



The Effectiveness of Using Smart Literacy Puppet Media on Storytelling Ability



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Article Information

Article History

Received: July 12, 2026

Revised: August 13, 2026

Accepted: Sept 2, 2026

Keywords:

storytelling, puppets,
learning media

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan perbedaan kemampuan bercerita antara peserta didik TK Negeri Pembina Girimarto yang mengikuti pembelajaran menggunakan media Boneka Cerdas Literasi dengan peserta didik yang tidak menggunakan media tersebut dan mendeskripsikan efektivitas penggunaan media Boneka Cerdas Literasi terhadap peningkatan kemampuan bercerita. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif dengan jenis penelitian eksperimen semu (*Quasi-Experimental Design*). Penelitian dilaksanakan di TK Negeri Pembina Girimarto Tahun Pelajaran 2025/2026, selama 3 (tiga) bulan, dengan populasi seluruh peserta didik TK Negeri Pembina Girimarto pada Tahun Pelajaran 2025/2026, yang berjumlah 27 (Dua puluh tujuh) peserta didik. Pengambilan sampel dilakukan dengan teknik *Matching sampling* (sampel berpasangan/terpadu). Seluruh populasi dijadikan sampel penelitian. Pengumpulan data melalui tes. Analisis yang digunakan untuk uji hipotesis menggunakan uji *Independent Sample t-test*. Untuk menguji efektivitas penggunaan boneka cerdas literasi digunakan *Uji N-gain score*. Hasil uji t sebesar 3,617 dengan sig (2tailed) sebesar 0,001, nilai N Gain Score sebesar 55,56%, dengan demikian dapat disimpulkan bahwa terdapat perbedaan pembelajaran dengan menggunakan media boneka tangan literasi dengan pembelajaran konvensional. Media boneka tangan literasi efektif digunakan dalam meningkatkan kemampuan bercerita.

Abstract

This study aims to describe the differences in storytelling abilities between students at TK Negeri Pembina Girimarto who participated in instruction using the "Literacy Smart Puppet" (*Boneka Cerdas Literasi*) medium and those who did not, as well as to describe the effectiveness of this medium in enhancing storytelling skills. The study employed a quantitative approach using a quasi-experimental design. It was conducted at TK Negeri Pembina Girimarto during the 2025/2026 academic year over a period of three months, involving the entire student population of 27 children. A matching sampling technique was used, with the entire population serving as the research sample. Data were collected through tests. Hypothesis testing was performed using the Independent Sample t-test, while the

	effectiveness of the Literacy Smart Puppet was assessed using the N-gain score. The results showed a t-test value of 3.617 with a significance (2-tailed) of 0.001 and an N-gain score of 55.56%. Thus, it can be concluded that there is a difference in learning outcomes between instruction using the literacy hand puppet medium and conventional instruction; the literacy hand puppet medium is effective for improving storytelling abilities  Jurnal Indria (Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Prasekolah dan Sekolah Awal) is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.
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INTRODUCTION

Early childhood education (PAUD) is essential to implement from an early age, as it forms the foundation for shaping a well-rounded individual — one with strong character, noble conduct, intelligence, cheerfulness, and skill, and devotion to God Almighty (Asmawati, 2009). In line with their role, teachers are responsible for guiding and directing children so that they become creative in developing their abilities and are able to contribute their creativity to society. To achieve this goal, the curriculum must be developed starting from early childhood education (Santoso, 2005).

Learning in early childhood education plays an important role in children's early development, particularly in language and storytelling ability (Masitoh, 2005). Early childhood development emphasizes the importance of developmental stages, in line with the cognitive stages children pass through, moving from the concrete stage toward more abstract thinking, planning, and problem-solving (Kusuma et al., 2023). Language ability, particularly storytelling ability, is one stage that requires close attention (Setiawati & Ulfah, 2018).

Based on preliminary observations at TK Negeri Pembina Girimarto, a significant disparity was found between the ideal achievement level and the actual empirical conditions. The core problem identified was the low ability of most students to tell stories independently and coherently. The predicted causes of this problem included limited learning media and teaching methods. Classroom learning was still often dominated by conventional methods, such as teachers telling stories without involving active student participation.

Various studies have shown the importance of learning media in improving storytelling ability, including the following: (1) Juniandari and Hidayati (2024) found that the use of finger-puppet media in storytelling activities produced a significant difference in the storytelling ability of children aged 5–6 years. (2) Azmi and Zahra (2023) found that the storytelling method combined with shadow-puppet (wayang kulit) media could improve speaking ability in children aged 5–6 years in Group B. (3) Putri and Muryanti (2023) found that the use of puppets as a learning medium had an effect on developing young children's speaking skills.

These findings demonstrate that learning media are essential for improving children's storytelling ability. To address the low storytelling ability of children at TK Negeri Pembina Girimarto, teachers therefore made use of smart puppets. The use of puppet media in storytelling techniques has proven to be an effective method for supporting the early childhood learning process. Puppets serve as a visual aid that can attract children's attention, bring stories to life, and help them better understand the storyline (Kesawan et al., 2025).

Through the use of smart literacy puppet media, children are expected to gain a better understanding of the learning themes presented by the teacher. This medium not only helps improve children's literacy skills but also supports the development of their social and emotional skills. The use of smart literacy puppets as a storytelling medium can therefore serve as an effective alternative for stimulating the future development of children's storytelling ability (Nursalim, 2023). This article aims to analyze the difference in storytelling ability between students at TK Negeri Pembina Girimarto who received instruction using the Smart Literacy Puppet medium and those who did not use this medium (conventional instruction), and to analyze the effectiveness of using the Smart Literacy Puppet medium in improving the storytelling ability of students at TK Negeri Pembina Girimarto.

LITERATURE REVIEWS

Smart Literacy Media

Media is a channel of communication. The word "media" derives from Latin, being the plural form of "medium," which literally means "intermediary" — that is, an intermediary between the source of a message (a source) and the recipient of the

message (a receiver). Heinich gave examples of such media as film, television, diagrams, printed materials, computers, and instructors (Heinich et al., 1993). "Learning media are anything used to convey a message and that can stimulate the thoughts, feelings, attention, and willingness of the learner, thereby encouraging the learning process to occur" (Miarso, 2004). Through the use of media, every child is given the opportunity to experiment and explore the medium extensively (Guslinda & Kurnia, 2018). Learning media are anything that can be used to convey a message in order to stimulate learners' attention, interest, thoughts, and feelings during learning activities so as to achieve specific learning objectives (Asmariansi, 2016).

Learning media are used to deliver instructional material and to stimulate learners' thoughts, feelings, interest, and attention (Mashuri, 2019). Learning media are a component of the delivery strategy that can contain the message to be conveyed to learners (Trianto, 2011). Learning media can take the form of a tool intended to convey instructional messages, whether visual, audio, or audiovisual, in order to stimulate learners' attention, interest, thoughts, and feelings (Sumiharsono et al., 2018). Through the use of media, every child is given the opportunity to experiment and explore the medium extensively (Guslinda & Kurnia, 2018). Learning media are used to convey messages in order to stimulate students' attention, interest, thoughts, and feelings during learning activities so as to achieve specific learning objectives (Asmariansi, 2016).

One learning medium that teachers can use to improve storytelling ability is the smart literacy puppet an interactive learning medium designed to support the delivery of story themes to children. The smart literacy puppet is a hand puppet larger than a finger puppet, made of felt material shaped like a human or animal, with an opening at the bottom for inserting the hand, and is operated by moving the fingers (Rahmita et al., 2023).

Storytelling Ability

Storytelling learning represents the development of language skills. Language development in young children can proceed optimally when stimulation is provided in accordance with their age stage. Storytelling means recounting something depicting an action or event, conveyed orally with the aim of sharing experience and knowledge with others (Bachri, 2005). Storytelling ability in early childhood is important to develop so

that children can narrate their experiences and more easily express their thoughts (Marfuah et al., 2024). Storytelling is, in essence, as natural an activity for children as eating, drinking, or talking with others (Astuti et al., 2021). Children can develop new stories through pictures and their own imagination, building on the original story (Istirokhah, 2017). Simple storytelling is a productive language activity that uses simple, meaningful sentences. When telling a story, children need to use their thinking, be mentally prepared, be courageous, and use accurate and clear pronunciation so that listeners can understand what is being said (Manurung & Simatupang, 2019).

The important aspects that can be assessed and developed in storytelling ability include: (1) Speaking ability, reflected in children's basic competencies and storytelling ability across different age ranges. These basic competencies include: (a) understanding receptive language (listening and reading); (b) demonstrating receptive language ability; (c) understanding expressive language (expressing language verbally and non-verbally); and (d) demonstrating expressive language ability (Robingatin & Ulfah, 2021). (2) Vocabulary development. Word choice should be clear, precise, and varied. "Clear" means that the words spoken are understood by the listener. In addition, using precise words that is, familiar words that clearly describe an activity makes the speaker easier to understand. "Varied" means that the words or expressions used carry meanings closely related to the topic of conversation (Arsjad & Mukti, 1988). (3) Children's vocabulary ability can increase in line with their developmental stage and their experience interacting with others (Susanto, 2011). (4) Expression and intonation. Maintaining eye contact with the listener means that, while speaking, the child is able to direct their gaze toward the entire audience (Arsjad & Mukti, 1988). (5) Independence. Storytelling is an effective method for providing learning experiences that help develop children's creativity, courage, and independence. Stories also stimulate language ability and social interaction (Yomina et al., 2024).

Based on the views outlined above, it can be concluded that the important aspects of storytelling include speaking ability, vocabulary development, expression and intonation, and independence. In developing storytelling ability in young children, all of these aspects are inseparable and constitute the assessment components used in evaluating the development of children's storytelling ability.

METHODS

This study used a quantitative approach with a Quasi-Experimental Design. This design involved two groups, namely an experimental group and a control group, which were not selected through random assignment. The study was conducted at TK Negeri Pembina Girimarto. The population consisted of all students at TK Negeri Pembina Girimarto in the 2025/2026 academic year, totaling 27 students. Sampling was carried out using a matching sampling technique (Putri et al., 2025). The main technique used to collect data on storytelling ability was a performance-based test (Khaerudin, 2012). The performance assessment used in this study took the form of a rubric with the following indicators: (1) independence, (2) alignment of the story content with the theme/picture, (3) use of vocabulary/language, and (4) expression (Arsjad & Mukti, 1988).

The quantitative data analysis technique used in this study comprised three stages: descriptive statistical analysis, data assumption testing, and hypothesis testing. The analysis used for hypothesis testing was a difference test, or t-test specifically, the Independent Sample t-Test. The Independent Sample t-Test is a method used to compare the means of two different (independent) samples. To examine the effectiveness of the smart literacy puppet in learning, the N-gain score was used. The N-gain score is intended to determine the effectiveness of using a particular method or treatment in research. The N-gain score test was carried out by calculating the difference between the pretest and posttest scores. By calculating this difference the gain score it is possible to determine whether the use of the smart literacy puppet medium can be considered effective.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Prerequisite Testing

Before hypothesis testing was carried out, normality and homogeneity tests were required. The normality results for the pretest and posttest scores in the experimental class are shown in the following table.

Table 1. Normality Test Results for the Experimental Class

		pre_eks	pos_eks
N		14	14
Normal Parameters ^{a,b}	Mean	60.7143	78.5714
	Std. Deviation	25.40875	19.25822
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.213	.224
	Positive	.163	.216
	Negative	-.213	-.224
Test Statistic		.213	.224
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) ^c		.085	.055
Monte Carlo Sig. (2-tailed) ^d	Sig.	.084	.058

Based on the results above, the Asymp. Sig. value obtained was 0.085 (> 0.05) for the pretest and 0.055 (> 0.05) for the posttest; it can therefore be concluded that the data from the experimental class were normally distributed. The normality test results for the pretest and posttest scores in the control class are shown in the following table.

Table 2. Normality Test Results for the Control Class

		pre_kon	pos_kon
N		13	13
Normal Parameters ^{a,b}	Mean	51.92	51.92
	Std. Deviation	18.99	18.99
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.233	.233
	Positive	.233	.233
	Negative	-.229	-.229
Test Statistic		.233	.233
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) ^c		.053	.053
Monte Carlo Sig. (2-tailed) ^d		.053	.053

The normality test results for the pretest and posttest scores in the control class showed a value of 0.053, meaning that this significance value was greater than the alpha value ($\alpha = 0.05$). It can therefore be concluded that the data were normally distributed. A homogeneity test was then carried out; the output of the homogeneity test results is shown in the following table

Table 3. Homogeneity Test Results

		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Pretest_storytelling_ability	Based on Mean	2.399	1	25	0.134
	Based on Median	2.655	1	25	0.116

Posttest_storytelling_ability	Based on Median and with adjusted df	2.655	1	24.955	0.116
	Based on trimmed mean	2.364	1	25	0.137
	Based on Mean	.063	1	25	0.803
	Based on Median	.028	1	25	0.870
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	.028	1	24.997	0.870
	Based on trimmed mean	.069	1	25	0.796

Based on the output of the homogeneity test using Levene's test, the significance value for the pretest was 0.134 and for the posttest was 0.803. Since these significance values were greater than 0.05, it can be concluded that the control and experimental class students came from populations with equal variance that is, the two classes were homogeneous.

Descriptive Analysis

The results of the descriptive statistical analysis are shown in the table below:

Table 4. Descriptive Statistical Analysis Results for the Experimental and Control Classes

Description	Experimental class		Control class	
	Pretest	Posttest	Pretest	Posttest
Mean	69.64	78.57	48.08	51.92
Median	75.00	75.00	50.00	50.00
Std. Deviation	29.71	19.26	18.99	18.99
Variance	882.55	370.88	360.58	360.58
Range	75.00	50.00	50.00	50.00
Minimum	25.00	50.00	25.00	25.00
Maximum	100.00	100.00	75.00	75.00

The table above shows that the pretest scores of the experimental and control classes differed in their highest, lowest, and mean values. It can therefore be concluded that, descriptively, the storytelling ability of students in the experimental class was superior to that of the control class. After the experimental class received treatment in the form of learning using the smart literacy puppet medium, while the control class did not use the smart literacy medium, both classes underwent a final test (posttest). The results showed an improvement in storytelling ability in the experimental class. The mean score of the experimental class was therefore higher than that of the control class.

Hypothesis Testing

The research hypothesis was tested using a t-test; the results of the t-test are shown in the following table.

Table 5. Hypothesis Testing Using the t-Test

	t	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean difference	Standard error
Storytelling ability	3.617	0.001	1.06593	0.29472

Based on the data analysis, the posttest Sig. (2-tailed) value was 0.001, while the research alpha level was 5%, or 0.05. This means that the Sig. (2-tailed) value was smaller than the alpha value ($0.001 < 0.05$); it can therefore be concluded that H_0 was rejected and H_1 was accepted. It can thus be concluded that there was a difference in the effect of using the smart literacy puppet medium on the storytelling ability of students at TK Negeri Pembina Girimarto.

Effectiveness Testing

The effectiveness test was carried out using the N-gain score. The results of the N-gain calculation, performed with the assistance of SPSS, are shown in the following table.

Table 6. N-Gain Score and N-Gain Percentage

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean
n_gain score	9	.00	1.00	0.5556
n_gain percentage	9	.00	100.00	55.5556
Valid N (listwise)	9			

The table above shows that the N-gain value was greater than 30% and less than 70%, indicating that the N-gain falls into the moderate category, within the range of 56–75, meaning that the smart literacy puppet medium was fairly effective in Indonesian-language learning.

Based on the data analysis described above, there was a significant difference in storytelling ability between the experimental group students who learned using the Smart Literacy Puppet medium and the control group students who learned using

conventional media. This was demonstrated by the data analysis results, which showed a calculated t-value of 3.617, with a significance value of 0.01 (< 0.05). This difference was attributed to the teachers' use of the smart literacy puppet medium; when this medium was used, students were more interested in paying attention to the stories told by the teacher. Research by Kania et al. (2025) showed that the use of real-object learning media can develop young children's language ability. A recent study by Sri Jumiatiy showed that concrete-object media have a positive impact on improving children's vocabulary ability in project-based early childhood education (Sri Jumiatiy et al., 2024) (Julaiha, 2024). In addition, research by Resmadewi, Dzulkifli, Supiati, and colleagues found that concrete-object media can improve storytelling ability in young children (Resmadewi & Dzulkifli, 2025) (Supiati et al., 2022).

The observed difference in children's storytelling ability is thus attributable to the use of the smart literacy puppet medium, indicating that innovative learning media such as this are a factor influencing learning outcomes. The effect of using the smart literacy puppet medium in storytelling instruction in kindergarten on children's reading ability arises because this medium is able to create a new learning atmosphere. Children's interest in story-based learning increases because the smart literacy puppet can be moved as though it were alive, making the learning atmosphere more engaging and prompting children to want to know more about what the teacher conveys through the puppet's visualization, which resembles play consistent with the characteristic tendency of young children to enjoy playing. Compared with conventional media, where teachers simply tell stories using a storybook, children tend to become bored and stop listening, sometimes even playing on their own without paying attention to the story being told. This is in line with the view of Azhar Arsyad (2016), who stated that the use of engaging learning media greatly supports active participation in the learning process and the delivery of instructional messages and content a clear contrast to the conventional storybook media typically used by kindergarten teachers, which tend to be dull and unappealing to today's kindergarten children. This is consistent with the findings of Sukmanasa et al. (2017), who stated that conventional media are limited in their ability to visualize abstract material and are less appealing to the digital-native generation.

The effectiveness of the smart literacy puppet medium lies in its visualization of characters that play roles within the story, allowing children to enjoy the puppet as

though it were alive, stimulating their imagination, capturing their attention, and creating an enjoyable learning atmosphere. The puppet is a visual medium that is cute in form and interactive in nature, able to capture children's focus so that material can be conveyed more easily. The puppet's selectable and movable features, which can be attached to the front of its body by the students, can also represent emotions (sadness, happiness, anger), helping children develop empathy and emotional intelligence, and can be used as a medium for interacting with students, thereby leaving a deeper impression on them. This aligns with Marfuah (2024), who stated that one advantage of hand puppets is that they help develop children's emotions, allowing children to express their emotions and worries so that the teacher's message is more easily remembered.

This clearly differs from conventional media, which can only be used as a one-way communication medium, meaning it cannot be used as a means of direct interaction between teacher and students; students cannot respond directly. Conventional media are also less engaging, since teachers cannot improvise in delivering material, and are less captivating compared with the smart literacy puppet medium, which is interactive in nature. It is therefore reasonable that the improvement in students' storytelling ability using conventional media was lower than the improvement achieved using the smart literacy puppet medium.

The findings show that the improvement in students' storytelling ability with conventional media was lower than that achieved through learning with the smart literacy puppet, indicating that conventional media are less effective for use in learning. This is consistent with the findings of Seprie (2024), who stated that conventional learning media are less effective in developing children's storytelling ability, as they can cause boredom and reduce understanding of the material. Learning with conventional media tends to depend solely on the teacher's role, reduces student participation in lessons, and does little to encourage teacher creativity in presenting material. In addition, learning with conventional media is also prone to problems such as students having difficulty remembering information and difficulty recognizing their own abilities. This is consistent with the findings of Rahma et al. (2023), who stated that learning should focus more on active student participation through the use of innovative learning media to stimulate students' interest and engagement in the learning process.

The confirmation of the research hypothesis that there was a significant difference

in storytelling ability between the experimental group (students who learned using the Smart Literacy Puppet medium) and the control group (students who learned using conventional media) indicates that these findings support Sriyanti and Putri (2023), who concluded that finger-puppet media used in storytelling activities help develop young children's speaking ability, and also support Juniandari and Hidayati (2024), who concluded that the use of finger-puppet media in storytelling activities produced a significant difference in the storytelling ability of children aged 5–6 years. Children in the experimental class who used finger puppets performed better than children in the control class who did not use them.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study show that there was a significant difference in storytelling ability between students at TK Negeri Pembina Girimarto who received instruction using the Smart Literacy Puppet medium and those who did not use this medium (conventional instruction), as demonstrated by a t-test value of 3.617 with a Sig. (2-tailed) of 0.001. The research hypothesis was thus confirmed: the smart literacy puppet medium was fairly effective for Indonesian-language learning, as further evidenced by an N-gain value of 55.56%. This indicates that the development of storytelling ability in young children can be achieved when teachers are able to create a classroom climate that is conducive, enjoyable, and communicative. Teachers can therefore use the smart literacy puppet medium, tailored to the story material, to develop young children's storytelling ability. Teachers at TK Negeri Pembina Girimarto are accordingly encouraged to be more creative and innovative in developing the smart literacy puppet medium so that it can be applied to a range of story materials, and schools are encouraged to facilitate and support teachers' efforts to develop learning media particularly the smart literacy puppet medium in order to foster a learning atmosphere that is engaging, enjoyable, and communicative.

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