

Listening Comprehension Skills: Storytelling Method among Third-Grade Students at Primary School

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Article Info

Article history:

Received February 06, 2026

Accepted April 20, 2026

Published April 30, 2026

Keywords:

Classroom Action Research;

Primary School Students;

Learning Innovation;

Listening Skills;

Storytelling Method.

ABSTRACT

The listening skills of third-grade students at Primary School II Latihan SPG Ambon were initially suboptimal. This study aims to enhance these skills through the storytelling method. Employing a Classroom Action Research (CAR) design, the study was conducted over two cycles involving 28 students (15 boys and 13 girls). Data collection techniques included observation, tests, and interviews to ensure a comprehensive evaluation of student progress. The findings demonstrate a consistent and significant improvement across all research phases. The classical mean score rose from 62.42 in the pre-test to 67.85 in Cycle I, ultimately reaching 77.42 in Cycle II. More impressively, the student completion rate increased dramatically from 23.8% in the pre-test to 100% by the end of the second cycle, surpassing the established success indicators. Analytical results highlight that the most substantial growth occurred in the character understanding dimension, which saw a 50.7% increase, driven by the teacher's expressive delivery and narrative gestures. The study concludes that the storytelling method is highly effective in creating an engaging, imaginative, and meaningful learning environment. Consequently, it is recommended as an innovative, student-centered instructional approach to improve listening comprehension and literacy foundations in lower primary school grades.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Indonesian language instruction serves as the cornerstone of the national curriculum, particularly at the primary level, where it integrates four essential linguistic dimensions: listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Fatmawati et al., 2023; Susetya & Sukardi, 2025). Among these, listening comprehension functions as the fundamental pillar for all subsequent literacy development. As noted by Munthe et al. (2023), children first internalize language through their auditory environment before they can effectively progress toward speaking, reading, or writing. Consequently, mastering listening at an early age is not merely an academic

requirement but a prerequisite for overall linguistic competence (Kusumaningputri & Khazanah, 2025).

Listening comprehension is an active cognitive process that demands sustained attention, deep interpretation, and the synthesis of oral information (Yarmi, 2025). According to Subakti (2023), it is the ability to receive and capture spoken data with full mental engagement. Proficiency in this skill correlates directly with a student's broader academic trajectory. However, a significant gap exists between this ideal and classroom reality; current research indicates that the listening skills of lower-grade elementary students remain at an alarmingly inadequate level, hindered by a lack of pedagogical focus on active auditory processing (Putri & Winarni, 2025).

The persistent struggle in listening proficiency is often rooted in a combination of internal and external barriers. Haryanto (2025) identifies critical obstacles such as low student concentration and a lack of interest, exacerbated by monotonous instructional methods. Furthermore, Prihatin (2017) observes that listening instruction frequently fails both as a pedagogical delivery tool and as a medium for social communication. This crisis is intensified by a heavy reliance on didactic lecturing, which Utaminingsih et al. (2023) argues renders the learning environment tedious and incapable of fostering the focus necessary for high-level comprehension.

Similar challenges were identified at Primary School II Latihan SPG Ambon, where third-grade students consistently struggled to comprehend oral narratives or retell story substances. Preliminary observations revealed that student scores remained below the Minimum Mastery Criterion due to a classroom atmosphere dominated by passive written assignments and conventional lectures. The novelty of this study lies in addressing these localized systemic failures by shifting the instructional paradigm from a teacher-centered "lecture-and-task" model to a dynamic, narrative-driven intervention specifically tailored to the cognitive-emotional needs of third graders.

To overcome these barriers, the storytelling method is proposed as a creative and holistic alternative. Maknum and Adelia (2023) emphasize that storytelling is a creative process that activates not only intellectual faculties but also emotional sensitivity, imagination, and both brain hemispheres simultaneously. This method transforms the classroom into an interactive space where students are no longer passive recipients but active participants in a narrative experience (Anggraeni & Hibana, 2021). By utilizing expressive delivery and engaging intonation, the teacher stimulates immediate auditory feedback and deeper content retention.

The efficacy of storytelling is well-supported by recent empirical evidence. Hastuti et al. (2021) and Desarmini et al. (2024) demonstrated that storytelling, particularly when integrated with media, significantly boosts both listening and speaking skills. Furthermore, Lestari et al. (2024) confirmed that this method yields consistent improvements across Classroom Action Research (CAR) cycles. By synthesizing these findings, this study aims to implement a refined storytelling approach to enhance listening comprehension at Primary School II Latihan SPG Ambon, providing a strategic reference for teachers to adopt student-centered, innovative instruction in lower elementary grades

2. METHOD

This study employed a qualitative Classroom Action Research (CAR) methodology, specifically designed to enhance and refine instructional quality through planned, systematic interventions. The CAR framework was selected, as it allows for an iterative process of addressing real-time classroom challenges, ensuring that the instructional strategies are directly responsive to the students' needs. By utilizing this approach, the research aimed to foster a more effective learning environment tailored to the specific pedagogical demands of the classroom.

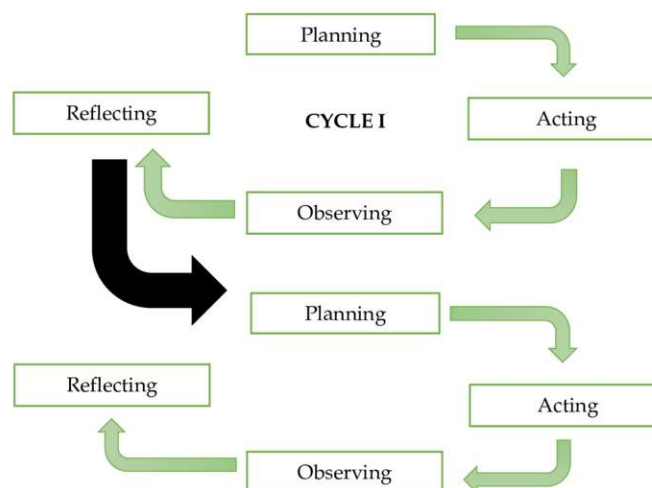


Figure 1. Classroom Action Research Design

The research was conducted at Primary School II Latihan SPG Ambon, Maluku Province, during the even semester of the 2024/2025 academic year, spanning from February to March 2025. This site was strategically chosen based on preliminary observations that highlighted a critical need for improvement in students' listening comprehension skills. The study was executed across two distinct cycles, each consisting of two instructional sessions, with the second cycle serving as a refined intervention based on reflections and deficiencies identified during the initial phase.

The subjects of this research comprised 28 third-grade students, consisting of 15 male and 13 female students. This grade level was selected because students in this developmental stage possess the foundational linguistic abilities necessary to engage with complex narrative structures, yet they still require structured guidance to optimize their auditory processing. The diverse composition of the group provided a comprehensive basis for evaluating the effectiveness of the storytelling method across different student profiles.

To ensure data triangulation and academic rigor, the study utilized observation, testing, and interviews as primary data collection techniques. The research instruments included structured observation sheets to monitor student engagement and standardized test items to measure comprehension gains. The resulting data were analyzed using descriptive quantitative analysis, applying specific performance formulas to determine individual learning outcomes and assess the overall success of the intervention in meeting established mastery criteria.

$$Individual\ Score = \frac{Score\ Obtained}{Total\ Score} \times 100$$

For classical completeness percentage, the following formula was used:

$$Classical\ Mastery = \frac{Number\ of\ Students\ Who\ Passed}{Total\ Number\ of\ Students} \times 100$$

The resulting student scores were subsequently compared against the Minimum Mastery Criterion of 70, as established by SD Negeri II Latihan SPG Ambon. Based on conference results and deliberations, it could be determined whether each student had achieved mastery or had not yet met the criterion. The calculated results were then compared against the research conference criteria, as presented in the following table.

Table 1. Student Mastery and Passing Criteria

Interval	Grade	Classification
85 – 100	A	Very Good
70 – 84	B	Good
55 – 69	C	Adequate
40 – 54	D	Poor
< 39	E	Very Poor

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Pre-Test Results

The results of the initial evaluation (pre-test) indicate that the listening proficiency level of third-grade students of Primary School II Latihan SPG Ambon in the Indonesian language subject is still in the adaptation phase and requires structured reinforcement. The majority of students are able to grasp the main points of the oral narrative delivered, but still face challenges in identifying specific details and concluding implied messages from complex functional texts. These data reflect variations in students' concentration and auditory information retention, so that the implementation of more interactive learning strategies and the use of varied audiovisual media are needed to bridge the competency gap before entering the next stage of material.

Table 2. Pre-Test Results for Indonesian Language Learning

	Aspects Assessed				Score	Classification
	Plot/ Storyline	Characters	Setting	Message/ Moral		
	0–20	0–20	0–25	0–35		
Total	310	301	347	352	1,311	
Mean	14.76	12.04	16.52	16.76	62.42	Adequate

Table 2 above, the students' listening comprehension skills at the classical level reached a mean score of 62.42, which falls within the "Adequate" category. The mean scores for each of the four assessed dimensions were as follows: plot/storyline, 14.76; characters, 12.04; setting, 16.52; and message/moral, 16.76. These findings indicate that student learning outcomes with respect to listening comprehension skills among

third-grade students at Primary School II Latihan SPG Ambon remained at a relatively low level. In response, the researcher proceeded to implement instructional interventions aimed at improving listening comprehension skills through the application of the storytelling method.

Cycle I

The evaluation results in Cycle I, the listening skills of third-grade students at Primary School II Latihan SPG Ambon in the Indonesian Language subject showed a positive improvement graph compared to the pre-cycle stage. The implementation of a more participatory learning method has succeeded in increasing students' auditory focus, which is reflected in their ability to describe the storyline and identify intrinsic elements of spoken texts more accurately. Although the average class achievement has exceeded the collective minimum completion threshold, there are still several areas of development in the aspect of drawing critical conclusions, so that strengthening of supporting media and instructional differentiation is needed in the next cycle to ensure a more comprehensive and even internalization of listening competency.

Table 3. Cycle I Test Results for Indonesian Language Learning

	Aspects Assessed				Score	Classification
	Plot/ Storyline	Characters	Setting	Message/ Moral		
	0–20	0–20	0–25	0–35		
Total	342	338	379	383	1,425	
Mean	16.28	16.09	18.04	18.23	67.85	Adequate

Table 3 above, students' listening comprehension skills reached a mean score of 67.85, classified within the "Adequate" category. The mean scores for each of the four assessed dimensions were as follows: plot/storyline, 16.28; characters, 16.09; setting, 18.04; and message/moral, 18.23. Eleven students had not yet attained the MMC (≥ 70), while 10 students had reached the MMC. These findings demonstrate that student learning outcomes in narrative learning through the storytelling method with respect to enhancing listening comprehension skills among third-grade students at Primary School II Latihan SPG Ambon had not yet been achieved. The researcher therefore proceeded with Cycle II to further improve students' listening comprehension skills through the storytelling method.

Cycle II

The evaluation results in Cycle II showed significant achievements and exceeded the target success indicators, where the listening skills of third-grade students at Primary School II Latihan SPG Ambon in the Indonesian language subject had reached an optimal point. Through the refinement of learning strategies and the integration of more contextual media, students now demonstrate acuity in analyzing complex information, capturing implicit nuances, and providing critical responses to spoken texts with a high level of accuracy. The more even distribution of scores above the completion criteria reflects the effectiveness of the intervention carried out, while

also indicating that students have a strong auditory literacy foundation to proceed to more challenging academic stages independently.

Table 4. Cycle II Test Results for Indonesian Language

	Aspects Assessed				Score	Classification
	Plot/ Storyline	Characters	Setting	Message/ Moral		
	0-20	0-20	0-25	0-35		
Total	386	381	429	430	1,626	
Mean	18.38	18.14	20.42	20.47	77.42	Good

Table 4 above, students' listening comprehension skills attained a mean score of 77.42, falling within the "Good" category, and demonstrating that all students (21 students) had achieved the MMC (≥ 70). The mean scores for each of the four assessed dimensions were as follows: plot/storyline, 18.38; characters, 18.14; setting, 20.42; and message/moral, 20.47. These findings confirm that student learning outcomes in narrative learning with respect to the enhancement of listening comprehension skills among third-grade students at Primary School II Latihan SPG Ambon were successfully achieved.

Discussion

The pre-test results for third-grade students at Primary School II Latihan SPG Ambon indicate that listening comprehension skills remain at a low level, evidenced by a classical mean score of 62.42, which categorizes their performance as "Adequate". Out of 21 students, only 23.8% achieved the Minimum Mastery Criterion (MMC), leaving the majority struggling to grasp narrative elements such as plot, setting, and moral messages. This deficiency is particularly pronounced in the characters' dimension, which recorded the lowest mean score of 12.04. According to [Ubaidillah et al. \(2025\)](#), such diminished abilities often stem from a lack of instructional variation and minimal interactive media usage, while [Ryandi et al. \(2025\)](#) note that these challenges are typical for students who require extended periods to process instructional content.

The difficulty students face in identifying character attributes and narrative progression suggests a reliance on traditional lecturing that lacks visualization or engagement. [Astuti et al. \(2023\)](#) emphasize that comprehension is highly dependent on how engagingly a teacher presents a story and the level of active student participation. To address this, [Hakim \(2018\)](#) suggests that audiovisual media can significantly enhance a student's ability to conceptualize themes and character traits. The significant 25-point gap between the highest (74) and lowest (49) scores further highlights a broad disparity in individual listening abilities. [Massitoh \(2021\)](#) attributes such variations to internal psychological factors and external environments, while [Fadhilah \(2025\)](#) recommends using contextually relevant media to foster a more meaningful learning atmosphere.

Observational data reinforces these quantitative findings, revealing that most students appeared unfocused and unenthusiastic, often engaging in distracted

behaviors during listening activities. This lack of engagement aligns with the observations of Syihabudin and Ratnasari (2020), who argue that monotonous instruction frequently leads to academic fatigue in the Indonesian language subject. The research data confirms that current performance levels are insufficient, with many students failing to reach the "Good" classification. Consequently, there is an urgent need for pedagogical intervention through innovative and student-centered methods, such as storytelling, to activate interest and bridge the existing proficiency gaps in the classroom.

Additionally, the implementation of the storytelling method in Cycle I demonstrated positive improvements in students' listening skills, as reflected in the increase in the average classical score from 62.42 in the pre-test to 67.85, an increase of 8.7%. Quantitatively, the number of students meeting the Minimum Completion Criteria increased significantly, from 5 students (23.8%) to 10 students (47.6%). This finding aligns with research by Dolla et al. (2025) and Izzati et al. (2025), which confirmed that the storytelling method is a communicative and relevant instructional strategy for developing elementary school students' concentration and confidence in processing auditory information. Although progress is evident, these results have not yet reached the research's success indicator, which sets a minimum target of 80% of students achieving the Minimum Completion Criteria (≥ 70).

A thorough analysis of the assessment dimensions revealed improvements across all listening components, with the most significant growth occurring in the characterization aspect at 33.6%. Success in this character dimension was driven using vocal variations, facial expressions, and body gestures in the storytelling method, which helped students more easily distinguish each character's attributes. This is supported by the findings of Yunelda et al. (2025) who found that storytelling techniques, both traditional and interactive, supported by media such as hand puppets, consistently strengthened students' narrative comprehension and information retention. In addition to characterization, improvements were also recorded in the plot (10.3%), setting (9.2%), and moral message (8.8%), demonstrating that this method began to integrate various linguistic elements coherently.

However, Cycle I reflection results revealed that 52.4% of students had not achieved mastery due to several technical constraints, such as suboptimal classroom management, limited discussion time, and some students' lack of focus during the narrative. Referring to the thoughts of Prasiwi (2018) and Sutanti and Rahmatika (2025), educators need to provide more intensive stimulation to foster meaningful listening habits. The obstacles identified in this cycle, especially regarding students' active participation in the question-and-answer session, became critical evaluation points that must be improved in the next cycle to create a more dynamic learning atmosphere and ensure that all aspects of students' listening development can be accommodated optimally.

The evaluation results from Cycle II showed a very significant improvement in the listening skills of third-grade students at Primary School II Latihan SPG Ambon. The average classical score increased from 67.85 in Cycle I to 77.42 in Cycle II, with a

completion rate of 100%. This success demonstrates the effectiveness of the strategy improvements implemented based on previous reflection. This aligns with research by [Khasanah et al. \(2023\)](#), which emphasized that storytelling methods, combined with good classroom management and the use of supporting media, can significantly improve students' listening skills, reaching the "Good" category.

Overall, progress from the pre-test to Cycle II recorded an average increase of 24%. Improvement occurred across all dimensions, with characterization experiencing the highest increase at 50.7%, followed by plot (24.5%), setting (23.6%), and moral message (22.1%). The dominant improvement in characterization indicates that explicit narrative delivery helps students develop a deeper understanding of the roles and traits of characters. This finding is supported by the perspective of [Sari et al. \(2023\)](#), who stated that a creative approach creates a fun learning environment, improves concentration, and motivates students to better absorb information.

In addition to the emotional aspect, storytelling plays a crucial role in activating students' imagination and creativity. According to [Afriana et al. \(2024\)](#), through the process of mental visualization while listening to stories, students are trained to develop creative narratives, which is crucial for their literacy development. Furthermore, [Nurkhalizah and Febrianto \(2023\)](#) added that the use of relevant story materials, such as character-themed storybooks, provides a contextual and meaningful learning experience. This makes it easier for students to internalize character values compared to abstract or contextless instructions.

The effectiveness of this method is also strengthened by the dynamic interaction between teachers and students during the storytelling process. [Ririhena \(2020\)](#) explained that teachers' exploration of creative ideas in designing narratives that involve mental readiness and clear expression can encourage students to process information productively. Question-and-answer sessions and retelling provide space for students to express their understanding using their own language. Supporting visual media, as studied by [Habibullah et al. \(2025\)](#) and [Lestari and Pertiwi \(2025\)](#) on the use of Canva-based media and digital storytelling have proven effective in bridging students' imagination barriers through concrete visual representations.

From a learning theory perspective, this success is consistent with the principles of constructivism and Ausubel's theory of meaningful learning. As explained by [Ilham et al. \(2023\)](#), the storytelling method positions students as active subjects who construct their own knowledge through auditory experiences. Meanwhile, [Nugraha et al. \(2025\)](#) argue that learning becomes more effective when material is connected to students' everyday life experiences. This also aligns with Piaget's theory of cognitive development, stating that elementary school-aged students in the concrete operational stage require a real-world context to understand information, a need effectively met through narrative storytelling ([Febrianti & Hasibuan, 2024](#)).

In conclusion, this study provides strong empirical evidence that the storytelling method consistently improves listening skills from the pre-test (62.42) and Cycle I (67.85) and reaches an optimal point in Cycle II (77.42). Despite limitations in terms of research duration and subject generalization, these results demonstrate that the

storytelling method creates a fun and developmentally appropriate learning experience for students. The successful achievement of 100% completion at the end of the cycle confirms that this approach is a robust strategy for strengthening students' literacy foundations at the elementary school level

4. CONCLUSION

This study proves that the effective implementation of the storytelling method can improve the listening skills of third-grade students at Primary School II Latihan SPG Ambon, as demonstrated by a consistent increase in the average classical score from 62.42 (Adequate) in the pre-cycle to 77.42 (Good) in Cycle II. The significance of this success is seen in the achievement of the classical completion rate, which jumped drastically from 23.8% to 100%, with the characterization dimension recording the highest growth of 50.7% thanks to the strength of the teacher's vocal expression and gestures that facilitate character visualization for students. The effectiveness of this method is rooted in its ability to create an active, enjoyable, and meaningful learning atmosphere through stimulating imagination and two-way interaction supported by optimized classroom management and the use of visual media. Thus, the storytelling method is highly recommended as an innovative, student-centered instructional strategy to strengthen the foundation of literacy, particularly in the aspect of listening skills at the elementary school level.

As a suggestion, it is recommended for educators to adopt storytelling as an alternative innovative learning strategy by optimizing variations in intonation, facial expressions, and body gestures to maintain students' attention and depth of understanding. Furthermore, schools should support the provision of supporting visual media and contextual story literature to enrich learning resources. Meanwhile, future researchers are expected to expand the scope of the study to the dimensions of critical and appreciative listening with a longer duration to test the consistency of continuous improvement of student competencies.

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