

**T.C.
ISTANBUL AYDIN UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF GRADUATE STUDIES**



**ONCE UPON A TIME IN FIRST GRADE: EXPLORING THE IMPACT
OF STORYTELLING ON LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT AND
LITERACY ENGAGEMENT IN YOUNG LEARNERS**

MASTER'S THESIS

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**Department of Foreign Languages Education
English Language Teaching Program**

SEPTEMBER, 2024

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SEPTEMBER, 2024

APPROVAL PAGE

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() Acceptance decision will be written in writing.**

DECLARATION

I hereby declare with respect that the study “Once Upon a Time in First Grade: Exploring the Impact of Storytelling on Language Development and Literacy Engagement in Young Learners”, which I submitted as a Master thesis, is written without any assistance in violation of scientific ethics and traditions in all the processes from the Project phase to the conclusion of the thesis and that the works I have benefited are from those shown in the References. (10/09/2024)

Wlla Abdel Majid Faisal Shawaqfeh

FOREWORD

This journey would not have been possible without the support of many individuals. First and foremost, I extend my deepest gratitude to my parents for their unwavering moral support. I am profoundly grateful to my supervisor, Asst. Prof. Dr. Ayşe Betül Toplu, for her expert guidance, encouragement, and patience throughout the research process. My heartfelt thanks also go to my husband, Abdulrahman Sabha, whose belief in my potential and steadfast support have been crucial in helping me complete this thesis.

A special note of appreciation is due to my little ones, Naya and Tia, who light up my mornings and give me the strength to keep pushing forward. This thesis is the result of a collective effort, and I sincerely thank everyone who contributed to this journey. I would also like to acknowledge my friends and colleagues, whose words of encouragement, shared experiences, and camaraderie have made this journey less daunting and more fulfilling. To my mentors and professors who have contributed to my academic growth, I am deeply thankful for your wisdom and guidance.

Lastly, to everyone who, in one way or another, contributed to the completion of this thesis, whether through words of encouragement, constructive feedback, or simple acts of kindness, I extend my sincere gratitude. This thesis is not just the culmination of my efforts but a testament to the collective support and love I have been fortunate to receive along the way.

Septemper, 2024

Wlla Abdel Majid Faisal Shawaqfeh

“ONCE UPON A TIME IN FIRST GRADE: EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF STORYTELLING ON LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT AND LITERACY ENGAGEMENT IN YOUNG LEARNERS”

ABSTRACT

This study examines how storytelling plays a role in developing and encouraging first-grade students' foreign language skills and literacy involvement. Also, this research focuses on educational psychology. It uses a quasi-experimental design to explore how storytelling affects listening comprehension skills and participation in literacy activities among first-grade students. This study was conducted over six weeks in an international school in Istanbul, Turkey, and it included 25 EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students from first grade who participated in storytelling sessions twice a week. The study collected data on students' responses and behaviors throughout each session using four different tools: observational checklists, teacher diaries, pre- and post-intervention interviews, and pre-and post-tests. The analysis aimed to identify changes in language skills and participation levels and provided experimental insights into how storytelling is effective as a learning tool. What is expected from this study is a deeper understanding of how storytelling can develop listening comprehension and literacy skills, as well as contributing to discovering more effective learning tools that help in early childhood education. This research is important since it tries to fill a gap in contemporary educational practices by delivering a recommendation based on real data to merge storytelling tools in the early childhood education curriculum and build a supportive and engaging environment for young learners.

Keywords:First grade, Impact of Storytelling, Language Development, Literacy Engagement

BİRİNCİ SINIFTA BİR ZAMANLAR: HİKAYE ANLATIMININ GENÇ ÖĞRENCİLERDE DİL GELİŞİMİ VE OKUMA-YAZMA KATILIMI ÜZERİNDEKİ ETKİSİNİN ARAŞTIRILMASI

ÖZET

Bu çalışma, hikaye anlatmanın birinci sınıf öğrencilerinin yabancı dil becerilerini ve okuryazarlık katılımını geliştirmede ve teşvik etmede nasıl bir rol oynadığını incelemektedir. Ayrıca, bu araştırma eğitim psikolojisine odaklanmaktadır. Hikaye anlatmanın birinci sınıf öğrencileri arasında dinleme anlama becerilerini ve okuryazarlık etkinliklerine katılımı nasıl etkilediğini keşfetmek için yarı deneysel bir tasarım kullanmaktadır. Bu çalışma, Türkiye, İstanbul'daki uluslararası bir okulda altı hafta boyunca yürütülmüştür ve haftada iki kez hikaye anlatma oturumlarına katılan birinci sınıftan 25 EFL (Yabancı Dil Olarak İngilizce) öğrencisi yer almıştır. Çalışma, dört farklı araç kullanarak her oturum boyunca öğrencilerin tepkileri ve davranışları hakkında veri toplamıştır: gözlem kontrol listeleri, öğretmen günlükleri, müdahale öncesi ve sonrası görüşmeler ve müdahale öncesi ve sonrası testler. Analiz, dil becerilerindeki ve katılım düzeylerindeki değişiklikleri belirlemeyi amaçlamış ve hikaye anlatmanın bir öğrenme aracı olarak nasıl etkili olduğuna dair deneysel içgörüler sağlamıştır. Bu çalışmadan beklenen, hikaye anlatmanın dinleme anlama ve okuryazarlık becerilerini nasıl geliştirebileceğine dair daha derin bir anlayış ve erken çocukluk eğitiminde yardımcı olan daha etkili öğrenme araçlarının keşfedilmesine katkıda bulunmaktır. Bu araştırma, erken çocukluk eğitimi müfredatında hikaye anlatma araçlarını birleştirmek ve genç öğrenciler için destekleyici ve ilgi çekici bir ortam oluşturmak için gerçek verilere dayalı bir öneri sunarak çağdaş eğitim uygulamalarındaki bir boşluğu doldurmaya çalıştığı için önemlidir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Birinci sınıf, Hikaye Anlatmanın Etkisi, Dil Gelişimi, Okuryazarlık Katılımı

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. Background

Recounting a tale orally, without using a written text, is known as storytelling. Storytelling is an essential social and educational tool that has been around for a long time, predating written language. It is prevalent in almost every civilization on Earth and serves to pass down cultural traditions from one generation to the next (Mello, 2001). The practice of oral storytelling varies among civilizations. Indigenous tribes often use oral storytelling to enjoy and impart group values. The Stahlo people of Canada utilize storytelling to educate young people about their place in the world and the need to take care of the land (Archibald, 2008). Similarly, the Quechua people of Peru use storytelling to inculcate their culture and identity in the younger generation (Bolin, 2006). On the other hand, Arizona's Hopi-Tewa people educate young people on moral values via storytelling (Kroskrity, 2009). Language development and literacy engagement are crucial during early childhood education. Children who develop strong language skills and engage in literacy activities are more likely to succeed academically and socially (Snow et al., 1998). Despite the recognized benefits of storytelling, there needs to be more substantial quantitative data on its effectiveness in promoting foreign/second language development and literacy engagement among first graders.

B. Historical Context

Storytelling has been a foundation of human communication and culture; it has served its role in saving history and spreading knowledge with moral lessons. The Stahlo tribe from Canada adopted stories to plant the feeling of environmental care in young people's behaviors to focus on their community and the natural world connection (Archibald, 2008). Likewise, the Quechua tribe from Peru uses stories to pass out cultural knowledge and empower community identity (Bolin, 2006). This traditional practice shows the power of storytelling as an educational tool and

protecting culture.

C. Modern Educational Context

As we all know, storytelling has been widely noticed because of its pedagogical value in contemporary educational practices. Teachers and researchers have agreed that storytelling effectively involves students, develops comprehension, and encourages them to love learning. As Isbell et al. (2004) and Ganea et al. (2008) claimed, merging storytelling in classroom activities could be a dynamic and interactive learning experience that makes the hard concepts easier to learn and remember for young learners. Despite their positive effects, more research is still needed regarding their effect on second language development in early childhood education.

D. Prevalence and Scope of the Problem

The most common challenge for young learners is language development, in precise listening comprehension. As Hart and Risley (2003) discussed, most students enter school without having the fundamental skills to succeed, resulting in gaps in academic achievement and long-term educational results, which are at the same level of importance as literacy engagement. Lacking fundamental skills can substantially affect the listening experience and future academic performance (Scarborough, 2001). Fixing these problems through methods like storytelling is necessary to improve educational outcomes.

E. Research Objectives

The main goal of this study is to figure out how storytelling affects the listening comprehension of first graders. In addition, it aims to look at the impact of storytelling on first graders' oral communication through the practice of retelling stories. This study examines the benefit of using storytelling as an educational tool involving both the direct and the indirect effects.

F. Significance

The result of this study will provide an important insight into how storytelling

is effective as an educational strategy, which leads to improved educational curriculums and aims to enhance language development outcomes in early childhood education on the social participation side. This study will encourage students to appreciate cultural differences, empower their curiosity, and explore them using the target language; therefore, empower their communication skills. Furthermore, the study contributes to learning a language and pedagogy by focusing on developing listening comprehension skills for EFL learners. It also offers insights into learning approaches that can support the unique needs of EFL learning in developing listening skills and achieving linguistic proficiency. Teachers can create interactive experiments for learning languages by implementing storytelling, specializing in EFL learners' listening comprehension goals, and eventually empowering students' linguistic abilities and cross-cultural understanding. This study confirms the importance of storytelling as a flexible educational tool in language education, specifically to improve listening comprehension skills in EFL contexts. This research aims to advance effective teaching approaches and empower the integration of storytelling into language learning curricula worldwide.

G. Anticipated Contributions

This research is important since it seeks to fill a gap in our current educational practice by introducing data-driven recommendations for merging storytelling into the early educational curriculum; in this way, it seems to empower an attractive and supporting learning environment for young learners, which can result to improving linguistic skills and achieve a bigger academic success. In addition, the study will contribute to understanding how using storytelling as a tool can fix specific challenges that EFL learners face. Also, it supports a more effective learning strategy. In conclusion, the study aims to thoroughly examine the effects of storytelling on language development and literacy engagement in first graders. Through a combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods, it seeks to present valuable insights that could be useful to educational practices and improve the learning experiences of young children, especially those learning English as a foreign language.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Storytelling is important in humanistic traditions and is a foundation in educational environments, especially in early childhood maturing. This review explains the multilayered role of storytelling in developing linguistic skills among first-grade students, focusing on the acquisition of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Previous peer-reviewed studies and theoretical structures aim to highlight the impact of storytelling on cognitive, emotional, and academic growth, thereby anchoring its importance in educational settings.

A. Theoretical Background: Cognitive and Educational Theories

Combining storytelling in language education is reinforced by intellectual and educational theories. Bruner (1986) claims storytelling is the main way to build and understand human experiences. He also suggests that stories can be powerful tools to simplify complex thoughts and make them easy for young learners to handle. This perspective goes with storytelling as an educational tool since most young learners have linguistic difficulties. The teachers can make learning a new language enjoyable and memorable by creating language learning around stories. Also, Egan (1986) highlights the importance of stories in intellectual development, and he argues that stories are natural organizations of knowledge, an important feature for EFL learners. Stories help learners connect old information with acquired information to understand language deeper and make it easier to remember. This approach supports intellectual development by engaging learners' imagination and making learning fun.

Vygotsky (1978) verified the importance of social interaction and cultural tools in intellectual development throughout his sociocultural theory. Storytelling provides, as a cultural tool, a rich context for social communication. EFL learners can participate in significant communication introduced to new language forms and develop their linguistic skills in social settings using storytelling to support learning and empower language learning development through social communication, which is also supported by this theory.

Krashen (1985) suggests that language acquisition occurs when learners are exposed to understandable input slightly higher than their parent's proficiency level. Through listening to stories, EFL learners are exposed to new vocabulary and structures in a setting that helps them understand; therefore, this matches Krashen's idea that language acquisition is possible through exposure to meaningful and challenging language.

B. Storytelling in EFL Contexts

There is a growing body of literature that explores the application of storytelling in EFL settings. While much of the research about storytelling focuses on first language context, these studies also clarify that storytelling could be used as an effective tool to empower language skills, participation, and motivation among EFL learners.

1. Language Skills Development

Wright (2008) discussed that storytelling largely improved EFL listening skills. This improvement happened through interacting with stories where learners could practice punctuation, intonation, and fluency in a natural context, as mentioned in Isbell et al. (2004). Storytelling helped EFL learners develop better comprehension skills by providing useful settings to understand new language forms.

2. Engagement and Motivation

García (2013), according to his study with EFL learners in Spain, concluded that storytelling increased participation and motivation. The storytelling style is very attractive for EFL learners and encourages them to participate in class discussions. Garcia (2013)'s study supports the idea that storytelling can create a positive educational environment, which is crucial for language acquisition.

3. Vocabulary Acquisition

Cameron (2001) showed that storytelling was a very effective tool in empowering vocabulary acquisition among young EFL learners. Ganea et al. (2008) also highlighted storytelling's role in simplifying vocabulary through context exposure.

4. Cultural Understanding

Stories from different cultures give learners strong visions of the target language society's values, beliefs, and practices. Lazar (1993) showed that storytelling empowers cultural understanding, a fundamental aspect of language learning. This cultural awareness can empower learners' communication efficiency and help them use language better in real-life situations.

C. Empirical Studies on Storytelling and Language Development

A wealth of empirical evidence attests to the transformative impact of storytelling on language acquisition and proficiency across diverse learner populations. For instance, Isbell et al. (2004) demonstrate the significant enhancement of vocabulary acquisition and narrative skills in young learners through regular exposure to storytelling sessions. Similarly, Ganea et al. (2009) underscore the role of storytelling in facilitating the application of learned vocabulary and concepts to novel contexts, thereby fortifying expressive language abilities. Importantly, these findings extend beyond native language contexts to encompass EFL settings, reaffirming storytelling as a potent pedagogical tool for language learners across linguistic boundaries.

Further studies shed light on additional aspects of its impact on linguistic proficiency. In Smith (2017), the results show a major improvement in learners' lexical knowledge and retention after regular exposure to storytelling sessions. Also, the qualitative analysis of learners' feedback on the storytelling's role shows how it enhanced participation and motivation among EFL learners.

The study conducted by Chen et al. (2020) shows that young learners from different cultural backgrounds are exposed to storytelling to improve their oral communication skills. The study includes different cultural and linguistic backgrounds to provide a total understanding of how storytelling can affect language development in different settings. Using a mixed-method approach, the researchers used quantitative and qualitative measures to evaluate the effectiveness of storytelling. The results of this study show a noticeable improvement in learners' oral proficiency after participating in storytelling activities; the participants especially show fluency, accuracy, and proficiency in their oral communication. The

researchers found massive progress in students' linguistic abilities through detailed analysis of their performance and responses.

The universal attention to storytelling is one of the major aspects of the current study, showing that it is a tool that comes across cultural and linguistic boundaries. Regardless of the learners' background, storytelling emerged as an attractive and powerful educational tool to enhance language acquisition and communication skills. This aspect conforms to storytelling's diversity in meeting learners' needs through different linguistics settings, which is also an important ingredient in EFL education.

D. Storytelling and Literacy Engagement

Further than storytelling's effectiveness in linguistics development, it also influences children's reactions toward reading and literacy. Wright (1995) introduced practical views on how increasing storytelling sessions will equally increase children's participation and motivation, and according to him, storytelling can create an attractive and dynamic environment that captures children's attention and makes them more engaged in reading materials. This engagement is very significant since it leads to an improvement in literacy skills.

Mar et al. (2006) supports this idea by highlighting and exposing students to storytelling to increase children's empathy and social understanding, major elements in engaging reading. By listening to stories regularly, children can learn different points of view and different emotions from characters, which means that more listening results in developing their reading experience and creating an active, creative reader who can connect with the text they read.

E. Storytelling in Wider Educational Settings

Pelletier and Wilde Astington (2004) explore a very important aspect of storytelling, storytelling is the best way to improve children's mind theory, and it is a way to understand narrative perspectives and develop social understanding. Their study points out that this tool, storytelling, could help children understand others' thoughts and feelings, which is a fundamental aspect of social learning.

In addition, merging storytelling within not only language learning but also

within different educational subjects like history, Math, and science can make understanding abstract concepts better, which guarantees intellectual and academic growth. As a result, storytelling tools increase children's linguistic skills, literacy participation, social understanding, and knowledge development. This strategic use of storytelling in an educational environment can empower children's love of reading and supporting their development.



III. METHODOLOGY:

A. Research Questions

This study aims to investigate the impact of storytelling on first graders' foreign/second language development and literacy engagement. The research questions include:

1. How does regular exposure to storytelling affect first graders' listening comprehension and vocabulary development, as measured by standardized assessments before and after the intervention?
2. How does participation in storytelling sessions enhance first graders' engagement and positive attitudes toward language learning, as observed through behavioral observations and self-reported interest?

The present chapter describes the research design, participants, data collection instruments, and procedures in detail, ensuring transparency and replicability. It outlines ethical considerations, which are crucial in studies involving young children, and shows conscientious planning. It also explains quantitative and qualitative data analysis methods, emphasizing how these help answer our research questions about storytelling's impact.

B. Research Design

Through a quasi-experimental design, we investigate the effects of a six-week storytelling intervention on listening comprehension development and literacy engagement of first-grade students, particularly English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. This design utilizes a one-group pretest-posttest approach, allowing for the assessment of changes in listening comprehension skills and engagement in English language learning contexts. While focusing on listening comprehension, this experiment aims to clarify the effectiveness of storytelling for young EFL students using it as a pedagogical tool.

Exposing EFL learners to stories is essential to understand how storytelling affects their listening comprehension for second language acquisition. According to previous studies, this research aims to seek how exposing EFL learners to English oral stories can improve their ability to listen to the English language as a foreign language. By using the results of this study, which lie in exposing young EFL learners to storytelling sessions, we aim to explore new strategies to be merged into young education curricula to enforce listening and comprehension skills throughout English language subjects.

C. Participants

This study includes 25 first-grade students, aged 5-8, registered at an international school in Istanbul, Turkey. This group of students represents diverse nationalities: Indian (2 students), Sudanese (2 students), Nigerian (4 students), Palestinian (2 students), Iraqi (3 students), Lebanese (1 student), Egyptian (3 students), Jordanian (2 students), Syrian (4 students), and Afghan (2 students). This diversity helps this study discover the effect of storytelling on multicultural samples.

Recognizing the ever-changing nature of dealing with young students, it is understood that attendance in storytelling sessions may differ owing to variables such as illness, family obligations, or unexpected events. It is recognized that attendance may vary across storytelling sessions due to illness, family commitments, or other unforeseen circumstances. While not all sessions may have a consistent count of 25 participants, the storytelling intervention ensures that all enrolled students are exposed to the storytelling technique throughout the study period. Therefore, even if individual students are absent from certain sessions, efforts have been made to ensure they receive equivalent exposure to the storytelling intervention through catch-up sessions. This approach aims to maintain consistency in the intervention's implementation while accommodating each participant's individual needs and circumstances, thereby maximizing the effectiveness of the intervention across the entire cohort.

D. Data Collection Instruments

1. Pre and Post Interviews:

The interviews were conducted in a structured manner with individual students before and after the study. The pre-interview determined the students' attitude towards storytelling, which type of stories they prefer, their interest in listening to stories, and their feelings while telling the story. After the intervention, interviews were also conducted with each student to assess the changes in their views towards storytelling. As part of this interview, an assessment of the students' enjoyment of telling stories was assigned. There were questions about the story they liked the most, what they preferred to retell, why they preferred it, and whether it helped them remember the story. Students were asked if they wanted to participate in activities similar to this study. Google Forms was used to create the interview questions, which we can easily access to fill out during the sessions. Two types of questions were asked, open-ended and close-ended, and they were designed according to the age of the students. The questions were yes or no to get quantitative answers from the children regarding their satisfaction with certain stories. As for the open-ended questions, they focused on the students' experiences, the reasons for their admiration for certain stories from the study, and the effect of retelling stories on remembering the story itself. Using Google Forms aimed to facilitate data collection and flexibility in understanding quantitative and qualitative answers. Appendix A contains a copy of the pre and post-interviews used in the study.

2. Pre and Post Listening Test:

A listening test was administered before and after the storytelling sessions to obtain quantitative data to assess the students' listening comprehension levels before and after the study, and answer the questions related to the effect of storytelling on listening comprehension. Utilizing the English Language Proficiency Assessments for California (ELPAC) Practice Test for Grade 1, participants engaged with tasks that included Short Exchanges, where students listened to brief conversations and answered comprehension questions; Stories with Dialogue, where students listened to stories and responded to questions related to the content; and Oral Presentations, where students listened to academic presentations and answered comprehension questions. Detailed specifics regarding the test materials and tasks are accessible in

Appendix section. The test link is provided therein for reference.

3. Observational Checklist:

A structured observational checklist was utilized to systematically record student behaviors and engagement levels during the storytelling sessions. The checklist encompassed various categories, including active participation, attentiveness, interaction with peers, emotional response, language use, social interaction, cognitive engagement, and more. The researcher noted specific behaviors within each category, such as attentiveness (e.g., actively listening, occasional distractions, frequent distractions), participation (e.g., verbal and non-verbal responses, initiation of questions or comments), emotional response (e.g., visible enjoyment, discomfort, or disinterest), language use (e.g., vocabulary usage, complexity of language), social interaction (e.g., engagement with peers, response to the storyteller), and cognitive engagement (e.g., predictions and inferences, story recall). The observational checklist template and detailed instructions are accessible in Appendix C. This tool will help answer the second research question by providing evidence of changes in engagement and attitudes observed during the sessions.

4. Teacher Journal:

A teacher journal was maintained throughout the storytelling intervention to document observations, reflections, and notable events during the sessions. The teacher journal is a qualitative data collection tool, providing insights into student engagement and contextual factors influencing their responses. The notes in the teacher's journal were classified into three parts: participation level, interactions, and body language, while each session has its general details, like story title, duration, and attending students. Under the participation level, student participation level was measured according to participation indicators such as leaning forward, eye contact, and participating in discussions. The interaction section focuses on students having group discussions about the story. In addition, they can share ideas with their colleagues or the group and observe any collaborative actions among them, whether verbal or nonverbal. The last section talks about body language notes. This section measures students' fidgeting level and their attention span and monitors any nonverbal indicators concerning their participation. After collecting every note and seeing what is reflected from the sessions, we will consider what has been done

perfectly in each session and record any challenge or unexpected action and students' reactions towards any typical part of the story. This tool allows us to gain a better understanding of the storytelling sessions and the possible improvement areas. During the qualitative analysis, all the sections in the teacher journal are considered. They are evaluated simultaneously to make any necessary adjustments to the future storytelling sessions. This practice supports student participation analysis and supports the observational checklist outcomes. An attached copy of the teacher journal form is found in the Appendices section.

E. Procedure

The procedure of our intervention started with two important steps. The first one was to get permission from the mentioned international school to approve the study launch with their students and ensure that the study would not affect the school's progress with the curriculum. After gaining the school's permission, we were led to the second step, which was about getting the parents' permission to include their children in our experiment, ensuring that the data and the recording would be used for academic use only. After collecting the permissions, students were exposed to a pre-test (ELPC) to know their listening comprehension level and a pre-interview to evaluate their interest in listening to stories and their motivation for storytelling. Following that, storytelling sessions began with arranging the day's story with the main theme in their curriculum. For instance, one week's theme was friendship or how to make a friend, and the story was then chosen according to this theme. Our adventure began by arranging the students' seats from the traditional way into the storytelling way; the seating was in circles or semi-circles so that every student could see the storyteller and each other, and the storyteller could observe the students' actions and reactions. The sessions were held twice a week, each lasting 25 minutes. The teacher used multiple techniques in these sessions, like voices, visual aids, and scents, to attract the student's attention. Furthermore, the session was not held in the classroom only, sometimes indoors or outdoors. These techniques helped the students waken their imagination and start brainstorming about the upcoming story. In this way, the teacher could collect notes about the students' behaviors, motivation, and reactions; the students were encouraged to share their ideas and expectations of the story. This was a helpful practice, not only for collecting notes but also for being

very lively and enjoyable. When the teacher finished telling the day's story, the students were asked to retell it using their own words. This practice benefited in knowing how much the story affected the students' understanding. This also showed the students' interest and participation. At the end of the study, the students were exposed to a post-test (ELPC) and a post-interview to measure the changes in the scores after the storytelling intervention.



IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study aimed to assess the impact of a storytelling intervention on Grade 1 students' listening comprehension skills and their involvement in and attitudes towards language learning.

A. The Quantitative Data

Simple listening comprehension tests were administered before and after the storytelling intervention to test the improvement in our participants' listening comprehension skills. The tests used were the ELPAC practice tests for Grade 1, which included tasks such as short exchanges, stories with dialogues, and oral reflection. These tests provided quantitative data on the ability of students to understand spoken English. The primary data served as a baseline for assessing the students' initial listening skills, while the post-test, carried out after the intervention, allowed us to measure any noticeable improvements. Data from quantitative test results were used to determine the effectiveness of storytelling in improving students' listening comprehension skills.

1. Data Analysis

To measure the impact of storytelling on students' listening comprehension, a paired t-test was conducted to compare the correct answer percentages from the pre-test and the post-test. Table 1 shows these percentages.

Table 1: Pre and Post-Test Scores

Question	Pre-Test Correct (%)	Post-Test Correct (%)
1	80	100
2	56	100
3	80	100
4	64	100
5	76	100
6	76	100
7	68	100

We did a paired t-test to determine any significant improvement between the pre-test and post-test scores. The results of the t-test are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Paired t-test Results

Statistic	Value
Mean (Pre-Test)	71.43
Mean (Post-Test)	100
Variance (Pre-Test)	111.81
Variance (Post-Test)	0
Observations	7
Df	6
t-Statistic	-4.62
p-value (one-tail)	0.0017
t Critical (one-tail)	1.94
p-value (two-tail)	0.0034
t Critical (two-tail)	2.45

The quantitative analysis of our study revealed a significant improvement in students' performance on listening comprehension tests, as evidenced by the increase in the average percentage of correct answers from 71.43% during the pre-test to 100% in the subsequent test. This increase reflects the storytelling intervention's profound impact on enhancing the participating students' listening skills.

To determine the statistical significance of this improvement, we conducted a paired t-test, which compares the average scores of the same students under two different conditions before and after applying the strategy. These results yielded a T-statistic of -4.62, reflecting a significant disparity between pre-test and post-test scores. The value associated with the value 0.0034 (two-tailed) supports this result. Given that this value P is much lower than the traditional significance threshold of 0.05, we can confidently reject the null hypothesis, which assumes that the storytelling intervention would have no significant effect on students' listening comprehension.

2. Discussion

The conclusion reached reinforces the point of view of the existing literature emphasizing the importance of the role of storytelling in educational environments, and because language is originally a skill that is acquired naturally through listening, storytelling has been consistently effective not only in improving the language skills

of children but also in enhancing the level of participation among them. The narrative format provides a natural structure that helps students organize information and enhances their listening and comprehension skills. Such teaching methods simplify information and enhance students' role in the educational process, enabling them to gain a deeper understanding for a longer time. (Isbell et al., 2004; Ganea et al., 2008).

Engaging narratives and stories will likely be important in improving student understanding. Stories, by their nature, provide a rich context that helps students visualize events and understand the narrative sequence of a story or novel, which has an important impact on developing their listening and understanding skills. This contextual learning is a vital and entertaining technique for young children because it helps them connect new information with their cognitive and cultural background, enhancing their cognitive processing and retaining information relatively longer. In addition, the integration of visual and audio effects in storytelling sessions may have increased the impact of the storytelling method on students through the formation of an audible and visual perception in their minds, as the use of these effects can make stories more vivid and imaginable for children and thus attract their attention more effectively and enhance their contribution within the classroom, these experiences that address several senses in students. It is especially useful for young learners because it meets different teaching methods, which makes learning more comprehensive and productive. (Wright, 1995; Mar et al., 2006).

The results of this study provide significant statistical support for the inclusion of storytelling as an effective pedagogical tool in language teaching curricula, especially for younger students. Engaging children in an interactive and enriching learning process can enhance the initial responses and reflect a promising and strong interest of the students in listening to the stories among themselves, which creates a positive perception of the storytelling strategy.

B. The Qualitative Data Collection

In addition to quantitative measures, a variety of qualitative data collection tools were employed to gain deeper insights into the students' engagement in and attitudes towards language learning.

1. Pre and Post Interviews Analysis

Individual interviews were conducted with each student before and after the storytelling intervention. The pre-intervention interviews aimed to capture the students' initial attitudes towards storytelling and their general interest in language learning. Questions were designed to be age-appropriate and engaging for 5-6-year-old children, focusing on their preferences and experiences with listening to stories. After the intervention, the same students were interviewed again to assess any changes in their attitudes and to gather feedback on their experiences with the storytelling sessions. These interviews provided valuable qualitative data on the students' perceptions and emotional responses to the intervention.

a. Interest in Listening to Stories

One of the primary research questions sought to evaluate students' interest in listening to stories and how this interest might change after the storytelling intervention. This was assessed through the pre-interview question, "Do you like listening to stories?" and the post-interview question, "Did you have fun telling the story back?"

- **Pre-Intervention Responses:** Before the intervention, the majority of students indicated a positive attitude towards listening to stories. Specifically, out of 25 students:
 - 92% (23 students) responded "Yes" to liking listening to stories.
 - 8% (2 students) responded "No."

These initial responses highlight a strong baseline interest in listening to stories among the students, setting a positive foundation for the intervention.

- **Post-Intervention Responses:**
 - After applying the strategy, the students were asked how much they enjoyed listening to stories. All the sample (all 25 students) answered "Yes". This shows their interest and confirms their desire to participate in storytelling.
- **Comparison and Analysis:**

The increase in positive responses from 92% to 100% suggests that the

storytelling sessions maintained and slightly increased the students' enthusiasm for storytelling. The unanimous positive feedback in the post-intervention interviews underscores the effectiveness of the storytelling approach in engaging students and fostering a love for stories. These findings align with previous research indicating that interactive and engaging storytelling can significantly enhance students' enjoyment and participation in language-related activities (Isbell et al., 2004; Ganea et al., 2008).

b. Frequency of Listening to Stories

Another key aspect of the research was understanding the frequency with which students listened to stories before and after the storytelling intervention. This was assessed through the pre-interview question, "How often do you listen to stories?"

- **Pre-Intervention Responses:**

Before the intervention, the frequency of listening to stories among students varied. The responses were as follows:

- Every day: 24% (6 students)
- A few times a week: 32% (8 students)
- Sometimes: 36% (9 students)
- Never: 8% (2 students)

These responses indicate that while some students are regularly engaged with stories, a significant portion only listened to stories occasionally or not at all.

- **Post-Intervention Responses:**

The increase in the percentage of interested students shows that storytelling sessions not only maintained their interest among students but also increased qualitatively, and the feedback from students in interviews after the application of the strategy confirms its effectiveness in enhancing the role of the student and increasing his love for stories, and these results are in line with previous studies in the same field, which thoughtfully states that interactive storytelling can increase students' enjoyment and participation in educational activities.

- **Comparison and Analysis:**

The initial data reflect a difference in the interaction with the stories, as more than half of the students (56%) more than once a week, and this reflects the success of the storytelling strategy, and the success of this method is reflected in the promising reactions in the interview after the application of the strategy: did you enjoy telling the story yourself again. This undoubtedly means that students' interest in stories has increased through practical experience, while post-application frequency data is not available, and the enthusiasm and increased student engagement reflect their tendency to listen to stories continuously after applying the strategy. The above is consistent with research that states that effective and positive storytelling experiences can increase interest and participation in listening-related activities. (Wright, 1995; Mar et al., 2006).

c. Types of Stories Preferred

Understanding the story genres students like is critical for adjusting storytelling interventions to meet their interests. This was assessed through the pre-interview question, "What is your favourite story genre?"

- **Pre-Intervention Responses:**

Before the method, students showed a variety of preferences for their favourite story genre. The responses were as follows:

- Magical story: 44% (11 students)
- Fable: 56% (14 students)
- Adventure fiction: 48% (12 students)
- Other: 4% (1 student) – This category included unique responses such as "stories about places" and "stories with funny voices."

These results reflect a remarkable interest in fable and adventures, where these types are closer to attracting students' interest due to their young age.

- **Post-Intervention Feedback:**

Even though the post-intervention interview did not ask directly about types of stories, the intervention required students to choose their favourite story and explain why they liked it. The responses reflected a continued interest in the

previously mentioned categories, with many students enjoying stories featuring animals and adventures. For example:

- "The Boy and the Apple Tree" was liked by several students because it combines both adventure and moral lessons.
- "The Lion and the Mouse" was also loved for its animal characters and themes of friendship and courage.

- **Comparison and Analysis:**

The pre-strategy data reflect a different set of student interests, despite their consensus on animal stories, and observations indicate that their interest continued to be consistent, as the majority liked animal stories and adventures, and those stories that contain lessons and moral impact, as "storytelling" met these interests positively, and this is from what was monitored from the feedback of the students during storytelling sessions. This alignment with the students' tastes has likely effectively contributed to their auditory comprehension and session participation. This highlights the importance of choosing the type of story as a factor in the success of the storytelling strategy (Isbell et al., 2004; Ganea et al., 2008).

d. The feedback from the storytelling

After studying the emotional dimension of the impact of the stories on students, storytelling had a vital role in understanding the extent of their perception and involvement with this method. These data were calculated by asking these questions before the interview: What do you feel when you listen to a new story? Moreover, a question after the interview: Describe how it feels to tell the story yourself. Moreover, can you mention what you like in the storytelling sessions?

- **Pre-Intervention Responses:**

Before the intervention, students shared a range of emotions they felt when listening to stories:

- Entertained: 64% (16 students)
- Okay: 20% (5 students)
- Bored: 4% (1 student)
- Sad: 0% (0 students)

- I don't know: 12% (3 students)
- Most students felt happy listening to stories, indicating a positive attitude toward storytelling.

Post-Intervention Feedback:

After the storytelling intervention, students were asked about their feelings when retelling the stories and what they liked most about the sessions. The responses were overwhelmingly positive:

- Happy: 72% (18 students)
- Excited: 16% (4 students)
- Okay: 8% (2 students)
- Nervous: 4% (1 student)

For example:

S1 mentioned that she loved the story about the fish and the dove because it was fun and made her happy.

S2 said the storytelling sessions made him happy and excited, particularly when we all sat together and heard the stories.

- **Comparison and Analysis:**

The comparison between the pre-and post-strategy impact on students' responses reflects a positive form, as students were happy when hearing stories before the strategy, but an increase in enthusiasm and happiness was observed after the strategy was applied, reflecting increased participation and pleasure, and this is in line with existing research indicating the emotional benefits and cognitive impact of storytelling in the educational process (Isbell et al., 2004; Ganea et al., 2008). The application of interesting stories and novels and their integration with storytelling techniques probably contributed to this positive feedback, enriching the students' experience and creating a beautiful psychological connection with language learning, which is important in encouraging them and the success of the educational process on a larger scale. (Wright, 1995; Mar et al., 2006).

e. Engagement with Stories

Monitoring students' interaction with the story and their opinion about it "that goes beyond the idea of listening" can provide insight into their cognitive participation by asking questions such as, "Do you talk about the story after listening to it?" and "Do you like to talk about it among yourselves?"

- **Pre-Intervention Responses:**

Students were questioned before the intervention about whether they had discussed stories after hearing them:

- Yes: 40% (10 students)
- No: 48% (12 students)
- Sometimes: 12% (3 students)

It was observed that less than half of the students preferred to talk about the stories they heard, which reflected a promising level of participation.

- **Post-Intervention Feedback:**

The feedback also showed that the students wanted to discuss the stories, and the results showed a noticeable increase in participation.

- Yes: 76% (19 students)
- No: 8% (2 students)
- Sometimes: 16% (4 students)

For example:

S1 expressed her admiration for discussing the story of the shoemaker and the three elves, especially when the elves helped the story's protagonist. S2 mentioned, "I liked discussing the Snail and Ladybug story with my classmates because it was funny, and we learned about new places."

- **Comparison and Analysis:**

Analyzing the data shows a marked improvement in students' responses to the intervention before and after the socio-cognitive discussions on the stories being told. The primary education students had limited discursive engagement with the stories before the intervention; this is evidenced by the revelation that only 40% of the

children used to discuss the stories with others, a situation that changed after the intervention as indicated by 76% of the students who said that they enjoyed engaging in a discursive manner when it comes to the stories. This increase corresponds to the goals of the storytelling intervention, as this study's goal was to help increase the amount of interaction and cooperation among the children.

f. Challenges in Listening to Stories:

The problems students face while listening to tales in English can only be solved by addressing the problems they face. This aspect was examined through the pre-interview question: 'Do you find it difficult to listen to stories in English?'

- **Pre-Intervention Responses**

Before applying the strategy, students encountered some difficulties in absorbing stories in English, yes: 64% (16 students), and no: 36% (9 students)

Common difficulties that were mentioned:

- Lack of understanding: "Sometimes I don't get them" (S1)
- The story going too fast: "The story goes too fast" (S2)
- Not getting attached: "It's hard to sit still for a long time" (S3)
- Complex vocabulary: "Big words" (S4)
- Attention issues: "I get distracted easily" (S5)
- Confusion with voices: "The voices are confusing" (S6)

- **Post-Intervention Feedback**

After the storytelling sessions, students reflected on their experiences and challenges:

Did telling the story help you remember it better?

- Yes: 92% (23 students)
- No: 8% (2 students)

Did you learn new words from the story?

- Yes: 100% (25 students)

The intervention resulted in most students reporting that telling the story

helped them remember it better, but there were still some challenges, albeit in a different context.

- Difficulty with new words: "Sometimes the words are too big" (S7)
- Story length: "The story is too long" (S8)
- Complexity of the story: "The story gets too complicated" (S9)

For example:

- S1 mentioned, "Sometimes I don't get them," indicating difficulty in understanding certain story parts.
- S2 noted, "The story goes too fast," suggesting that pacing was an issue.
- S3 expressed, "It is hard to sit still for a long time," highlighting attention span challenges during storytelling sessions.

- **Comparison and Analysis**

Comparing the pre-and post-intervention responses highlights that while storytelling improved students' engagement and language learning, certain challenges, particularly related to comprehension and attention, persisted.

Before the intervention was administered, 64% of students reported vocabulary, pace, and concentration issues. Although most participants believed storytelling helped with remembering and learning new words, comparable concerns were identified following the intervention, showing that, while storytelling is effective, other interventions may be required to address these specific challenges.

For example, adding additional conversational components, such as pauses, simpler language, and visual aids, could help reduce these issues (Wright, 1995; Mar et al., 2006). Tailoring the pacing of stories and providing repeated exposure to complex vocabulary within various contexts might also improve comprehension and retention (Isbell et al., 2004; Ganea et al., 2008). According to these results, even though storytelling is a useful teaching strategy, teachers should continue to help students overcome their difficulties. Teachers can increase the overall effectiveness of storytelling in teaching and make it more pleasant and fun for all students by applying helpful strategies (Pelletier and Wilde Astington, 2004). Assessing students' desire to use storytelling offers valuable information about the intervention's overall

effectiveness and level of involvement.

g. Interest in Future Storytelling:

The following post-interview questions were used to gauge this: "After telling the story, do you prefer hearing more new stories?" and "Would you like to tell more stories like this one?"

It is evident from the after-the-intervention replies that every kid was eager to tell and hear more stories:

- Would you like to tell more stories like this one?

Yes: 100% (25 students)

No: 0% (0 students)

- After telling the story, do you want to hear more new stories?

Yes, I want to hear more! 100% (25 students)

No, it is the same.: 0% (0 students)

- **Student Contribution**

It is evident from the post-intervention replies that every kid was eager to share and hear more stories:

S1 stated, "Yes, I want to hear more!" reflecting a strong interest in continuing storytelling activities.

S2 expressed excitement by saying, "Yes, I want to hear more!"

S3 also showed eagerness by saying, "Yes, I want to hear more!"

The students found the storytelling classes interesting and entertaining, as seen by the overwhelming favorable feedback. They valued how the activities were immersive and involved, which aided in their learning and made it memorable and fun.

- **Comparison and Analysis**

The overwhelming affirmative reaction to carrying on with the storytelling exercises highlights the potency of storytelling as a captivating pedagogical technique. The intervention successfully boosted students' involvement and interest in language learning through tales based on their pre-intervention interest in stories

and their post-intervention excitement for more storytelling.

For example:

S1 and S2 showed enthusiasm for the storytelling sessions, indicating that their desire for more was probably influenced by how dynamic these sessions were. Furthermore, S3 and S4 desired to hear and tell more stories, demonstrating how well the intervention maintained their interest and involvement.

The enormous enthusiasm for more storytelling exercises suggests that storytelling should be regularly incorporated into language acquisition curricula. The favourable comments from the students are consistent with other studies that highlight the pedagogical and motivating advantages of storytelling for young students (Wright, 1995; Mar et al., 2006).

Storytelling can be included in normal classes to keep students interested in language acquisition and to give them a constant source of delight and involvement. Future studies could examine the elements of storytelling that have the greatest impact on student engagement and how best to use them to improve learning results.

These results support that storytelling can be an effective and pleasurable teaching strategy that helps young children develop a lifelong interest in learning a language (Pelletier and Wilde Astington, 2004).

2. Observation Checklists

The teacher adopted a structured observation checklist to methodically document the students' conduct and participation levels during each storytelling session. Several areas, including involvement, emotional response, language use, social connection, and intellectual engagement, were included in the checklist. With this tool, it was possible to consistently monitor how the students engaged with the stories and one another, giving precise qualitative data on their actions throughout time. Various aspects were observed, including children's active listening, discussion participation, evident delight or difficulty, use of new language, and interactions with peers and the storyteller.

a. Attentiveness

The information gathered from the observation checklists during the storytelling sessions revealed different student attention levels:

Attentiveness
12 responses

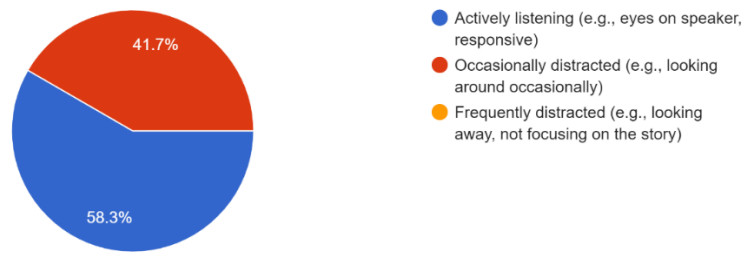


Figure 1.a Attentiveness

- **Attentive listening:** In 7 out of the 12 sessions, or 58.3%, students were seen to be listening intently. This was exhibited through gestures such as maintaining eye contact, answering questions, and expressing interest in the delivered tale.

- **Occasionally distracted (41.7%):** The interruption was indicated by behavioural patterns like looking about the room or not paying close attention to the storyteller all the time but occasionally looking back at the story. The findings show that while most students actively participated and paid attention during the storytelling sessions, some occasionally drifted off. Furthermore, the fact that the distraction was session-based instead of student-based suggests that attentional gaps may have been brought on by aspects of the storytelling or other external factors during particular sessions. Future interventions should look into ways to lessen these distractions, such as enhancing narrative approaches or changing the environment, to sustain student involvement consistently.

b. Participation

Using checklists to record student involvement levels during storytelling sessions systematically, the following tendencies were identified:

Participation
12 responses

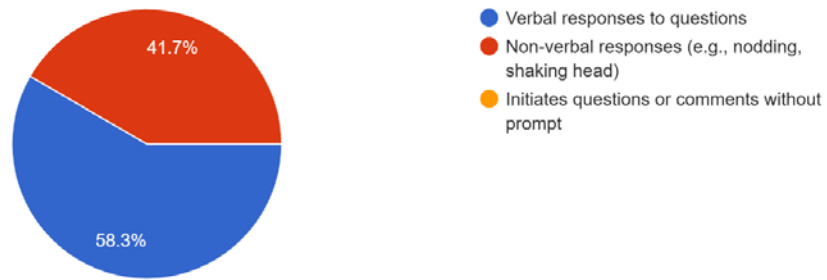


Figure 2.b Participation

Students responded verbally to questions in 7 out of 12 sessions (58.3%), this showed a high level of engagement, as students were actively involved in the discussions by answering questions and adding their views to the storytelling method.

In 5 out of 12 sessions (41.7%), some students responded nonverbally; these responses were nodding or shaking their heads, which expressed their comprehension of the story without using words.

The results show that a major number of the sessions included active verbal involvement, which means the storytelling experience effectively empowered students to speak up. Furthermore, the nonverbal responses showed that students actively understood the story, even if they did not always express their feelings and ideas verbally.

c. Visible Enjoyment

The satisfaction level of the students was recorded carefully during storytelling, which shows a multiple vision of psychological engagement.

Visible Enjoyment
12 responses

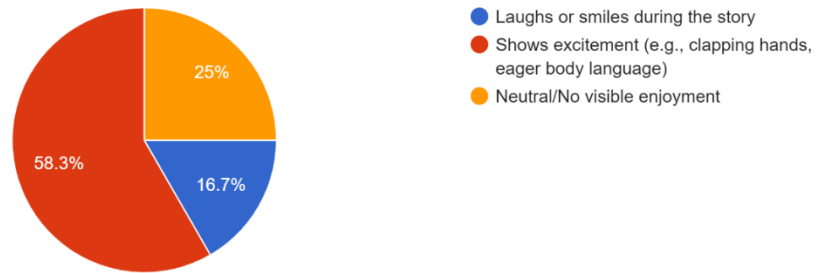


Figure 3.c Visible Enjoyment

7 out of the 12 sessions (58.3%) had noted signs of enjoyment from the students, like clapping hands, laughing, and body language, which reflect a positive response from the students to the storytelling sessions, emotionally and psychologically.

In 2 out of 12 sessions (16.7%), most of the students smiled or laughed during these 2 sessions; this shows that during these 2 sessions, the stories were interesting and joyful for the students, which made the students give positive responses.

In 3 out of 12 sessions (25%), students showed no notable excitement or natural responses. This shows that even though most of the sessions were interesting for the students, a few times students were not interested or attracted to the story.

These results show that the storytelling sessions successfully created positive emotional reactions from the students, and the graph proved a high level of enjoyment and excitement that appeared in multiple sessions.

d. Visible Discomfort or Disinterest

The following observations on the students' apparent displeasure or lack of interest throughout the storytelling sessions offered important insights into their participation levels:

Visible Discomfort or Disinterest
12 responses

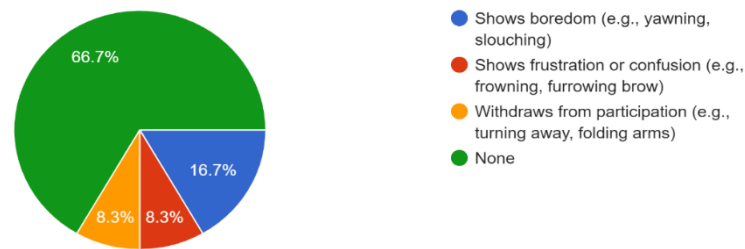


Figure 4.d Visible Discomfort or Disinterest

None: Students expressed no outward indicators of difficulty or indifference throughout most sessions (8 out of 12, or 66.7%). This suggests that the students were generally at ease and attentive throughout the storytelling activities.

Displays signs of boredom, such as slouching and yawning: In 2 of the 12 sessions (16.7%), students displayed indicators of boredom, including slouching and yawning. These incidents imply that, despite the storytelling classes being largely interesting, there were sporadic periods when some students were disinterested.

Displays indications of perplexity or irritation (such as scowling or furrowing the brow): In 1 out of 12 sessions (8.3%), students showed signs of confusion or disappointment, indicating sporadic difficulty comprehending or following the story.

Resigns from involvement (e.g., turns away, folds arms): Students who withdrew from participation in 1 out of 12 sessions (8.3%) demonstrated a lack of participation.

Based on most sessions demonstrating no discomfort or indifference, these results indicate that the narrative intervention successfully kept students comfortable and interested. There were rare signs of boredom, dissatisfaction, or disengagement throughout sessions, suggesting that most children found the intervention beneficial.

e. Use of Vocabulary

Students' engagement with new language was effectively encouraged by the storytelling sessions as well as getting attached to new words:

Use of Vocabulary
12 responses

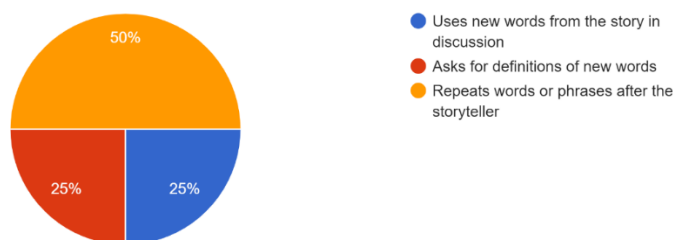


Figure 5.e Use of Vocabulary

Repetition of words or phrases after the storyteller: Students were seen repeating words or phrases after the storyteller in 6 out of the 12 sessions (or 50%). This recurrence suggests that the pupils were paying attention and trying to use new words in their language use.

Applies new vocabulary from the tale during discussion: Throughout discussions, students used new vocabulary from the story in 3 out of 12 sessions, or 25% of the total. This use of language shows that the pupils could comprehend and use new words in a practical setting.

Requests definitions of new words: Students made this request in 3 of the 12 sessions or 25% of the total. This inquisitiveness demonstrates that the children were attentive and keen to learn new words throughout the storytelling sessions, as seen by their desire to increase their vocabulary.

These results demonstrate how well storytelling works to teach children new vocabulary while also motivating them to use and interact with them.

f. Complexity of Language

The following tendencies were found when the language difficulty throughout the storytelling sessions was analyzed:

Complexity of Language
12 responses

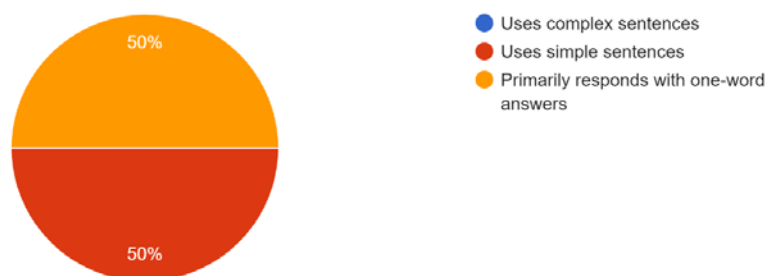


Figure 6.f Complexity of Language

Uses simple language: Students mostly used short phrases in 6 out of 12 sessions (or 50%) when answering questions or contributing to discussions. Suggesting that even while the students actively participated in the subject, they only used English at a basic level for half of the sessions.

Mostly gives one-word responses: In 6 of the 12 sessions (or 50% of the total), students frequently gave one-word responses. This implies that they were usually short and simple even when they were responding.

These results show that even while the storytelling sessions promoted verbal engagement, there is still much space for the kids to grow in their ability to utilize more sophisticated language. To improve language development, additional interventions can concentrate on eliciting more thorough answers and promoting full phrases.

g. Social Interaction

These patterns were revealed by analyzing the social interactions that took place throughout the storytelling sessions:

Interaction with Peers
12 responses

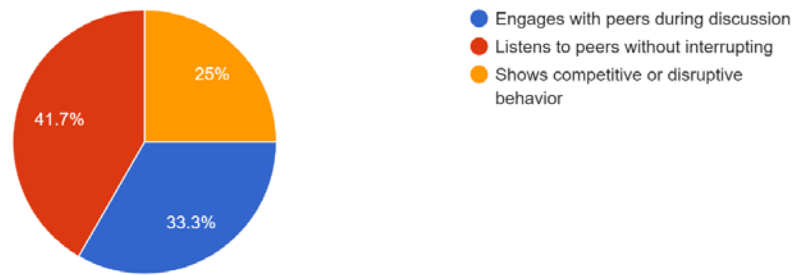


Figure 7.g Social Interaction

Pays attention to peers without interjecting: Students were shown to listen to their peers in 5 out of 12 sessions (41.7%). This suggests that these sessions were held in an environment of courteous and focused listening.

Interacts with peers during discussion: Students interacted with other students during talks in 4 of the 12 sessions (33.3%). This indicates that around one-third of the meetings promoted a cooperative and engaging atmosphere.

Shows competitive or disruptive behaviour: In 3 out of 12 sessions (25%), some students exhibited competitive or disruptive behaviour. Even though it was not as common, this shows how important it is to have techniques to control these actions and encourage constructive connections.

These findings imply that storytelling sessions typically promoted constructive social connections among students; however, to guarantee a continuously encouraging learning environment, handling sporadic disruptive or competing behaviours is still necessary.

h. Response to Storyteller

Throughout the sessions, the following were the pupils' reactions to the storyteller:

Response to Storyteller
12 responses

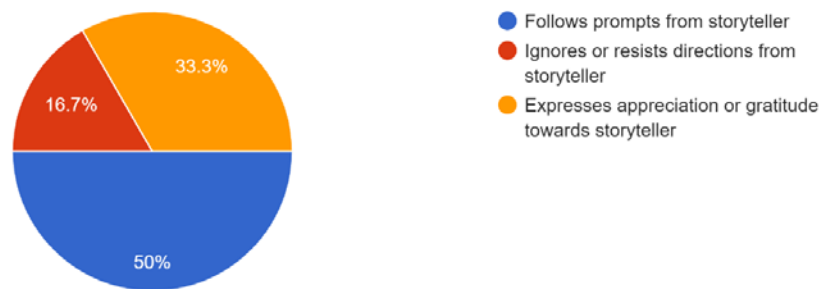


Figure 8.h Response to Storyteller

- Complies with storyteller's prompts: 6 out of the 12 sessions (50%) saw students consistently complying with the storyteller's prompts. This suggests that in half of the sessions, there was reasonable participation and attention to the storyteller's advice.

- Shows gratitude or admiration for the storyteller: In 4 of the 12 sessions (33.3%), students showed appreciation or admiration for the storyteller. This indicates that the pupils and the storyteller have a good rapport, which enhances the supportive and motivating learning environment.

- Disregard or resist the storyteller's instructions: In 2 of the 12 sessions (16.7%), a few children disregarded or resisted the instructions. Even if they are less common, these incidents show the importance of developing plans to guarantee that every student is attentive and involved for the entire session.

Even though most students were attentive and involved with the storyteller, these results imply that there is still an opportunity for development in guaranteeing constant engagement during all sessions. Creating more engaging and participatory storytelling strategies could keep students interested and participating during the lessons.

i. Cognitive Engagement

Several variables were utilized to evaluate students' cognitive engagement during the storytelling sessions.

Predictions and Inferences
12 responses

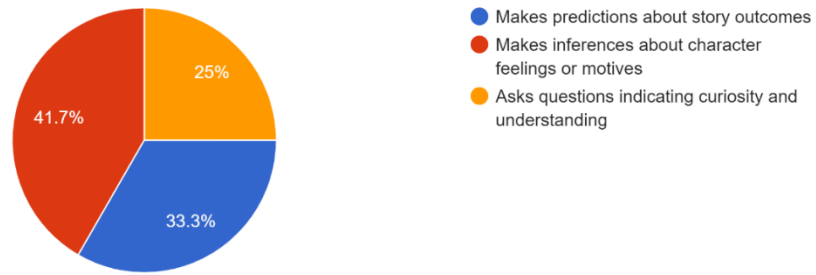


Figure 9.i.1 Predictions and Inferences

Story Recall
12 responses

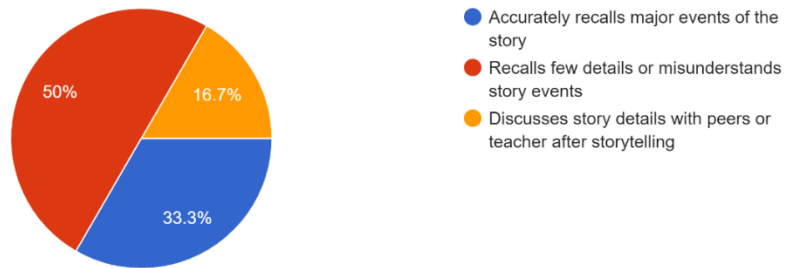


Figure 10. i.2 Story Recall

Actively predicts story outcomes: Students actively predicted the stories' outcomes in 4 of the 12 sessions (33.3%). This demonstrates their involvement and critical thinking as they attempt to predict the story's course.

Concludes the motivations or feelings of characters: In 5 of 12 sessions (41.7%), students were seen to have concluded the motivations or feelings of the characters. This demonstrates their in-depth comprehension and examination of the plot and characters of the novel.

Asks questions demonstrating knowledge and curiosity: Of the 12 sessions, 3 (or 25%) had questions from the student's demonstrating comprehension and curiosity about the story. This demonstrates their interest and active participation in the storytelling process.

Accurately recalls the story's major events: Students showed that they understood and remembered the narrative by correctly recalling the story's major

events in 4 out of 12 sessions (33.3%).

Remembers little information or misinterprets narrative events: In 6 of the 12 sessions (50%), students remembered small details or needed clarification on the story's events. This points out places requiring more assistance or explanation to improve understanding.

Discusses tale details with peers or teacher following storytelling: Following the storytelling session, students discussed the narrative details with peers or the teacher in 4 out of 12 sessions (33.3%). This demonstrates their interest and involvement in the story, even outside of the storytelling session.

These results show that students' mental participation throughout the storytelling sessions was diverse but typically favourable. Most pupils actively engaged in predictions, inferences, and questioning, which are important cognitive engagement and understanding markers. Nonetheless, the existence of certain misconceptions or a deficiency in recollecting specific details indicates the necessity for continuous methods to assist every pupil in completely grasping and remembering the narrative's substance.

j. Discussion of the Observational Data

According to the observational data, students were typically attentive and involved during the storytelling sessions. Important conclusions consist of:

- i. High Attentiveness:** Students demonstrated significant involvement with storytelling by paying close attention in 50% of the sessions.
- ii. Effective Emotional Response:** Students regularly displayed excitement and smiles throughout the stories, and in 50% of the sessions, visible excitement and enjoyment were recorded.
- iii. Participation and Interaction:** Students frequently interacted with classmates during discussions in class and frequently responded to queries verbally, demonstrating their active participation and social interaction.
- iv. Language Use:** Students demonstrated proactive language usage and learning by using basic sentences and often repeating words or phrases from the storyteller.
- v. Cognitive Engagement:** Prediction deductions and tale detail recall were

noted in many sessions, indicating cognitive engagement and comprehension.

- vi. Challenges:** Occasionally, there were periods of boredom and distractions, indicating areas that needed to be improved to sustain constant involvement during the sessions.

To sum up, the structured observation checklists offered thorough insights into the actions and degrees of participation of the students during the narrative intervention. The data shows that using stories to engage kids was a successful way to evoke good emotional responses, encourage active involvement, and promote language use. These results corroborate the qualitative information gathered from the pre- and post-interviews, highlighting the effectiveness of storytelling as a teaching strategy for improving young students' listening comprehension and general involvement.

3. Teacher Journal

This tool is a notebook the teacher holds to take each session's notes, thoughts, and major events. It includes notes about students' participation, interactions, body language, responses to specific parts of the stories, and general information about the session. In addition to assisting in identifying patterns and trends in student behaviour and engagement, this qualitative data source offered deep, contextual insights into the dynamics of the storytelling sessions.

Teacher journal's answers review:

a. Engagement Levels:

With the story "The Lion and the Mouse" in class on April 17, 2024, all 23 kids actively participated by nodding, maintaining eye contact, and having debates. Throughout the student's participation in the storytelling intervention, their interest rate was obvious in it. There were particular instances of strong student engagement when they discussed how the small mouse might assist the large lion in response to the story's message. This shows that the story affects students' feelings and builds special bonds.

b. Interactions:

The teacher frequently noticed the discussion between the students, showing the sessions' collaborative side, like what happened in one of the sessions when the

students gave their opinions and argued about the story events and the characters' behaviours. The students asked each other about the event and shared their viewpoints, improving their social learning and understanding. These arguments continued outside the classroom, showing that the stories greatly influenced the students.

c. Body Language:

Students' body language showed indicators of eagerness and attentiveness. In the April 30, 2024 class with "The Golden and the Silver Axe," students leaned in, made eye contact, and showed signs of curiosity and enthusiasm on their faces. When the fairy mother of the river appeared, the students started to show signs of excitement, and even some of them started to imitate her movement; these nonverbal signs proved that the story affected the student's attention.

d. Reflections:

Positive affective reactions were regularly recorded in the instructor's notebook. When the fish and bird tried to understand each other's worlds during the storytelling portion of "The Fish and the Bird," students laughed and showed excitement during the lesson on May 14, 2024. The teacher reflected on these instances of emotional connection and laughing as markers of the session's success since they demonstrated that the students were paying attention to the story and emotionally involved with it. This shows how ironic and humorous characters are important to keep students' attention.

e. Challenges and Adjustments:

The note shows some problems with the student's attention level, and it points out the areas which need to be focused on. For instance, in the session "The Sun and The Wind", the students were very easily distracted, and they showed boredom signs; this shows that either they did not like the way the story was told or they were not interested in the story characters. The teacher noted these difficulties and considered the importance of more attractive storytelling methods or stories that would be better for the student's interests, including those with more interactive components or likeable characters.

f. Next Steps and Exploration:

According to her notes, the teacher tends to use a wide range of characters and situations to improve the students' interests. For example, the "The Ant and the Dove" session on July 5, 2024, was to investigate the students' perceptions of typical human versus animal characters. The teacher was able to grasp the students' preferences better and modify future story selections as a result of this very enlightening session. Motivated by the success of storytelling sessions like "Snail and Ladybug" (May 3, 2024), where the natural surroundings heightened students' participation, the instructor also contemplated adding more outdoor storytelling sessions.

By following and evaluating the session's notes, the teacher increased the intervention's general effectiveness by keeping track of and evaluating these observations, which allowed her to prepare for the upcoming session according to the student's interests and participation levels. Strong evidence suggests that exposing first graders to storytelling regularly improves their spoken language proficiency, involvement, and attitudes toward language learning. These findings come from a variety of data collection tools. This proves how important it is to use storytelling in the classroom to help young students develop their language skills and build a love of learning.

4. Summary of the Observation Checklist and Teacher's Diary Data

A thorough examination of the observational data from the storytelling sessions and the teacher's diary provided some important insights regarding the behaviour and engagement of the students. Students can keep their attention through storytelling, as evidenced by their high attentiveness and active involvement levels. Students showed strong emotional responses to the stories according to their regular positive reactions, like laughing and joy. Because students frequently discussed the stories and exchanged interpretations with one another, the results further demonstrated the value of peer relationships and social learning. In addition to improving their comprehension, this cooperative setting promoted community bonding inside the classroom.

Some difficulties were noted, such as sporadic diversions and boring moments. Despite the achievements discussed above, these incidents showed their

significance, improving storytelling methods and choosing stories that speak to students' experiences and areas of interest. The teacher made wise changes by addressing these issues, adding more diverse characters and settings and looking into outdoor storytelling sessions.

To conclude, the data from the observational checklists and the teacher's notebook clearly indicate that storytelling is an effective teaching tool for encouraging social interaction and improving language level and student engagement. To improve the storytelling intervention upon adopting the second language, several controlled observations are required. This created an interesting learning environment by ensuring that the stories remained effective and relevant and kept student engagement high.

5. Discussion of the Overall Findings

The findings address the following research questions gathered from listening assessments, pre-post interviews, observational checklists, and teacher journals taken together:

- a) Based on pre- and post-intervention standardized tests, how does regular exposure to storytelling affect first graders' listening comprehension and vocabulary, as measured by standardized assessments before and after the intervention?

Regular storytelling sessions had a good influence, as seen by the significant improvement in listening comprehension scores shown by the pre- and post-intervention tests. The average score from the pre-test, 71.43%, rose sharply to 100% in the post-test, demonstrating how well the storytelling method improves listening comprehension. The quantitative results were further supported by the pre- and post-interviews, which showed that students believed storytelling improved their memory of the stories and helped them pick up a new language. Frequent exposure to story vocabulary within captivating stories reinforces their comprehension and understanding of how these terms are used.

- b) Based on self-reported interest and behavioural observations, how can storytelling sessions improve first graders' engagement and positive attitudes toward language learning?

The observational checklists and instructor journal entries qualitatively demonstrated more engagement and optimistic attitudes around language acquisition. Students regularly demonstrated high levels of participation and attention, carefully listening to questions and participating in class discussions. Students found the storytelling sessions entertaining and engaging, as evidenced by the numerous displays of positive emotional reactions, including enthusiasm and delight. All students said that they enjoyed the storytelling process and wanted to hear more stories after the intervention, which was another indication of a change in their attitudes from the pre- to post-interviews. These results imply that storytelling activities greatly increased student participation and promoted a good attitude toward language acquisition.



V. CONCLUSION

A. Summary of Findings

This study aimed to investigate how much effect can be made from exposing storytelling sessions on the student's skills in language and their participation in literacy activities. By employing a multi-method approach, this study investigated the effect of storytelling on language development and literacy engagement between the international school first-grade students in Istanbul, Turkey. The methodology of this research merged quantitative and qualitative data collection methods, such as tests for listening comprehension, interviews before and after applying the changes, Observable checklists, and teachers' journals.

This study's results prove the positive effects on the young learner's form of storytelling. From a quantitative perspective, the listening Comprehension tests discovered a great development in the ability of students to understand and analyze the English language when listening. The average test results increased significantly after employing the storytelling sessions, showing the efficiency of this method in improving their comprehension skills. This enhancement correlates with Krashen's theory of input, which states that language acquisition happens when learners highly understand their level of competence.

From a qualitative perspective, the data gathered from the interviews, checklists, and journals offered deep insights into the student's participation and thoughts towards learning the language. The interviews showed the students' interest in storytelling was high during the entire study period. At first, 92% of the students stated that they enjoyed listening to stories, and this percentage increased to 100% after employing the changes, which indicates that storytelling sessions elevated their enthusiasm. Furthermore, the students stated their increased interest in repeating the stories, which indicates enhanced participation and enjoyment.

The checklists and journals cited the behaviour and interaction of the students during the storytelling sessions; some high levels of interest, participation, and

enjoyment were noticed; the students were listening, answering questions and participating in debates. These emotional responses indicate that storytelling did not just get their attention; it filled the learning process with enjoyment. On top of that, social interaction was encouraged by the sessions, in which the students discussed the stories with their colleagues, exchanged explanations and worked together in the retelling.

The study showed that storytelling has an impact on gaining vocabulary. The students often used new words and phrases during the sessions in later debates, demonstrating the enhancement of understanding and using the newly learned words. The academic framework of the intellectual and educational theories supports these results, confirming the importance of storytelling part in constructing and understanding the human experience, which can help young learners understand more complicated thoughts.

B. Implications for Educational Practice

The improvements in listening understanding and participation levels indicate that storytelling is a useful and effective educational tool that can be merged into the curriculum to improve language learning and literacy engagement. The study results show a huge impact on education in the early stages of childhood, especially in English learning as a foreign language (EFL).

Dynamic storytelling techniques -props, visual aids, and sound effects- can enhance students' participation and help them understand and remember the stories better. The teachers can combine storytelling sessions in the classroom routines, which provides consistent exposure to the students. Different stories that have cultural connections and reflect the students' backgrounds can lead to improving the cultural understanding and confirm that these stories connect with their experiences and interests

Furthermore, storytelling can be merged strategically in different subjects to create Cross-disciplinary methods for learning. Merging storytelling with science, history, and mathematics, for example, can lead to a better understanding of the concepts, making them more relatable, and enhancing and improving the student's understanding of the subject. This approach corresponds with Vygotsky's

sociocultural theory, which validates the importance of social interaction and cultural tools in knowledge evolution.

Students' encouragement of participation and debates before and after the sessions -and even during them- can help them analyze the story's content, enhance thinking and imp, and improve language skills. In addition to that, the benefits of storytelling intervention can be guaranteed to all students by identifying the individual challenges and processing them. For example, the constant exposure to complicated words in different contexts and merging the interactive factors can help reduce these challenges.

C. Limitations and Future Research

It should be noted that despite the great evaluations, some restrictions must be considered. Including 25 students from one international school, the study can be limited from generalization of the results. The six-week period might not reflect the effects of storytelling on language development and literacy engagement. Furthermore, this design will limit the enhancement attribution to storytelling.

More studies can search for some storytelling components, such as types or narrative techniques for stories. As a recommendation, future research can fix these restrictions through linear studies using larger sample sizes and even more diverse ones. Integrating the observation groups and investigating the long-term effects of storytelling on enhancing the language can help with these restrictions. Furthermore, studying storytelling's effects on skills such as writing and reading can offer a wide understanding of its advantages. Future research can examine the full cooperation between storytelling tools and multi-media resources to improve the storytelling experience. Some intellectual and interactive experiences that serve different learning types and preferences can be provided from digital storytelling, enlarging the benefits that were noticed in the traditional sessions. Studying how these digital tools affect language improvement and participation can offer teachers -who are looking for emerging technology in their educational practices- some valuable insights.

D. Conclusion

In conclusion, storytelling can significantly improve young learners' language and literacy engagement by improving listening, understanding and participation. This study validates storytelling's high potential as an effective multi-use educational tool, especially in early childhood education. These results call for the strategical merging of storytelling in educational curriculums, showing its value in creating a more dynamic and educational environment for the kids.

Storytelling is a powerful tool that can empower intellectual language skills and grow the learning and exploration of love. This study's evidence indicates that storytelling can close the gap between learning a language and cultural understanding, which can offer educational learning experiences with purposes. The teachers can create a supportive and educational environment that enhances the full development of young learners and prepares them for academic and social success through storytelling tradition.

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ELECTRONIC SOURCES:

URL-1 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jecp.2008.05.008>

URL-2 <https://doi.org/10.17507/jltr.0801.10>

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Pre-Post Interview Questions

1. Pre-interview (Questionnaire):

- What is your name?
- How old are you?
- Do you like listening to stories?
 - Yes
 - No
- If the answer is No, why?
- How often do you listen to stories?
 - Every day
 - A few times a week
 - Sometimes
 - Never
- What kind of stories do you like to listen to? (You can choose more than one)
 - Fairy tales
 - Animal stories
 - Adventure
 - Other
- Do you like it when someone tells you a story?
 - Yes
 - No
- If the answer is No please specify
- When someone tells you a story, how do you feel?
 - Happy
 - Okay
 - Bored
 - Sad

- Do you like learning English with stories?
- Yes
- No
- I don't know
- Do you think stories help you learn English?
- Yes
- No
- I don't know
- What do you like about listening to stories in English?
- Is there anything hard about listening to stories in English?
- Do you talk about the stories after listening?
- Yes
- No
- Sometimes

2. Post-interview (Questionnaire):

- What is your name?
- Did you have fun telling the story back?
- Yes
- No
- If the answer is No, why?
- What story did you like telling the best?
- Why did you like telling that story?
- Did telling the story help you remember it better?
- Yes
- No
- What was your favorite part to tell in the story?
- When you told the story, did you feel like you were the storyteller?
- Yes
- No
- Would you like to tell more stories like this one?
- Yes
- No

- If the answer is No, tell me which one you like to tell
- After telling the story, do you want to hear more new stories?
 - Yes, I want to hear more!
 - No, it's the same.
- Did you learn new words from the story?
 - Yes
 - No
- Can you tell me one new word you learned?
- Did you like talking about the story with your friends?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Sometimes
- How did you feel when you were telling the story?
 - Happy
 - Okay
 - Nervous
 - Excited
- Would you like to listen to more stories in English?
 - Yes
 - No
- What did you like most about the storytelling sessions?
- Is there anything you didn't like about the storytelling sessions?

Appendix B: Pre-Post Listening Test

ELPAC Practice Test for Grade 1: The English Language Proficiency Assessments for California (ELPAC) includes listening comprehension tasks.

Test Components:

1. Short Exchanges:

Listen to a brief conversation and answer comprehension questions.

2. Stories with Dialogue:

Listen to a story with dialogue and respond to questions about the story.

3. Oral Presentations:

Listen to an academic presentation and answer comprehension questions.

Test

Link:

https://www.lausd.org/cms/lib/CA01000043/Centricity/domain/22/elpac/ELPAC_Grade_1_Practice_Test_2018.pdf

Appendix C: Observational Checklist Template

Observational Checklist Template link:

<https://forms.gle/2qavaUZm2rcW5Bgx9>

Appendix D: Sample Teacher Journal Entry

Teacher Journal link:

<https://forms.gle/SXG1ffceYJnUEeDBA>

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