

Preschool Children’s Oral Narrative Abilities: Developmental Trajectories, Influencing Factors, And Educational Implications

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Abstract

The development of oral narrative abilities in preschool children is crucial for their literacy development and academic success. This article provides a comprehensive overview of the development of oral narrative abilities in preschool children, emphasizing the significance of these skills in early educational settings. This article begins by identifying four main types of oral narratives produced by preschool children. Each type is defined and exemplified, illustrating how these narratives can be elicited through various prompts. The materials used to elicit preschool children’s oral narratives are then introduced. These materials are chosen for their ability to provide structured stimuli that support narrative organization and encourage substantive and relevant output from children. The assessments of preschool children’s oral narrative abilities are discussed, focusing on macrostructure and microstructure analyses. The development of oral narrative abilities in preschool children is explored, highlighting the gradual progression from simple to more complex narratives as children age. This article also discusses the influence of various factors on the development of preschool children’s oral narrative abilities. This article concludes with significant implications for researchers and educators to support the holistic development of preschool children and set them on a path toward academic success.

Keywords: *preschool children, oral narrative abilities development, types, eliciting materials, assessment, development trajectory, factors*

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I. Introduction

The development of oral narrative abilities in preschool children is a critical area of research within the fields of applied linguistics and language acquisition. Oral narrative ability, defined as the cognitive and linguistic skill to create coherent linguistic structures that describe an experience or action (Berman & Slobin, 1994), either real or imagined, is foundational for literacy development and academic success. This ability encompasses the comprehension and production of socially and academically fundamental discourse-level language skills, enabling children to sustain discussions around a topic and organize information episodically. Narratives are essential tools for children to express their thoughts, emotions, and experiences, serving as a means to make sense of the world and communicate complex ideas effectively.

Despite the recognized importance of oral narrative abilities, there are significant gaps in our understanding of how these skills develop in preschool children and the factors that influence this development. While extensive research has shown that early oral narrative abilities are strong predictors of later reading and writing performance, as well as emergent literacy outcomes, the specific mechanisms and contexts that support or hinder the development of these abilities remain underexplored. Additionally, the influence of cultural, socioeconomic, and linguistic backgrounds on narrative development is not fully understood, particularly in diverse and bilingual populations. This gap in knowledge limits our ability to design effective interventions and educational practices that can support all children in developing robust oral narrative abilities.

This article provides a comprehensive overview of the development of oral narrative abilities in preschool children, emphasizing the significance of these skills in early educational settings. This article begins by identifying four main types of oral narratives produced by preschool children. Each type is defined and exemplified, illustrating how these narratives can be elicited through various prompts. The materials used to elicit preschool children's oral narratives are then introduced. These materials are chosen for their ability to provide structured stimuli that support narrative organization and encourage substantive and relevant output from children. The assessments of preschool children's oral narrative abilities are discussed, focusing on macrostructure and microstructure analyses. The development of oral narrative abilities in preschool children is explored, highlighting the gradual progression from simple to more complex narratives as children age. This article also discusses the influence of various factors on the development of preschool children's oral narrative abilities. This article concludes with significant implications for researchers and educators to support the holistic development of preschool children and set them on a path toward academic success.

Definition of oral narrative ability

The narrative is using language “to describe ideas, emotions, history, and heritage” (Curenton & Lucas, 2007, p.378). Sociolinguist William Labov defines narrative as the description of an event or experience which contains at least “a sequence of two clauses which are temporally ordered” (Labov, 1972, p.360-361). Narrative ability refers to “the comprehension and production of socially and academically fundamental discourse-level language abilities” (Licandro, 2016, p.11 as cited in Abbott, 2002). Oral narrative ability is the cognitive and linguistic ability that creates coherent linguistic structures by several linked utterances, which describe an experience or an action (Berman & Slobin, 1994), either real or imagined. It demonstrates the ability to sustain a discussion around a topic.

The importance of developing preschool children's oral narrative abilities

Developing preschool children's oral narrative abilities is of paramount importance, as it lays the foundation for their literacy development and academic success. Extensive research has shown that early oral narrative abilities are closely associated with emergent literacy outcomes in preschool children (Dickinson & McCabe, 1991) and are strong predictors of later reading and writing performance (Curenton et al., 2008; Fey et al., 2004; Gardner-Neblett & Iruka, 2015; Griffin et al., 2004; Neuman & Dickinson, 2011; Reese et al., 2010; Speece et al., 1999; Storch & Whitehurst, 2002; Tabors et al., 2001). For example, children who can effectively use evaluative story components at age five tend to exhibit better reading comprehension and written narrative abilities by age eight. Moreover, oral narrative abilities are not only linked to literacy but also to later mathematical ability (O'Neill et al., 2004), highlighting their cross-disciplinary impact on academic success. They are also closely related to children's reading success (Boudreau, 2008; Owens, 2010; Stockman, 1996;

Westby, 1992) and serve as important precursors to literacy for both monolingual and bilingual children (Bishop & Adams, 1990; Dickinson & Tabors, 2001; August & Shanahan, 2006).

Types of oral narratives produced by preschool children

There are many ways to collect a narrative sample in preschool children. Four main types of oral narratives produced by preschool children have been identified. These types include personal narrative (including recount and account), event cast, script narrative, and fictional narrative (Licandro, 2016). Table 1 lists the types of oral narration products, including definitions and examples for prompts that might trigger these types of oral narration.

Table 1 Types of oral narratives produced by preschool children adapted from Goldstein (2000) and Hughes et al. (1997)

	Personal narrative		Event cast	Script narrative	Fictional narrative
	Recount	Account			
Definition	Prompted describing an impressive personal experience	Unprompted reminiscing/spontaneously described an impressive personal experience	A narrative of what is about to happen or what is happening in pretend play	Verbalizing routines and common events or activities	Constructing fictional stories based on the content of storybooks, fairy tales, myths or fables
Examples for prompts	Tell me what you did in the park today.	Something interesting happened to me this morning. When I was painting ...	You are going to be a gardener in pretend play. First, you will...	What do you usually do on Sunday?	Once upon a time, there was a princess who lived in a castle. One day, ...

Narrating and storytelling have been used simultaneously in language acquisition research (e.g., McCabe et al., 2008). Additionally, Heath (1986) categorizes stories as a sub-category of narrative, such as fairy tales or other fictional narratives. As a result, storytelling and story retelling are used as synonyms for fictional narratives. Story retelling is a complex linguistic and cognitive task that requires children to understand a story read aloud first and then organize a coherent and detailed retell (Gutiérrez-Clellen, 2002; Bedore et al., 2010; Hipfner-Boucher et al., 2015). Story retelling involves interpreting and reconstructing a story using appropriate event sequencing and vocabulary (Roth et al., 1996). Story retelling has been used extensively as a natural vehicle for evaluating preschool children's oral narrative abilities. Several widely recognized benefits of using story retelling to assess preschool children's oral narrative abilities have been identified. Firstly, preschool children's oral narrative productions could be analyzed based on both microstructural and macrostructural components of language in context by using a single task (Heilmann et al., 2010a, 2010b). Secondly, story retelling provides information about how children understand, modify, and present a story's vocabulary, grammatical structures, and content of the story. Thirdly, story retelling enables preschool children to use language within a familiar and authentic context (Spycher, 2009). Fourthly, stories are usually told and read aloud to preschool children at home and in school, and they are generally proficient in retelling at an early age (Boyd & Naucclér, 2001).

II. Materials That Elicit Preschool Children's Oral Narratives

The careful choice of elicitation techniques offers an informative and effective strategies for providing a reliable assessment of oral narrative ability. Children's picture books are the preferred materials used as the prompt in preschool children's oral narrative tasks. Monolingual children's picture books, wordless picture books, and bilingual children's picture books are primarily used to motivate preschool children's oral narratives.

Monolingual children's picture books are selected as the eliciting materials for several reasons. Firstly, compared to a single picture that might stimuli short and unelaborated narratives (Kaderavek & Sulzby, 2000; Shapiro & Hudson, 1991), monolingual children's picture books contain a sequence of pictures and these sequenced pictures provide a highly structured stimulus for the narrative organization (Eisenberg et al., 2008; Hedberg & Westby, 1993). Additionally, monolingual children's picture books contain clearly ordered pictures with a high degree of plot complexity which may elicit elaborate and complex narratives of young children (e.g., Curenton & Justice, 2004; Fiestas & Peña, 2004). Moreover, the reference and contextual information provided by monolingual children's picture books are quite clear and can offer a developmentally suitable stimulus for the generation and construction of a rich fictional narrative (Bamberg, 1987). Monolingual children's picture books also promote the production of substantial and connected output, facilitating further multifaceted analyses (Reese et al., 2012). Lastly, monolingual children's picture book-based story retelling enables children with different personal experiences to retell stories around a fixed theme, so their oral narrative abilities can be compared horizontally.

Wordless picture books have been widely used as the materials to elicit the storytelling of preschool bilingual children who live in the United States (e.g., Bedore et al., 2010; Fiestas et al., 2005; Melzi et al., 2013; Montanari, 2004; Muñoz et al., 2003; Rezzonico et al., 2016). Wordless picture books are pictorial books that tell a story with illustrations and very minimal written text. Consequently, wordless picture books rely on illustrations to deliver or present messages. Children need to decode and interpret wide-ranging and complex illustrations to make sense of the story (Ramos & Ramos, 2011). Wordless picture books are selected as the eliciting materials for a few reasons. One reason is that wordless picture books can elicit long, complex, and elaborated narratives from young bilingual children (e.g., Curenton & Justice, 2004; Fiestas & Peña, 2004). A second reason is that wordless picture books provide highly structured stimuli to support narrative organization (Eisenberg et al., 2008; Hedberg & Westby, 1993) and encourage bilingual children to produce substantive and relevant output that facilitates further multifaceted analysis (Reese et al., 2012). Furthermore, wordless picture books-based story retelling has no text interference, reduces memory burden, and places relatively low cognitive requirements on children, leading to well-structured oral narratives. The fourth reason is that wordless picture books can be used to elicit children's oral narratives in both native and second/foreign languages. Finally, the absence of text in wordless picture books serves to eliminate the potential interference of written language and reduce the trouble that children are afraid to say wrong (Berman & Slobin, 1994). Most of studies have used the Frog Story wordless picture book to elicit oral narratives with preschool bilingual children. For example, *Frog, Where Are You?* (Mayer, 1969), *Frog on His Own* (Mayer, 1973), *One Frog Too Many* (Mayer, 1975), and *A boy, a Dog and a Frog* (Mayer, 1967) have been proved valuable tools to elicit preschool bilingual children's oral narratives. Previous studies on using wordless picture books to stimulate the oral narratives of preschool bilingual children have shown that the oral narrative products of preschool bilingual children stimulated by these books has higher productivity and complexity (e.g., Bedore et al., 2006; Lofranco et al., 2006).

Bilingual children's picture books are a special type of children's picture books that incorporates content in two languages, typically the child's native language and a second/foreign language. These books are designed primarily for children and offer a unique way to introduce them to a second/foreign language through the

medium of storytelling and visuals. Bilingual children's picture books can significantly promote preschool children's oral narrative abilities development. Bilingual children's picture books introduce children to new vocabulary and linguistic structures in both languages. This dual-language exposure helps children build a richer lexicon and understand different grammatical patterns. By seeing and hearing words in context, children can better retain and use them in their own narratives. These books often incorporate cultural references and stories that reflect diverse backgrounds. When children see their own culture or other cultures represented in books, they can better relate to the content and feel more confident in expressing themselves. This cultural connection also enhances their ability to tell stories that are meaningful and engaging.

Assessments of preschool children's oral narrative abilities

Macrostructure and microstructure have been widely used as an informal assessment approach for evaluating preschool children's oral narrative abilities. Narrative analysis on the macrostructure domain evaluates preschool children's overall oral narrative abilities of organizing information episodically without help (Hughes et al., 1997; McCabe & Bliss, 2003; McCabe & Rollins, 1994; Ortiz, 1997; Ortiz & Yates, 2002; Peterson et al., 2008). It reflects the cognitive ability and higher-order organization ability for narrating "a thematically coherent story" (Rezzonico et al., 2016, p.521). Macrostructure analysis consists of seven elements: character, setting, initiating event, plan, action, consequence, and internal response. Narrative analysis on the microstructure domain focuses on the internal structure of language, including the generation of words and sentences and semantics. The generation of words and sentences mainly involves productivity (such as the length of T units, number of words, etc.) and syntactic complexity (such as the average length of T units, the ratio of complex sentences to T units, etc.)

Preschool children's oral narrative abilities development trajectory

Generating oral narrative discourse "is a complex area of language acquisition" (Licandro, 2016, p.14) due to a reliance on cognitive, socio-emotional, and various linguistics skills (e.g., lexical, morpho-syntactical, and pragmatic skills). Therefore, preschool children's oral narrative abilities are developed gradually instead of suddenly or automatically. It takes a few years for preschool children to construct "good" oral narratives. Studies on preschool children's oral narrative abilities development have resulted in similar findings across studies. These studies have consistently concluded that preschool children's oral narrative abilities are likely to develop with age.

Between three and five years of age, children occasionally produce the fewest narrative sequences, which is a short chain of time-related events and time-related concepts (Licandro, 2016). In line with this, Botting (2002) suggested that young children may create structurally incomplete stories (Peterson & McCabe, 1983; Shapiro & Hudson, 1991) with fewer words, shorter story lengths, and less complex syntax (Licandro, 2016). Three- to four-year-old often merely describe and comment on events presented in the pictures (Licandro, 2016). They view each story scene as an isolated event instead of constructing a coherent and cohesive story, which was referred to as "heaps" (Applebee, 1978) or an "isolated event" (Stein & Glenn, 1979). Children aged four to five begin to use pronouns that are adequate to the audience's knowledge to provide them with enough information to understand the story out of context (e.g., Beliaevsky, 2003). Around this age, children often tell stories based on picture books, simply describing the pictures, rather than coherent plots (e.g., Berman & Slobin, 1994). Curenton and Justice (2004) discovered that children at ages four and five years utilize significantly more conjunctions than three-year-old children when generating a fictional story form, a wordless picture book. Moreover, although four- and five-year-old monolingual children begin to include evaluative language features

in their oral narratives, they are generally small and varied (Bamberg & Damrad-Frye, 1991).

Time-organized event chains are becoming more and more common in young children's oral narratives as time goes by, and the focus is still often on the most prominent pictures, not the most important events (Pearson & de Villiers, 2005). Children begin to produce causal structures first, which typically relate to local or adjacent events, rather than global story schemes (Trabasso & Rodkin, 1994). At about five years old, normally developing children from middle-income families are usually able to produce chronologically structured and sequential narratives (Licandro, 2016). However, they are usually not able to maintain the organization from beginning to end, and often end their stories at the climax, rather than with a conclusion and/or an explanation (e.g., Peterson & McCabe, 1991). Five-year-old can link the actions to the motives of a character therefore their oral narratives have causal coherence (Olson & Gee, 1988). Additionally, children will not consistently sequence events in oral narratives until they are five years old (Petersen & McCabe, 1983).

In terms of syntactic development, it has been demonstrated that the production of connectivity (i.e. the use of conjunctions that establish coordinating, temporal, and/or causal links between utterances) becomes more sophisticated in terms of the types and tokens produced as the preschool years progress (Licandro, 2016). The coordinating conjunction "and" is the earliest and most commonly used marker of connectivity in children's oral narratives, followed by temporal and causal connections (Licandro, 2016). Usually, five-year-old are able to connect sentences cohesively by using additive and temporal markers (such as "and" and "then") (Peterson & McCabe, 1991). At about five years of age, children who are from middle-income families can generate chronologically structured and sequential oral narratives (Licandro, 2016). However, they are often unable to sustain the development of the entire organization and often end their stories at the climax instead of drawing conclusions and/or making explanations (e.g., Peterson & McCabe, 1991).

Shapiro & Hudson (1991) submitted that the oral narratives of six-year-old include a greater proportion of temporal connectives than that of four-year-old. Between five and seven years of age, children construct internal coherent oral narratives around an action structure, which includes an initial goal, the attempt to reach the goal, and the result (Berman & Slobin, 1994).

At the late preschool age, even if children are considered to have mastered the syntactic system, it is still a challenge to establish continuous discourse (Hickmann, 2003). Developing bilinguals automatically construct oral narrative texts (Licandro, 2016). They also show maturity in terms of a narrative global organization (Heilmann et al., 2010a; Muñoz et al., 2003; Ukrainetz et al., 2005), as well as in terms of content and form (Greenhalgh & Strong, 2001), which continues through their school-age years.

Factors influence preschool children's oral narrative abilities

Family socioeconomic status emerges as a significant factor influencing the progression of children's oral narratives (Price et al., 2006). Families with low socioeconomic status are unable to provide children with ample literacy resources and a conducive learning environment. With parents typically engrossed in their work commitments, these families may find it challenging to impart adequate early family education to their children. Consequently, fewer literacy activities are organized within the family, leading to limited linguistic interactions between parents and children. As a result, children from such backgrounds frequently exhibit delays in various narrative tasks compared to their peers. Conversely, families with high socioeconomic status are well-equipped to provide their children with an abundance of literacy resources and foster effective parent-child language interaction. These advantages significantly bolster children's oral narrative abilities, positioning them favorably in their cognitive and linguistic development.

Snow et al. (1991) have identified several dialogue reading strategies that notably impact children's oral narrative abilities. These include the mother's sensitivity in her intention to elicit dialogue during interactions

with her child, the extent to which she endeavors to prolong the dialogue, her flexibility in expanding the child's discourse, her proactive approach in augmenting the information related to the topic of discussion, her practice of posing questions pertinent to the subject, and her encouragement of the child to elaborate and formulate their own speculations based on their answers. Dialogue reading serves as a potent tool for nurturing narrative abilities by introducing children to the language of storytelling and familiarizing them with the structure of narratives (Curenton et al., 2008). Furthermore, it aids in the acquisition of the macrostructure of fictional stories, empowering children to comprehend and appreciate the broader framework of stories (Lever & Sénéchal, 2011).

Children from diverse cultural backgrounds consistently exhibit notable differences in the overall architecture of their narrative storytelling. Specifically, children of East Asian descent, including those from Chinese, Japanese, and Korean cultures, tend to recount their personal experiences in narratives that are more concise compared to their European American peers (Han et al., 1998; Minami & McCabe, 1991). Japanese children's oral stories are notably brief, usually encompassing a few discrete events across three stanzas, whereas European American children's stories are more likely to focus on a single main event (Minami & McCabe, 1991). While African American children do engage in telling "classic narratives" (Champion, 1998), they also often share lengthy and detailed narratives that encompass multiple thematically connected episodes (Michaels, 1991). These structural differences are significant as they indicate that while children's oral narrative abilities improve over time, different cultures may hold different notions of what makes a story coherent and complete (McCabe, 1995; McCabe & Bliss, 2003).

The way children construct stories is also shaped by the structure of their native language (Berman & Slobin, 1994). Each language provides unique linguistic tools for creating coherent narratives. For instance, there are differences across languages in the range of verb tenses at the disposal of storytellers, as well as the methods for indicating aspect. Additionally, the assortment and types of adjectives and adverbs available to narrators vary from one language to another. Consequently, these linguistic disparities can affect both the framework and substance of the narratives that children produce (Berman & Slobin, 1994; Gutiérrez-Clellen, 2002; Minami, 2008).

Implication For Researchers

The study of preschool children's oral narrative abilities development has several important implications for researchers, which can guide future research directions and methodologies.

Gender differences in narrative development. Research has consistently shown that gender differences in narrative abilities emerge early in development. Girls tend to include more relational and emotional content in their narratives compared to boys (e.g., Adams et al., 1995; Andrews, et al., 2015; Buckner & Fivush, 1998). For example, girls are more likely to focus on other people and relationships in their stories, while boys may emphasize more on individual achievements and action (Fivush & Gryzman, 2022). These differences are highly context-sensitive, meaning that they can vary depending on the setting in which the narratives are elicited. Future studies should focus on the contextual sensitivity of gender differences in narrative abilities. Since gender differences in narrative content and frequency are highly context-dependent, researchers can investigate how various settings (e.g., home, school, peer groups) influence the expression of gendered narratives. This can help identify whether certain environments amplify or mitigate these differences. Moreover, longitudinal studies can track the development of narrative abilities from early childhood through adolescence to understand how gender differences evolve over time. This approach can provide insights into whether early gender differences in narrative content and style persist or change as children grow older. Additionally, it can explore how these differences interact with

other developmental processes, such as cognitive and social development. Given that gender roles and expectations are culturally embedded, future research should examine how cultural variations influence gender differences in narrative development. Studies can explore how different cultural contexts shape the themes of agency and communion in children's narratives. This can also involve investigating how sociohistorical changes, such as evolving gender norms, impact the way children construct and share their stories.

Cognitive development and narrative abilities. Oral narrative abilities are closely linked to cognitive development. The ability to construct complex and coherent narratives reflects advancements in cognitive organization. Narrative development can serve as a valuable indicator of cognitive growth, as it requires children to organize events, understand cause-and-effect relationships, and use language to convey their thoughts. Future studies should investigate the neural mechanisms underlying narrative abilities, particularly how different cognitive processes such as memory and executive function contribute to narrative development. Research has shown that higher-order cortical networks, such as the default mode network (DMN) and the fronto-parietal network (FPN), play a significant role in narrative production (Li et al., 2025). These networks are involved in organizing the logical flow of narratives and integrating semantic information. Future research can explore how these networks interact with language-specific regions to support narrative abilities. Narrative development requires the integration of multiple cognitive processes, including memory and executive function. Future research should examine how these cognitive processes interact with narrative abilities. For example, studies can investigate how episodic memory and attention contribute to the macrostructure of narratives, which involves organizing events and maintaining coherence. Additionally, research can explore how executive functions, such as inhibitory control and working memory, support the construction of complex and coherent narratives. Narrative abilities change over time, and future research should focus on the developmental trajectories of these abilities from early childhood through adolescence and into adulthood. Longitudinal studies can track how narrative abilities evolve and identify critical periods for intervention. Research has shown that narrative abilities decline with age, particularly in the macrostructure, which is more vulnerable to cognitive decline. Future studies can investigate the compensatory mechanisms that older adults use to maintain narrative abilities, such as the involvement of spatial constructional abilities. Understanding the relationship between narrative abilities and cognitive development can inform the development of targeted interventions and educational strategies. Future research can explore how interventions aimed at improving memory, executive function, and language skills can enhance narrative abilities in children and adults. Additionally, studies can investigate the effectiveness of narrative-based interventions in supporting cognitive development and mitigating age-related declines.

Multimodal communication and narrative abilities. Narrative abilities are not limited to verbal expression but also involve multimodal communication, including gestures, prosody, and facial expressions. Multimodal imitation abilities are closely related to narrative and sociopragmatic abilities in preschool children. This highlights the importance of studying narrative development through a multimodal lens, allowing researchers to gain a more comprehensive understanding of how children communicate and express themselves. Future studies could develop and evaluate multimodal imitation training programs specifically designed for typically developing preschool children. These programs could combine socially relevant gestures, prosody, and verbal imitation to enhance language acquisition and social communication skills. For example, interventions like Reciprocal Imitation Training, which has been successful for children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), could be adapted for use in mainstream early childhood education (Castillo et al., 2023). More research is needed to assess the role that natural interactive patterns of social multimodal imitation play in preschool children's language development. This could involve studying how

children naturally use gestures, prosody, and facial expressions during storytelling and how these multimodal elements contribute to narrative coherence and complexity. Given the interdisciplinary nature of multimodal communication, future research should involve collaboration across fields such as psychology, education, computer science, and linguistics. This can lead to a more comprehensive understanding of how different cognitive and social processes contribute to narrative development. Research could investigate how teachers provide feedback on multimodal compositions in early childhood education settings. This includes examining whether and how feedback on gestures, prosody, and other non-verbal elements can enhance narrative abilities. Existing frameworks and rubrics for evaluating multimodal compositions can serve as starting points for developing effective feedback practices. Longitudinal studies could track the development of multimodal communication skills from early childhood through adolescence. This would provide insights into how early multimodal experiences influence later language and literacy outcomes. Such studies could also identify critical periods for intervention and support. Future research should examine how cultural and socioeconomic factors influence multimodal narrative development. This includes exploring how different cultural practices and family backgrounds shape the use of gestures, prosody, and other non-verbal elements in storytelling.

Individual differences and personalized learning. Recognizing individual differences in narrative abilities is crucial for developing personalized learning strategies. Factors such as temperament, shyness, and language background can influence narrative development. By understanding these differences, researchers can design tailored interventions that meet the unique needs of each child, maximizing their potential for growth. This approach can also help identify children who may require additional support in their language and literacy development. For example, interventions could incorporate multimodal communication strategies, such as gestures and prosody, to enhance narrative abilities. This approach can help identify children who may require additional support in their language and literacy development. Research could investigate the role of natural interactive patterns in narrative development. This includes studying how children use gestures, prosody, and facial expressions during storytelling and how these elements contribute to narrative coherence and complexity. Understanding these patterns can inform the development of more effective personalized learning strategies. Longitudinal studies should track the development of narrative abilities from early childhood through adolescence to understand how individual differences influence growth trajectories. This can help identify critical periods for intervention and support, particularly for children with language impairments. Future research could examine how socioeconomic status and cultural background influence narrative development. This includes exploring how different family environments and cultural practices shape children's narrative abilities and how these factors can be addressed in personalized learning strategies.

Cross-cultural and bilingual studies. Given the influence of cultural practices on narrative development, future research should focus on conducting cross-cultural and bilingual studies to explore how different cultural contexts shape narrative abilities. This includes comparing narrative abilities across various cultures to identify how cultural values and practices impact the way children construct and share stories. Additionally, investigating the impact of bilingualism on narrative development can provide insights into how children navigate and integrate multiple languages in their storytelling. Such studies can inform the development of inclusive educational programs that are culturally responsive and cater to diverse populations, ensuring that all children have the opportunity to develop strong narrative abilities. Furthermore, exploring the neural mechanisms underlying narrative abilities and how different cognitive processes contribute to narrative development can provide a deeper understanding of the complexities involved. Longitudinal studies tracking the developmental trajectories of narrative abilities over time can identify critical periods for intervention and support. Finally, integrating technology, such as virtual

environments and digital tools, can enhance narrative abilities and cultural understanding by creating immersive storytelling experiences.

The study of preschool children's oral narrative abilities development offers researchers valuable insights into gender differences, cognitive development, multimodal communication, individual differences and cross-cultural and bilingual studies. These findings can guide future research directions and inform the development of targeted interventions and educational practices that support the holistic development of preschool children.

Implication for teachers

The study of preschool children's oral narrative abilities development has several important implications for teachers.

Incorporating narrative approaches in teaching. Teachers can benefit from incorporating narrative approaches in their teaching practices. Narrative approaches have been found to be effective in achieving moral, pedagogical, and intercultural functions in educational contexts. By using stories to make sense of the world and the tasks they encounter, teachers can enhance their instructional strategies and support preschool children's understanding and engagement.

Supporting bilingual and multicultural children. Given the influence of cultural practices on narrative development, teachers should be aware of the diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds of their children. Cross-cultural and bilingual studies can provide insights into how different cultural contexts shape narrative abilities. Teachers can use this knowledge to develop inclusive educational programs that cater to diverse populations, ensuring that all preschool children have the opportunity to develop strong narrative abilities.

Utilizing digital tools for narrative development. Digital storytelling provides an authentic opportunity to develop various literacy skills needed in the 21st century. Teachers can integrate digital tools and platforms into their classrooms to support preschool children's narrative development. These tools can help preschool children create and share their stories in engaging and interactive ways, enhancing their motivation to learn and improving their communication skills.

Promoting social-emotional development. Teachers should recognize the importance of oral narratives for preschool children's social-emotional functioning and literacy achievement. By encouraging preschool children to share their stories and experiences, teachers can foster a positive classroom culture that values diversity and promotes empathy and understanding among students.

III. Conclusion

The development of oral narrative abilities in preschool children is a critical area of research within the fields of applied linguistics and language acquisition. This article has provided a comprehensive overview of the development of oral narrative abilities in preschool children, emphasizing their significance in early educational settings. This article began by identifying four main types of oral narratives produced by preschool children, providing a framework for categorizing and studying these abilities. The discussion on materials used to elicit oral narratives offers insights into effective strategies for assessing and developing these abilities. The focus on macrostructure and microstructure analyses provides a methodological approach for evaluating oral narrative abilities, which can be applied in various research settings. The exploration of how oral narrative

abilities develop over time, from simple to more complex narratives, offers a developmental perspective that can guide longitudinal studies. This article discusses various factors affecting the development of oral narrative abilities, such as socioeconomic status, cultural background, and linguistic structures, which can inform future research on interventions and educational practices. Overall, this article underscores the critical role of oral narrative abilities in early childhood development, providing valuable insights for researchers to guide future studies and for educators to enhance their teaching practices, ultimately supporting the holistic development of preschool children and setting them on a path toward academic success.

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