

Language and Literacy in the Digital Age

According to Lucarevschi (2016), storytelling constitutes one of the oldest ways that people communicate, and much has been written about its effectiveness as a pedagogical method for the acquisition of language abilities in both a native and a foreign or second language, regardless of the learners' background or age. Moreover, Jones Bartoli (2018) claims that stories help children learn the language and play creatively. Furthermore, literacy is a complex set of skills, some of which can be seen in babies and develop during preschool. Understanding how to take turns, how to communicate both verbally and nonverbally, how to use language, how to make marks, how to sing and rhyme, and how to read symbols are all vital for functional literacy (Jones Bartoli, 2018). Moreover, Hissan and Syakira (2012) claim that children's tales are an unchanging tool for exploring children's thinking and imagination, although technology has provided children with creative opportunities to learn how to see the world. Therefore, according to Welsh Government (2022), literacy and digital competence are cross-curricular abilities required in the Wales Curriculum. Through these curricular areas, children can critically analyse situations and perceive the world on a moral level.

Repetition

The story "The Go-Away Bird" by Julia Donaldson was chosen to be recorded both traditionally and, on the device, considering the study conducted by Horst *et al.* (2011a). According to Horst *et al.* (2011a), children learned more new words through shared storybook reading when they were read the same tales again than when they were read separate stories with the same amount of target words. However, an explanation is that individuals enjoy listening to the same stories repeatedly, which raises the possibility that children in the group who heard the same stories again were better able to keep their focus on those stories, according to Leavitt and Christenfeld (2011). Kosanovic (2019) also notes that familiarity is another significant reason children enjoy having the same books read to them repeatedly.

By contrast, according to Horst (2013), children struggle to learn from books that contain stories and characters with whom they are unfamiliar. Given this, children who are

particularly unfamiliar with a storyline or characters may need to continue paying attention to these aspects of the story to process them. This will cause them to divert attention from focusing on other parts of the story, such as new words, according to Horst (2013).

According to Schulz (2016), repeated book reading is promising for all families, regardless of their financial situation. Whether they have an extensive library or just a few books in their house makes no difference. However, reading the same book to children several times is essential. Moreover, helping children anticipate and discuss what will occur next in the story enables them to engage in the story by repeating words uttered or pronouncing them before they are read aloud.

Contextual repetition is also beneficial for children's language acquisition, according to Horst (2013). Furthermore, Ferreira Pinto and Soares (2012) claim that children's engagement is encouraged by repeating essential words and phrases from a story, enhancing their pronunciation, and listening abilities. Moreover, through contextual repetition, children become conscious of the language's rhythm, articulation, and intonation, according to Ferreira Pinto and Soares (2012). Moreover, Blaiser *et al.* (2015) found that the repetition of words is beneficial for pre-schoolers and younger students in different situational contexts. The benefit may be demonstrated by repeating phrases, even without explaining them, according to Newman *et al.* (2016).

Furthermore, according to Skinner (1957), language is another human behaviour and pattern learned through habit formation. According to his idea, toddlers imitate the sounds and patterns they perceive through imitation and repetition. Skinner argued that language is a collection of verbal expressions taught by operant conditioning and that learning may happen through rewarding, imitation, and shaping.

At the same time, Department of Education (2020) claims that children build early literacy abilities through hearing and employing repetition and rhyme. Also, repeating words, ideas, and activities is vital for early brain development because it builds a strong foundation for early learning. Moreover, according to Sari *et al.* (2017), the presence of repetitions suggests the participation of the author's emotions. This aspect is easily identified in the repeated expression "Go away!" from the recorded story, which illustrates the amalgam of emotions that the main character, "The Go-Away Bird," goes through. The bird communicates pride, indifference, anger, fear, and excitement by repeating the expression. Therefore, reading

allows children to exercise their emotions and imaginations, enabling them to investigate their ideas and better comprehend the world in which they live, according to Sari *et al.* (2017).

Rhythm and rhyme

According to Stephens (2018), every culture incorporates singing, rhyming, and storytelling into its traditions. By singing and rhyming with children, parents, and caregivers keep traditions alive and help children pronounce words, practise the pitch, volume, and rhythm of their native language, and build the essential listening and attention skills for brain development and memory.

Notably, in the newly revised Te Whariki: Early Childhood Curriculum, language is a crucial component of communication and one of the essential cultural tasks for children to acquire proficiency. In addition to words, phrases, and tales, language embraces visuals, art, dance, theatre, mathematics, movement, rhythm, and music, according to White (2020).

Moreover, according to Read (2014), the use of rhyme is a characteristic that is often seen in children's literature. Furthermore, Dunst, Meter, and Hamby (2011) claim that knowledge of and familiarity with nursery rhymes are favourably related to phonological and preliteracy assessments, including alphabet knowledge and letter-sound recognition. Also, the content of the book "The Go-Away Bird" by Julia Donaldson is built on rhyme. The stories with rhymes may also incorporate patterns and sequences to teach children basic math abilities as they repeat them, according to Dunst, Meter, and Hamby (2011). Children can learn several verses, including numbers, counting, and other arithmetic terms, such as "one, two, three, / All the way back to the tree," from the recorded story "The Go-Away Bird." Due to technological advancements, children are exposed to more music than in the past, including pop melodies, theme songs, and commercial melodies. However, children can absorb and remember a vast repertoire of melodies and rhythms, allowing considerable capacity and opportunity for traditional nursery rhymes, according to Mordsley (2017).

Kuppen (2018) claims that spoken and sung rhymes provide a chance for intimacy and enjoyment and transmit spoken language in a manner that children can easily interact with. Moreover, repetition, language, noises, and rhythm help children anticipate what will happen next. This may help children remember the rhyme's words and emphasise distinct sounds, paving the path for them to learn to read, according to Kuppen (2018). Correspondingly, Pacey (2019) asserts that rhymes are beneficial for expanding vocabulary. They often contain a

melodic, rhythmic structure and simple, repetitive phrases that infants and young children may quickly learn and repeat. According to Pacey (2019), for children to acquire phonological awareness, they should be often exposed to spoken language, and nursery rhymes are an effective way to do so.

Additionally, according to Hahn *et al.* (2018), infants may recognise recurring rhymes and sounds in their natural language environment. Chomsky (1965) stated, in other words, that all children are born with the capacity to acquire language and recognise sounds with their natural language acquisition device (LAD). This allows language structure to be determined according to accepted linguistic norms, including constructing new sentences and phrases by applying grammatical knowledge. Chomsky eventually called this the "Universal Grammar" (UG) theory, and he used this innate capacity to explain how new-born learn phonological grammar despite being exposed to specific constrained "degenerate" language models in their environment (e.g., motherese).

Opponents of Chomsky's innate theory (Vygotsky, 1962; Bruner, 1983) have argued that the environment, particularly social relationships, plays a more significant role in language learning than Chomsky suggests. Considering this, Krijnen *et al.* (2020) assert that parents and other caregivers who participate in daily rhyming and singing activities with infants and expose children to music and language at home assist in developing their vocabulary. Moreover, many nursery rhymes are closely related to children's everyday experiences, and Pacey (2019) claims that children enjoy sharing these experiences with their caregivers or practitioners.

Given this, Bruner (1983) argued that the reciprocal relation between the adult and child engaged in conversation was essential for helping children develop their language and construct meaning from the connection. He refers to this method as the "language acquisition support system" (LASS) because it understands that successful interaction is predicated on the scaffolding that adults in contact with children are best able to provide and that it is the method and level of conversation that allow children to progress in gaining language knowledge. Similarly, Vygotsky (1978) emphasised the relationship between dialogue (inner speaking to oneself and relational communication) and conceptual understanding, claiming that language and cognition are inextricably connected.

Onomatopoeia

According to Laing (2014), the most frequently used words by toddlers and pre-schoolers are onomatopoeic. Moreover, onomatopoeia may help new-borns exercise, memorise, and retrieve phonological segments, establishing a stable and functional phonological system, according to Laing (2019). Furthermore, according to Ozturk, Krehm, and Vouloumanos (2013), infants may be receptive to sound-meaning correspondences or sound symbolism at four months of age, which might contribute to word acquisition.

Additionally, Perniss and Vigliocco (2014) indicate that onomatopoeia provides the earliest mappings between word and referent by replicating the sound qualities of a particular referent (e.g., meow corresponds to a cat; woof-woof relates to a dog). Moreover, within the restrictions of a growing vocabulary, onomatopoeia provides abundant material for early turn-taking discussions with adult-like sequencing. However, these forms are perfect for turn-taking routines because they are repetitive (caregivers can ask for unlimited onomatopoeia). The complexity of the routine may change with an infant's phonological ability, and caregivers' use of the non-onomatopoeic form may aid new-borns' transition to further learning, according to Laing (2014).

At the same time, Laing *et al.* (2017) claim that onomatopoeic words in the child-directed speech are more prominent (i.e., vocalised at a higher pitch and with a longer length) than their traditional ones, according to Laing (2017). It has been shown that babies aged 10 and 11 months, using an image mapping exercise, spend more time looking at photos in reaction to onomatopoeic words than they do looking at pictures in response to conventional word forms (e.g., "baa" vs. "sheep"). Similarly, onomatopoeia created by mothers has been observed to have a higher pitch, more considerable pitch variation, and a longer length than other words in spontaneous situations, according to Laing, Vihman, and Keren-Portnoy (2017).

According to El -Hamid, Asmaa, and Sofia (2016), Pavlov's experiment shows that there is a connection between stimulus and reaction. Babbling, which a new-born does because it sounds like the right words repeated by people or items around them, is one-way children learn their original language. So they get something for all their mutterings and babbles. Because of this reinforcement, comparable articulations into syllable and word clusters are more likely to occur in future similar situations. This process continues until the infant can blend sounds into sentences by generalisation and analogy, which, in challenging instances,

might predispose him to make mistakes while speaking inside correctly allowed speech structures (Asmaa, and Sofia, 2016).

Furthermore, El -Hamid, Asmaa, and Sofia (2016) suggest that onomatopoeia assists most children in accurately producing letter sounds, acquiring new lexical words, and developing their ability to listen and speak and their cognitive and semantic abilities. Also, their early productive words are often onomatopoeic, and imitating sounds plays a significant part in early word learning. However, in written materials like children's books, onomatopoeic words are used more often than in spoken language, according to Karina (2017). Given this, the readers need to understand the concepts the author is trying to communicate through written words. Based on their extensive word knowledge, the reader is expected to recognize and comprehend the words and phrases used in the narrative and express them in onomatopoeia when possible. Moreover, according to Book Trust (2019), adults are encouraged to read aloud with enthusiasm. According to the charity, it does not matter how a story is read as long as children enjoy it. Onomatopoeia helps children recognise sounds and understand the meaning of words, according to Laing (2019).

For example, in "The Go-Away Bird," using the sound made by the bird's feather promotes more engagement in children. In addition, hearing animal noises engages a distinct portion of the brain and promotes quicker processing, which may help with early word acquisition, according to Mages (2020). Moreover, when an adult recites a story to children, a portion of their brain is activated, allowing the children to synchronise with the narrator and, therefore, to develop a feeling of understanding and empathy (Mages, 2020).

In conclusion, reading aloud and telling stories to infants and children fosters the development of the brain and creativity, as well as linguistic and emotional growth, and it helps to improve their relationships. Additionally, reading aloud to children is a pleasant activity that encourages the development of their imagination and expands their perspective of the world. Moreover, repetition, rhythm, rhyme, and onomatopoeia help children build their vocabulary, understand, and retain the story, empathize with the characters, and enjoy reading independently.

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