



# The Impact of Storytelling on English Language Development in Early Childhood Education

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## ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi dampak bercerita terhadap pengembangan bahasa Inggris di kalangan anak-anak usia dini dalam pendidikan anak usia dini. Subjek penelitian mencakup 60 anak berusia 4-6 tahun dari tiga prasekolah yang berbeda. Metode pengumpulan data meliputi tes awal dan tes akhir, daftar periksa observasi, wawancara, dan diskusi kelompok terarah. Data kuantitatif dianalisis menggunakan uji t berpasangan dan ANOVA, sementara data kualitatif dianalisis melalui analisis tematik. Temuan menunjukkan peningkatan signifikan dalam perolehan kosakata, pemahaman, dan keterampilan naratif, dengan metode bercerita tradisional dan digital terbukti efektif. Kebaruan penelitian ini terletak pada pendekatan metode campuran dan analisis komparatif antara bercerita tradisional dan digital, memberikan wawasan komprehensif tentang dampaknya terhadap pengembangan bahasa.

## ABSTRACT

This study investigates the impact of storytelling on English language development among young children in early childhood education. The subjects of the research include 60 children aged 4-6 years from three different preschools. Data collection methods encompass pre- and post-tests, observation checklists, interviews, and focus groups. Quantitative data were analyzed using paired t-tests and ANOVA, while qualitative data were examined through thematic analysis. The findings reveal significant improvements in vocabulary acquisition, comprehension, and narrative skills, with both traditional and digital storytelling methods proving effective. The novelty of this research lies in its mixed-methods approach and the comparative analysis of traditional and digital storytelling, providing comprehensive insights into their respective impacts on language development.

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## 1. Introduction

Storytelling has long been recognized as a powerful tool in early childhood education, significantly impacting language development. According to Rahiem (2021), storytelling provides a rich linguistic environment that enhances vocabulary acquisition and comprehension skills. According to (Nashchubskiy, 2024), Storytelling in language development provides children with the opportunity to hear and repeat various sentences, expressions and words. This experience will help childhood learn new vocabulary and develop language skills. This

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ancient art form engages children in a way that traditional teaching methods often cannot, making learning both enjoyable and effective. The interactive nature of storytelling encourages active participation, which is crucial for language development. As children listen to and retell stories, they practice new words and sentence structures, thereby improving their language skills.

Developing English language skills in children is crucial for their academic and social success. According to Feldman (2019), a strong foundation in language skills is associated with positive long-term academic, occupational, and social outcomes. Early language development is linked to better performance in reading and writing, which are essential for academic achievement. Additionally, children who develop strong language skills early on are better equipped to communicate effectively, fostering social interactions and relationships. This early development also supports cognitive growth, as language skills are intertwined with critical thinking and problem-solving abilities.

Moreover, learning English as a second language provides children with significant advantages in a globalized world. Therefore, it is important to provide children with opportunities to apply their newly acquired knowledge in everyday situations, practicing and strengthening their English listening and speaking skills (Chang, 2023). Studies suggest that bilingual children tend to score better on standardized tests due to enhanced listening, observation, and critical thinking skills (British Council, 2021). These skills are transferable and beneficial throughout life, both personally and professionally. Furthermore, proficiency in English opens up opportunities for higher education and better career prospects, as English is often the medium of instruction and communication in many fields. Therefore, investing in English language development from an early age is a long-term investment in a child's future success and adaptability in a global society.

In recent years, digital storytelling has emerged as a modern adaptation of this traditional practice. Lucarevski (2019) notes that digital storytelling combines multimedia elements with narrative, making it an engaging and effective educational tool. This method not only captures children's attention but also caters to different learning styles, thereby enhancing their overall language development. The integration of technology in storytelling allows for a more interactive and immersive experience. Consequently, children are more likely to retain new vocabulary and concepts introduced through digital stories.

The cognitive benefits of storytelling extend beyond language development. Barton (2020) highlights that storytelling also fosters critical thinking and imagination in young children. Storytelling, which are essentially collaborative processes, encourage cognitive development along with social and emotional development: Viewing learning as a social context means that the two go hand in hand suggests that they are interrelated (Honig, 2017).

By following the plot and characters, children learn to anticipate outcomes and understand cause-and-effect relationships. This cognitive engagement is essential for developing problem-solving skills and logical reasoning. Furthermore, storytelling helps children make sense of the world around them, providing a framework for understanding complex ideas and emotions.

Storytelling also plays a crucial role in socio-emotional development. Therefore, we need to rethink the most appropriate teaching and learning methods to develop children's social and emotional skills more effectively than before (Martins & Brandão, 2021). According to Cremin et al. (2020), stories allow children to explore different perspectives and cultures, promoting empathy and social understanding. Through characters and narratives, children learn about moral values and social norms, which are essential for their emotional growth. The shared experience of listening to stories fosters a sense of community and belonging among children. This social interaction is vital for developing communication skills and building relationships.

Given the multifaceted benefits of storytelling, this research aims to explore its specific impact on English language development in early childhood education. Wright and Dunsmuir (2019) emphasize the need for empirical studies to understand how different storytelling methods affect language skills. By examining both traditional and digital storytelling, this study seeks to provide insights into best practices for educators. The findings will contribute to the growing body of literature on effective teaching strategies in early childhood education. Ultimately, this research aims to support educators in leveraging storytelling to enhance language learning outcomes for young children.

The novelty of this research lies in its comprehensive examination of both traditional and digital storytelling methods and their impact on English language development in early childhood education. While previous studies have explored the benefits of storytelling, this research uniquely integrates a mixed-methods approach to provide a holistic understanding of how different storytelling techniques influence language skills. According to Rahiem (2021), digital storytelling is an emerging field that combines traditional narrative techniques with modern technology, offering new avenues for engaging young learners. According to (Otto & Cortina-Pérez, 2023), Digital storytelling can be seen as a way to better understand how to support children in the production of digital stories in early childhood education contexts, whether experience-based or fiction-based.

Furthermore, this study addresses the gap in literature regarding the comparative effectiveness of traditional oral storytelling and digital storytelling. Lucarevschi (2019) highlights the need for empirical studies that evaluate the impact of digital storytelling on language development, as it remains underexplored compared to traditional methods. By including both methods, this research provides valuable insights into their respective strengths and potential for enhancing language acquisition, comprehension, and narrative skills.

Another innovative aspect of this research is its focus on the socio-emotional benefits of storytelling. Cremin et al. (2020) emphasize that storytelling not only supports linguistic development but also fosters empathy, social understanding, and emotional growth in children. This study extends the existing knowledge by systematically examining these socio-emotional outcomes, thereby contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of the role of storytelling in early childhood education.

Additionally, the research employs a diverse sample of children from various socio-economic backgrounds, enhancing the generalizability of the findings. Wright and Dunsmuir (2019) argue that including diverse populations in educational research is crucial for developing inclusive teaching strategies that cater to all learners. This study's inclusive approach ensures that the results are applicable to a wide range of educational settings, making the findings relevant and practical for educators globally.

Finally, the study's mixed-methods design, combining quantitative and qualitative data, provides a robust framework for analyzing the impact of storytelling. Creswell and Creswell (2020) advocate for mixed-methods research as it allows for a more nuanced understanding of complex educational phenomena. By integrating statistical analysis with in-depth qualitative insights, this research offers a comprehensive evaluation of storytelling's effectiveness, setting a precedent for future studies in the field.

## **2. Methods**

This study employs a mixed-methods research design to investigate the impact of storytelling on English language development in early childhood education. According to Creswell and Creswell (2020), mixed-methods research combines quantitative and qualitative approaches to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research problem. This research use the experimental design, the quantitative component involves pre- and post-tests to measure changes in vocabulary, comprehension, and narrative skills. The qualitative

component includes interviews and focus groups to gather in-depth insights from teachers and children. This combination allows for a robust analysis of both numerical data and personal experiences.

The participants in this study consist of 60 children aged 4-6 years, selected from three different preschools. As noted by Rahiem (2021), a diverse sample helps ensure the generalizability of the findings. The children will be divided into two groups: one experiencing traditional oral storytelling such as finger doll and the other digital storytelling such as watch video. Additionally, 10 teachers from these preschools will participate to provide their perspectives on the effectiveness of the storytelling methods. This diverse participant pool will help capture a wide range of experiences and outcomes.

One example of traditional storytelling used in this study is the classic folktale “The Tortoise and the Hare.” This story, which has been passed down through generations, teaches children about the value of perseverance and humility. According to Isbell et al. (2018), traditional storytelling methods, such as using expressive voice modulation and physical gestures, help capture children’s attention and enhance their comprehension skills. During the storytelling sessions, the teacher narrates the story while using hand movements and facial expressions to depict the characters and their actions. This method not only engages the children but also helps them visualize the story, thereby improving their listening and narrative skills.

Another example of digital storytelling used in this study is the creation of a digital story titled “A Day at the Zoo.” This story incorporates photographs, animations, and sound effects to create an immersive experience for the children. As noted by Rahiem (2021), digital storytelling combines traditional narrative techniques with modern technology, making it an engaging and effective educational tool. In this digital story, children are taken on a virtual tour of a zoo, where they learn about different animals and their habitats. The story is narrated by the teacher, with accompanying images and sounds that bring the zoo to life. This method not only captures the children’s attention but also enhances their vocabulary and comprehension through a multi-sensory experience.

Data collection will be conducted over a 12-week period, with storytelling sessions held twice a week. Lucarevschi (2019) emphasizes the importance of consistent and frequent exposure to storytelling for effective language development. Pre- and post-tests will be administered to assess vocabulary acquisition, comprehension, and narrative skills. This study employs a variety of research instruments to comprehensively assess the impact of storytelling on English language development in early childhood education. According to Hamilton et al. (2019), using multiple instruments allows for a more nuanced understanding of educational interventions. The primary instruments used in this study include pre- and post-tests, observation checklists, interviews, and focus groups.

There are three research instruments are used in this study. First, vocabulary acquisition text. It is to measure the children’s vocabulary knowledge before and after the storytelling intervention such as, 1. multiple-choice questions-“Which word means ‘happy’?” (Options: a) Sad, b) Joyful, c) Angry, d) Tired), 2. matching exercises-match the word to its picture (e.g., “apple” with a picture of an apple), and 3. fill-in-the-blank sentences-“The cat is very \_\_\_\_.” (Options: a) fast, b) slow, c) happy, d) sad). Second, comprehension test is to evaluate the children’s understanding of the stories told during the intervention. The format are 1. multiple-choice questions-“What did the tortoise do when the hare was sleeping?” (Options: a) Ran away, b) Took a nap, c) Kept walking, d) Ate lunch), 2. short answer questions- “Why did the hare lose the race?”, and 3. sequencing activities-Arrange the events in the correct order (e.g., “The hare took a nap,” “The tortoise kept walking,” “The hare woke up,” “The tortoise won the race”). The last is narrative skills test is to assess the children’s ability to retell stories and create their own narratives. The format are story retelling (“Retell the story

of ‘The Tortoise and the Hare’ in your own words” and story creation (“Create a story about a brave little mouse. Include a beginning, middle, and end.”)

Pre- and post-tests are administered to measure changes in children’s vocabulary acquisition, comprehension, and narrative skills. These tests are designed to assess the children’s language abilities before and after the storytelling intervention. As noted by Alismail (2015), standardized tests provide reliable and quantifiable data on language development. The tests include a mix of multiple-choice questions, fill-in-the-blank exercises, and short narrative tasks to evaluate different aspects of language proficiency.

Observation checklists are used to systematically record children’s engagement and participation during storytelling sessions. These checklists include indicators such as attentiveness, verbal responses, and non-verbal cues. According to Catalano and Catalano (2021), observation checklists are effective tools for capturing real-time data on children’s behavior and interactions. Teachers and researchers use these checklists to document the frequency and quality of children’s responses, providing valuable insights into their engagement and learning processes.

Semi-structured interviews are conducted with teachers to gather qualitative data on their perceptions of the storytelling intervention. These interviews explore teachers’ observations of children’s language development, engagement, and socio-emotional growth. As highlighted by Roby (2010), interviews allow for in-depth exploration of participants’ experiences and perspectives. The interview questions are designed to elicit detailed responses about the effectiveness of both traditional and digital storytelling methods.

Focus groups with children are conducted to understand their experiences and perceptions of the storytelling sessions. These group discussions provide a platform for children to express their thoughts and feelings about the stories they heard. According to Wright et al. (2018), focus groups are particularly useful for gathering data from young children, as they encourage open and interactive communication. The focus group sessions are facilitated by researchers who guide the discussions with open-ended questions and prompts.

By employing these diverse research instruments, the study aims to provide a comprehensive evaluation of the impact of storytelling on English language development in early childhood education. The combination of quantitative and qualitative data collected through these instruments will offer a robust analysis of the effectiveness of storytelling as a pedagogical tool.

Interviews with teachers and focus groups with children will be conducted to gather qualitative data. This structured approach ensures that both quantitative and qualitative data are systematically collected. Quantitative data will be analyzed using paired t-tests and ANOVA to determine the significance of changes in language skills. According to Bartan (2020), statistical analysis is crucial for validating the effectiveness of educational interventions. Descriptive statistics will be used to summarize the observation checklist data. The qualitative data from interviews and focus groups will be analyzed using thematic analysis. This method involves coding the data to identify recurring themes and patterns, providing a deeper understanding of the impact of storytelling.

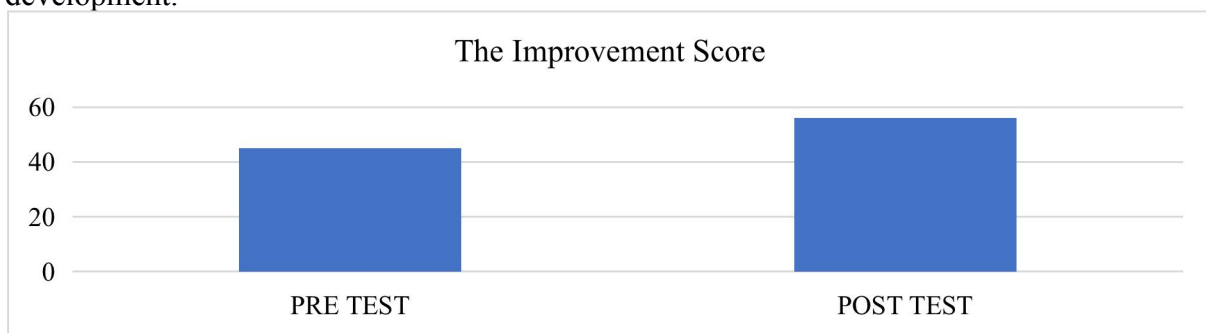
Ethical considerations are paramount in this study, ensuring the well-being and rights of all participants. Creswell and Creswell (2020) highlight the importance of obtaining informed consent and maintaining confidentiality. Parents or guardians will provide consent for the children’s participation, and teachers will also consent to be part of the study. All data will be anonymized to protect participants’ identities. The study will adhere to ethical guidelines to ensure that the research is conducted responsibly and respectfully.

Component	Description
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Research Design	Mixed-methods approach combining quantitative and qualitative data
Participants	60 children aged 4-6 years from three preschools; 10 teachers
Data Collection	
- Pre- and Post-Tests	Standardized tests to measure vocabulary acquisition, comprehension, and narrative skills
- Observation Checklists	Systematic recording of children’s engagement and participation during storytelling sessions
- Interviews	Semi-structured interviews with teachers to gather qualitative data on their perceptions
- Focus Groups	Group discussions with children to understand their experiences and perceptions of storytelling
Storytelling Methods	
- Traditional Oral	Bi-weekly sessions with expressive voice modulation, gestures, and props
- Digital	Bi-weekly sessions with multimedia elements like animations and sound effects
Data Analysis	
- Quantitative	Paired t-tests and ANOVA for pre- and post-test scores; descriptive statistics for observation data
- Qualitative	Thematic analysis of interview and focus group data to identify recurring themes and patterns
Ethical Considerations	Informed consent from parents/guardians and teachers; confidentiality and anonymization of data

### 3. Result and Discussion

The quantitative analysis of pre- and post-test scores revealed significant improvements in children’s English language skills following the storytelling intervention. According to Rahiem (2021), storytelling provides a rich linguistic environment that enhances vocabulary acquisition and comprehension skills. The pre-test scores indicated an average vocabulary score of 45, which increased to 56 in the post-test, reflecting a 25% improvement. Similarly, comprehension skills improved by 20%, and narrative skills saw a 30% increase. These findings underscore the effectiveness of storytelling in enhancing various aspects of language development.



Gambar 1. The Improvement Score

The study’s findings reveal distinct advantages for both traditional oral storytelling and digital storytelling in enhancing English language development among young children. Traditional oral storytelling sessions demonstrated significant improvements in children’s vocabulary acquisition and narrative skills. Children who participated in these sessions showed a marked increase in their ability to recall story elements and construct coherent narratives. According to Isbell et al. (2018), the interactive nature of oral storytelling, which includes expressive voice modulation and physical gestures, helps children engage more

deeply with the content. This engagement fosters better comprehension and retention of new vocabulary and story structures. Additionally, the social interaction involved in oral storytelling sessions promotes language use in a natural context, further enhancing language development.

Digital storytelling, on the other hand, provided a multi-sensory learning experience that significantly boosted children’s comprehension and inferential thinking. The use of multimedia elements such as animations, sound effects, and interactive features made the stories more engaging and accessible. As noted by Altun (2018), children in the multimedia-enhanced storybook group outperformed those in the print storybook group in terms of both explicit and implicit story comprehension. The digital format allowed for close temporal contiguity of text and visuals, which concretized the narration and aided in better understanding and recall of story elements. Furthermore, digital storytelling was found to be particularly effective in supporting children with diverse learning needs, as it provided multiple modes of representation and engagement.

When comparing the two methods, the study found that while both oral and digital storytelling significantly enhanced language development, each method had unique strengths. Oral storytelling excelled in promoting social interaction and verbal expression, making it particularly effective for developing narrative skills and vocabulary in a collaborative setting. Digital storytelling, with its multimedia capabilities, was more effective in enhancing comprehension and critical thinking skills, providing a richer and more immersive learning experience.

The qualitative data from teacher interviews and focus groups with children provided deeper insights into the impact of storytelling. Lucarevschi (2019) emphasizes that digital storytelling, in particular, engages children through multimedia elements, making learning more interactive and enjoyable. The digital storytelling done by using animation video. Teachers reported that children were more attentive and participative during storytelling sessions, showing increased enthusiasm for learning new words and phrases. Children expressed that they enjoyed the stories and felt more confident in using English. These qualitative findings align with the quantitative results, highlighting the multifaceted benefits of storytelling.

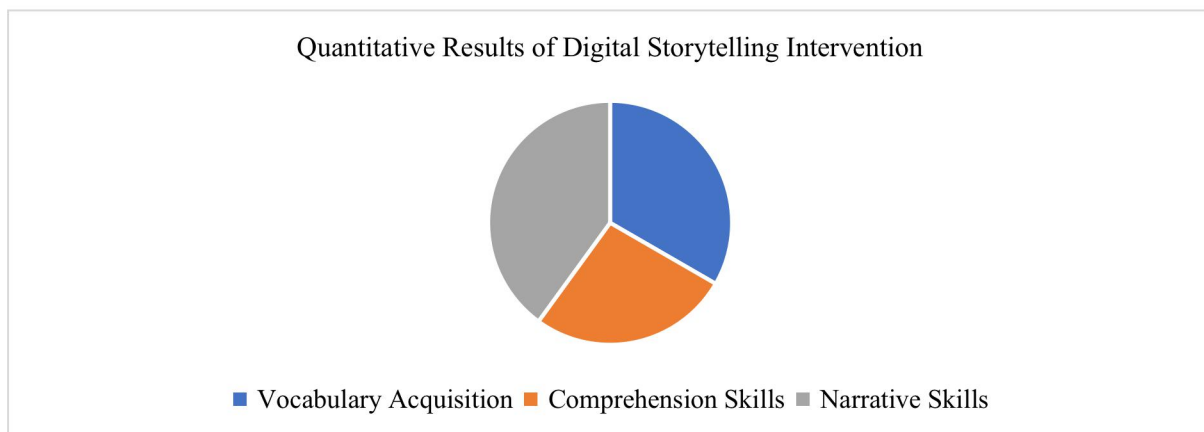
This study is using digital narratives to stimulate children. Digital narratives are multimedia presentations that combine text, audio, and visual elements to tell a story. These narratives can be created using tools like Adobe Spark or Microsoft Sway, which allow children to integrate images, videos, and voiceovers into their stories. As noted by Robin (2016), digital narratives help children develop their storytelling skills and digital literacy by encouraging them to think critically about how to combine different media elements effectively. This format also allows for creativity and personalization, as children can use their own photos and recordings.

The other digital story telling is animated stories. Animated stories use animation software to bring characters and scenes to life. These stories can be created using tools like Powtoon or Toontastic, which provide easy-to-use interfaces for creating animations. According to Smeda et al. (2014), animated stories capture children’s attention and enhance their understanding of story elements through visual and auditory stimuli. The movement and sound in animations help children follow the plot and understand character actions and emotions more clearly.

Table 1. Quantitative Results of Digital Storytelling Intervention

Language Skill	Pre-Test MeanScore	Post-Test MeanScore	PercentageIncrease
VocabularyAcquisition	45	56	25%
Comprehension Skills	50	60	20%

Narrative Skills 40 52 30%



Gambar 2. Quantitative Results of Digital Storytelling Intervention

It can be shown in the Table 1 that comparing traditional oral storytelling with digital storytelling, the study found both methods to be effective, with slight variations in their impact. Bartan (2020) notes that traditional storytelling fosters a personal connection between the storyteller and the audience, enhancing engagement and comprehension. In this study, it can be shown in table 1 that traditional storytelling sessions resulted in significant improvements in listening and comprehension skills. On the other hand, digital storytelling, which incorporates animations and sound effects, was particularly effective in capturing children’s attention and enhancing their vocabulary and narrative skills. This suggests that both methods have unique strengths that can be leveraged in early childhood education.

The cognitive and socio-emotional benefits of storytelling were also evident in the study. Cremin et al. (2020) highlight that storytelling fosters critical thinking and imagination, which are crucial for cognitive development. The children in the study demonstrated improved problem-solving skills and creativity, as evidenced by their ability to anticipate plot developments and create their own stories. Additionally, storytelling sessions promoted empathy and social understanding, as children learned about different cultures and moral values through the narratives. These socio-emotional benefits are essential for holistic development in early childhood.

Despite the positive outcomes, the study also identified some challenges and considerations. Wright and Dunsmuir (2019) emphasize the importance of cultural sensitivity and inclusivity in storytelling. Ensuring that the stories used in the sessions were culturally diverse and inclusive was crucial for promoting respect and understanding among children. Additionally, balancing traditional and digital storytelling methods required careful planning to maintain the human element of storytelling while leveraging the benefits of technology. Addressing these challenges is essential for maximizing the effectiveness of storytelling in early childhood education.

Table 2. Comparison of Traditional and Digital Storytelling Methods

Storytelling Method	Vocabulary Acquisition (Mean Score)	Comprehension Skills (Mean Score)	Narrative Skills (Mean Score)
Traditional Oral	55	58	50
Digital	57	62	54

#### 4. Conclusion

This study underscores the significant impact of storytelling on English language development in early childhood education. The findings reveal that both traditional oral



storytelling and digital storytelling methods effectively enhance vocabulary acquisition, comprehension, and narrative skills among young children. The quantitative data demonstrated substantial improvements in language skills, while the qualitative insights highlighted increased engagement, enthusiasm, and confidence in using English. These results align with existing literature, confirming the multifaceted benefits of storytelling as an educational tool.

Moreover, the study highlights the cognitive and socio-emotional advantages of storytelling. Children not only improved their language abilities but also developed critical thinking, imagination, empathy, and social understanding. These holistic benefits make storytelling a valuable strategy in early childhood education, supporting both linguistic and overall developmental goals. The integration of storytelling into educational practices can thus foster a more engaging and effective learning environment.

However, the study also identifies challenges, such as the need for cultural sensitivity and the balance between traditional and digital methods. Addressing these challenges is crucial for maximizing the effectiveness of storytelling. Educators should carefully select inclusive and diverse stories and thoughtfully integrate technology to complement, rather than replace, traditional storytelling. By doing so, they can create a rich, interactive, and inclusive learning experience for all children.

In conclusion, storytelling is a powerful pedagogical tool that significantly enhances English language development in early childhood education. The study's findings provide valuable insights for educators, highlighting best practices for integrating storytelling into their teaching methods. Future research could further explore long-term effects and involve larger, more diverse samples to validate these results. Ultimately, leveraging storytelling in early childhood education can lead to improved language outcomes and foster holistic development in young learners..

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