

Language and Literacy

According to Maureen *et al* (2022) the act of telling and sharing stories is at the heart of the social and cultural practice of storytelling. One of the most popular ways that knowledge has been passed down from one generation to the next throughout history is through the sharing of stories. A storytelling session in early childhood settings, in which a practitioner narrates a narrative to the children, can pique their curiosity and motivation while also fostering sense-making as the story may relate to the children's experiences and daily lives. To add to this, Maureen *et al* (2022) says that despite the potential for relaxation and enjoyment, storytelling also has the benefit of conveying narrative structures. Setting, topic, characters, storyline, and conflict are some of the components that enable storytelling to serve as a speech model, a learning context, and a means of developing imagination—all of which support the progression of literacy. On the other hand, Ramamurthy *et al* (2024) suggests that storytelling facilitates cognitive processing, reflection, and expression as well as promoting a positive outlook on the world and offering admirable role models in the form of characters. Vaahtoranta *et al* (2019) implies that early language proficiency in children, particularly in vocabulary, is a strong indicator of future academic success so children's language skills, particularly their expressive language, may be enhanced through storytelling. The purpose of this essay is to assess three storytelling facets that are employed in both traditional and digital story time, considering the ways in which they support children, including enhancing their language, writing, and digital literacy skills. To provide depth and detail, a variety of theorists, articles, and journals will be explored.

While carrying out both traditional and digital story, there was a frequent representation of repetition. As stated by Callaghan (No Date) repetition is a literary term used to describe a recurrent feature in a work of literature. This may be a word, phrase, or sound or it could be an image, setting, or concept. Repetition is frequently employed in poetry and classic literature; this is so that a concept can be ingrained in the reader's or listener's memory through repetition. Nonetheless, words that are repeated in children's stories serve to highlight the concepts of routine, discipline, and order. They also help to establish rhythm and help children recall the phrases by reinforcing literacy. In a study carried out by Rahiem *et al* (2020), repetition was found to be one of the best practices when telling a story because it enables the children to gain a better understanding and ensures to support them in remembering specific phrases while fostering their imagination. The stories I decided to use for this piece of work are examples of repetition, 'We Are Going on a Bear Hunt' and 'The Smartest Giant in Town', to illustrate, The Bear Hunt uses the phrase 'we are going on a bear hunt, we are going to catch a big one, what a beautiful day, we're not scared' repetitively throughout the story and The Smartest Giant in Town uses 'but look at me up and down, I am the smartest giant in town' over and over. In result, these stories, along with other children's stories that use repetition will enhance self-esteem and reinforce the neural pathways that support learning in children. According to past research, infants benefit from repetition because it enables them to separate speech into individual words and supports their brain to form associations between words and objects (BBC, 2025). For example, a study carried out by Isik (2016) represents that repetition is one of the most important aspects of language learning, particularly when

it's a second language. Children learn by practicing and repeating what they have acquired in their short-term memory. Due to this, stories are even more crucial because they involve a lot of repetition and offer crucial practice components. The conclusions of this study tell us that children pick up new information quickly and easily when repeated, which makes language acquisition much simpler. Moreover, Lawley Publishing (2024) points out that repetition in stories does not only foster language and oracy development, but recurrent books are important for several strong reasons. They offer beneficial chances for early reading skill development, pattern identification, and memory improvement. Children learn best when they recognise patterns. Children can anticipate what will happen next in the story since repetitive books create a familiar rhythm and pattern. This activity improves comprehension and helps children prepare for reading tasks at the school level, including comprehending character emotions and narrative flow. Word recognition, intonation, and pronunciation are all improved through repetition. Children's reading fluency is improved when they hear and see the same words in context because they learn to link visual symbols to their matching sounds. Ulu and Akyol (2016) maintain that repetitive reading is one technique that aids in the development of reading skills, which are among the first abilities that a child learns in the early years of schooling. Furthermore, repetition within stories too has advantages on a child's spelling and writing skills. A study that took place to investigate the long-term effects of a rhyme-repetition-based intervention program for children revealed that the children that were placed into the intervention groups demonstrated improvements in their reading, accuracy, efficiency, spelling and writing skills compared to those children who were placed in the control group (Eghbaria-Ghanamah, 2022).

Additionally, another key aspect used frequently throughout 'We are Going on a Bear Hunt' and 'The Smartest Giant in Town' is rhythmic literature. Cousins and Minns (2023) point out that stories with rhymes are incorporated into national curricula because they are thought to be beneficial to children's development. Children will thrive if they are often read to, are involved in active stories that contain rhymes and poetry and are given enough opportunities to employ and incorporate new words in a variety of contexts. To build on this, Cousins and Minns (2023) also say that repeated rhymes, whether they make logic or not, support children in their development because they enjoy the sounds of words, they take in the rhythms and sounds they hear and soon start incorporating and modifying them to correspond with their own play. Research has shown that where children hear rhymes within the early years it plays a role in enhancing their language, to illustrate, a study was carried out by Read and Quirke (2018) to test whether children in the conditioned group were able to successfully identify verbs compared to those children that were not in the conditioned group. These results showed that after reading the rhymed story to the conditioned group and the non-rhyming story to the un-conditioned group, children who heard rhymes within stories more frequently demonstrated a stronger knowledge towards recognising words and a higher level of language. Nevertheless, rhyming within children's stories also supports a child's literacy skills. For example, Beaumont (2022) conveys that activities such as story time, songs and poems that involve rhyme are significantly associated with improvements in children's general phonological recognition and alphabetic understanding. Regularly guiding young children through poetry and rhymed picture books helps them become more aware of

language and literacy principles, preparing them for writing and reading. To build on this, Rosati (2024) suggests that important factors have made experts contemplate how children communicate, express themselves, and explore the environment. Nursery rhymes, rhythms, songs, and storytelling are examples of artistic genres that have drawn attention to this because they give children imaginative opportunities to express themselves and support their holistic development. In addition to providing children with an artistic outlet, these types of activities can have a significant formative impact on how adolescents from ages 0 to 6 develop as individuals. These activities can foster cognitive well-being and aid in the development of the child's language, cognitive, emotional, and social skills. Overall, Bower and Barrett (2014) make it clear that rhythm, rhyme, and repetition can be used to help children as they read, write, and use conversational language. Children experience rhyme in their bodies as they develop, and young children who hear them before they start reading on their own are already sensitive to a beating of rhythm, a sense of structure and a fitting of word to pitch. Inevitably they develop a tendency to react to one of the basic components of literature as a result of this process.

Moreover, during the storytelling of 'We Are Going on a Bear Hunt' and 'The Smartest Giant in Town', expressive language was used throughout. NHNSCR (2023) believes that reading stories expressively is what keeps a child intrigued right up until the very end and leaves them wanting more. To give the text life and make it more than just words, expressive reading entails incorporating intonation and emotions. Similarly, BEGIN (2022) believes that to read aloud with emotion is to read with expression. For the reader to comprehend the author's intention, it infuses the written word with emotion. The text seems uninteresting when the reader's tone is expressionless. As a result, the child will find it difficult to maintain interest. When the child does not understand how the characters are feeling, it will be hard for them to focus and follow the narrative. Intergrated Children's Therapy (2019) discusses that reading can be a very engaging activity, although when individuals hear the word "reading," they may picture an adult reading from a book while a child listens. However, if the reader transforms into an actor by employing inflection and even a sing-song voice when reading to a child, it not only keeps the child interested but also educates them on how to articulate their feelings and emotions and how to use language correctly according to the situation. A theorist, Noam Chomsky, brought forward his idea on children's language acquisition where he contended that language acquisition comes naturally to infants. While language development is instinctive, everyone has the ability to acquire and grow in language from birth. He was determined that children had to understand grammar in order to acquire language. Still, Chomsky ignored the function of imitation on its own, particularly when an adult is employing a structure that the child has not yet begun to utilise. Children frequently make grammatical mistakes that they would not have learnt from listening to adults speak. This demonstrates how the child is using LAD (a tool in the brain that helps the child learn linguistic norms quickly) to understand linguistic rules (Tutor2U, 2022). Furthermore, Moore (2018) maintains that expressive story telling does not only benefit the child's language but can also support them in developing their empathy and creativity, comprehending tones in various writing styles, learning to break words down into their sounds for simpler pronunciation, practicing multitasking, and improving their ability to focus.

Gayatri (2023) maintains that education is typically imparted to children through traditional literature, and it has been demonstrated that literary works contribute to children's development by fostering literacy culture, language awareness, and reading proficiency. Traditional children's literature serves as a vehicle for character and identity, fostering in pupils a sense of cultural independence, self-reliance, and inventiveness. However, Traditional children's stories have all but vanished from people's memories additionally because most children now use digital technology daily. Children will probably have encountered numerous digital communication platforms by the time they enter early childhood. A variety of digital skills and knowledge need therefore be developed for today's young children to be literate. Traditional types of literacy have gotten much more attention than the growth of digital literacy. Since digital reading and writing are becoming more and more ingrained in daily life, it is equally relevant and significant to discuss how technology affects young children's development of (digital) literacy (Maureen, Van Der Meij and De Jong, 2018). In this case digital competency, literacy, and numeracy should be cross-curricular. All educators and those who work with children and youth have obligations (HWB, 2022). The Welsh Government (Digital Competence Framework for Wales) (2018) has stated that the set of abilities and dispositions that permit the self-assured, innovative, and critical use of systems and technology is known as digital competence. For children to be knowledgeable, competent, and capable of succeeding in today's society, it is imperative. Along with literacy and numeracy, digital competence is one of three cross-curricular obligations. The primary objective is to help children build digital abilities that they can use in a variety of contexts and disciplines that are applicable to the future.

In conclusion, a child's growth depends on language and literacy because it enables them to comprehend the outside world and express their emotions. Early instruction in talking, listening, reading, and writing prepares children with the skills they need to thrive throughout education. Learning is made enjoyable and meaningful by simple activities like storytime. Expressive language and literacy abilities enable children to become more self-assured, creative, and curious and assist them in becoming lifelong learners and proficient communicators.

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