

PROFILE OF STUDENTS' STORYTELLING SKILLS IN 21ST CENTURY LEARNING

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Abstract

Storytelling ability, as the foundation of narrative literacy, is a crucial skill in the 21st century, requiring students to master effective communication, innovative creativity, and analytical critical thinking. This study aims to profile in depth the storytelling ability of fifth-grade students at Sugihwaras Elementary School, focusing on five main story aspects: plot structure, character development, setting description, language mastery, and non-verbal expression. Using a quantitative descriptive research method, this study involved 100 students from 4 classes, selected randomly, as a representative sample. The instrument used was a visual stimulus-based storytelling test, assessed using a validated comprehensive assessment rubric. The results showed that most students (60%) had storytelling ability at the "adequate" level, but there was a significant gap in mastery of specific aspects. Only 20% of students showed "good" storytelling ability, while the other 20% were at the "poor" level. These findings indicate the need for more structured and targeted learning interventions to improve students' storytelling abilities, with an emphasis on developing narrative skills that are relevant to the demands of 21st-century competencies. The implication of this study is the need for the integration of innovative and contextual learning strategies to develop students' narrative literacy holistically.

Keywords: Storytelling ability, Learning profile, In the 21st century

Abstrak

Kemampuan bercerita, sebagai fondasi literasi naratif, menjadi keterampilan krusial di abad 21, menuntut siswa untuk menguasai komunikasi efektif, kreativitas inovatif, dan pemikiran kritis analitis. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk memprofilkan secara mendalam kemampuan bercerita siswa kelas V di Sekolah Dasar Negeri Sugihwaras, dengan fokus pada lima aspek utama: struktur alur cerita, pengembangan karakter, deskripsi latar, penguasaan bahasa, dan ekspresi non-verbal. Menggunakan metode penelitian deskriptif kuantitatif, penelitian ini melibatkan 100 siswa dari 4 kelas, yang dipilih secara acak, sebagai sampel representatif. Instrumen yang digunakan adalah tes bercerita berbasis stimulus visual, dinilai menggunakan rubrik penilaian komprehensif yang telah divalidasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa mayoritas siswa (60%) memiliki kemampuan bercerita pada tingkat "cukup", namun terdapat kesenjangan signifikan dalam penguasaan aspek-aspek spesifik. Hanya 20% siswa yang menunjukkan kemampuan bercerita "baik", sementara 20% lainnya berada pada tingkat "kurang". Temuan ini mengindikasikan perlunya intervensi pembelajaran yang lebih terstruktur dan terarah untuk meningkatkan kemampuan bercerita siswa, dengan penekanan pada pengembangan keterampilan naratif yang relevan dengan tuntutan kompetensi abad 21.

Implikasi dari penelitian ini adalah perlunya integrasi strategi pembelajaran yang inovatif dan kontekstual untuk mengembangkan literasi naratif siswa secara holistik.

Kata kunci: Kemampuan bercerita, Profil pembelajaran, Di abad 21

INTRODUCTION

In the era of globalization and digitalization, storytelling has transcended the boundaries of conventional literary skills. It has evolved into an essential competency that is not only necessary in education but also in social, professional, and even public decision-making. Amidst the rapid flow of information and increasing social complexity, the ability to compose and convey stories has become a strategic tool for building understanding, establishing emotional connections, and conveying ideas and thoughts persuasively (Sunden, 2024). Storytelling is now an important part of 21st-century life skills, which include communication, critical thinking, creativity, and collaboration. In the world of education, storytelling skills are becoming increasingly relevant. These skills are the foundation for the development of narrative literacy, which contributes to the character development of students and their higher-order thinking skills. Students who are skilled at storytelling are not only able to compose interesting narratives but also demonstrate proficiency in organizing ideas, connecting personal experiences with social realities, and expressing emotions healthily and constructively. At the elementary level, storytelling is an effective medium for practicing language skills, expanding vocabulary, and honing social and cultural sensitivity (Hana, 2023).

The reality in the field shows that many elementary school students still face challenges in developing adequate storytelling skills. Research by Setiowati & Nuryanto, (2022) indicates that the storytelling skills of elementary school students are still low and need significant improvement. Research by Halimah et al., (2020) also shows that storytelling skills are an important foundation in language learning, which has a direct implication on students' academic achievement and language skills. Kafele, (2021) added that innovative storytelling learning can significantly increase students' learning motivation. These findings confirm that storytelling skills are not only important from an academic perspective but also have deep psychological and social dimensions. On the other hand, studies that explicitly profile students' storytelling abilities in the context of 21st-century demands and their relationship with narrative literacy are still limited. Narrative literacy, which includes the ability to compose, understand, and reflect on stories in various forms, actually has great potential in shaping students who are more adaptive, reflective, and ready to face change.

The integration of narrative literacy into the curriculum not only supports academic achievement but also enriches students' learning experiences holistically. Narrative literacy itself can be understood as the ability to understand and create stories, both orally and in writing, that reflect an understanding of narrative structure, logical flow, and the deeper meaning of an event or experience (Suwatno et al., 2020). In education, narrative literacy bridges the cognitive and affective aspects of students. Through stories, students learn to understand other people's perspectives, reflect on personal experiences, and

develop empathy and imagination. Narrative literacy also allows teachers to evaluate students' understanding in a more contextual way, as the stories told by students reflect their entire thought process.

In the context of 21st-century skills, storytelling plays a strategic role in supporting the development of four core competencies, known as the 4Cs: communication, creativity, critical thinking, and collaboration. First, through storytelling, students learn to communicate ideas and information coherently and convincingly. Second, storytelling encourages students' creativity as they are required to develop interesting characters, settings, and conflicts. Third, critical thinking is honed when students must construct a logical plot, make consistent narrative decisions, and evaluate the moral message in a story. Fourth, through group storytelling activities, students learn to work together, listen to their friends' ideas, and integrate different perspectives into a cohesive narrative. Storytelling skills also contribute to the development of students' self-identity and social awareness (Halimah et al., 2020).

In the process of composing and delivering stories, students reflect on their values, beliefs, and personal experiences. They learn to recognize their strengths and weaknesses and build self-confidence through authentic expression. At the same time, students also learn to understand the experiences and backgrounds of others through the stories they hear. This process indirectly strengthens tolerance, empathy, and openness to differences (Dacholfany et al., 2023). However, to fully realize the potential of storytelling as a tool for developing 21st-century skills, innovative and integrated learning strategies are needed. Conventional learning models that emphasize information reproduction tend to be insufficient in developing students' narrative dimensions. A more participatory, project-based approach that creatively uses digital media can open up more space for students to explore and express themselves. Digital technology, for example, offers various platforms for story development, such as podcasts, vlogs, digital comics, and animation. The use of this technology can increase student engagement and provide a more contextual and relevant learning experience (Chen et al., 2022).

In the context of Indonesian language learning in elementary schools, storytelling skills should be the main focus in language skill development. Unfortunately, in practice, storytelling activities are often positioned as a supplement rather than the center of learning. Teachers tend to focus more on technical aspects, such as grammar and spelling, without providing enough space for students to express themselves through narratives. As a result, many students find it difficult to convey their ideas in a structured and interesting way, even though they have many ideas and experiences to share (Adisaputera et al., 2023). Therefore, systematic efforts are needed to revitalize storytelling in elementary schools. This can be done by strengthening teachers' competencies in designing meaningful and enjoyable storytelling lessons, developing interactive and relevant learning media, and developing a curriculum that places narrative literacy as a key pillar in language skill development. In addition, assessments of students' storytelling abilities need to be designed comprehensively, not only measuring cognitive aspects such

as story structure and vocabulary, but also affective aspects such as emotional expression, originality, and depth of reflection.

Comprehensive profiling of students' storytelling abilities is an important first step in understanding the individual needs and potential of students. Through this mapping of abilities, teachers can design targeted interventions, such as providing special guidance for students who lack confidence in storytelling or providing more challenges for students who have already demonstrated high narrative abilities. This profile data can also be used as a basis for developing school literacy programs that are more inclusive and responsive to the needs of the 21st century. This study aims to address these needs by focusing on mapping the storytelling abilities of fifth-grade students at Sugihwaras Public Elementary School.

This study aims to present a comprehensive and in-depth picture of how students develop narratives, how their story structures are formed, the extent to which they can convey messages effectively, and how these abilities relate to elements of 21st-century skills. With a comprehensive approach, this study is expected to make a real contribution to the development of more contextual and transformative learning strategies. Furthermore, this study will also explore the role of the learning environment, learning media, and social interaction in shaping students' storytelling abilities. Factors such as teacher support, reading culture in schools, access to narrative media, and opportunities to perform in public will be analyzed to understand how the learning context influences the development of students' narrative literacy. Thus, the results of this study are expected to not only be descriptive but also provide practical recommendations for the development of effective and relevant storytelling learning in the digital age. Ultimately, storytelling is not merely a tool for conveying stories, but also a vehicle for shaping character, fostering empathy, and strengthening cultural and national identity. Amidst the tide of globalization and the flood of digital information, this ability serves as an anchor that helps students stay connected to human values and local wisdom. By strengthening storytelling skills from an early age, we are not only producing academically competent generations but also generations capable of sharing, understanding, and building a better world through the power of words and stories.

METHOD

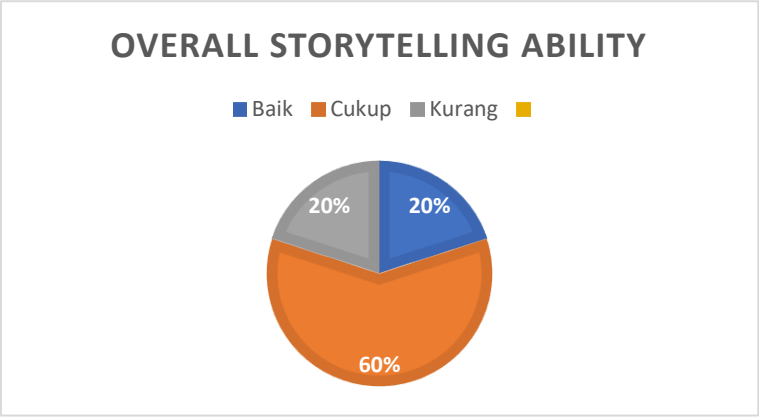
This study uses a quantitative descriptive approach to profile the storytelling abilities of fifth-grade students at SDN Sugihwaras (Amaratunga et al., 2002). This approach was chosen because it allows researchers to systematically describe the conditions and characteristics of students' storytelling abilities in the population under study. This method has been used for a long time and is considered well-established in educational research. The research population included all fifth-grade students from four classes (A, B, C, and D), each consisting of 25 students, for a total sample of 100 students. The sample was selected using random sampling so that each student had an equal chance of being selected, and the population was fairly represented. The sample consisted of

students aged 10 to 12 years who were at a stage of cognitive and language development relevant to Piaget's theory (2019). The main instrument in this study was a picture-based storytelling test, in which students were asked to compose and deliver a story orally based on the illustrations provided. This instrument allows for a comprehensive evaluation of students' narrative abilities through five assessment aspects, namely plot, characters, setting, language use, and expression. The assessment rubric was developed based on storytelling ability theory and validated by experts to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the instrument. Data collection was conducted individually in a conducive classroom setting, with sufficient time given to each student to design and deliver their stories. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including the calculation of the mean, minimum, maximum, and standard deviation for each aspect of storytelling ability. The results of the analysis were presented in tables and graphs to facilitate interpretation. This approach enables researchers to describe the general profile of students' storytelling abilities quantitatively, as well as identify strengths and weaknesses in each aspect of the assessment to provide more targeted learning recommendations.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The 21st century has brought the world into a new phase characterized by rapid change, global competition, and rapid advances in technology and science. In facing these challenges, human resources are needed who not only have factual knowledge but are also equipped with higher-order thinking skills and good adaptability. In line with the views of Dorsey, (2024) The 21st century demands high-quality, adaptive human resources who are ready to face various forms of global complexity. Among the important skills that need to be developed from an early age is storytelling. This skill is not only part of language learning but also a means of fostering communication skills, creativity, critical thinking, and collaboration, the four main competencies in the 21st-century skills framework. In the context of the study conducted on fifth-grade students at SDN Sugihwaras, it was found that students' storytelling skills were generally in the adequate category, with a distribution of abilities indicating that there is still considerable room for improvement.

Figure 1. Overall Storytelling Ability



The storytelling ability profile results showed that only 20% of students had good storytelling skills, while the majority of students 60% were in the adequate category, and the remaining 20% were below the minimum passing criteria (KKM). These findings indicate that although some students have achieved adequate skills, many students still need additional support to improve their abilities.

In terms of communication skills as part of the 21st century skills profile, the measurement results show that most students are in the category of close to standard. In detail, 60% of students demonstrated communication skills that were close to standard, 26% had achieved standard, and 14% were still below standard. Students can convey ideas, thoughts, and information, but often do not do so in a clear, concise, and logical manner. In class discussions, they can participate actively, but need improvement in expressing structured and meaningful opinions. This reflects the need for a learning approach that emphasizes effective expression and communication of ideas. The data also shows that students who scored well in storytelling generally achieved a score of 80. Those in the satisfactory category scored around 75, while students who were still considered poor scored around 60. Therefore, remedial programs need to be provided to the latter group so that they can achieve mastery following the KKM. Husnaini, (2022) states that the minimum competency standard is the minimum that students must achieve in each competency, and in a national context, the target for mastery is a minimum of 75. Therefore, in practice, teachers and researchers work together to design steps to improve students' storytelling skills.

Figure 2. Example of a Storybook



One concrete step taken was the development of picture storybooks as learning media. These books were designed with attractive visuals and stories that were familiar to students to encourage their interest in storytelling. The results were quite encouraging, as the number of students in the poor category decreased from 20% to 5% after the

implementation of this media. In addition, teachers also provide direct examples of storytelling, such as using expressive and interesting tones of voice, to provide storytelling models that students can imitate. Storytelling itself is a complex speaking skill, involving the ability to convey ideas fluently, coherently, and expressively. This requires mastery of language, emotion management, and self-confidence. Therefore, from an early age, children need to be trained to speak and tell stories in various contexts, both formal and informal. The goal is for them to become accustomed to expressing their opinions and feelings in a structured manner that is easy for others to understand. This process will help shape individuals who are capable of building effective communication and good social relationships.

In a more in-depth evaluation, researchers assessed students' storytelling abilities based on five main aspects: plot, characters, setting, language, and expression. The average scores obtained for each aspect were as follows: plot 3.2, characters 3.1, setting 3.0, language 3.3, and expression 3.2 (on a scale of 1–5). When viewed from the distribution of these abilities, language was the most prominent aspect, while setting had the lowest score. In terms of expression, the majority of students showed significant progress, with around 80% of students able to display good expression when storytelling. This shows that the emotional and performative aspects of storytelling have developed better than the narrative aspects, such as character development or setting description. These findings are in line with previous research by Aydın & Aydın, (2020), which highlighted the importance of improving students' storytelling skills, and Elley & Mangubhai, (1983), who emphasized that storytelling skills are fundamental to language learning. This study also reinforces the argument that the development of narrative skills cannot be left to conventional learning alone, but requires creative and varied approaches. The weaknesses found in the character and setting aspects indicate that students need further guidance in developing complex and in-depth narratives. Meanwhile, the strengths in the expression and language aspects show potential that can be utilized as a starting point in the further learning process.

The implications of this study are the importance of designing more innovative and contextual storytelling learning strategies. For example, by using interactive storytelling techniques, utilizing digital media, and project-based learning that encourages students to compose and present their stories in various formats. In addition, the habit of reading storybooks from an early age can be a strong foundation for the development of students' narrative abilities. Interest in reading materials will broaden students' horizons, enrich their vocabulary, and help them understand good narrative structure. Strong storytelling skills will give students an advantage in various aspects of life.

They will be better able to express their opinions, explain their ideas effectively, and engage in constructive discussions. In the long term, these skills will support their academic and social success and equip them to adapt to a workplace that demands high communication skills. Therefore, basic education must be a strong foundation for developing these skills through a fun, exploratory, and meaningful learning approach.

The recommendations from this study are the need for training for teachers in designing effective storytelling activities, developing comprehensive assessment rubrics, and integrating storytelling into various subjects. In addition, schools can make storytelling programs part of extracurricular activities or literacy competitions to provide more space for students to express their abilities.

In this way, students' storytelling skills can be significantly improved and become an important part of 21st-century competencies. As a follow-up to this study, the researchers suggest that further studies be conducted using different approaches, such as classroom action research or qualitative research, which can explore in greater depth the factors that influence storytelling skills. Further research could also explore the relationship between storytelling skills and reading interest, family background, and exposure to digital media. Additionally, the development of story-based teaching materials integrated with educational technology could serve as an alternative strategy for engaging and effective learning. Thus, this study not only provides an overview of the current state of storytelling ability among fifth-grade students at SDN Sugihwaras but also contributes to a broader understanding of the importance of developing this skill in the digital age. Through the enhancement of narrative literacy, students are expected to not only become good learners but also effective communicators, critical thinkers, and individuals capable of building positive social relationships in their daily lives.

CONCLUSION

This study aims to profile the storytelling abilities of fifth-grade students at SDN Sugihwaras in the context of 21st-century skills. The results indicate that the majority of students have adequate storytelling skills, but there are still certain aspects that need improvement. Of the 100 students who were the subjects of this study, only 20% demonstrated good storytelling skills, 60% were in the adequate category, and the remaining 20% were in the poor category. These findings indicate a gap in storytelling skills, which has important implications for curriculum development and learning strategies in elementary schools. Storytelling skills, as part of essential 21st-century competencies, are important to develop systematically through relevant and contextual learning approaches. This study provides important contributions to understanding the profile of students' storytelling abilities and their urgency in the context of basic education. However, the quantitative descriptive approach used limits a deeper understanding of the factors that influence students' storytelling abilities. Therefore, it is recommended that further research use qualitative methods or a combination of methods (mixed methods) to explore the dynamics of learning and students' backgrounds more holistically. The results of this study also provide practical directions for teachers and education stakeholders, including the need for teacher training in developing narrative learning strategies and the provision of learning resources that support the development of storytelling skills. Overall, this study emphasizes the importance of structured and innovative learning interventions in improving elementary school students' storytelling abilities. Enhancing these skills will support the mastery of other competencies such as

communication, creativity, and critical thinking, all of which are essential for addressing the challenges of the ever-changing modern world.

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