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AI Acknowledgement

I acknowledge the use of Copilot (<https://copilot.microsoft.com/>) on 01 February 2026 to create images for my digital storytelling video using the prompt(s):

1. make a brown mouse cartoon with transparent background
2. cartoon sly looking fox with transparent background
3. make the fox running away
4. turn the fox around so you can only see the back of it. transparent background
5. make me a light brown owl sitting, transparent background
6. make the owl flying away scared - transparent background
7. make a snake, looking sly, transparent background
8. make a brown beast, with tusks, claws, terrible teeth, knobbly knees and turned-out toes, poisonous green wart at the end of his nose. orange eyes, black tongue and purple pricks all over its back. transparent background
9. make it look evil
10. make it look curious
11. make its expression evil. keep the original art style
12. make expression curious, transparent background
13. make it looking scared. transparent background

I acknowledge the use of ChatGPT (<https://chatgpt.com/>) on 01 February 2026 to create images for my digital storytelling video using the prompt(s):

1. make me a forest animation image, simple illustration for children. add a stream in the background. no characters. more like a storybook
2. get rid of the stream
3. can you add a small stream of water along the side
4. make this mouse look shocked, transparent background. keep the original art style

I acknowledge the use of Copilot (<https://copilot.microsoft.com/>) on 02 February 2026 to create images for my digital storytelling video using the prompt(s):

1. make this snake slither away. keep the original art style. TRANSPARENT background
2. make the mouse look happy while holding the nut
3. make the creature running away scared. transparent background

I acknowledge the use of ChatGPT (<https://chatgpt.com/>) on 02 February 2026 to create images for my digital storytelling video using the prompt(s):

1. make this mouse look sneaky

I acknowledge the use of Copilot (<https://copilot.microsoft.com/>) on 02 March 2026 to find sources using the prompt(s):

1. find me an academic sources which state Chomsky disagrees with the environment aiding a child's literacy and language
2. give me academic sources, such as journal articles

I confirm that I have not presented any AI generated text as my own work. I confirm I have copies of my drafts, notes, and other resources I used before, and after the use of AI tools which I may be asked to provide in evidence.

Links to Storytelling Videos

[Dear Zoo: Traditional Video](#)

[The Gruffalo: Digital Video](#)

Paper on the benefits of storytelling for language and literacy

According to Lucarevschi (2016), storytelling is one of the oldest forms of human communication, used for the promotion of educational values. Clark (2018) adds to this, saying that the more exposure children have to language in their first three to four years, the better they do when they enter school (Clark, 2018). However, Lucarevschi (2016) states that storytelling is considered to be a very effective tool in the development of language skills, in first and second language, regardless of the age and background of children. Therefore, this paper will be discussing the benefits of storytelling in the context of language and literacy. The paper will look into how traditional storytelling can develop the oracy of children, as well as how digital storytelling can promote oracy development. It will look into theorists such as Piaget, Chumsky, Clarke, Cambourne and Vygotsky. The paper will focus on how repetition, the role of the storyteller and the use of props can aid the development of language and literacy. The curriculum for funded non-maintained nursery settings will also be looked into.

Tosca (2023) uses the term 'repetition' to refer to the act of repeating phrases or words over again. This definition is similar to that found in Nencheva *et al.* (2024), who writes that repetition can be defined as the reiteration of sounds, syllables, words and phrases. However, Dickinson and Morse (2019) refer to repetition as children hearing the same words multiple times, often by hearing books being reread. In fact, Dickinson and Morse (2019) believe that as children hear books being reread, they learn how words can be used in sentences, as well as learn information about the words' meaning from the context of the story and pictures from the book. This can be observed in the digital storytelling video. By the practitioner reading the Gruffalo and repeating phrases such as 'the mouse looked good', the children are connecting the meaning of the word to the image in the book. Thus, supporting the child's oracy skills. This is supported by Prosic-Santovac (2015), who states that repetitive language provides ample opportunities for children to reuse language for developing classroom activities. Crystal (2001, cited in Prosic-Santovac, 2015), suggests that repetitive language through storytelling can function as linguistic drills, without the feeling of boredom. Additionally, Dickinson and Morse (2019), claims that repetition gives children the chance to absorb the language of the

book. This point can be expanded on by Jean Piaget, who created the theory of cognitive development.

This theory refers to all aspects of thought and behaviour in the development of children, from birth to adolescence, which includes language, problem solving and logical thinking (Barrouillet, 2018). Within the theory of cognitive development lies the 'Pre-Operational' stage, which refers to children aged two to seven years old, having not yet learnt the ability to perform 'mental operations', and that children's thinking is led by what is seen rather than by logical principles (Pakpahan and Saragih, 2022). During the Pre-Operational stage, Piaget states that 'Assimilation' takes place. This can refer to the process by which children incorporate elements of the environment within their cognitive structures to achieve understanding (Barrouillet, 2018). Therefore, this can relate to repetition, and that storybooks which involve repetition, are a part of a child's learning environment and can contribute to a child's cognitive structure and to the understanding of language. As stated previously, this can relate to Crystal's idea of repetition as repetition in storytelling can be used as linguistic drills (Crystal, 2001, cited in Prosic-Santovac, 2015). Assimilation can be seen in practice by the practitioner in the traditional storytelling video. The practitioner read the repeated phrase 'so they sent me a...'. By repeating this phrase, the children's are understanding the language of what it means to be sent something, and therefore, the learning environment is contributing the child's cognitive structure (Barrouillet, 2018; Pakpahan and Saragih, 2022). However, theorist Noam Chomsky would argue against the idea that language can be learnt through the environment. Chomsky proposed the idea of the 'language acquisition device', which means that all humans are born with the knowledge of what makes a human language (Chomsky, 1959; Salkind, 2005). Included in this knowledge is the idea that children are born with 'universal grammar', and within the process of language development, a child discovers which grammatical rules are contained within universal grammar and can apply it to the language that they are learning (Salkind, 2005). Therefore, Chomsky would argue that language is genetically determined, rather than Piaget's idea of learning through the environment.

Lucarevschi (2016), Dyson and Genshi (1994) and Hsu (2010, cited in, Lucarevschi, 2016) use the term storyteller to refer to the narrator of the story, who uses dramatic

imagery, vocalisation, facial expressions and gestures to connect the story to the listeners. Lucarevschi (2016) adds to this, stating that storytelling can be more effective in teaching oracy to children, compared to traditional language teaching methods, such as textbooks. Therefore, the role of the storyteller can influence the development of children's oracy skills. This is because of the fun engaging manner of the role of the storyteller (Lucarevschi, 2016). This is built upon by Wajinryb (2003, cited in Lucarevschi, 2016), who believes that storytelling can help children learn and retain vocabulary, grammatical structures and pronunciation of words. This can be observed in the digital storytelling video. The practitioner changed the tone of her voice to be scared of the features of the Gruffalo, such as the purple prickles all over his back. Additionally, the reader ran across the room to point to the features. Therefore, the enthusiasm of the practitioner helped develop the oracy skills of the children.

Theorist Eve Clark expands on this and states that children learn language from the adults around them (Clark 2020; Clark; 2018; Clark 2004). This is built upon by Clark (2004), who says that social interaction is essential to the process of language acquisition. Therefore, children rely at first on gestures and hearing language to develop their vocabulary (Clark and Kelly, 2022, cited in Clark, 2023). Clark (2018) states that the storyteller can aid a child's vocabulary by introducing new words for objects, actions and relations. This can be seen in the digital storytelling video. By the practitioner reading the Gruffalo, the children were introduced to different words for 'dinner'. For example, the mouse told the snake that he was going to have a 'feast' with a gruffalo. Other words used were 'tea' and 'lunch'. The new labels for dinner provided the children with supplementary information about the referents of new words, which helped children learn new words and expand their language skills (Clark, 2018). Additionally, within the digital storytelling video, the practitioner stated that they were 'clicking' onto the next page. This is introducing new vocabulary relating to digital literacy. Therefore, this can be interpreted that the role of the storyteller introducing new vocabulary to a child, can aid the child's language acquisition, thus developing the child's oracy and digital skills.

This can relate to Lev Vygotsky's theory of play and its role in mental development. Vygotsky (2016) states that play is one of the most important parts of development in

the early years and is a purposeful activity for children. Additionally, Vygotsky (2016) states that play is the source of development and creates the zone of proximal development. This relates the role of the storyteller as a practitioner needs to have fun and bring enthusiasm to storytelling in order to develop a child's language development. This fun in play can be observed in the digital storytelling video. By the practitioner creating the images of the Gruffalo story and placing them on 3 screens around the room, the children are immersed in the story and feel like they are a part of the book. Additionally, the practitioner is having fun telling the story by using different voices and using puppets, which in return is making the child have fun. Therefore, this type of play is developing the child's language and literacy skills as play is a purposeful activity for the development of cognition (Vygotsky, 2016).

As stated previously by Vygotsky (2016), play is a valuable part of development in the early years of childhood. This is supported by Yonzon *et al.* (2023), who state that play has a central role in the everyday education in the early years. One way that practitioners can develop oracy through storytelling is the use of props, such as puppets or teddies. Tierney (1995, cited in Råde, 2021) states that puppets can have many benefits during teaching. One of these benefits are that puppets can facilitate communication between adults and children, which can make teaching more enjoyable for both, as the puppets can bring humour and fun to the serious task of teaching language and literacy (Tierney, 1995, cited in, Råde, 2021). Yonzon *et al.* (2023) states that by using props, practitioners invite children to enter and experience imaginary situations through play. This can be seen in the traditional storytelling video. By the practitioner using teddies of the animals in Dear Zoo, they are inviting the children into the experience, gaining their attention. By gaining their attention, the practitioner can develop the vocabulary of the children, thus improving the development of the children's oracy skills. The idea of the props being used through play and storytelling is developed further by Vygotsky. Vygotsky (1997, cited in Yonzon *et al.*, 2023) argues that tools, such as props, play a supporting role in developing a child's mental functioning. The environment plays a significant factor to contributing to developing a child's imagination and cognitive development (Vygotsky, 1966). Therefore, the more a child experiences, the more productive a child's mind will be (Yonzon *et al.*, 2023).

The idea of the environment stimulating a child's learning links to theorist Brian Cambourne. Brian Cambourne is an Australian educator, who developed a theory of learning which applies to literacy learning (Rushton, Eitelgeorge and Ziackafoose, 2003). Cambourne (n.d.) states that there are 8 conditions of learning and suggests that children acquire early facility with oral and written language most easily when certain conditions are present in their environments. One of these conditions is 'immersion'. Cambourne (n.d.) suggests that children need to be surrounded by interesting, high quality books. With these books, Cambourne (n.d.) suggests that children need to be read to, and practitioners need generate lively engagement in language and literacy. Crouch and Cambourne (2017) add to this, stating that when learning a language, children need to be surrounded by meaningful examples of language, not only sounds and rhythms, but by the environment surrounding them. This can be observed in the traditional storytelling video. By the practitioner using props within the child's learning environment, the practitioner is reinforcing oracy knowledge that is being learnt over time. Additionally, by the practitioner using props within both the traditional and digital storytelling video, they are generating a lively engaging environment for the child's learning, thus developing the child's language and literacy skills over time.

The idea of the environment being a part of a child's learning is mentioned in the curriculum for funded non-maintained nursery settings. The curriculum mentions that a practitioners role is to create a holistic and meaningful learning environment, which provides an engaging, exciting experience, in order to aid a child's learning (Welsh Government, 2024). This exciting, engaging environment is shown by the practitioner in the digital storytelling video. By the practitioner using an immersion room with screens across 3 walls, sounds being used in the background and using puppets of the characters from the book, they have created an exciting experience for the children to develop their language and literacy skills. This also links to the curriculums idea of the environment giving children accesses to digital media to enhance learning and development. By the practitioner storytelling using props and digital media in the immersion room, they are developing the child's digital literacy skills.

In conclusion, the role of the storyteller, props and repetition are beneficial for the development of language and literacy skills. Many sources were used in the paper, and some were more beneficial than others. Vygotsky's journal on 'Play and its role in the mental development of the child' was very useful, particularly in the role of the practitioner and props. There was a lot of information on the environment as a whole being useful to play and therefore, storytelling. Additionally, Chomsky's 'Review of Verbal Behaviour' was useful in providing reasons why repetition may not be useful for learning language. AI websites, Copilot and ChatGPT, were used in the assignment to create images for the digital storytelling video. This was particularly useful as the practitioner was able to create their own version of the Gruffalo to be able to put up on multiple screens, which was not possible with the original book.

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