

Once Upon A Skill: Using Creative Storytelling to Enhance Listening Skills of Grade 3 Learners

Marjorie Anne N. Carvajal

Graduate School, Osias Educational Foundation Inc., Balaoan, La Union, Philippines

Publication history: Received: May 2, 2026; Revised: May 19, 2026; Accepted: May 24, 2026

Email of Author: marj26.ma@gmail.com; ORCID: 0009-0008-6996-9481

Abstract

This study investigated the effectiveness of creative storytelling in enhancing the listening comprehension, attention, and responsiveness of Grade 3 learners at Pila Elementary School during the School Year 2025–2026. Grounded in Krashen’s Input Hypothesis, Vygotsky’s Sociocultural Theory, Bruner’s Constructivist Theory, Paivio’s Dual Coding Theory, and Engagement Theory, the study examined how interactive and visually supported storytelling activities influence young learners’ listening skills. A quantitative one-group pretest–posttest quasi-experimental design was employed involving thirty Grade 3 learners selected through total enumeration sampling. Data were collected using a validated listening comprehension test, an attention observation checklist, and a responsiveness task sheet administered before and after the storytelling intervention. The findings revealed that learners initially demonstrated moderate levels of listening comprehension, attention, and responsiveness. After the implementation of creative storytelling sessions using PowerPoint presentations and laminated flip-picture materials, posttest results showed very high performance across all measured variables. Statistical analysis through paired-sample t-tests confirmed significant improvements in listening comprehension, attention, and responsiveness after the intervention. Among the storytelling materials used, The Lazy John accompanied by Flip pictures creative visuals produced the greatest improvement in comprehension and participation. The study concluded that creative storytelling is an effective, engaging, and low-cost instructional strategy for improving English listening skills among young learners in public elementary classrooms. The study further recommended integrating storytelling strategies into English instruction and encouraging home and school collaboration in storytelling activities. The study supports Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 on Quality Education by promoting inclusive, engaging, and effective language learning strategies for young learners. It also contributes to educational and community sustainability by providing accessible and adaptable instructional approaches that strengthen literacy development, classroom participation, and learner engagement in resource-limited educational settings. The study also supports SDG 5 on Gender Equality by providing equal opportunities for boys and girls to participate in interactive storytelling activities regardless of gender or socioeconomic background.

Keywords: Attention, Creative Storytelling, Grade 3 Learners, Listening Comprehension, Listening Responsiveness, Public Elementary Education, Storytelling Intervention

1. Introduction

Listening is a foundational skill in language learning because it enables learners to understand spoken language before developing speaking, reading, and writing abilities. For Grade 3 learners, listening comprehension supports communication, vocabulary development, attention, responsiveness, and literacy growth. However, traditional listening instruction often fails to sustain young learners’ engagement, especially in contexts where exposure to English is limited. Storytelling has emerged as an effective instructional strategy because it combines meaningful language input, emotional engagement, interaction, and creativity. Studies across different countries consistently demonstrate that storytelling enhances listening comprehension, attention, and learner responsiveness (Putri et al., 2021; Ahmed et al., 2023; Royani et al., 2023; Demirbas and Sahin, 2022; Tabieh et al., 2021). Despite these findings, limited research has examined the effects of creative teacher-led storytelling among Grade 3 learners in Philippine public schools. This study, *Once Upon a Skill: Using Creative Storytelling to Enhance Listening Skills of Grade 3 Learners*, investigates how creative storytelling influences listening comprehension, attention, and responsiveness among learners at Pila Elementary School.

1.1 Background of the Study

Listening is considered the “gateway skill” in second language learning because it supports comprehension, communication, and literacy development (Putri et al., 2021). Children who develop strong listening comprehension are more capable of understanding lessons, following instructions, and improving their speaking and reading skills (Ahmed et al., 2023). However, listening is often difficult to teach because it occurs in real time, giving learners little opportunity to pause or clarify meaning, especially among young learners with limited English exposure outside school (Royani et al., 2023). Traditional listening activities such as drills, recorded audio, and comprehension exercises frequently fail to

maintain learners' interest. Grade 3 learners generally learn more effectively through imaginative, interactive, and emotionally engaging activities. Researchers therefore emphasize that listening instruction should involve creativity and active participation (Royani et al., 2023). Storytelling addresses these needs by transforming listening from a passive activity into a meaningful and enjoyable learning experience. Storytelling enhances vocabulary acquisition, comprehension, sequencing, memory retention, pronunciation awareness, and speaking abilities through retelling and dramatization. Narrative structures help learners organize information more effectively, while suspense and emotional engagement sustain attention and encourage responsiveness. Learners actively participate by predicting events, answering questions, retelling stories, and relating narratives to personal experiences. Studies consistently report that storytelling improves listening comprehension and learner motivation (Ahmed et al., 2023; Royani et al., 2023). In Philippine public schools, listening instruction is often constrained by large class sizes, limited instructional materials, and restricted exposure to English outside the classroom. Creative storytelling provides a practical and low-cost instructional strategy because it can be implemented through gestures, pictures, props, facial expressions, and voice modulation without requiring advanced technology. At Pila Elementary School, the Beginning of School Year (BoSY) Comprehensive Rapid Literacy Assessment (CRLA) revealed significant literacy gaps among Grade 3 learners, with only 50% classified as Grade Ready while others required varying levels of intervention. These findings established the empirical basis for implementing creative storytelling interventions.

1.2 Themes and Insights from Related Literature on Creative Storytelling and Listening Skills

The reviewed literature consistently identifies listening as a critical component of language acquisition and highlights storytelling as an effective pedagogical strategy for developing listening comprehension, attention, and responsiveness among young learners. Studies show that storytelling improves listening comprehension because narratives provide meaningful and contextualized language input. Ahmed et al. (2023) found that preschool learners taught through storytelling demonstrated significantly higher listening comprehension and recall than learners exposed to routine classroom instruction. Similarly, Demirbas and Sahin (2022) reported that digital storytelling enhanced comprehension among Turkish primary learners by combining narrative structure, visuals, and sound. Another major theme in the literature is learner engagement and attention. Tabieh et al. (2021) demonstrated that storytelling improved concentration and active listening among Grade 3 learners, while Royani et al. (2023) observed higher learner motivation and participation during storytelling sessions compared to textbook-based activities. Philippine studies also confirmed that storytelling enhanced attentiveness and reduced behavioral disruptions in public school classrooms (Alipar et al., 2024; Duran and Aquino, 2024; Calo, 2023). Responsiveness also emerged as a significant outcome of storytelling-based instruction. Storytelling naturally encourages learners to ask questions, predict outcomes, retell events, and express reactions. Yeung, Ma, and Law (2025) found that interactive storytelling delivered by teachers or robots increased learner responsiveness and participation more effectively than passive tablet-based storytelling. The literature further emphasizes the cognitive, emotional, and social benefits of storytelling. Neuroscience studies indicate that storytelling activates brain regions associated with memory, empathy, and visualization (Learning to Listen, 2024). These findings suggest that storytelling supports not only language acquisition but also social interaction, emotional development, and collaborative learning. Despite extensive international evidence, local studies remain limited, particularly regarding simple teacher-led storytelling interventions for Grade 3 learners in Philippine public schools. Most Philippine research focuses on digital storytelling or older learners (Alipar et al., 2024). This gap highlights the need for localized studies examining the effectiveness of creative storytelling on listening skills among young Filipino learners.

1.3 Local, National, and Global Context of Creative Storytelling and Listening Development

Globally, English functions as a dominant international language used in education, technology, science, and business. Consequently, early listening comprehension in English is essential for learners in non-English-speaking countries, including the Philippines. Research indicates that strong listening comprehension supports vocabulary growth, pronunciation development, and real-time language processing (Ahmed et al., 2023). International studies from Turkey, Indonesia, Jordan, and other countries demonstrate the effectiveness of storytelling in improving listening comprehension, learner attention, and classroom engagement (Demirbas and Sahin, 2022; Royani et al., 2023; Tabieh et al., 2021). These studies consistently show that storytelling promotes active learning and improves learners' ability to sustain focus during listening activities. Nationally, English remains a core subject in the Philippine K–12 curriculum, where listening is identified as a key competency. However, classroom instruction often prioritizes reading and writing over listening. Many Filipino learners have limited exposure to English outside school because local languages are primarily used at home. Consequently, classroom listening activities become learners' primary opportunities for practicing English comprehension. Locally, schools such as Pila Elementary School experience challenges related to limited resources, varying learner proficiency levels, and large class sizes. In these contexts, creative storytelling provides an accessible and culturally appropriate instructional strategy that can strengthen learners' comprehension, attention, and responsiveness while requiring minimal resources.

1.4 Theoretical and Conceptual Basis of Creative Storytelling and Listening Skills

This study is grounded in several theories related to language acquisition, cognition, interaction, and learner engagement. Krashen's Input Hypothesis (1985) explains that learners acquire language through exposure to comprehensible input slightly beyond their current proficiency level. Storytelling provides contextualized and meaningful language input supported by gestures, visuals, and repetition, making comprehension more accessible (Ahmed et al., 2023; Alipar et al., 2024). Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory (1978) and the Zone of Proximal Development emphasize that learning occurs through guided social interaction. Storytelling sessions support learners through scaffolding, guided questioning, and collaborative participation, enabling them to gradually develop listening skills (Royani et al., 2023; Tabieh et al., 2021). Bruner's Constructivist Theory (1991) highlights the importance of narratives in organizing experiences and constructing meaning. Storytelling helps learners understand sequencing, prediction, and cause-and-effect relationships while making listening meaningful and memorable (Demirbaş and Şahin, 2022). Paivio's Dual Coding Theory (1986) posits that learners process information through verbal and non-verbal channels. Storytelling integrates spoken language with visuals, gestures, voice modulation, and emotional expression, strengthening comprehension and recall (Lin et al., 2025). Engagement Theory further explains that learners achieve better outcomes when they are emotionally, cognitively, and behaviorally engaged (Fredricks et al., 2020). Storytelling promotes engagement by stimulating imagination, encouraging participation, and sustaining learners' attention (Alipar et al., 2024). The study also adopts the Input–Process–Output (IPO) Model. The input includes learners' pretest and posttest levels of listening comprehension, attention, and responsiveness. The process involves structured storytelling sessions using creative materials and guided interaction. The output focuses on enhanced storytelling materials, strategies, and improved listening performance among Grade 3 learners.

1.5 Research Gaps and Rationale

Although numerous international studies confirm the effectiveness of storytelling in improving listening comprehension, attention, and responsiveness (Demirbaş & Şahin, 2022; Royani et al., 2023; Ahmed et al., 2023), limited research has examined simple teacher-led creative storytelling interventions among Grade 3 learners in Philippine public schools. Existing Philippine studies mainly focus on digital storytelling or older learners (Alipar et al., 2024), leaving insufficient evidence regarding low-cost, classroom-based storytelling approaches appropriate for resource-limited settings. Additionally, there is limited localized evidence examining storytelling's effects on listening comprehension, attention, and responsiveness simultaneously among young Filipino learners. This study addresses these gaps by investigating the effectiveness of creative storytelling sessions among Grade 3 learners at Pila Elementary School, Luna, La Union. Specifically, it examines learners' listening comprehension, attention, and responsiveness before and after participation in storytelling interventions and determines whether significant improvements occur following the sessions.

1.6 Alignment with Relevant Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

This study aligns primarily with SDG 4 – Quality Education and SDG 5 – Gender Equality. SDG 4 promotes inclusive, equitable, and quality education through innovative and effective instructional strategies. By exploring creative storytelling as a low-cost and participatory approach to English instruction, the study contributes to improving listening comprehension and learner engagement among Grade 3 learners in public schools. Storytelling supports meaningful language acquisition, enhances classroom participation, and strengthens foundational literacy skills essential for lifelong learning. The study also supports SDG 5 – Gender Equality by providing equal opportunities for boys and girls to participate in interactive storytelling activities regardless of gender or socioeconomic background. Storytelling creates an inclusive classroom environment where all learners can engage actively in listening, responding, and collaborative participation. Additionally, the study contributes indirectly to educational sustainability by promoting accessible instructional practices that can be implemented even in resource-limited schools.

1.7 Importance of the Study to Multidisciplinary Sustainability

This study contributes to educational sustainability by strengthening foundational listening and literacy skills through accessible and engaging instructional strategies. Creative storytelling promotes learner-centered and inclusive education that can be sustained even in classrooms with limited technological resources. The study also supports socio-economic sustainability because improved language and communication skills contribute to learners' long-term academic success and future opportunities. Strong listening comprehension enhances performance in speaking, reading, and writing, which are essential competencies for educational advancement. From a community and institutional sustainability perspective, the study provides teachers and schools with practical and low-cost instructional approaches that can improve classroom participation and learner engagement. It also strengthens home-school collaboration by encouraging parents to use storytelling activities to support language development outside the classroom. Furthermore, the study contributes to research sustainability by expanding localized evidence on storytelling interventions among Filipino learners in public elementary schools. The findings may guide educators, curriculum developers, and future researchers in designing innovative and inclusive instructional strategies for language learning.

2. Material and methods

2.1 Research Design

The study employed a quantitative one-group pretest–posttest quasi-experimental research design to determine the effect of creative storytelling on the listening comprehension, attention, and responsiveness of Grade 3 learners. This design is commonly used in educational research to evaluate the effectiveness of instructional interventions when random assignment is not feasible (Creswell & Creswell, 2021). According to Cranmer (2021), quasi-experimental designs are practical in real classroom settings because they allow researchers to examine causal relationships within naturally existing groups. The study involved a single group of Grade 3 learners who participated in pretest assessments before the intervention and posttest assessments after the implementation of creative storytelling sessions (Choueiry, 2022). The independent variable of the study was the creative storytelling intervention, while the dependent variables included listening comprehension, attention, and responsiveness. The intervention consisted of teacher-led storytelling activities designed to engage learners through imagination, interaction, and expressive narration. The pretest established the learners' baseline listening performance, while the posttest measured improvements after the storytelling sessions. This design enabled the researcher to determine whether significant changes occurred following the intervention. Studies by Tabieh et al. (2021) and Duran and Aquino (2024) support the use of quasi-experimental approaches in language and classroom research because they effectively measure learning outcomes in authentic educational environments.

2.2 Locale of the Study

The study was conducted at Pila Elementary School located in Pila, Luna, La Union. The school was selected because it had Grade 3 learners suitable for investigating the effects of creative storytelling on listening skills. The researcher's involvement as a volunteer external Aral tutor for Key Stage 1 learners also facilitated access to the participants and familiarity with the school environment. The research was carried out within the learners' regular classroom setting during English lessons. Conducting the study in a natural classroom environment allowed the researcher to observe the learners' listening comprehension, attention, and responsiveness under normal learning conditions. The school administration, teachers, and parents were informed about the study to ensure cooperation and smooth implementation of the intervention.

2.3 Respondents of the Study

The respondents of the study consisted of thirty (30) Grade 3 learners enrolled at Pila Elementary School during the School Year 2025–2026. All learners in the class participated in the study through total enumeration, allowing the researcher to gather complete data regarding the effects of creative storytelling on listening comprehension, attention, and responsiveness. The respondents represented the entire Grade 3 population involved in the intervention, ensuring full participation and comprehensive observation of learners' listening performance throughout the study.

2.4 Sample and Sampling Procedure

The study employed total enumeration sampling, wherein all Grade 3 learners at Pila Elementary School were included as respondents. Since the population consisted of only thirty learners, all participants were selected to ensure complete representation of the target group. Using total enumeration enabled the researcher to gather comprehensive data regarding the effects of creative storytelling on the listening skills of the learners. This sampling approach also minimized sampling bias and ensured that every Grade 3 learner had equal participation in the intervention and assessments.

2.5 Research Instrument

The study utilized a validated listening comprehension test, an attention observation checklist, and a responsiveness task sheet to collect quantitative data related to learners' listening skills. These instruments were based on approaches commonly used in language education research to assess comprehension and learner engagement (Ahmed et al., 2023; Tabieh et al., 2021). The Listening Comprehension Test served as both the pretest and posttest instrument. It consisted of ten multiple-choice questions designed to measure learners' understanding of short English stories. The test aligned with the Department of Education's Grade 3 English curriculum standards (DepEd, 2020), ensuring age-appropriate content and validity. The Attention Observation Checklist was used during storytelling sessions to evaluate behavioral indicators of learner engagement, including attentiveness, eye contact, and active participation. Observation methods are considered effective in assessing learner attention in interactive classroom settings (Lin et al., 2025). The checklist underwent expert validation to establish reliability and content validity. The Responsiveness Task Sheet assessed learners' oral and picture-based responses to comprehension and recall questions after each storytelling session. This instrument measured learners' ability to interpret and react meaningfully to spoken English. Lin et al. (2025) emphasized that responsiveness reflects active listening and engagement with language input. The creative storytelling intervention served as the instructional treatment of the study. Two storytelling approaches were utilized: creative PowerPoint storytelling and laminated flip picture storytelling. The intervention lasted five weeks, with each session conducted for approximately 30–40 minutes. The stories used during the sessions were selected according to learners' interests, cultural familiarity, and alignment with the Most Essential Learning Competencies (MELCs) prescribed by the Department of Education for Grade 3 English. The competencies focused on listening comprehension, oral language development, participation in oral activities, identifying

story details, predicting outcomes, and retelling stories. Each storytelling session incorporated expressive narration, character voices, gestures, visual aids, questioning techniques, prediction activities, and story retelling exercises to sustain attention and strengthen comprehension. Research by Hidayat & Zainuddin (2023), Indrawati & Wardana (2023), and Putri & Salim (2023) supports the effectiveness of storytelling combined with multimedia and interactive elements in improving comprehension and engagement. Prior to implementation, approval was secured from the school administration, and informed consent was obtained from parents or guardians. Ethical standards concerning confidentiality, voluntary participation, and age-appropriate procedures were strictly observed in accordance with Creswell & Creswell (2021).

2.6 Data Gathering Procedure

The data gathering process began with securing approval from the school principal and obtaining informed consent from parents or guardians of the participating learners. After the necessary permissions were obtained, the researcher administered the pretest to assess the learners' baseline listening comprehension, attention, and responsiveness. Following the pretest, the researcher conducted the creative storytelling intervention over a five-week period. The sessions utilized creative PowerPoint presentations and laminated flip picture cards as instructional materials. During the storytelling sessions, learners listened to stories, answered comprehension questions, identified characters and events, predicted outcomes, and participated in oral and picture-based activities. Their attention and responsiveness were monitored continuously through observation checklists and task sheets. After completing the intervention, a posttest was administered using the same listening comprehension instrument to determine improvements in learners' listening performance. The collected data were then organized, analyzed, and interpreted to determine the effectiveness of the storytelling intervention.

2.7 Data Analysis Techniques

The study employed both descriptive and inferential statistics to analyze the collected data. For the first and second research problems concerning learners' listening comprehension, attention, and responsiveness before and after the intervention, the mean and standard deviation were computed. Performance levels for the pretest and posttest were interpreted using score ranges categorized as Very High, High, Moderate, Low, and Very Low. The Attention Observation Checklist utilized a five-point Likert scale to determine learners' levels of attentiveness and engagement during storytelling sessions. Descriptive equivalents ranging from Very Low to Very High were used to interpret the computed mean scores. For oral responsiveness, score ranges were likewise interpreted using categories from Very Low to Very High to describe learners' performance. To determine whether there was a significant difference between pretest and posttest scores, the Paired Sample t-Test was applied. According to Gay, Mills, & Airasian (2022), the paired t-test is appropriate for comparing related means such as learners' performance before and after an intervention. A p-value lower than 0.05 indicated a statistically significant improvement in listening comprehension, attention, or responsiveness following the storytelling intervention. To identify the most effective storytelling material, the study compared the mean gain scores obtained from the two storytelling approaches: creative PowerPoint storytelling and laminated flip picture storytelling. The material that produced the highest mean gain score and demonstrated more consistent results through a lower standard deviation was identified as the more effective intervention.

2.8 Ethical Considerations

The study strictly adhered to ethical research standards to protect the welfare and rights of the learners. Formal permission was secured from the Department of Education, the La Union Supervisor, the school head of Pila Elementary School, and participating teachers before the implementation of the study. Informed consent was obtained from parents or guardians after explaining the purpose, procedures, and activities involved in the research. The learners were also informed about the activities using age-appropriate language. Confidentiality and privacy were maintained throughout the study. Learners' names were replaced with codes or numbers in all records and reports, while faces appearing in documentation were concealed. All collected data were stored securely and used exclusively for research purposes. The study ensured that no harm, discomfort, or disadvantage was experienced by the participants. The storytelling sessions and assessments were integrated into regular classroom activities to minimize disruption to the learners' academic routines. Coordination with the classroom teacher was maintained throughout the implementation of the intervention to preserve the integrity of the learners' educational program.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Listening Skills of Grade 3 Learners Before and After Creative Storytelling Sessions

3.1.1 Listening Comprehension Before the Creative Storytelling Sessions

The pretest results showed that learners demonstrated moderate listening comprehension before the intervention. For the story "The Turtle and the Monkey," the learners obtained a mean score of 6.87 with scores ranging from very low to high. Although several learners performed well, others struggled to identify important details and understand story events. For "The Lazy John," the mean score declined further to 5.07, with more learners obtaining low and very low scores. These findings revealed inconsistent listening comprehension levels among Grade 3 learners prior to the storytelling intervention. The moderate comprehension levels suggest that learners had difficulty processing spoken narratives consistently,

particularly when stories involved unfamiliar vocabulary, complex sequencing, or unfamiliar themes. These findings support constructivist perspectives which explain that comprehension develops when learners connect new information to prior knowledge. Without interactive and engaging strategies, learners may struggle to process oral texts effectively. The results also indicate the need for scaffolded and learner-centered storytelling activities to strengthen listening comprehension among young learners.

3.1.2 Listening Attention Before the Creative Storytelling Sessions

The learners' listening attention before the intervention was also interpreted as moderate, with an overall mean score of 3.35. Learners generally showed enjoyment during storytelling and waited patiently while stories were being told. However, indicators related to sustained concentration, attentive posture, focus, and responsiveness received only moderate ratings. Many learners displayed inconsistent attention and were easily distracted during listening activities. These findings imply that while learners enjoyed listening to stories, they were not consistently engaged as active listeners. Their limited concentration and attentiveness may be associated with the developmental characteristics of Grade 3 learners, who naturally possess shorter attention spans. The results align with educational theories emphasizing that attention is essential to meaningful learning because weak focus negatively affects comprehension and retention. The moderate attention scores further suggest that previous listening activities may have lacked interactive and stimulating elements necessary to sustain learner engagement.

3.1.3 Listening Responsiveness Before the Creative Storytelling Sessions

Before the intervention, learners' responsiveness was interpreted as moderate, with a mean score of 5.60. Most learners demonstrated moderate participation during storytelling activities, while only a few achieved high responsiveness. Several learners also showed low and very low responsiveness, indicating hesitation in answering questions, reacting to story events, or participating actively during discussions. The moderate responsiveness levels indicate that learners were not consistently active participants during storytelling sessions. Limited responsiveness may have resulted from low confidence, weak comprehension, or insufficient opportunities for interaction. From a social constructivist perspective, learning develops through participation and interaction; therefore, passive listening may hinder language acquisition. The findings suggest that traditional storytelling methods may not have adequately encouraged learner participation, reinforcing the importance of interactive storytelling approaches that involve questioning, prediction, and active engagement.

3.1.4 Overall Pre-Intervention Listening Skills

Overall, the pre-intervention findings revealed moderate levels of listening comprehension, attention, and responsiveness among Grade 3 learners. The results showed uneven listening abilities and varying levels of engagement before the implementation of creative storytelling activities. Learners who obtained low and very low scores demonstrated difficulty processing spoken language and sustaining attention during storytelling sessions. These findings support Krashen's Input Hypothesis, which emphasizes the importance of comprehensible input in language acquisition. Learners with lower scores may not have been consistently exposed to meaningful and contextualized spoken language. Similarly, Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory explains that learners require scaffolding, guided questioning, and interactive support within their Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) to sustain engagement and comprehension. The moderate attention and responsiveness levels also align with Engagement Theory and Paivio's Dual Coding Theory, suggesting that learners benefit from interactive, multimodal, and visually supported instruction (Fredricks et al., 2020; Sonda et al., 2024; Hadi et al., 2023; Puspitasari et al., 2024).

3.2 Listening Skills After the Creative Storytelling Sessions

3.2.1 Listening Comprehension After the Creative Storytelling Sessions

The posttest results revealed remarkable improvement in learners' listening comprehension after the implementation of creative storytelling sessions. For "The Turtle and the Monkey," learners achieved a very high mean score of 9.57, with all learners obtaining scores of either 9 or 10. Similarly, for "The Lazy John," the mean score increased significantly to 9.00, with most learners achieving very high scores and none falling under moderate, low, or very low categories. The substantial improvement indicates that creative storytelling effectively enhanced learners' ability to process spoken narratives, identify details, sequence events, and understand story meanings. Interactive storytelling elements such as expressive narration, visual aids, gestures, repetition, and audience participation likely contributed to improved comprehension. These findings support Bruner's Constructivist Theory, which explains that narratives help learners organize information and construct meaning. The results also support studies showing that storytelling improves listening comprehension and recall among young learners (Demirbaş & Şahin, 2022).

3.2.2 Listening Attention After the Creative Storytelling Sessions

The learners' listening attention after the intervention was interpreted as very high, with an overall mean score of 4.72. All indicators received very high ratings, particularly attentiveness to the storyteller and visuals, sustained interest, enjoyment, and active participation during storytelling sessions. Learners demonstrated significantly improved concentration and engagement throughout the activities. These findings suggest that creative storytelling transformed listening from a passive

activity into an immersive and engaging learning experience. The use of visual aids, expressive delivery, and interactive questioning likely stimulated learners' curiosity and sustained their focus. The improvement supports Engagement Theory, which explains that emotional, cognitive, and behavioral engagement enhances learning outcomes. Interactive storytelling strategies encouraged learners to remain attentive and participate actively throughout the sessions (Bawamenewi et al., 2024; Sonda et al., 2024).

3.2.3 Listening Responsiveness After the Creative Storytelling Sessions

The posttest results showed that learners achieved very high responsiveness after the intervention, with a mean score of 9.63. All learners scored either 9 or 10, indicating exceptional participation during storytelling sessions. Learners became more willing to answer questions, respond appropriately to story events, and participate in discussions and storytelling activities. The findings indicate that creative storytelling effectively encouraged learners to become active participants rather than passive listeners. Interactive storytelling strategies such as questioning, dramatization, prediction activities, and guided responses strengthened learners' confidence and communication skills. These results support Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory, which emphasizes that learning occurs through guided interaction and participation within the learners' ZPD. Repeated and supportive storytelling experiences likely improved learners' confidence and responsiveness during oral activities.

3.2.4 Overall Post-Intervention Listening Skills

Overall, the posttest findings revealed consistently high and very high scores across listening comprehension, attention, and responsiveness. The learners demonstrated substantial improvement after exposure to creative storytelling sessions, suggesting that the intervention effectively strengthened both cognitive and behavioral aspects of listening. The results support Krashen's Input Hypothesis because learners were exposed to meaningful and comprehensible language input during storytelling sessions. The improvement also aligns with Bruner's Constructivist Theory, Engagement Theory, Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory, and Paivio's Dual Coding Theory. Learners benefited from structured narratives, guided interaction, emotional engagement, and multimodal input involving visual and auditory elements (Demirbaş & Şahin, 2022; Bawamenewi et al., 2024; Hadi et al., 2023; Puspitasari et al., 2024).

3.3 Significant Difference Between Pretest and Posttest Scores

The statistical analysis revealed significant differences between the pretest and posttest scores across all measured variables. Listening Comprehension for "The Turtle and the Monkey" increased from 6.87 to 9.57, while "The Lazy John" improved from 5.07 to 9.00. Attention improved from 3.35 to 4.72, and responsiveness increased from 5.60 to 9.63. All computed p-values were less than 0.05, indicating statistically significant improvements after the intervention. The significant differences confirm that creative storytelling effectively enhanced learners' listening comprehension, attention, and responsiveness. These findings support Krashen's Input Hypothesis, which explains that learners acquire language through meaningful and comprehensible input. Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory further explains that scaffolding and guided interaction improve participation and learning. Bruner's Constructivist Theory and Paivio's Dual Coding Theory also support the results by emphasizing the importance of narratives, visuals, and multimodal learning experiences in strengthening comprehension and engagement. Recent studies similarly report significant gains in listening and language development through storytelling interventions (Sonda et al., 2024; Hadi et al., 2023; Bawamenewi et al., 2024; Fredricks et al., 2020).

3.4 Most Effective Creative Storytelling Material

The findings revealed that "The Lazy John" presented through traditional flip-picture storytelling produced the strongest improvement in listening comprehension among Grade 3 learners. The story generated a higher mean gain score of 3.93 compared to the 2.70 improvement observed in "The Turtle and the Monkey." The use of flip pictures encouraged learners to predict story events, answer follow-up questions, and engage actively throughout the storytelling process. The stronger impact of flip-picture storytelling may be explained through Paivio's Dual Coding Theory, which emphasizes the effectiveness of combining visual and verbal input in improving comprehension and retention. The predictive and interactive nature of flip-picture storytelling also aligns with Bruner's Constructivist Theory because learners actively constructed meaning while anticipating story events. Furthermore, guided questioning and interaction reflect Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory by providing scaffolding that supports learner engagement and comprehension (Demirbaş & Şahin, 2022; Hadi et al., 2023).

3.5 Enhanced Creative Storytelling Materials and Implementation Strategies

The study developed enhanced creative storytelling materials using different flip pictures paired with varied stories designed to strengthen listening comprehension, attention, and responsiveness. The stories emphasized values such as honesty, kindness, hard work, gratitude, courage, organization, and responsibility. Each story was supported by colorful flip pictures that visually represented important events, characters, and moral lessons. The storytelling materials

encouraged learners to predict outcomes, answer questions, participate in discussions, and engage physically and emotionally with the narratives. The findings indicate that visually rich and interactive storytelling materials effectively bridge comprehension gaps and deepen learner engagement. The use of predictive questioning, visual scaffolding, sensory integration, and interactive inquiry strengthened learners' ability to process and retain information. These results support previous studies showing that storytelling combined with meaningful visuals and interaction enhances listening comprehension, engagement, and participation among young learners. The effectiveness of flip-picture storytelling further demonstrates that low-cost and teacher-led instructional materials can significantly improve listening skills even in resource-limited classrooms (Demirbaş & Şahin, 2022; Hadi et al., 2023).

3.6 Overall Discussion

The findings confirmed that creative storytelling is an effective instructional strategy for improving listening comprehension, attention, and responsiveness among Grade 3 learners. The intervention addressed challenges such as short attention spans, limited English exposure, and low classroom participation by situating listening activities within engaging and meaningful narratives. Significant improvements across all variables demonstrate that storytelling is not only enjoyable but also pedagogically effective for language learning. The study further supports global and local literature emphasizing storytelling as a holistic instructional strategy that enhances comprehension, engagement, motivation, and interaction in language classrooms (Sonda et al., 2024; Bawamenewi et al., 2024; Puspitasari et al., 2024). The alignment of the findings with Krashen's Input Hypothesis, Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory, Bruner's Constructivist Theory, Paivio's Dual Coding Theory, and Engagement Theory strengthens the validity of the results and demonstrates that creative storytelling addresses cognitive, social, emotional, and behavioral dimensions of learning simultaneously.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

The study concluded that creative storytelling was highly effective in improving the listening comprehension, attention, and responsiveness of Grade 3 learners. The learners demonstrated significant improvement from moderate pretest performance to very high posttest performance across all measured variables after participating in the storytelling intervention. The findings further revealed that creative storytelling encouraged active participation, sustained attention, and better understanding of spoken narratives. Among the storytelling materials used, The Lazy John with flip pictures creative visuals produced the greatest improvement, particularly among learners with lower baseline comprehension. Overall, creative storytelling proved to be a practical, engaging, and cost-effective instructional strategy for enhancing English listening skills among young learners in resource-limited classroom settings.

The study recommends the integration of creative storytelling into English instruction to strengthen learners' listening comprehension, attention, and responsiveness. Schools and administrators are encouraged to incorporate storytelling activities in both classroom instruction and learner engagement programs to promote participation and active learning. Teachers are advised to utilize storytelling strategies regularly to improve comprehension and interaction during lessons, while learners should practice active listening and participation during storytelling sessions. Families are also encouraged to support storytelling activities at home through shared reading and storytelling experiences. Furthermore, future researchers may explore related strategies such as digital storytelling and role-playing to further develop language and communication skills among learners.

The study was limited to Grade 3 learners of Pila Elementary School during the School Year 2025–2026 and utilized a one-group pretest–posttest quasi-experimental design without a comparison group. The intervention focused only on listening comprehension, attention, and responsiveness using selected storytelling materials and a limited number of participants. The findings were therefore confined to the context of the study and may not be generalized to other grade levels, schools, or learning environments with different learner characteristics and instructional conditions.

Compliance with ethical standards

The author declares no conflict of interest, and this study received no external funding. The study was conducted at Pila Elementary School with the voluntary participation of Grade 3 learners, and informed consent was obtained from parents or guardians prior to data collection. Data were gathered through non-invasive procedures integrated into regular classroom activities, and all information collected was treated confidentially through the use of codes and the exclusion of identifying details in all records and documentation.

REFERENCES

- Afana, N., Mashuri, & Usman, S. (2025). Using digital storytelling to improve students' listening ability. *IDEAS: Journal on English Language Teaching and Learning*. <https://ejournal.iainpalopo.ac.id>
- Ahmed, A., Gul, R., & Khan, S. (2023). The impact of storytelling on preschool children's listening comprehension. *Early Child Development and Care*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03004430.2023.2198673>

- Ahmed, A., Mohamed, R., & Ali, F. (2023). Storytelling as a strategy for improving young learners' English listening comprehension. *Asian Journal of Language Teaching*, 13(2), 55–68. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eltj.2023.02.007>
- Ahmed, M., Inam, A., & Saif, J. (2023). Effect of storytelling on listening skills and vocabulary of preschool children. *Journal of Early Childhood Care and Education*, 5(2).
- Ahmed, M., Mansour, A., & Khalil, N. (2023). The effect of storytelling on preschool children's listening comprehension. *Early Child Development and Care*, 193(1), 13–25.
- Ahmed, R., Rahman, S., & Kumar, P. (2023). The impact of storytelling on preschool children's listening comprehension and vocabulary acquisition. *Journal of Early Childhood Education*, 45(2), 123–138. <https://doi.org/10.1080/xxxxxxx>
- Alipar, A., Castillo, M., & Rivera, J. (2024). Digital storytelling and English listening skills in Philippine public schools. *Asia Pacific Journal of Education*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02188791.2024.2334512>
- Alipar, A., Villanueva, R., & Santos, J. (2024). Digital storytelling as a strategy for English learning in Philippine public schools. *Asia Pacific Journal of Education*, 44(2), 176–190.
- Alipar, F., Santos, J., & Cruz, M. (2024). Enhancing young learners' attention and engagement through digital storytelling: Evidence from Philippine classrooms. *Philippine Journal of Education Research*, 12(1), 45–62.
- Alipar, K. M. A., Alon-Alon, F. L., Arinaza, J. M. E., Bernardino, M. B. F., Sabado, R. D., & Villapando, E. A. B. (2024). Utilizing storytelling strategies as tools in enriching students' listening comprehension skills. *International Journal of Science and Research Archive*, 11(02), 1451–1455.
- Bawamenewi, D., Fitria, R., & Santoso, A. (2024). The impact of interactive storytelling on young learners' engagement and comprehension in primary classrooms. *International Journal of Early Childhood Education Research*, 12(1), 45–62.
- Bruner, J. (1991). The narrative construction of reality. *Critical Inquiry*, 18(1), 1–21. <https://doi.org/10.1086/448619>
- Calo, M. T. (2023). Storytelling as a strategy to improve learners' engagement in English listening. *Philippine Social Science Journal*, 6(3), 112–120. <https://doi.org/10.52006/main.v6i3.615>
- Calo, R. (2023). Interactive storytelling strategies in Philippine primary classrooms. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Education*, 43(3), 210–225.
- Choueiry, N. (2022). Quasi-experimental designs in education research: Strengths and limitations. *Journal of Educational Research and Practice*, 12(3), 115–127. <https://doi.org/10.28945/4952>
- Cranmer, S. J. (2021). Understanding quasi-experimental research designs in education. *Educational Review*, 73(4), 563–577. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131911.2020.1711885>
- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2021). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (6th ed.). SAGE Publications. <https://scholar.google.com/scholar?q=Creswell+Research+Design+2021>
- Demirbaş, M., & Şahin, A. (2022). Digital storytelling and listening comprehension in primary schools. *Education and Information Technologies*, 27(3), 4235–4252.
- Demirbaş, M., & Şahin, S. (2022). Digital storytelling in primary school classrooms: Effects on listening comprehension and engagement. *International Journal of Instruction*, 15(4), 301–320. <https://doi.org/10.29333/iji.2022.15418a>
- Demirbaş, M., & Şahin, İ. (2022). Effects of digital storytelling on primary school students' listening skills. *Education and Information Technologies*, 27(9), 12459–12474. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-022-11056-3>
- Department of Education [DepEd]. (2020). *K to 12 curriculum guide: English Grade 3*. DepEd Philippines.
- Duran, A., & Aquino, L. (2024). Digital storytelling and English listening skills of Filipino elementary learners. *Philippine Studies in Language Teaching*, 7(1), 78–95.
- Duran, M. E., & Aquino, R. M. (2024). Digital storytelling as a tool in enhancing English language learning in Philippine classrooms. *International Journal of Education and Practice*, 12(1), 45–56. <https://doi.org/10.18488/12.v12i1.3575>
- Fredricks, J. A., Filsecker, M., & Lawson, M. A. (2019). Student engagement, context, and adjustment. *Learning and Instruction*, 43, 1–4.
- Fredricks, J. A., Filsecker, M., & Lawson, M. A. (2019). *Student engagement: Current perspectives and future directions*. Routledge.
- Gay, L. R., Mills, G. E., & Airasian, P. (2022). *Educational research: Competencies for analysis and applications* (13th ed.). Pearson.
- Hadi, R., Prasetyo, B., & Kartika, L. (2023). Scaffolding strategies in storytelling for enhancing listening and responsiveness of primary school students. *Journal of Language Learning and Teaching*, 15(4), 215–233.
- Hidayat, A., & Zainuddin. (2023). The use of digital storytelling in learning listening based on students' comprehension in EFL class. <https://jurnal.iaih.ac.id/index.php/ETJaR/article/view/614>
- Indrawati, I. G. A. R., & Wardana, I. K. (2023). Art of digital storytelling: A tool in improving listening comprehension. <https://nblformosapublisher.org/index.php/jeda/article/view/468>
- Krashen, S. (1985). *The input hypothesis: Issues and implications*. Longman.
- Learning to listen: Changes in children's brain activity following a listening comprehension intervention. (2024). *Behavioral Sciences*, 14(7), 585. <https://doi.org/10.3390/bs14070585>

- Lin, C., Chen, H., & Wu, J. (2025). Human versus robotic storytelling: Effects on preschool children's listening and responsiveness. *Computers & Education*, 212, 105025. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2025.105025>
- Lin, C., Chen, H., & Wu, Y. (2025). Interactive storytelling and children's responsiveness in language learning. *Journal of Educational Technology*, 52(2), 56–71.
- Lin, T., Chang, C., & Lee, H. (2025). Human vs. robot vs. tablet: Children's responsiveness to storytelling. *Computers & Education*, 210, 104813. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2025.104813>
- Lin, Y., Chen, W., & Huang, C. (2025). Storytelling through teachers, robots, and tablets: Effects on children's responsiveness and comprehension. *Computers & Education*, 210, 104999.
- Paivio, A. (1986). *Mental representations: A dual coding approach*. Oxford University Press.
- Puspitasari, R., Handayani, T., & Wijayanti, L. (2024). Multimodal storytelling and its effects on cognitive processing and retention in early learners. *Asia Pacific Journal of Education and Development*, 9(2), 101–119.
- Putri, A. N., Arifin, A., & Sari, D. (2021). Developing listening comprehension for young learners through interactive activities. *Journal of English Language Teaching Innovations*, 3(1), 45–56.
- Putri, D., Santoso, H., & Lestari, P. (2021). Listening as a gateway skill in young learners' English acquisition. *Indonesian Journal of English Education*, 8(3), 15–30.
- Putri, R., Wahyuni, S., & Fitria, D. (2021). Listening as a gateway skill in second language acquisition. *Journal of English Language Teaching and Linguistics*, 6(3), 455–468. <https://doi.org/10.21462/jeltl.v6i3.659>
- Royani, E., Herlina, H., & Rustandi, A. (2023). Digital storytelling improves listening comprehension and motivation among EFL students. *Journal of English Education and Pedagogy*, 11(1), 34–46.
- Royani, M., Herlina, D., & Rustandi, A. (2023). Storytelling and young learners' motivation in English listening. *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 13(2), 234–245. <https://doi.org/10.17509/ijal.v13i2.57351>
- Royani, N., Herlina, & Rustandi, A. (2023). Storytelling and motivation in English listening lessons. *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 13(2), 389–401.
- Royani, R., Herlina, E., & Rustandi, D. (2023). The impact of storytelling techniques on EFL students' listening comprehension. *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 13(1), 112–122. <https://doi.org/10.17509/ijal.v13i1.49812>
- Royani, R., Herlina, H., & Rustandi, A. (2023). Storytelling to improve listening comprehension and motivation in early grade students. *Journal of Language Teaching and Learning*, 11(2), 102–118.
- Sonda, F., Maulana, H., & Putri, N. (2024). Storytelling as an evidence-based approach to improve listening comprehension and engagement in primary education. *Journal of Educational Research and Practice*, 14(1), 77–95.
- Tabieh, A., Al-Hawamdeh, A., & Al-Saadi, F. (2021). Digital storytelling to enhance listening comprehension and attention in Grade 3 students. *Journal of Educational Research and Practice*, 11(6), 55–70.
- Tabieh, A., Al-Jamal, D., & Khlaif, Z. (2021). Using storytelling to enhance English language listening and speaking skills among young learners. *International Journal of Instruction*, 14(3), 27–42. <https://doi.org/10.29333/iji.2021.1432a>
- Tabieh, A., Al-Khalili, A., & Harb, A. (2021). Digital storytelling and active listening skills in elementary education. *Education and Information Technologies*, 26(6), 7651–7668. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-021-10674-y>
- Tabieh, A., Huda, S., & Rawashdeh, A. (2021). The impact of digital storytelling on listening skills and creative thinking of EFL learners. *International Journal of Instruction*, 14(2), 1–16.
- Tabieh, A., Shamsi, N., & Ahmad, S. (2021). Digital storytelling and the development of active listening among young learners. *International Journal of Instruction*, 14(3), 45–62.
- UNESCO. (2023). *Education and the sustainable development goals: 2023 monitoring report*. <https://www.unesco.org/reports/sdg-education-2023>
- UNESCO. (2023). *Sustainable development goals 4 and 5: Progress report*. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000386140>
- Victor, K. S. (2025). A systematic review on instructional media for enhancing listening skills in primary education. *Jurnal Ilmiah Kanderang Tingang*. chem-upr.education
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Harvard University Press.
- Yeung, A., Ma, R., & Law, E. (2025). Interactive storytelling with humans, robots, and tablets: Effects on attention and responsiveness. *Computers & Education*, 196, 104711. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2022.104711>
- Yeung, S. S., Ma, M., & Law, T. T. (2025). Let's listen and tell a story together: Social robot and multidimensional learning engagement among young learners. *AI Brain and Child*, 1, 5. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s44436-025-00006-2>