

There are many ways in which children can use language. It can be through the use of Pecs (Picture exchange) or sign language, through their body language and facial expressions, their emotions. When children have built up a level of trust with others they may use language in means such as asking questions, gaining support of certainty. Storytelling helps build relationships and helps them to develop their emotional literacy. By telling, sharing and reading stories together they all help to build strong relationships with others (Killick and Boffey, 2012, p.5).

Storytelling is an important part of children's development and language acquisition. Stories are enjoyable experiences that can be shared with others (Medicott, 2019). Sharing stories with children can help their development in many ways. According to Raising Children (2020) reading stories to children sparks their imagination and stimulates their curiosity. Stories allow for children to hear and learn new sounds, new words and language. From this they are able to develop early literacy skills. They also state it helps with children's brain development, their ability to focus and concentrate, their social skills and communication skills. Children's bureau (2017) explains how reading to young children can support their cognitive development. They state that by reading to children it is essentially providing them with background knowledge which will help them to make sense of their world around them, from what they see, hear and read. Gervain (2015, p.14) states experiences with spoken language start in the womb. A baby is able to hear in the womb from about the 24th to the 28th week of gestation. Like Gervain (2015, p.14), Bhamani (2017, p.369) mentions how it is speculated babies can hear their mothers voice in the womb. The state babies start to hear their mothers voice by the end of the second trimester. They also say babies are able to hear the sounds of their mothers heartbeat, her blood coursing through her veins and her breathing patterns.

Throughout a child's early years there are various stages to their language development. As previously stated it starts within the womb, by the time children start school around ages 3-4 years children are able to listen to longer stories and are able to answer questions about it. It is at this age that they are starting to be able to answer 'why' questions at a basic level. They are also able to use longer sentences and describe events that have already happened, even though they may

differ to adults. For example, where an adult would say 'I went to the beach yesterday' a child may say 'I went beach yesterday'. At ages 4-5 years children are able to take turns in their conversations and these conversations are longer. They are able to understand spoken instructions without needing to stop and look at the person who is speaking to them. Children start to understand words that describe a sequence such as 'first', 'next', 'now'. Their sentences are more well formed however some may have difficulty with the correct grammar and pronouns. For example, they may say 'drinked' instead of 'drank', 'goed' instead of 'went'. The last age group is children aged 5-7 years. At this point in their speech and language development they rely less on the use of pictures to learn new words, they use the language skills that they already have to develop their learning for reading, writing and spelling (Speech and Language, no date).

One recording shows a story being told the traditional way. The story of the runaway pea is read out to the children. There was not any use of props during the story however there was acknowledgement towards a display of the runaway pea which involves children's paintings of some of the vegetables in the story. The display allows for the reader to engage with the audience by asking questions. By doing this the reader is providing the children the opportunity to interact, to use their communication skills and to have a voice. Reading to children allows them to get an understanding of bringing a story to life, by adding in expression and emphasis that can then be used in their own story telling. According to Yee Bee Choo., Abdullah, Abdullah Mohd Nawi (2020, p.47) Oral storytelling is a powerful teaching tool as it allows for children to use their imagination and build mental images of the story. To keep the children engaged with the story the reader asks questions such as 'what is going to happen?' and by taking a look at the next page and using body language and expression before showing the page can peak children's curiosity for what is coming next.

The other recording shows a story being told to the children with the addition of using technology to incorporate a digital element within storytelling. A digital element may be incorporated into children's story times as society is evolving and technology plays a major part of children's lives (Lantz, 2019). With the use of technology and having the story shown on a big screen all the children are able to see the pictures

and it also allows for them to have the chance to jump in and read along with the teacher. The screen also allows for the use of free hands and to use actions within the storytelling. Actions allow for the children to engage and interact with the story. The children are able to physically participate through the actions, this can help children to consolidate their language development as it will help support them in remembering the story and are able to recount it. For instance at the end of the digital storytelling video actions were used to ask the 'children' about the story and what happened, this is where some props were also introduced.

When comparing the two videos and styles of storytelling they both provide children with the opportunity to have a voice and promote their oracy skills as children are encouraged to speak by getting them involved and asking them questions. Both tellings of the stories also involved the use of facial expressions and change in tones of voice, this includes different voices for different characters. This was used to emphasise the different characters speaking, to keep it fun and interesting for the children.

In terms of what could have been done differently is there could have been more use of props on both styles of storytelling. Puppets could have been used and given out to the children, they could have had their own roles and said the line of a character.

The art of storytelling can be linked to the work of theorists. At the start of this assignment there were mentions of how storytelling helps to build relationships. This can be linked to two theorists, the first being Maslow and the second being Bowlby. Maslow's hierarchy of needs shows the different levels of children's needs that need to be met in order for them to realise their own unique potential and reach self-actualisation. In relation to storytelling Maslow's theory can be incorporated as it helps children to reach self-actualisation. As previously stated, storytelling helps to build relationships, a sense of connection and security. This can not only be with the reader but with others listening to the story (Chan, 2022, no page numbers). Bowlby's theory of attachment looks at the attachment styles and how the relationships between the primary caregiver and baby when building those foundations may be impacted later in life if they do not have secure attachment (Tu Zahra, 2022, p.44). According to Segal, Glenn and Robinson (2022) secure

attachment is when children feel secure, they feel they are understood and they are calm enough to be able to experience optimal development of their nervous system. They also state when children feel secure and safe they show an eagerness to learn, to trust and to show empathy towards others and to have a healthy self-awareness. From what has been stated from Bowlby's attachment theory this can be linked back to Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Bowlby's theory mentions that when children feel secure and safe they are open to learning and trusting others. This can be achieved when children's needs are met in Maslow's theory. Bowlby's theory can be comparable with Maslow's theory in regards to storytelling. Storytelling provides opportunities for children and adults to bond and build those relationships. Once those relationships are built and secure the children's needs have been met and they are willing and eager to learn meaning their understanding of language and literacy grows.

Another theorist to mention is Vygotsky. He believed that learning first takes place at a social level and then later on an individual level. He also talks about the zones of proximal development. This can simply be defined as the levels children are at developmentally with independent problem solving and the level they are at developmentally with problem solving under the guidance of adult support (Pumtambekar, 2021, p.543). In relation to storytelling Vygotsky's theory suggests children learn from others through social interactions and learn from others who have more knowledge than them. Storytelling provides children those opportunities to have social interactions, where there are positive role models around and stories can be made exciting. They can also build on their skills of oracy, reading and writing from others, this could be the teacher, their parents or even their peers.

In conclusion, it is important for children to have the experience and opportunities to have storytime because it allows children the chance to feel a sense of security by building up those connections and relationships with others, they are building trust with others to enable them to feel comfortable enough to learn and have a voice. Stories help children to develop their imagination by listening and forming those mental images. They also engage children to spark their curiosity which allows them to ask questions. Storytelling helps to develop children's language and literacy skills from a young age as the more opportunities children have to listen to stories and to

talk to others the more they are able to learn from those more knowledgeable than themselves.

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