



## The Role Of Storytelling In Supporting Language And Early Literacy Development In Early Childhood: A Literature Review

Hakiki Putri<sup>1</sup>, Mufaro'ah<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1, 2</sup>. IAIN Datuk Laksemana Bengkalis

Jl. Lembaga, Senggoro, Kec. Bengkalis, Riau, Indonesia

Email: [putrikiki0629@gmail.com](mailto:putrikiki0629@gmail.com)<sup>1</sup>, [muf.rohah@gmail.com](mailto:muf.rohah@gmail.com)<sup>2</sup>

---

Naskah diterima: ....., direvisi: ....., diterbitkan: .....

---

**Abstract:** *This study examines how storytelling supports language development and early literacy in young children through a systematic literature review of 27 scholarly references published between 2017 and 2026. The research addresses the fundamental question of storytelling's pedagogical role in advancing vocabulary growth, listening comprehension, oral communication ability, narrative competence, print awareness, and motivational orientation toward literacy engagement. Employing qualitative content analysis, the study systematically identified, coded, and interpreted recurring patterns across diverse research contexts including Indonesian early childhood settings, EFL classrooms, and multilingual educational environments. The findings establish that storytelling consistently enhances children's receptive and expressive language by delivering rich and contextually embedded linguistic input through vocabulary, sentence patterns, pronunciation models, and narrative structures. Children participating in storytelling activities demonstrate measurable improvements in listening comprehension, vocabulary breadth, speaking fluency, sentence construction, narrative coherence, and communicative confidence. The study further reveals that storytelling functions as a transitional bridge connecting oral language and formal literacy by familiarizing children with narrative organization, story meaning, print awareness, and phonological sensitivity. The effectiveness of storytelling is substantially amplified when implemented interactively with scaffolding techniques, guided questioning, visual media, digital tools, and structured retelling activities across pre-storytelling, during-storytelling, and post-storytelling phases. Both traditional and digital storytelling formats, alongside dramatic and creative approaches, contribute meaningfully to early literacy outcomes when educators provide expressive delivery, appropriate story selection, and purposeful follow-up experiences. The study recommends that early childhood educators incorporate storytelling as a regular, planned, and purposeful component of daily language and literacy instruction, selecting culturally relevant and age-appropriate narratives while implementing structured storytelling cycles that integrate vocabulary preparation, interactive narration, and follow-up activities.*

**Keywords:** *storytelling, language development, early literacy, early childhood education, scaffolding*

**Abstrack:** Penelitian ini mengkaji bagaimana mendongeng mendukung perkembangan bahasa dan literasi awal pada anak usia dini melalui tinjauan literatur sistematis terhadap 27 referensi ilmiah yang dipublikasikan antara tahun 2017 hingga 2026. Penelitian ini menjawab pertanyaan mendasar tentang peran pedagogis mendongeng dalam memajukan pertumbuhan kosakata, pemahaman mendengarkan, kemampuan komunikasi lisan, kompetensi naratif, kesadaran cetak, dan orientasi motivasional terhadap keterlibatan literasi. Dengan menggunakan analisis konten kualitatif, penelitian ini secara sistematis mengidentifikasi, mengkodekan, dan menginterpretasikan pola-pola berulang di berbagai konteks penelitian termasuk setting pendidikan anak usia dini Indonesia, kelas EFL, dan lingkungan pendidikan multibahasa. Temuan penelitian menetapkan bahwa mendongeng secara konsisten meningkatkan kemampuan reseptif dan ekspresif bahasa anak dengan memberikan input linguistik yang kaya dan tertanam secara kontekstual melalui kosakata, pola kalimat, model pengucapan, dan struktur naratif. Anak-anak yang berpartisipasi dalam kegiatan mendongeng

menunjukkan peningkatan terukur dalam pemahaman mendengarkan, jangkauan kosakata, kefasihan berbicara, konstruksi kalimat, koherensi naratif, dan kepercayaan diri berkomunikasi. Penelitian ini lebih lanjut mengungkapkan bahwa mendongeng berfungsi sebagai jembatan transisi yang menghubungkan bahasa lisan dan literasi formal dengan memperkenalkan anak pada organisasi naratif, makna cerita, kesadaran cetak, dan kepekaan fonologis. Efektivitas mendongeng secara substansial diperkuat ketika diimplementasikan secara interaktif dengan teknik scaffolding, pertanyaan terbimbing, media visual, alat digital, dan aktivitas menceritakan kembali yang terstruktur di seluruh fase pra-mendongeng, selama mendongeng, dan pasca-mendongeng. Baik format mendongeng tradisional maupun digital, bersama dengan pendekatan dramatis dan kreatif, berkontribusi secara bermakna terhadap hasil literasi awal ketika pendidik menyediakan penyampaian yang ekspresif, pemilihan cerita yang tepat, dan pengalaman tindak lanjut yang bertujuan. Penelitian ini merekomendasikan agar pendidik anak usia dini memasukkan mendongeng sebagai komponen reguler, terencana, dan bertujuan dalam pengajaran bahasa dan literasi harian, memilih narasi yang relevan secara budaya dan sesuai usia sambil mengimplementasikan siklus mendongeng terstruktur yang mengintegrasikan persiapan kosakata, narasi interaktif, dan kegiatan tindak lanjut.

**Kata Kunci:** *mendongeng, perkembangan bahasa, literasi awal, pendidikan anak usia dini, scaffolding.*

## A. Introduction

The earliest years of a child's life constitute a critical and irreplaceable period for language acquisition and foundational literacy development, during which children begin building their vocabulary, decoding oral messages, voicing nascent ideas, recognizing symbolic forms, and constructing meaning through social interaction. Linguistic growth during this phase spans a wide spectrum from listening comprehension and lexical command to articulation, grammatical understanding, communicative confidence, and the ability to express thoughts and feelings coherently. These capacities subsequently lay the groundwork for higher-order literacy competencies, encompassing reading, writing, and textual interpretation. Early literacy itself reaches well beyond the recognition of letters or the decoding of printed words; it equally encompasses oral language proficiency, awareness of print, phonological sensitivity, breadth of vocabulary, depth of comprehension, and children's intrinsic drive to engage with literacy-related activities (Halimatuzzuhrotulaini dkk., 2023).

Among the wide range of pedagogical strategies available to support language development in young learners, storytelling emerges as one of the most powerful, owing to its capacity to deliver linguistically rich input within experiences that are both engaging and meaningfully contextualised. As children immerse themselves in stories, they encounter unfamiliar vocabulary, varied syntactic structures, expressive language use, and narrative sequences that illuminate how language functions as a medium for conveying meaning. Storytelling also generates authentic opportunities for children to respond to questions, reconstruct story events, characterise narrative figures, and articulate their personal reactions to plot developments. Empirical investigations have affirmed that the storytelling approach exerts a measurable positive influence on early childhood language development, particularly in relation to fluency, vocabulary selection, and sentence construction (Rafiola dkk., 2022). Complementary research has

further demonstrated that storytelling broadens children's vocabulary range, sharpens listening comprehension, refines pronunciation accuracy, strengthens narrative coherence, and builds confidence in verbal expression (Sitinjak dkk., 2025).

The processes through which storytelling stimulates language learning in young children can be theoretically anchored in sociocultural theory, which holds that language acquisition is fundamentally rooted in social interaction, scaffolded support, and purposeful communication. Within storytelling contexts, educators occupy a role that goes far beyond mere narration; they actively guide children to listen with focus, respond with intention, anticipate narrative directions, formulate questions, and reconstruct story content. These dialogic exchanges allow children to internalise language through authentic communicative encounters with adults and peers alike. The instructional impact of storytelling is amplified further when educators bring expressive vocal delivery, deliberate gesture, dynamic facial expression, visual media, and dramatic enactment into their practice, as these multimodal elements substantially deepen children's access to story meaning (Alkilani & Zhang, 2025).

Storytelling also exerts a direct and consequential influence on the trajectory of early literacy development. Literacy in early childhood extends far beyond print decoding to encompass listening comprehension, oral vocabulary, print awareness, phonological sensitivity, narrative understanding, critical reasoning, and the disposition to engage meaningfully with books and written symbols. Systematically designed storytelling activities have been identified as a robust vehicle for advancing early literacy, particularly when structured to incorporate pre-story, in-story, and post-story learning phases (Maureen dkk., 2022). Creative storytelling practices that harness vocal intonation, visual materials, puppet characters, purposeful gesture, and imaginative narrative development have similarly demonstrated the capacity to deepen children's vocabulary, heighten phonological awareness, strengthen story comprehension, and cultivate a positive disposition toward reading and writing (Dina dkk., 2025).

Within early childhood educational settings, storytelling manifests across a rich spectrum of forms—including oral narration, digital storytelling, dramatic enactment, picture book-based narratives, puppet-mediated storytelling, multilingual formats, and audio-visual story presentation. This diversity of modalities allows educators to calibrate storytelling experiences to the developmental needs, personal interests, linguistic backgrounds, and contextual realities of their classrooms. Both digital and traditional storytelling approaches have demonstrated effectiveness in advancing vocabulary acquisition, comprehension, and narrative competence within early childhood English learning environments (Surya & Aprilia, 2024). The incorporation of digital storytelling centres has further been shown to strengthen children's listening abilities, capacity for character identification, understanding of story sequences, and confidence in narrative retelling (Nasution, 2025). Additionally, technology-supported storytelling can widen children's access to visual, auditory, and interactive learning

experiences, provided that it remains developmentally appropriate and carefully mediated by educators (Paramansyah, 2025).

The integration of media into storytelling activities heightens children's attentiveness, imaginative engagement, and participatory investment. Interactive digital platforms including PowerPoint-driven storytelling and educational games have been observed to foster greater focus and enthusiasm as children follow narrative sequences, respond to questions, imitate characters, and engage in language play (Sianipar dkk., 2025). Earlier research on virtual peer storytelling similarly suggests that technology can model advanced narrative language and encourage children to adopt the dual roles of storyteller and critical listener (Ryokai dkk., 2002). Taken together, these findings indicate that media-enriched storytelling can reinforce literacy learning, provided that digital tools are harnessed to support rather than supplant meaningful interaction between teacher and child.

The pedagogical value of storytelling extends further to its capacity to bridge language development, early literacy, imaginative growth, and social-emotional learning. Narratives furnish children with conceptual frameworks for understanding characters, emotional states, conflict, resolution, and the moral dimensions of human experience. Through sustained engagement with stories, children are prompted not merely to expand their vocabulary and comprehension, but also to reflect on empathy, friendship, cultural identity, and appropriate social conduct. This broader developmental role resonates with scholarship that characterises stories as powerful contributors to children's holistic growth, as well as with recent community-based research demonstrating that storytelling can nurture literacy, imagination, and antibullying values in early childhood settings (Kerry-Moran & Aerila, 2019).

Despite these well-documented benefits, storytelling in early childhood classrooms does not automatically fulfil its full pedagogical promise. In certain educational contexts, storytelling may be deployed as mere entertainment or as a habitual classroom routine, stripped of clearly defined literacy objectives. Children risk becoming passive recipients when educators monopolise the storytelling process and neglect to cultivate space for authentic interaction. The extent to which storytelling proves genuinely effective depends on a constellation of interrelated variables including the appropriateness of story selection, the expressiveness of teacher delivery, the calibre of media employed, the depth of children's active participation, and the richness of follow-up activities such as discussion, narrative retelling, drawing, symbol recognition, and experiential connection with story themes (Maureen dkk., 2022).

Informed by the foregoing discussion, this article addresses the central question of how storytelling supports language development and early literacy in young children, drawing on evidence synthesised from prior empirical studies. It aims to critically examine and analyse storytelling's role in advancing vocabulary growth, listening comprehension, oral communication ability, narrative competence, print awareness, textual understanding, and motivational orientation toward literacy

engagement. Through this systematic literature review, storytelling is positioned as a pedagogically significant strategy that equips educators to design language and literacy learning experiences that are interactive, enjoyable, inclusive, and genuinely responsive to the developmental needs and capabilities of young children.

## **B. Theoretical Framework**

### **1. Early Childhood Language Development**

The acquisition of language in early childhood serves as a critical foundation for children's development across cognitive, social, emotional, and academic domains. Throughout this period, young learners develop both their ability to understand and produce language, accumulate vocabulary, improve pronunciation skills, enhance their use of grammatical structures, and discover the social functions of communication. Thus, language development encompasses far more than simple word learning; it represents the integrated maturation of auditory comprehension, verbal expression, meaning construction, sound awareness, grammatical competence, and the ability to use language appropriately in social contexts (Halimatuzzuhrotulaini dkk., 2023).

### **2. Early Literacy Development**

The concept of early literacy refers to young children's emerging abilities to understand and use linguistic elements, symbolic representations, auditory patterns, visual imagery, written materials, and storytelling before they receive formal instruction in reading and writing. This developmental domain incorporates multiple components: competence in spoken language, auditory comprehension skills, awareness of print conventions, sensitivity to sound patterns, lexical acquisition, interpretation of visual information, comprehension of narrative forms, and enthusiasm for interacting with texts and environmental print. Viewed comprehensively, early literacy constitutes an interconnected system of communication and sense-making activities that can be fostered through interactions within families, educational settings, and broader community contexts (Marwany & Kurniawan, 2020).

### **3. Storytelling as a Language Learning Strategy**

As an instructional method, storytelling leverages narrative frameworks to enhance children's capacities for listening, oral production, lexical expansion, comprehension, creative thinking, and story construction. When children experience storytelling, they encounter purposeful language woven through characterization, story settings, problem situations, plot sequences, and conclusions. Such rich linguistic immersion allows children to absorb grammatical patterns, assimilate novel vocabulary items, learn expressive language forms, and understand how ideas are logically structured. Furthermore, storytelling creates opportunities for children's active engagement, encouraging them to answer questions, repeat unfamiliar words, predict narrative outcomes, retell stories, and offer their own interpretations. Empirical evidence consistently demonstrates that storytelling enhances various aspects of children's language capabilities, including verbal fluency, word selection, grammatical construction, vocabulary acquisition, articulation accuracy, auditory

comprehension, narrative organization, and communicative assurance (Sitinjak dkk., 2025).

#### **4. Storytelling as a Bridge between Oral Language and Literacy**

Storytelling serves as an essential mediating mechanism linking spoken language abilities with developing literacy competencies, introducing children to textual structures through oral narrative forms. Prior to acquiring independent reading and writing capabilities, storytelling demonstrates to children how story events are arranged chronologically, how characters are presented, how conflicts emerge, and how communication is structured for listeners. These experiences facilitate children's progression from context-dependent communication toward more decontextualized language forms that are fundamental for subsequent literacy achievement (Ryokai dkk., 2002). Storytelling operates as a vital connective pathway between oral communication skills and nascent literacy development by introducing children to the organizational principles of texts through spoken stories. Before young learners can read or write autonomously, storytelling conveys that narratives possess intrinsic meaning, progress through organized patterns, and incorporate characters, challenges, and solutions. Through consistent and recurring exposure to storytelling, children progressively absorb the structural logic underlying oral narratives and come to recognize how meaning can be communicated through linguistic, visual, and symbolic means. Additionally, storytelling strengthens children's narrative comprehension abilities, memory-based information recall, and capacity to reconstruct story elements using their personal linguistic repertoires. Consequently, storytelling performs a vital function in facilitating children's developmental progression from engagement with oral language toward preparedness for literacy activities (Florit-Pons dkk., 2025).

#### **5. Sociocultural Theory and Scaffolding in Storytelling**

The theoretical foundations supporting storytelling in early childhood pedagogy are closely aligned with sociocultural perspectives, which propose that language acquisition is primarily facilitated through social engagement and assistance from more knowledgeable participants. Within storytelling environments, teachers offer responsive scaffolding through demonstrating language patterns, explaining unknown terms, asking facilitative questions, prompting children to make predictions, and assisting them in narrative reconstruction. Such interactions allow children to acquire language within authentic communicative and purposeful contexts, rather than through isolated practice or mechanical repetition. Dramatic storytelling intensifies this scaffolding process, as bodily movements, facial expressions, voice modulation, physical actions, and theatrical presentation provide additional supportive structures that enhance children's understanding. These multimodal elements make narratives more comprehensible and encourage children toward more energetic and active involvement in language acquisition (Ovati dkk., 2026).

#### **6. Digital and Multimodal Storytelling**

Within early childhood educational environments, storytelling can be implemented through diverse modalities, including conventional oral delivery, illustrated book sharing, puppet theater, dramatization, digital technology platforms,

audiovisual narratives, podcast formats, and participatory presentations. Digital and multimodal storytelling facilitates children's comprehension by integrating verbal communication with visual elements, auditory components, moving images, physical expression, and child involvement. When employed with pedagogical intentionality, these approaches can enhance attention span, narrative understanding, vocabulary application, and story retelling abilities, while simultaneously generating opportunities for genuine communication in culturally heterogeneous learning environments (Shi & Cheung, 2024).

### **7. Creative Storytelling and Children's Active Participation**

Creative storytelling includes narrative practices that utilize diverse voice modulation, visual resources, puppet characters, expressive body language, spontaneous adaptation, dramatic roleplay, and interactive inquiry methods. This pedagogical approach carries particular importance because young children exhibit enhanced learning outcomes through playful activities, imaginative engagement, kinesthetic experiences, and multisensory stimulation. Creative storytelling fosters an environment characterized by enjoyment and meaningful purpose, transforming children from passive observers into active contributors who participate as audience members, speakers, actors, and narrative co-constructors. When children engage in these active capacities, storytelling measurably enhances their lexical development, phonological sensitivity, narrative comprehension, interest in reading, and foundational writing competencies. Therefore, creative storytelling is extensively acknowledged as an effective pedagogical strategy for making early literacy instruction more adaptable, responsive to children's needs, and developmentally appropriate (Dina dkk., 2025).

### **8. Multilingual and Inclusive Storytelling**

Storytelling also possesses considerable potential for promoting multilingual and inclusive literacy approaches within early childhood settings. In classrooms characterized by linguistic diversity, children bring distinct native languages, culturally embedded experiences, and varied meaning-making frameworks. Storytelling can honor these linguistic and cultural assets by enabling children to access their complete communicative resources through translanguaging practices, collective narratives, visual representation, verbal elaboration, and cooperative story development. Empirical investigations of multilingual storytelling suggest that these practices can enhance participation in emergent reading and writing activities while simultaneously supporting spoken language growth and cultural self-awareness (Ollerhead & Pennington, 2024).

### **9. The Role of Stories in Children's Holistic Development**

The benefits of storytelling extend considerably beyond linguistic and literacy domains, influencing children's imaginative capacities, emotional growth, social skills, ethical thinking, identity construction, and the overall educational community culture. Through narrative participation, children cultivate sophisticated understandings of human situations, acquire perspective-taking abilities, and practice socially acceptable responses to disagreement and diversity. Stories can therefore contribute to

developing empathy, imagination, self-understanding, and moral character, in addition to their more observable language and literacy benefits (Rahma dkk., 2025).

### **10. Analytical Assumption of the Literature Review**

Based on the theoretical perspectives and research evidence examined throughout this review, the analysis operates from the fundamental assumption that storytelling facilitates language and early literacy development through three primary pathways. Initially, storytelling provides abundant and contextually situated linguistic input that promotes vocabulary expansion, listening comprehension, oral communication proficiency, and narrative competence. Subsequently, storytelling creates interactive pedagogical situations through questioning techniques, story retelling activities, facilitated dialogue, dramatic performance, and teacher-provided scaffolding. Finally, storytelling exposes children to essential literacy foundations including narrative organization, the communicative function of written symbols, phonological awareness, comprehension abilities, and inherent motivation to interact with books and representational systems. These considerations establish storytelling as a valuable analytical framework for investigating how early childhood educational practices can simultaneously advance both language acquisition and early literacy in an integrated and cohesive fashion (Alkilani & Zhang, 2025).

## **C. Research Methodology**

This study adopted a qualitative descriptive approach founded upon a literature review framework. The literature review was conducted to systematically identify, analyze, and integrate relevant scholarly evidence regarding storytelling and its role in fostering language acquisition and early literacy skills in young learners. This methodological approach was intentionally selected because the research's central objective is to develop a theoretically and empirically robust understanding derived from extant academic literature, rather than collecting primary data through direct participant involvement. A literature review is broadly recognized as a suitable methodological strategy when a study's goal focuses on analyzing, contrasting, and synthesizing insights across diverse sources to generate substantive conclusions about a particular research topic.

The data foundation for this investigation consisted of 27 academic references, including peer-reviewed scholarly articles, conference publications, and academic texts focusing on storytelling, language acquisition, literacy education, and early childhood pedagogy. Materials were chosen using purposive sampling strategies based on their direct alignment with the research objectives, temporal relevance (prioritizing publications from 2017 through 2026), and academic rigor. Source identification was executed through recognized academic search platforms, including Google Scholar, ERIC, and Scopus, utilizing these search descriptors: storytelling, early childhood, language development, early literacy, vocabulary, phonological awareness, narrative skills, digital storytelling, and scaffolding. Only sources that specifically investigated storytelling as an instructional approach within early childhood educational settings

and presented outcomes related to language or literacy development were incorporated into the review.

The data gathering process advanced through documentation methods, encompassing meticulous and comprehensive examination of each chosen source, identification of pertinent information, and organized documentation of essential findings aligned with the research questions guiding the study. The documentation procedure involved detailed analysis of the abstracts, opening sections, theoretical underpinnings, research results, and concluding sections of each reference, thus guaranteeing thorough and balanced representation of relevant material. Documented observations were then arranged according to the primary thematic dimensions of the investigation, including the connection between storytelling and language acquisition, storytelling and early literacy development, varied storytelling approaches, scaffolding mechanisms within storytelling contexts, and patterns of children's engagement.

The analytical framework utilized qualitative content analysis, representing a methodical approach for detecting, classifying, and interpreting consistent patterns and developing themes within written materials. The analysis progressed through four consecutive phases. During the initial phase, data condensation was accomplished by concentrating exclusively on information directly pertinent to storytelling and language or literacy advancement in early childhood, while intentionally excluding extraneous or marginally related content. The subsequent phase involved thematic classification, during which related findings were grouped into unified themes addressing vocabulary expansion, auditory comprehension, oral communication competence, narrative abilities, phonological sensitivity, preparedness for literacy, and the unique contributions of different storytelling formats. The third phase utilized narrative synthesis to express findings from each designated theme in a logical and analytically sound fashion, combining perspectives from numerous sources to identify trends, commonalities, and areas of variation. The concluding phase encompassed inference formulation, whereby core findings were consolidated to respond to the research questions and produce significant implications for early childhood teaching practice.

To enhance the validity and reliability of the analytical procedure, the investigation implemented source triangulation by incorporating a heterogeneous collection of references from diverse research settings, including Indonesian early childhood programs, EFL instructional environments, multilingual pedagogical contexts, and Western educational systems. Analytical rigor was preserved through repeated verification of thematic classifications against the primary source documents throughout the composition process. The study additionally upheld transparency by explicitly recognizing its inherent constraints, including the substantial diversity in research methodologies and assessment tools across the examined sources, thereby ensuring that interpretations were approached with suitable prudence and did not exceed reasonable claims concerning the transferability of the results.

#### **D. Discussion**

## **1. Storytelling as a Strategy for Supporting Language Development**

The evidence compiled from the examined literature uniformly indicates that storytelling functions as a dependable and effective mechanism for advancing language acquisition during early childhood. By providing exposure to vocabulary, demonstrating expressive linguistic structures, presenting diverse grammatical formations, modeling accurate pronunciation, and situating communication within meaningful contexts, storytelling generates recurring occasions for children to listen to, comprehend, replicate, and employ language purposefully (Rofi'ah dkk., 2025). Contemporary Indonesian research likewise confirms that storytelling and participatory language activities can enhance lexical command, verbal fluency, grammatical understanding, and self-assurance in oral communication (Supriyadin dkk., 2025).

The impact of storytelling on language acquisition becomes most comprehensible when examined through the perspective of its fundamentally interactive nature. When teachers encourage children to predict narrative progressions, answer queries, mimic character speech, or recreate story content, children are prompted to utilize language in productive and engaged ways. This dynamic concurrently develops receptive linguistic competencies such as focused listening and interpretation alongside expressive linguistic skills such as verbal production and narrative reproduction. The caliber of instructor language during shared book reading and storytelling encounters also matters significantly, as the employment of intellectually challenging questions, lexically rich expressions, and extended discourse has been demonstrated to influence children's oral language development, especially regarding syntactic understanding and lexical expansion (Ovati dkk., 2026).

These results collectively emphasize that storytelling realizes its most substantial linguistic benefits when it moves beyond unidirectional narrative delivery. Children need authentic opportunities to interact with the story, their instructor, and their peers. Storytelling encounters enhanced through questioning techniques, shared dialogue, linguistic rehearsal, and retelling activities establish a communicatively rich setting wherein children can exercise genuine language application naturally. Therefore, within early childhood instructional contexts, storytelling ought to be purposefully designed as an interactive language-acquisition mechanism rather than reduced to merely an amusement activity.

## **2. Storytelling and Early Literacy Development**

In addition to its influence on spoken language, storytelling holds a pivotal role in early literacy advancement by familiarizing children with the organization, purpose, and semantic characteristics of language prior to the introduction of formal reading and writing pedagogy. Early literacy incorporates spoken language proficiency, auditory comprehension, lexical knowledge, print recognition, sound sensitivity,

narrative interpretation, visual comprehension, and inclination to interact with texts and written representations. This comprehensive conceptualization is reinforced by early childhood literacy research that highlights reading, writing, cognitive processing, and meaning construction as interrelated developmental phenomena (Marwany & Kurniawan, 2020).

The investigations analyzed in this review reveal that storytelling provides children with capabilities to track narrative progressions, distinguish primary characters, discern conflicts and their solutions, and reproduce story events using their own linguistic resources. These developing abilities are intimately and substantively linked to subsequent reading and writing preparedness. Findings from picture-book interventions, story-grammar approaches, and collaborative reading programs indicate that narrative-centered instruction can enhance children's understanding of story frameworks, episodic sophistication, and future narrative competencies, even when certain vocabulary or grammatical outcomes fade over time (FitzPatrick dkk., 2026).

The relationship between storytelling and literacy becomes more apparent by examining the developmental pathway children traverse from oral language participation toward symbolic comprehension. Before developing the capacity to interpret written materials independently, children initially grasp that narratives contain meaning, that visual representations can depict actual occurrences, and that spoken language corresponds to written symbolic markers. In this regard, storytelling fulfills the critical function of connecting oral communicative proficiency with formal literacy learning. This strengthens the pedagogical principle that early literacy instruction should not be delivered solely through isolated reading and writing drills, but through substantive, purposeful language encounters that are authentically responsive to young children's developmental characteristics.

### **3. Traditional, Digital, and Dramatic Storytelling**

The scholarly literature examined in this investigation demonstrates that storytelling can be executed through various implementation formats, including conventional oral delivery, digital storytelling, theatrical presentation, and storytelling supplemented by visual or multimedia resources. Each approach possesses unique pedagogical advantages. Traditional storytelling promotes immediate and emotionally intimate teacher-student interaction, affective bonding, and impromptu communicative interaction. Digital storytelling attracts and maintains children's engagement through the incorporation of visual elements, audio effects, motion graphics, and visual progression. Dramatic storytelling enhances children's understanding through the physical application of bodily movements, facial communication, kinesthetic activity, and character-based performance.

Comparative investigations examining conventional and digital storytelling determined that both methodologies yielded significant improvements in vocabulary

learning, narrative comprehension, and story construction abilities within early childhood English instructional settings (Surya & Aprilia, 2024). The implementation of digital storytelling stations in early childhood classrooms additionally enhanced children's auditory skills, character recognition, comprehension of narrative sequences, and assurance in story reproduction (Nasution, 2025). Supplementary technology-enhanced storytelling interventions utilizing interactive PowerPoint platforms have been documented to elevate children's concentration, eagerness, involvement, and responsive behavior during instructional sessions (Sianipar dkk., 2025).

Collectively, these results indicate that no particular storytelling format should be regarded as the singularly effective methodology. Instead, educators benefit most from choosing storytelling modalities deliberately, informed by children's developmental requirements, classroom environmental conditions, articulated instructional aims, and resource accessibility. While digital technology undoubtedly enriches the storytelling encounter, it should not be allowed to supplant the indispensable worth of authentic human connection between instructors and children. In the end, the critical determinant in successful storytelling is not the delivery mechanism itself, but how that mechanism is utilized to promote listening involvement, verbal production, comprehension, creative thinking, and engaged participation.

#### **4. Storytelling, Scaffolding, and Children's Active Participation**

The instructional effectiveness of storytelling is considerably enhanced when educators integrate intentional scaffolding across the activity. Scaffolding can manifest in multiple ways, including the explanation of unknown vocabulary, the presentation of strategically formulated questions, the demonstration of targeted grammatical structures, the application of visual aids, the encouragement to anticipate subsequent events, and the creation of organized opportunities for narrative reconstruction. Research on collaborative reading and narrative instruction highlights that educator discourse, directed questioning, visual assistance, and story-structure teaching can influence children's spoken language and narrative development (Grøver dkk., 2024).

Children's engaged participation represents an essential component of successful storytelling implementation. When children are prompted to forecast future events, portray story figures, organize narrative components, address questions, or reproduce story material, they shift from passive language receivers to active sense constructors. This corresponds with evidence that participatory storytelling and language-based activities assist children in applying novel vocabulary in discourse, articulating thoughts verbally, and engaging more assuredly in literacy experiences (Rofi'ah dkk., 2025).

The scholarly literature examined aligns on the suggestion that storytelling be organized around three integrated stages: pre-storytelling, during-storytelling, and post-storytelling experiences. Within the pre-storytelling stage, educators can present

essential vocabulary, stimulate children's existing background knowledge, and display visual materials related to the narrative. During the storytelling phase, teachers can utilize expressive delivery, present thought-provoking questions, and encourage children to engage actively with story progressions. After the storytelling, children can participate in reconstructing the narrative, drawing characters, arranging story visuals, examining embedded ethical lessons, or establishing personal links between story occurrences and their own life experiences. This three-stage framework provides storytelling with enhanced methodological organization and guarantees its purposeful integration with comprehensive literacy advancement objectives.

## 5. Summary of Reviewed Findings

Table 1. Summary of Storytelling Contributions to Language and Early Literacy Development

No.	Storytelling Aspect	Main Contribution	Supporting Sources
1	Oral storytelling	Improves fluency, vocabulary, sentence structure, and speaking confidence	Rafiola et al. (2022); Sitinjak et al. (2025); Supriyadin et al. (2025)
2	Structured storytelling	Supports early literacy through planned before, during, and after story activities, including narrative structure and story grammar	FitzPatrick et al. (2026); Maureen et al. (2022); Grøver et al. (2024)
3	Digital storytelling	Increases attention, comprehension, vocabulary, narrative skills, retelling confidence, and interactive participation	Nasution (2025); Shi and Cheung (2024); Sianipar et al. (2025); Surya and Aprilia (2024)
4	Dramatic storytelling	Strengthens emergent literacy through dramatization, gestures, and active involvement	Alkilani and Zhang (2025)
5	Creative storytelling and language games	Improves phonological awareness, reading interest, writing readiness, story comprehension, vocabulary, and oral confidence	Dina et al. (2025); Rofi'ah et al. (2025)
6	Multimodal narrative intervention	Supports narrative and pragmatic skills through verbal, visual, and embodied scaffolding	Florit-Pons et al. (2025); Ryokai et al. (2002)
7	Multilingual storytelling	Validates children's home languages and cultural identities while supporting oral language, early reading, and writing engagement	Ollerhead and Pennington (2024); Shi and Cheung (2024)

8	Storytelling for holistic development	Supports imagination, empathy, character formation, social understanding, and identity development	Kerry-Moran and Aerila (2019); Rahma et al. (2025)
---	---------------------------------------	--	--

Table 1 demonstrates that storytelling promotes language and early literacy advancement through several interrelated mechanisms. Oral storytelling strengthens children's verbal production capabilities and lexical range, while organized storytelling facilitates intentional literacy instruction. Digital storytelling improves concentration, comprehension abilities, and narrative reproduction assurance, while dramatic and creative storytelling foster engaged participation, creative thinking, and sound awareness. Multilingual and multimodal storytelling further broaden the applicability of storytelling for children representing varied linguistic and cultural heritages (Ollerhead & Pennington, 2024).

## 6. Interpretation of the Literature Review

Based on the collection of research analyzed in this review, storytelling can be conceptualized as facilitating language and early literacy advancement through no fewer than four core processes. Initially, storytelling provides purposeful and contextually situated linguistic input, repeatedly introducing children to novel vocabulary, grammatical constructions, expressive terminology, and narrative frameworks within logical and meaningful situations. Subsequently, storytelling actively stimulates language production by prompting children to address questions, formulate their own questions, develop predictions, provide descriptions, and recreate narrative content. Additionally, storytelling enhances understanding by directing children to interpret characters, story occurrences, causative connections, outcomes, and incorporated ethical meanings. Finally, storytelling nurtures children's dispositional engagement with literacy by making literacy-associated activities naturally pleasurable, imaginatively engaging, and emotionally significant (Cremin dkk., 2017).

These processes demonstrate substantial correspondence with the developmental attributes that characterize early childhood education. Instruction during this phase proves most successful when it is tangible, interactive, ludic, and anchored in children's actual experiences. Storytelling fulfills these requirements by naturally integrating language, kinesthetic movement, visual representation, auditory elements, play, imagination, and interpersonal engagement. This perspective receives support from academic literature on storytelling and childhood development, which repeatedly underscores that narratives enhance language growth, literacy learning, classroom culture, imaginative capacity, self-identity construction, and the development of social connections (Kerry-Moran & Aerila, 2019).

The outcomes of this review additionally indicate that storytelling merits acknowledgment as a comprehensive pedagogical approach rather than a narrowly defined instructional technique. Its benefits reach far beyond any isolated aspect of language, such as vocabulary knowledge, to include auditory comprehension, verbal production, narrative proficiency, social engagement, and early literacy preparation in a unified and reciprocally supportive fashion. Consequently, storytelling emerges as a practically feasible and educationally valid approach for instructors aiming to systematically integrate language and literacy advancement within early childhood teaching environments.

## **7. Comparison with Previous Studies**

The outcomes of this literature review reveal considerable consistency with earlier research that has recorded the beneficial influence of storytelling on children's lexical development, comprehension abilities, and narrative capabilities. Storytelling has been demonstrated to operate not simply as an entertaining instructional activity, but as a pedagogical method that offers children substantive language exposure, organized narrative frameworks, and occasions for verbal production. Empirical evidence has shown that storytelling leads to enhancements in children's comprehensive language advancement, especially in verbal fluency, lexical selection, and grammatical construction (Rafiola dkk., 2022). Similarly, storytelling has also been discovered to enhance children's vocabulary scope, articulation precision, narrative consistency, auditory comprehension, and self-assurance in oral expression (Sitinjak dkk., 2025). These outcomes receive additional validation from evidence that methodically organized storytelling interventions can function as an effective vehicle for advancing early literacy when they are coordinated with purposeful learning experiences preceding, accompanying, and following the narrative (Maureen dkk., 2022).

The results also correspond with investigations analyzing digital, dramatic, and multimodal storytelling formats. Both conventional and digital storytelling have exhibited the ability to advance English language acquisition among young learners, particularly in lexical learning, comprehension, and narrative competence development (Surya & Aprilia, 2024). Dramatic storytelling has likewise been recognized as an influential methodology for facilitating emergent literacy in EFL kindergarten contexts because it combines storybooks, dramatization, expressive communication, and children's engaged involvement (Alkilani & Zhang, 2025). Multimodal narrative instruction has also revealed beneficial impacts on preschool children's narrative production and pragmatic communication abilities through the application of verbal scaffolding, visual assistance, gesture, facial communication, and interactive reconstruction activities (Florit-Pons dkk., 2025). Viewed collectively, these investigations suggest that storytelling sustains its educational significance across varied pedagogical settings, including Indonesian early childhood programs, EFL instructional contexts, and multilingual early childhood environments.

Despite this promising alignment of results, the examined literature also clarifies that the efficacy of storytelling depends upon the quality of its execution. Storytelling is improbable to generate optimal developmental results when educators limit themselves to reading or delivering stories without integrating meaningful engagement, scaffolded assistance, media materials, or intentional follow-up experiences. Teacher expertise consequently surfaces as a vital factor influencing effectiveness. Instructors must possess the capacity to choose contextually suitable narratives, apply expressive and diverse language, dynamically involve children in the narrative experience, and connect storytelling encounters within explicitly articulated literacy instructional goals.

## **8. Research Limitations**

Considering that this investigation is based on a literature review approach, the breadth and detail of its examination are inevitably influenced by the quality, availability, and thematic pertinence of the materials examined. The research incorporated in this review displays substantial variation in methodological design, participant numbers, educational settings, assessment tools, and storytelling formats. Particular investigations focus their analytical emphasis predominantly on language advancement results, while others concentrate on early literacy, digital storytelling, dramatic narrative, multilingual storytelling approaches, or narrative instruction. This diversity among investigations prevents the development of a singular comprehensive conclusion transferable to all early childhood instructional settings.

An additional constraint exists in the lack of a uniform set of assessment criteria for language and literacy results across the examined research. Some studies define development through vocabulary and comprehension measures, while others emphasize narrative competence performance, participatory involvement, story reconstruction capacity, or classroom observation evidence. This inconsistency makes inter-study comparisons more analytical and deductive in character than statistically exact. Furthermore, several of the cited works appear as community engagement reports or theoretical academic texts, which, although providing worthwhile practical viewpoints and theoretical contributions, may not possess the equivalent level of empirical stringency as experimental studies or longitudinal scholarly investigations.

## **9. Practical Implications**

The results generated by this review hold significant implications for early childhood teaching practice, indicating that instructors should regard storytelling as a carefully organized and intentionally structured instructional methodology. Successful execution of storytelling requires explicitly defined instructional goals, deliberate narrative choice, carefully developed interactive queries, expressive and captivating delivery, intentional incorporation of media assistance, and organized subsequent literacy experiences. Instructors can utilize a broad array of materials including illustrated books, hand puppets, narrative cards, digital presentation media, dramatic

roleplay, and children's personal illustrations to enhance the storytelling encounter and maintain children's attention. Children should be regularly prompted to engage actively across storytelling encounters, participating in prediction, question response, character representation, peer conversation, drawing, story arrangement, and narrative reconstruction.

Within the wider context of instructional practice, storytelling should be incorporated as a fundamental element of routine language and literacy learning activities. Instructors can employ storytelling as a mechanism for presenting new vocabulary, cultivating auditory comprehension, encouraging verbal production, establishing narrative comprehension, and strengthening children's individual relationship with books and reading. When storytelling is executed with deliberateness and methodical organization, it possesses the capacity to function as an authentically transformative approach in facilitating both language advancement and early literacy development across early childhood education.

## **E. Conclusion**

This research establishes that storytelling represents a powerful and significant pedagogical method for promoting language development throughout early childhood. Storytelling consistently strengthens children's abilities to comprehend and produce language by providing rich and contextually embedded linguistic input through lexical items, sentence structures, articulation models, and story organization. Children participating in storytelling activities demonstrate advancement in listening comprehension, vocabulary scope, oral fluency, sentence formation, narrative coherence, and confidence in verbal communication. These language accomplishments are intensified when storytelling is implemented in an interactive manner, allowing children to predict story progressions, address questions, emulate character behaviors, and retell narratives in their own linguistic expressions. The findings validate that storytelling promotes language development most effectively when it is designed as a bidirectional communicative interaction rather than a one-way transmission, and when teachers utilize expressive speech, visual materials, and guiding inquiries to scaffold children's language utilization throughout the narrative experience.

This research additionally establishes that storytelling facilitates early literacy development by introducing children to story structure, narrative meaning, awareness of print, sound sensitivity, and motivation to engage with literature and written symbols. Storytelling functions as a transitional bridge connecting oral communication and formal literacy instruction because children learn, through repeated narrative experiences, that language carries significance, that stories contain sequential elements and characters, and that spoken words correspond to written symbols. Systematic storytelling that encompasses pre-narrative, during-narrative, and post-narrative activities demonstrates particular effectiveness in supporting early literacy because it connects language learning with reading readiness, interpretive skills, and writing motivation. Both traditional and digital narrative approaches, together with dramatic

and creative techniques, contribute to early literacy outcomes, and their effectiveness depends on the quality of teacher-child interaction, the appropriateness of story selection, and the implementation of subsequent activities that encourage children to respond, retell, draw, and reflect upon the narrative.

Moreover, this research establishes that the effectiveness of storytelling in early childhood classroom environments is determined not exclusively by the narrative medium or approach, but by how storytelling is planned, implemented, and sustained by educators. Storytelling that incorporates supportive scaffolding, interactive questioning, visual aids, digital technologies, multilingual resources, and structured retelling activities provides richer possibilities for children to listen, express themselves, understand, imagine, and construct meaning. These features position storytelling as a developmentally responsive strategy for strengthening children's language, literacy, imagination, and social-emotional growth.

Based on these findings, this research recommends that early childhood teachers incorporate storytelling as a regular, systematic, and purposeful component of daily language and literacy learning experiences. Teachers are encouraged to select stories that are culturally meaningful, age-suitable, and connected to children's lived experiences, and to implement organized storytelling cycles that include vocabulary preparation, interactive presentation, and follow-up activities such as retelling, drawing, and discussion. Future investigations are recommended to explore the long-term effects of systematic storytelling programs on children's literacy development, and to examine the role of family involvement, multilingual narrative practices, and locally developed digital storytelling platforms in advancing early literacy within Indonesian early childhood education contexts.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Alkilani, G. Y., & Zhang, Q. (2025). Effect of Dramatic Storytelling on Emergent Literacy in EFL: Evidence from the UAE Kindergartens. *Literacy Research and Instruction*, 64(3), 322–340. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19388071.2024.2329877>
- Cremin, T., Flewitt, R., Mardell, B., & Swann, J. (2017). *Storytelling in Early Childhood: Enriching Language, Literacy and Classroom Culture*. Routledge.
- Dina, Jamila, Juariyah, Yulianti, S., & Syamsiah. (2025). Metode Mendongeng Kreatif dalam Meningkatkan Literasi Baca Tulis Anak Usia Dini. *AKSIOMA: Jurnal Sains Ekonomi dan Edukasi*, 2(12), 2789–2802.
- FitzPatrick, E., Schrodtt, K., Davis, T., Lee, S., & Towson, J. (2026). Foundations for writing: Preschool oral storytelling following visual design and story grammar instruction. *Reading and Writing*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11145-026-10817-1>
- Florit-Pons, J., Igualada, A., & Prieto, P. (2025). Evaluating the Feasibility and Preliminary Effectiveness of a Multi-Tiered Multimodal Narrative Intervention

- Program for Preschool Children. *Language, Speech, and Hearing Services in Schools*, 56, 17–41. [https://doi.org/10.1044/2024\\_LSHSS-24-00048](https://doi.org/10.1044/2024_LSHSS-24-00048)
- Grøver, V., Gustafsson, J.-E., Rydland, V., & Snow, C. E. (2024). Are there sustained effects of a preschool shared-reading intervention addressing dual language learners? *Scientific Studies of Reading*, 28(4), 441–462. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10888438.2024.2335925>
- Halimatuzzuhrotulaini, B., Arzani, M., Riandiani, B., Hidayatussolihah, J., Dewi, L. T., Yulianti, N., Riyadatussoliha, Hidayaturrohmah, S., & Zaeniah, U. (2023). *Perkembangan bahasa anak (Child language and literacy development)*. CV Alfa Press.
- Kerry-Moran, K. J., & Aerila, J.-A. (2019). *Story in Children's Lives: Contributions of the Narrative Mode to Early Childhood Development, Literacy, and Learning* (Vol. 16). Springer Nature Switzerland AG. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-19266-2>
- Marwany, & Kurniawan, H. (2020). *Pendidikan Literasi Anak Usia Dini: Meningkatkan Keterampilan Membaca, Menulis, dan Berpikir Anak*. Hijaz Pustaka Mandiri.
- Maureen, I. Y., van der Meij, H., & de Jong, T. (2022). Evaluating storytelling activities for early literacy development. *International Journal of Early Years Education*, 30(4), 679–696. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669760.2021.1933917>
- Nasution, D. F. (2025). Efektivitas Model Sentra Digital Storytelling untuk Meningkatkan Kemampuan Literasi Dini Anak PAUD RA Al Anshar Bandar Baru Bendahara Aceh Tamiang. *UNISAN JURNAL: Jurnal Manajemen dan Pendidikan Islam*, 04(07), 445–454.
- Ollerhead, S., & Pennington, G. (2024). Starting small: Engaging young learners with literacy through multilingual storytelling. *Journal of Early Childhood Literacy*, 26(1), 327–357. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14687984241303390>
- Ovati, T. S. R., Rydland, V., Lekhal, R., Lydersen, S., & Grøver, V. (2026). Does Teacher Talk During Shared Reading Predict Child Oral Language Development in Diverse ECEC Settings? *First Language*, 46(2), 234–255. <https://doi.org/10.1177/01427237251377897>
- Paramansyah, A. (2025). *Pengembangan literasi anak usia dini dalam tantangan zaman di era digital*. CV Eureka Media Aksara.
- Rafiola, R. H., Anggraini, D., & Sari, V. N. (2022). The Effectiveness of Storytelling Method To Increase Language Development In Early Childhood. *JED: Jurnal Etika Demokrasi*, 7(3), 461–471. <https://doi.org/10.26618/jed.v%25vi%25i.8140>
- Rahma, F., Lestari, M., Uliya, N., Alya, F., Fitri, H., Salikin, N., Nadhifa, C. S., & Nadila, D. (2025). Membangun literasi, imajinasi, dan karakter antibullying anak usia dini melalui kegiatan storytelling di taman kanak-kanak. *Jurnal Pengabdian Kolaborasi dan Inovasi IPTEKS*, 3(4), 914–919.
- Rofi'ah, U. A., Oktaviana, W. F., Mundzir, M., Muslimin, Ngainin, N., Hidayati, N., & Fauzi, M. (2025). Pelatihan storytelling dan permainan bahasa interaktif sebagai strategi literasi kreatif untuk anak di RA Nurul Huda. *SEMAR: Jurnal Sosial dan Pengabdian Masyarakat*, 3(1), 70–82. <https://doi.org/10.59966/semar.v3i1.1625>

- Ryokai, K., Vaucelle, C., & Cassell, J. (2002). *Literacy learning by storytelling with a virtual peer* (G. Stahl, Ed.; hlm. 352–360). International Society of the Learning Sciences.
- Shi, H., & Cheung, L. M. E. (2024). Storytelling for understanding: A case study of an English-language digital storytelling service-learning subject for refugee children in Hong Kong. *Journal for Multicultural Education*, 18(1/2), 81–97. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JME-10-2023-0116>
- Sianipar, W. M., Lutfiah, N., Azzahra, B., Sapitri, E., Afrita, S. N., Harianja, S. I., & Rosyadi, A. F. (2025). Penerapan Teknologi Berbasis Literasi Digital untuk Anak Usia Dini: Aktivitas Storytelling dan Permainan Interaktif Menggunakan PowerPoint. *Jurnal Pengabdian Masyarakat Bangsa*, 3(10), 5789.
- Sitinjak, O., Pardede, M., Siahaan, J., & Manungkalit, N. (2025). Enhancing Early Childhood Language Development through the Storytelling Method. *International Transformative Education and Humanities Journal*, 1(1).
- Supriyadin, Wiarsih, A., Supriatin, A., Afifah, R., & Latifah, U. (2025). Storytelling as a literacy strategy to improve reading and language ability in Phase A. *Edukasi: The Journal of Educational Research*, 5(1), 65–75.
- Surya, U. I., & Aprilia, V. (2024). The Impact of Storytelling on English Language Development in Early Childhood Education. *Jurnal PG-PAUD Trunojoyo: Jurnal Pendidikan dan Pembelajaran Anak Usia Dini*, 11(2), 147–157. <https://doi.org/10.21107/pgpaustrunojoyo.v11i2.21785>