. Next, the researcher carried out the first action as a form of Cycle I by providing the media selected as a problem-solving medium for the technique. storytelling children. Then, the final stage, namely cycle II, is the final stage to ensure that the storytelling techniques has developed well in children. All of these activities are carried out through several stages, including planning, implementation, observation, and reflection. The following is a description.

#### *a. Pre-cycle*

At this stage, researchers focused on collecting initial data through interviews and observations to obtain a clear picture of children's storytelling abilities. Pre-cycle activities began with interviews with class teachers regarding technical abilities. storytelling children.

Based on the results of the interview, it was found that most of the children had not yet shown the ability storytelling optimal. Children still have difficulty retelling a story coherently, are unable to name the characters in the story, and the storyline is still unclear and unstructured. Furthermore, children also tend to lack confidence in telling stories in front of their peers and have not yet demonstrated courage in telling stories. To strengthen this, Based on the results of the interview, the researcher then conducted direct observations of the abilities storytelling .

Based on the results of the pre-cycle stage, technical skills storytelling The children's ability still needs to be improved. This initial data serves as a basis for researchers to design corrective actions through the use of local storybook media in the next cycle. The results of the ability scores storytelling Children in the pre-cycle stage can be seen in Figure 3.

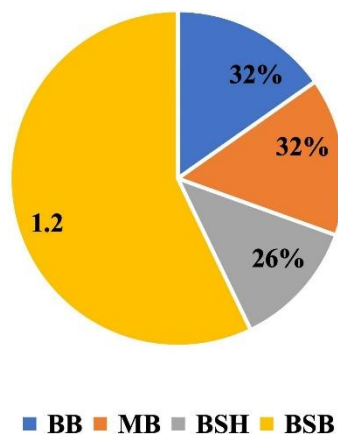


**Figure 3. Technical Capabilities storytelling Pre-Cycle Children**

Based on the table, it is known that the majority of children are still in the low category or Not Yet Developing (BB). As many as 58% of children (11 people) are in the BB category, 37% (7 people) are in the Starting to Develop (MB) category, and only 5% (1 person) has reached the Developing According to Expectations (BSH) category. These results indicate that technical abilities storytelling The children have not yet achieved the established success criteria, namely a minimum of 75% of children being in the BSH category. Therefore, further action is needed through the use of local North Sumatra storybook media to improve their abilities. storytelling child.

*b. Cycle I*

The research activity begins with an opening lesson adapted to the previously prepared lesson plan (RPPH). Next, the teacher gives the researcher the opportunity to carry out the research activity. At this stage, the researcher begins to introduce the topic North Sumatra local storybook media was used for children. Researchers briefly explained the story's content, then read it using engaging intonation, expression, and movement to increase children's focus and enthusiasm. After the storytelling activity, researchers engaged the children by asking simple questions related to the story and asking them to share their opinions. Next, children were given the opportunity to retell the story in their own words. In this activity, researchers provided guidance and stimulation to increase children's confidence in telling the story. After the learning activity was completed, researchers assessed their technical abilities. storytelling children using previously prepared instruments. The assessment results were then recorded and presented in Figure 4.



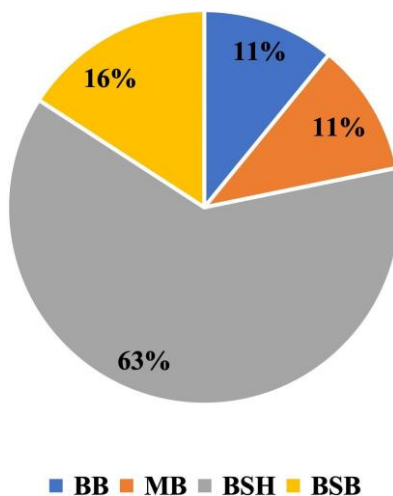
**Figure 4. Technical Capabilities storytelling Cycle I Children**

Based on data, can identified there is positive development from the pre-cycle stage to cycle I. This can be seen from the distribution of children's ability categories, namely 6 children (32%) are in the Not Yet Developing (BB) category, 6 children (32%) in the Starting to Develop (MB) category, 5 children (26%) in the Developing According to Expectations (BSH) category, and 2 children (10%) in the Very Well Developing (BSB) category. The number of children who have reached the BSH and BSB categories is 7 children (36%) of the total students. This percentage shows an increase compared to the pre-

cycle stage, but has not yet met the established success criteria, namely a minimum of 75% of children reaching the BSH category. A total of 12 children (64%) are still in the BB category and MB, so that the technical capabilities storytelling Children's performance still needs to be improved through further learning activities. The research continued into cycle II by making improvements to the learning strategy to optimally increase the number of children achieving the BSH category.

*c. Cycle II*

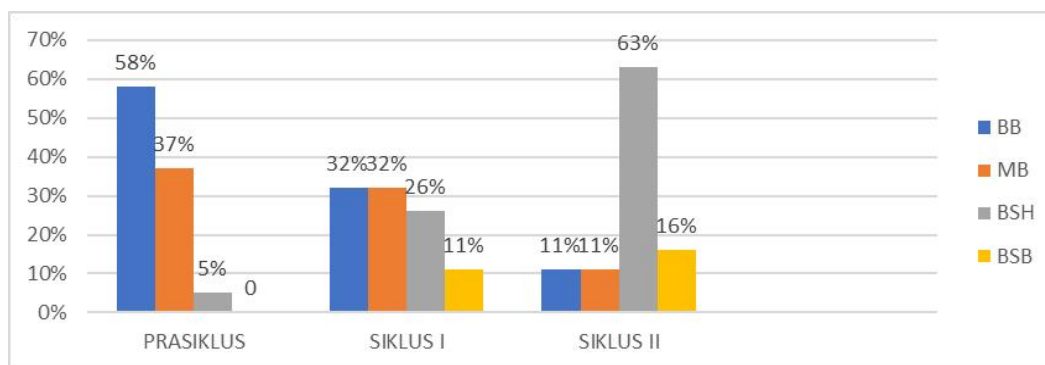
In cycle II, improvements were made based on the results of the reflection on cycle I by adding the tor-tor dance to increase children's engagement. This dance was added as a representation of the story's content, as children will remember stories more easily when accompanied by physical activity. The tor-tor dance was also added to enhance children's expressiveness in storytelling . As is the case with storytelling The correct approach is not only to involve verbal communication, but also requires nonverbal expressions such as body movements and facial expressions. Finally, the Tor Tor dance is used to provide variation in the learning process so that learning is not too monotonous and does not make children bored, thus different from the previous cycle. In the planning stage, researchers prepared learning using local story books as well as additional activities in the form of the Tor-Tor dance and observation instruments. In the implementation stage, researchers read the story, then the children retell the story, followed by practicing simple Tor-Tor dance movements. In the observation stage, observations were made on the students' technical abilities storytelling Children. The results show an improvement compared to cycle I. In the reflection stage, children's abilities developed further and approached the success criteria. The assessment results for cycle II are presented in Figure 5.



**Figure 5. Technical Capabilities storytelling Cycle II Children**

Based on the data listed in the table, it can be seen that the technical capabilities storytelling The children's development in cycle II experienced significant improvement. The distribution of categories showed that 2 children (11%) were in the Not Yet Developing (BB) category, 2 children (11%) were in the Starting to Develop (MB) category, 12 children (63%) were in the Developing According to Expectations (BSH) category, and 3 children (15%) were in the Very Well Developing (BSB) category. The number of children who achieved the success criteria, namely the BSH and BSB categories, was 15 children (79%) of the total students. This percentage has exceeded the established success criteria, namely a minimum of 75% of children achieving the BSH and BSB categories. These results indicate that the use of local storybook media combined with Tor-Tor dance activities is effective in improving technical skills. storytelling child.

The results of the study show that technical skills storytelling children experience improvement from pre-cycle to cycle II. The success rate increased from a low initial level to 79% in cycle II, thus exceeding the established criteria. This indicates that the use of local storybooks combined with the Tor-Tor dance is effective in improving children's abilities. storytelling children. To be clearer, the ability data storytelling The child will be described in Figure 6.



**Figure 6. Recapitulation of Technical Capabilities storytelling Children in All Cycles**

## Discussion

The results of the study show that the use of local North Sumatra storybook media combined with Tor-Tor dance activities can improve technical skills. storytelling early childhood. This improvement did not occur by chance, but was influenced by the learning activities provided and the learning media used. As in Cycle I, the use of local storybooks helped children understand the story's content because it was contextual and directly from the learning media. Furthermore, children could easily understand by recognizing the characters in the story, thus understanding the storyline. Then, in Cycle II, the learning process was supplemented with variations to practice the Tor-Tor dance itself, aiming for children to gain direct experience in performing the dance that is the story's theme. Furthermore, the Tor-Tor dance also aims to foster children's self-confidence, and the dance activities performed with friends make children appear more confident (Wati et al., 2023).

Ability storytelling is an important part of children's language development early age. storytelling can help children in composing story lines, enriching vocabulary, and expressing ideas and feelings verbally (Dhi. This finding is in line with research results showing that storytelling activities can significantly improve children's language and communication skills (Kartikasari, 2025). The use of local storybook media also has a positive influence on improving children's abilities. Stories that are close to children's lives make it easier for them to understand the content of the story and increase involvement in learning (Wahyuni & Dheasari, 2025). Improved ability storytelling The children in this study can also be explained through the theory of language development and contextual

learning. Theoretically, the ability storytelling is part of a child's language development, which develops through meaningful interactions and learning experiences (Evi Maylitha & Lestari, 2021). Early childhood language skills develop more easily because they are directly involved in activities that allow them to hear, understand, and express information (Lubis & Ardilla, 2023).

Furthermore, the use of local storybooks in this study aligns with the concept of contextual learning, which relates material to children's real-life experiences (Cantika & Mavianti, 2022). Stories that are close to everyday life make it easier for children to understand the content, enabling them to reconstruct the storyline more coherently. This improved ability storytelling also not only caused by actions, but also because of the suitability of learning strategies to the characteristics of child development (Rambe et al., 2021).

The addition of the Tor-Tor dance activity in cycle II also had an impact on increasing children's engagement and motivation (Ratih, 2020). The role of the Tor-Tor dance in this study was a significant factor in the improvements that occurred in cycle II. Theoretically, movement activity is closely related to children's cognitive and language development (Anggriawan et al., 2024). Movement helps children strengthen memory because it involves direct learning experiences (learning by doing). When children combine stories with movement, they more easily remember the storyline and re-express it.

Furthermore, culturally-based activities such as the Tor-Tor dance also increase children's engagement and motivation to learn (Sit et al., 2016). Learning that combines elements of movement and culture creates a more enjoyable learning environment, making children more active and less passive than in the previous cycle (Nasution & Lubis, 2025). Performing with friends also increases children's self-confidence, which impacts their courage in performing. storytelling . Thus, the Tor-Tor dance is not merely a complement, but acts as a strategy that supports children's memory, involvement, and expression in storytelling . ability. The children in this study demonstrated that learning that integrates local storytelling media, educational interactions, and movement-based cultural activities creates a more meaningful learning experience. Children not only understood the story content but were also able to re-express it more coherently, confidently, and

communicatively. This contextual and active learning approach has been shown to positively contribute to early childhood language development.

Furthermore, this study has several limitations. The relatively small number of subjects, 19 children, means the results cannot be broadly generalized. The limited research time also limited the ability to observe children's development over the long term. The study was conducted at only one educational institution, so the characteristics of the subjects may not necessarily be representative of broader conditions. Future research could involve a larger number of subjects, a longer period of time, and a variety of learning methods to obtain more comprehensive results.

#### **D. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS**

Based on the results of the research that has been conducted, it can be concluded that this research shows learning storytelling based on local story books combined with cultural activities in the form of Tor-Tor dance can improve abilities storytelling early childhood through a contextual, interactive approach involving movement activities. This research's contribution lies in the integration of local storytelling media and cultural activities that not only support language development but also increase children's engagement and confidence. Teachers are advised to implement this approach. storytelling Based on local culture and integrating artistic elements such as dance or music into learning to make it more engaging and meaningful. Future researchers can expand the research by involving a larger number of subjects or using different approaches to obtain broader and more in-depth results.

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