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# A Systematic Literature Review: The Modalities, Pedagogies, Benefits, and Implications of Storytelling Approaches in Early Childhood Education Classroom

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Arts degree in Education

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## Abstract

The purpose of this systematic literature review was to investigate and synthesize several aspects of storytelling in the reviewed scholarly research, providing a holistic summary and potential insights for early childhood educators. The study asked: (1) What are the various forms, modes and media, and involved pedagogies that storytelling in early childhood education (i.e., birth to age eight) can take? (2) What are the reported benefits of storytelling in early childhood education? (3) Based on the literature, what understandings and pedagogical implications are enriched for early childhood educators to utilize storytelling in their pedagogies? Using a theoretical framework which based on multimodal literacy and sociocultural theory, I collected data from 33 screened articles that had been published in the last 10 years. The findings showcase that educators use diverse storytelling approaches with multimodal ensembles in early childhood education, and storytelling provides children a variety of different opportunities to make meaning of the world and express it. By being immersed in storytelling, the literature documented children as benefiting from considerable immediate and long-term effects. This study offers understandings of a diversity of forms of storytelling and instructional implications for engaging children through multimodal participation. Additionally, this study may provide baseline knowledge for teacher education to improve storytelling strategies and corresponding multimodal scaffolding feedback, which may provide insights into supporting young children's storytelling experiences.

## Keywords

Systematic literature review, storytelling, early childhood education, classroom,  
multimodal literacies

## Summary for Lay Audience

This systematic literature review focuses on studies exploring children's storytelling practices in the context of early childhood classrooms, and the research questions are:

(1) What are the various forms that storytelling in early childhood education can take?

What modes and media are involved? What kinds of pedagogies are included? (2)

What are the reported benefits of storytelling in early childhood education? (3) What

are the implications for educators to utilize storytelling in early childhood education?

With the selecting strategies and screening criteria, I drew on this SLR of 33 reviewed studies from *Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)*, *Canadian Business & Current Affairs Database (CBCA)*, *Education Database*, and *Academic Search Ultimate*. By employing inductive and deductive thematic analysis, I synthesized the extracted data and reported findings based on my research questions which concerned several aspects of early childhood storytelling practice. This study intends to enrich early childhood educators' understandings of storytelling, encouraging them to incorporate storytelling in their pedagogies and providing insights to employ this practice in an engaging and multimodal environment for meeting children's needs and interests. In addition, this study may support teacher education in improving pedagogical strategies for storytelling, which also offers suggestions for future research needs in exploring storytelling's scaffolding and feedback with multimodal features.

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# Chapter 1

## 1 Introduction

Literacy has been an approach of viewing and making sense of the world, and educators particularly underline its significance in early childhood education, no matter in what country or culture (Cremin, 2017; Lisenbee, 2017). The story is a prevalent and significant element of literacy; for instance, Wells and Edwards (2009) claim that “there has probably never been a human society in which people did not tell stories” (p. 214). For children in kindergarten or preschools, researchers argue that stories are an essential mode for describing scenarios, worlds, and feelings (Cremin et al., 2016). Furthermore, storytelling provides a way for children to understand others, reflect on their own views, promote narrative ability, and it also supports other literacy learning such as reading and writing (Cooper, 1993; Hamilton & Weiss, 2005). And plenty of empirical research has shown that storytelling in early literacy education co-creates many learning opportunities, including narrative engagement, imaginary play, and social development (Cremin, 2017). There is also ample evidence indicating that shared narrative practices can play a significant role in children’s meaning-making, interaction, engagement, social and emotional development, and in making connections between self-experience and academic content (Cremin et al., 2016; Lisenbee, 2017; Schick & Melzi, 2010). Given the opportunities created by storytelling in early childhood, pedagogies that include storytelling are widely recommended in the literature (Binder, 2014; Kaderavek & Justice, 2002). From my

undergraduate study in early childhood education and teaching experience in kindergarten, I found that storytelling is one of the most ubiquitous literacy activities in formal early education class (e.g., circle time in daily routine). For instance, play-based elements have burgeoned in storytelling in early childhood education for decades. The most prevalent and traditional one is Paley's (1990) storytelling and story-acting approach, which incorporates narrative activity with play and drama and celebrates the potential value of play in literacy learning (Adomat, 2009). On the other hand, children in the 21st century are surrounded by diverse digital technologies in everyday experience. Accordingly, when it comes to school, children are identified in the literature as willing to have a rich range of encounters with digital devices (Lisenbee, 2017) and potentially, digital storytelling. Digital storytelling, which refers to telling stories with technology devices, is another form of storytelling that is gaining emphasis in formal schooling in recent decades (Lambert & Hessler, 2018). As mentioned, these two storytelling approaches represent traditional play-based and technology-related literacy practices, and educators can utilize both of them with multimodal forms for interactively engaging early years in telling stories, sharing experiences, and literacy learning.

In combination, these forms of storytelling explain why it is an effective and attractive literacy practice in early childhood education. When children are constructing or listening to others' stories, they are exchanging knowledge and experience, learning literacy, and socializing in engaging and enjoyable literacy practices. Besides, storytelling related activities could form and shape the peer-group culture and

community (McCabe, 1997), including supporting the children whose funds of knowledge (Gonzalez et al., 2005) have traditionally been excluded from formal education and “who remain on the outside” (Paley, 1991, p. 11). In a bid to support storytelling pedagogies in early childhood (i.e., birth to age eight), this systematic literature review (SLR) focuses on the several storytelling aspects and approaches of the reviewed studies in the early childhood education context, devoting to the implications and applications for storytelling in everyday practice.

## 1.1 The Rationale of this Systematic Literature Review

*“The way that theatre ignites its audience can happen whether in a classroom 20 minutes before the end of the morning or in a darkened auditorium at an evening’s performance by professional actors. The theatre of the children portrays a microcosm of the world as they see it” (Lee, 2016, p. 58).*

Storytelling is a vital tool in early education settings, for it provides a place for children’s expression, exploration, interaction and offers a pathway for literacy acquisition. All the fragments, sounds, words, and actions in storytelling contribute to depicting a picture of children’s imagination and worlds. During this literacy practice, early childhood educators get to know children’s perspectives, feelings, interests, and strengths, and they can design curriculum accordingly for later. Children also can engage in peer interaction, group culture, and narrative collaboration (Cremin et al., 2016). Above all, storytelling is a meaningful approach for both educators and children besides the benefits for literacy development. It is worthwhile to underline



the calls for a much broader understanding and creating more space for storytelling approaches in early childhood classrooms.

On the one hand, multimodal literacies literature and other literacy literature that focus on a diversity of modes and media (e.g., Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001; Maureen et al., 2018; Stein, 2008) encourage educators in the 21st century to extend literacy teaching beyond the emphasis on oral and written expression forms and print-based text. As children are able to engage deeply in multimodal learning opportunities such as play-based or digital-related activities (Lisenbee, 2017), educators have increased motivation to explore more multimodal literacies approaches (Vasudevan et al., 2010), and storytelling can be the typical one which contains multimodal elements. Although educators get to perceive the power and innovations of multimodal pedagogy from the research literature, this multimodal expectation in literacy curriculums is not always fully appreciated in all early childhood classrooms. Nicolopoulou (2009) states that the value of play in real early childhood class in western countries “is often underappreciated and poorly understood” (p. 42), and there is limited space for exploring “modal approaches” and “performing arts” in literacy practice (Lenters & Winters, 2013, p. 227). Walsh (2009) also points out that children in formal education settings do not always have sufficient multimodal opportunities for literacy learning. The reasons for this phenomenon are verified and one of them is the educators in kindergarten and preschool are under increasing pressure for teaching literacy content by explicit and direct instructions (Wohlwend, 2012). As for my own teaching experience in kindergarten, I now realized that my colleagues and I were accustomed

to utilizing storytelling in class, though our focus was on language learning, and the space and time for multimodal storytelling such as digital storytelling were insufficient. Since we had to focus more on the programmatic curriculum and children's academic performance, our teaching in literacy tended to involve more direct literacy skills instructions and pay more attention to children's measurable literacy outcomes. Thus, the focus on the modality exploration and further implications for storytelling, the prevalent and global literacy practice in early schooling, is vital, valuable, and insightful for early childhood practitioners and educators.

On the other hand, the communication pattern has changed in today's world. Young children encounter many different kinds of digital texts in their surroundings, and the traditional concepts of formalized and text-based literacy learning such as reading and writing have been updated and influenced by global and technological development. For example, the representation and literacy learning methods have renewed with technologies, and the conventional linguistic and gestural modes are negotiating with screen-based and digital texts. For seeking multiple and meaningful ways of literacy learning in early childhood education, educators have the responsibility to "embrace children's multifaceted ways of knowing and representing knowledge" (Kendrick & McKay, 2002, p. 45). And storytelling is a typical literacy practice that can be successfully formed by various modes of representation (e.g., language, movements, gestures). What educators need to focus on is how to utilize these storytelling forms most effectively and properly for young children in daily routine (Lisenbee, 2017;

Marlar Lwin, 2010). Therefore, it is necessary to understand various storytelling approaches and continue to create multimodal space in the early literacy practice (Cremin et al., 2016).

Most of the literature explores how oral storytelling strategies influence children's language performance, and some of these studies have investigated some specific useful literacy instructions (e.g., Cooper, 1993; Shin & Cimasko, 2008; Yang, 2012).

While it is also worthwhile to emphasize the modalities, pedagogies, and implications of various storytelling approaches in early childhood education settings. For this reason, this systematic literature review identified, illustrated, and summarized what the reviewed literature reported on the forms, media, pedagogies, and the benefits of storytelling in early literacy classroom, such that I can provide recommendations to utilize various modalities of storytelling for maximizing its benefits in early schooling.

## 1.2 Research Questions

This systematic literature review focuses on the storytelling approaches in formal early childhood education settings such as kindergartens and preschools. My study concerns the following aspects:

1. What are the various forms that storytelling in early childhood education can take? What modes and media are involved? What kinds of pedagogies are included?
2. What are the reported benefits of storytelling in early childhood education?
3. What are the implications for educators to utilize storytelling in early childhood

education?

### 1.3 The Purpose of this Systematic Literature Review

The main purpose of this systematic literature review is to identify and synthesize several aspects of storytelling in the reviewed scholarly research, providing a holistic summary and potential insights for early childhood educators. It is hoped that the information and reviewed findings in this paper will enrich early childhood educators' understanding of pedagogy and storytelling and encourage them to employ diverse storytelling approaches in their pedagogies, providing inspirations and applications for early childhood educators.

### 1.4 The Overview of this Systematic Literature Review

Three main research questions frame my systematic literature review. Chapter 1 introduces the storytelling approach and its contribution to early childhood education. In addition to the illustration of multimodal expectation in early literacy education, I discuss the rationale of conducting this systematic literature review in storytelling. Chapter 2 provides the relevant literature background of storytelling, illustrating the theoretical foundation for a better understanding of the findings and implications in Chapters 4 and 5. In Chapter 3, I outline the information about the methodological framework, searching strategies, data extraction, and data analysis methods. In Chapter 4, I then report findings of these reviewed scholarly studies, which synthesizes the reviewed forms, benefits, modalities, and pedagogies of storytelling in early-years schooling. For Chapter 5, I discuss my research findings and provide some

implications for early childhood educators, which I hope could enrich their understandings of storytelling practice in early literacy class and expand possible options for utilizing it. Finally, the Appendices contain the information of the selected studies, deductive themes, and inductive themes.

## Chapter 2

### 2 Background Information and Theoretical Framework

The central theme of this systematic literature review is about storytelling in early childhood classrooms, and some literature forms the basis for me to engage in this inquiry. For getting a better understanding of the study findings and the comprehensive discussion in Chapter 5, I lay the foundation of knowledge synthesis on early literacy and several storytelling approaches and introduce the theoretical grounding in this chapter.

#### 2.1 Background Synthesis Related to Storytelling in Early Childhood Education

The background synthesis in this chapter contributes to understanding how early childhood educators design and organize class storytelling activities in daily routines. Following the description of early literacy needs, I introduce Paley's (1990) storytelling and story acting approach and digital storytelling approach as two representations of play-based and technology-related storytelling practices, and both of them engage early years in expressing perspectives and sharing experiences.

##### 2.1.1 Early Literacy

Early literacy takes account of children's literacy practices and acquisition as well as considers pedagogies and opportunities for further literacy learning (Neuman & Dickinson, 2003). Children may encounter diverse literacies and have diverse literacy

paths, each of which is essential in the literacy eco-system (Bainbridge et al., 2019). For instance, children gain information and literacy learning opportunities from bedtime stories and from interactions with text, peers, and adults. Wohlwend (2012) also agrees that literacy practices occur within social participation and are interrelated to children's situated backgrounds. A rich range of studies have explored how children choose the most appropriate modes and symbols according to interests, culture, and environment, and these experiences and perspectives are negotiating during children's interactions with peers, educators, and surroundings (Gillen & Hall, 2013; Neuman & Dickinson, 2003; Wohlwend, 2012).

The literature also expresses that literacy development is not limited to schooling. All forms of informal learning contribute to children's funds of knowledge (Gonzalez et al., 2005), which in turn play a significant role in shaping narrative forms (Bainbridge et al., 2019). For instance, McCabe (1997) reveals that "all children bring an oral storytelling form to school with them and draw on this in their encounters with literacy" (p. 454). Accordingly, it is particularly essential for educators to create rich literacy encounters for children to explore and provide opportunities to meet individual interests and knowledge in early literacy education. The literature is also replete with calls for educators to consider pedagogies that value funds of knowledge (Gonzalez et al., 2005) when designing early literacy practices such as storytelling activities (e.g., Hamilton & Weiss, 2005; Lisenbee, 2017; McCabe, 1997).

## 2.1.2 Storytelling as a Prevalent Literacy Activity in Early Childhood Education

Story-related activities are a ubiquitous format for narrative sharing and literacy learning at all levels of education, especially in early years schooling (Berkowitz, 2011; Isbell et al., 2004). Storytelling is an authentic way to pass on cultural histories, conventions, and linguistic legacies (Hamilton & Weiss, 2005). Children are able to structure their understandings of the world with information from stories, and storytelling is a helpful way for children to inherit historical traditions and values from past to present. McCabe and Bliss (2003) agree that storytelling is a valued and natural way to introduce the characters and plots and enable children to make sense of the world.

Meanwhile, considerable evidence shows storytelling is beneficial for increasing students' engagement and interests in narrative, reading, and purposeful writing, and it can potentially enhance their literacy development (e.g., Booth, 2005; Cremin et al., 2018; Dunn & Finley, 2010; McCabe & Bliss, 2003). When children narrate or listen to stories from others, their literacy competencies, including language structure in speech, are developed within interactions. And storytelling has a long-term influence in later schooling, not only in fostering children's print literacy (e.g., reading and writing) but also in creating opportunities for children's comprehension, imagination, problem-solving development, and identity formation (Binder, 2014). There is a reciprocal relationship between children's existing knowledge and inspiration from



emergent literacy. For instance, according to Nicolopoulou (2009), peers' story elements and popular culture may inspire young learners and then they could compose and rework their own, which supports individual imaginative thinking and helps children to form their interests and identities in the future.

Additionally, storytelling in the early childhood education setting proffers educators a direct way to understand children' ideas, interests, and identities (Hedges et al., 2011). Story sharing activities not only create the opportunities for children to reveal the depth of their experiences and express their voice but also provide educators deeper insights about their self-reflection and class recording and inform them how to organize class activities and enact changes according to children's needs in the future (Neuman & Dickinson, 2003; Nicolopoulou et al., 2009). The following sections introduce prevalent storytelling approaches in early years classrooms.

### 2.1.3 Paley's Storytelling and Story Acting Approach

Educators widely utilize storytelling with voice modulations, facial expression, gestures, and actions in early years classrooms (Isbell et al., 2004), and these forms are common in both traditional oral-based and play-based storytelling approaches (Berkowitz, 2011; Cooper, 1993; Cremin, 2017). In addition to traditional oral storytelling, this section introduces the storytelling and story acting approach in early childhood daily routines. It considers how this approach supports shared and collaborative classroom culture and how children are therein creatively making meaning.

Paley (1990) is a pioneer of the storytelling and acting approach. She describes the actual related literacy practice in her books, which contributes to both theoretical study and early literacy practice. This storytelling approach seeks to encourage children to compose and illustrate their own stories firstly and act them out in class (Cooper et al., 2007). In general, the early childhood educator acts as a scribe, taking notes and echoing back when the child is creating a story and subsequently helping the story become alive as a play. The process is not a simple oral literacy practice but a collaborative creation. During the children's description, the educator is expected to co-create the narration by asking questions to help children expand the content (Cremin, 2016). Furthermore, the educator may explain some written criteria and introduce some concepts of print and text. In retelling the story through playing and drama, the educator often holds the assistant's role, supporting the storyteller to choose the characters and helping others understand the story plots within an enhanced performance. During this process, the actions, hearings, and feelings are beneficial for children to make connections between self-experience and storytelling content (Lisenbee, 2017) with multimodal genres (e.g., gesture, sounds, and body movement). This storytelling and story acting approach reflects the essences of student-centered and play-based pedagogy, encouraging children to be creative meaning makers through interactions and collaborations. Drawing on the findings of Cremin et al.'s (2013) study, children who have participated in Paley's storytelling and story acting approach show excellent performances in literacy development and peer-group collaboration. When children are immersing in telling and acting out

stories, their speech, gaze, and action are blended to express meaning, which indicates how multimodal ensembles play significant roles in this process.

A myriad of literature has investigated Paley's storytelling and story acting approach, and educators and researchers have produced compelling evidence to support its effectiveness and importance in children's literacy and creativity development, peer collaborations, and shared classroom atmosphere formation (e.g., Binder, 2014; Cooper, 1993; Cremin, 2017; Nicolopoulou, 2009). There is no doubt that it is an interesting and engaging literacy practice for children. The cooperation of action and words, and the interactions between early childhood educators and children and between children and peers are especially worthwhile. Accordingly, educators include this storytelling and story acting practice frequently in early childhood education classrooms over time.

### 2.1.4 The Digital Storytelling Approach

As situated in an information explosion age, young children have countless encounters with diverse forms of digital resources, such as iPads, smartphones, laptops and so on. For many years in early childhood classrooms, traditional oral forms of storytelling with puppets materials have played a vital role in children's storytelling practices, while educators gradually employ emerging technological resources in storytelling activity, which influences and enriches the modes of expression and experiences sharing. For example, Lambert and Hessler (2018) created one of the most important examples of digital storytelling forms, composing a digital

film to illustrate life experience.

Digital storytelling expands the range and forms of multimodal pedagogy; that is to say, multimodal literacies provide opportunities for students or educators to utilize photographs, images, video records, graphic, and audio sounds for sharing their narrations, feelings, and experiences (Robin, 2008). Digital storytelling contains these elements and several scholars have explored and studied its benefits on students' learning. For example, Semino (2009) and Skouge et al. (2007) take the view that children can develop their capacities of empathy, comprehension, problem-solving, and creative collaboration through digital storytelling. Solvie (2004) also holds the positive argument on the interactive whiteboard for early literacy learning, "visual display in the form of diagrams, webs, and pictures, as well as the use of colors and shapes" promotes learning engagement and "creates meaningful links from activity to application" (p. 486).

What's more, the narrator of digital storytelling can be either student or educator, and the content can also be imaginative stories or live experiences (Jakes, 2006), which builds strong connections between speaker and audience and between individual and technology. Therefore, digital storytelling is increasingly employed as a powerful tool with numerous possibilities for literacy learning and social interaction in both school and social settings (Robin, 2008). For decades, the growing focus on digital storytelling begins to verify the perspectives, forms, and experiences of storytelling, and early childhood educators are encouraged to use 21st-century skills (e.g.,

interactive whiteboard, tablet, laptop, PowerPoint) to enrich and support children's literacy practices in class. When conducting the digital storytelling approach in early childhood settings, one crucial part is organizing it in a proper way to make storytelling more understandable and engaging for early years learners.

## 2.2 Theoretical Framework

This systematic literature review proposes to understand several practical points of the storytelling organizations in ECE classes and hopes to provide some implications for it. I introduce multimodal literacies and sociocultural theory in this section, and I also illustrate how these two theories are linked in storytelling activities. These related theories play a significant role in guiding my thematic analysis and finding report, proffering the clear theoretical grounding in the following sections.

### 2.2.1 Multimodal Literacies

Over time, social changes and the emergence of technological have changed and influenced the ways of communication and expression, and individuals gradually can select what communication forms they prefer, such as visual and digital-related modes, rather than only express perspectives through print literacy. The New London Group (1996) first introduced multiliteracies to explain the need to reshape and rethink literacy education with the various types of literacy in a globalized communication context, indicating that multiple literacies can be produced by multiple media and emphasizing the linguistic and cultural diversities. Multiliteracies represent the need and growth of diverse types of communication, while the linked theory--multimodal

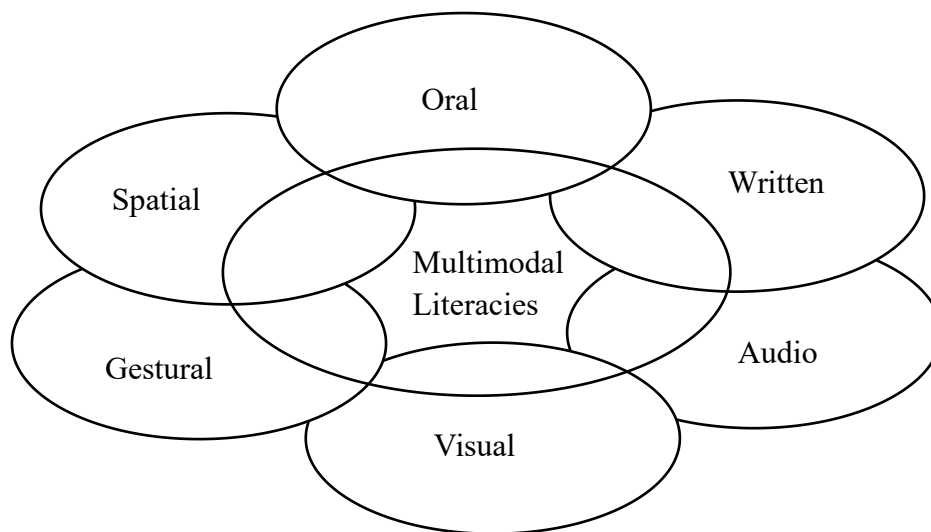
literacies examines “the way we use signs or symbols to communicate” (Walsh, 2017, p. 22) and encourages individuals to make meanings through these combinations of different semiotic modes.

The term *multimodal literacies* refers to how individuals make and express meaning through several combinative modes and how social and cultural factors shape and influence these selected modes (Bezemer & Kress, 2008; Flewitt, 2008; Kress & Van Leeuwen). Jewitt (2008) has noted that “no one mode stands alone in the process of making meaning; rather, each plays a discrete role in the whole” (p. 247). Individuals may be interested in their own “creation of signs” (Heydon, 2007, p. 38) for meaning-making, and their preferences of the modes and media show how they “find the best fit” (Heydon, 2007, p. 39) during the process.

That is to say, language is not the only representation of being literate, and the multimodal approach can expand the possibilities of using and cooperating diverse modes (e.g., gesture, music, visual image, body movement), which especially coincides with the early literacy practice trends (Cremin et al., 2016; Flewitt, 2008). Communication and expression are not limited to oral and written forms and individuals should recognize the possible benefits for other modalities (Kress & Jewitt, 2003), while we educators and adult guardians are still accustomed to using the linguistic mode for teaching (Cremin et al., 2016; Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001). The following Figure 1 depicts several interconnected modes based on Jewitt and Kress’s (2003) and Anstey and Bull’s (2009) contributions to multimodal literacies. To

illustrate, multimodal literacies can respond to our increasingly diverse utilizations of different modes, and all the interrelated modes construct the multimodal ensembles for making meaning together.

**Figure 1: Several interconnected modes in multimodal literacies**



In the literature, there is a consensus on the contribution of multimodal practices in promoting children’s participation in communication and in helping their identity formulation in the future (Jewitt & Kress, 2003; Kenner & Kress, 2003). In addition, curriculum knowledge can be “mediated through multimodal communication in the classroom” (Jewitt, 2008, p. 251), and if educators value children’s multiple modes and media of communication in the classroom, children may be more engaged in classroom practices and curriculum learnings.

Therefore, multimodal literacies and pedagogy are particularly valuable in contemporary early childhood education, which may also be significant in expanding possibilities for young children’s meaning-making in the classroom storytelling

practices.

Furthermore, some researchers have approved that multimodality is essential for both children and educators. For instance, Johnson and Kendrick (2017) argue that multimodality is helpful in improving children's self-confidence, expression ability and promoting positive identities. Multimodal ensembles in education also have been found to provide a broader understanding of children's interests, learning status, identity options, and further needs, contributing to educator's reflection and career development in turn (Stein, 2008).

The understandings of multimodal literacies theoretical framework enrich the organizations and innovations of storytelling approach in the early childhood classroom context, creating multi-layered ensembles for children.

When connecting multimodal literacies to this systematic literature review, I look at the involved modalities, modes and media, the reported benefits, and the potential implications of storytelling from the selected literature, utilizing multimodal literacies framework for analysis.

## 2.2.2 Sociocultural Theory

Multimodal literacies is undergirded by sociocultural theory. Taking a sociocultural perspective, meaningful learning occurs within social activities such as interaction and collaboration, and knowledge is constructed through active participation instead of passive inculcation (e.g., McMahon, 1997; Wertsch, 1997). Vygotsky's assertions



of scaffolding and its significance in individual development provide indispensable advice for pedagogy. Vygotsky (1978) states that learning is more than knowledge or words, and it also includes the ways of thinking and can be influenced by the persons who surround us. For instance, children's funds of knowledge (Gonzalez et al., 2005) play crucial roles in individual understanding and expression, and the surroundings are likely to get inspiration and share information for "grow collectively" (Smagorinsky, 2013, p. 197) in interactions and collaborations. When connecting it to early childhood education, children can generate their understandings and expressions and get inspiration through their social environments, thus educators' scaffolding of new learning must correspond with children's interests as well as experiences. The sociocultural theoretical framework underpinnings the development process of promoting "human potential through social mediation" (Smagorinsky, 2013, p. 201), offering insights into how educators can invent new pedagogies to influence children's meaning-making by empowering their "concrete, personal engagement with the world" (Smagorinsky, 2013, p. 201). For instance, story dictation is popular in storytelling activities (Marlar Lwin, 2010) and early childhood educators may ask numerous questions to engage children's participation and support their understanding of plots and literacy acquisition (Berkowitz, 2011). When adults or peers give feedback to individuals, children's current knowledge increases and thus the scaffolding process occurs.

In addition, Vygotsky (2016) points out that "play is the source of development and it creates the zone of proximal development" (p. 96). This assertion can also respond to

the play elements in the storytelling by calling for the children's collaboration in "constructing and maintaining a shared imaginary situation" (Nicolopoulou et al., 2009, p. 45); rather than just focusing on passive knowledge inculcation. When conducting storytelling activities in classrooms, children in the literature establish and express "a shared understanding of story content and structure" (Faulkner, 2017, p. 86), which is coincident with some aspects of sociocultural theory. This perspective also resembles that of Paley (1990), who argued that "our kind of storytelling is a social phenomenon, intended to flow through all other activities and provide the widest opportunity for a communal response" (p. 21). Drawing on sociocultural theories, educators can improve their scaffolding and organizational strategies to support individual meaning-making and promote children's collaborative participation in shared endeavors (Nicolopoulou et al., 2009; Smagorinsky, 2013).

### 2.2.3 Sociocultural Theory and Multimodal Literacies

Working from sociocultural theory, social practices and individual backgrounds influence individual learning, and meaningful learning occurs with social activities (Greeno et al., 1996). Therefore, literacies learning should involve children in negotiating meanings within ongoing dynamic interactions and experiences between peers and teachers (Greeno & Gresalfi, 2008). Similarly, the perspectives of multimodal literacies highlight myriad modes of communication rather than always prioritizing print literacy, calling for a much broader understanding of multi-layered communication experiences (Jewitt, 2008), which values individual interests, cultural

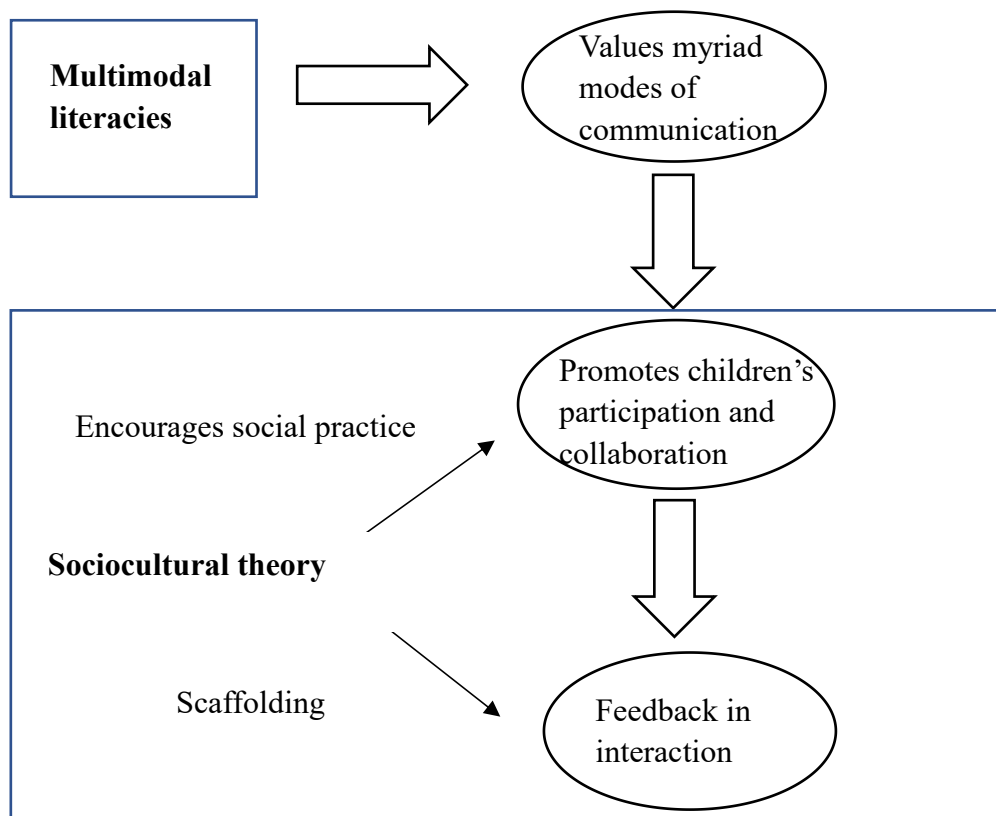
background, and knowledge in holistic and creative ways (Cremin et al., 2016). With the multimodal perspectives, all modes in communication are accepted and valuable and early years have equal opportunities to present their ideas, interests, and feelings, interacting actively with multiple resources.

On balance, sociocultural theory underlines multimodal literacies and these two related theories are useful for conceptualizing storytelling practices in early childhood education. To illustrate, meaning-making based on sociocultural perspectives is seen as socially constructed and embedded in a shared environment. And for promoting children's participation in the shared environment, educators and researchers encourage the employment of multiple modes, such as spoken words and gestures as well as images and actions in the early years' classrooms, which is accordant with the essence of multimodal literacies. Vygotsky's proposal of effective learning is occurring in the 'zone of proximal development' (1978), which shows learning is shaped by "individual encounters through everyday practice" (Nind et al., 2014, p. 345) and takes into accounts how children are able to share their narratives and represent their significance in the social worlds. And if children are able to share themselves through multimodal approaches, their engagement in participation is likely to be promoted, which in turn supports children's internalizations of shared ideas in social practices (Kissel, 2009).

Cremin et al. (2016) also propose that "researchers working with multimodality have extended sociocultural theorizing" (p. 152) to show how the combination of diverse

modes “are interdependent and integral to meaning making” (p. 152). The interactions, feedbacks, and collaborations gradually in turn influence scaffolding during the multimodal practices. Likewise, Wertsch (1991) reports that the wide range of communication modes and related artifacts promote children’s participation in peer interaction, indicating how learning is mediated through social practice. In other words, multimodal literacies as predicated in sociocultural theory can help bring into view the importance in early childhood education of enabling children’s voices in social practices and their shared environments through their engagement with diverse modes such as narrative, action performance and so on. Figure 2 illustrates how I connect multimodal literacies with sociocultural theory in early childhood storytelling practices.

**Figure 2: Multimodal literacies and sociocultural theory**



This systematic literature review intends to investigate how educators utilize diverse storytelling approaches in the early childhood education setting, reporting and revealing the included modes, media, pedagogies, and its benefits in the process. Therefore, it is particularly significant to understand how storytelling practices are conceptualized and discussed in the current literature in this chapter, which also guides my thematic analysis in Chapter 4. I then outline how I conducted this systematic literature review according to my methodology in Chapter 3.

## Chapter 3

### 3 Methodology and Methods

In this chapter, I outline the methods of this study based on the systematic literature review approach. In order to conduct a comprehensive and explicit systematic literature review and to provide reliable evidence-based implications for the practitioners, educators, and other researchers, I followed the Systematic Literature Review Guide from Okoli and Schabram (2010). I then offer detailed explanations of data collection and data analysis methods followed by the searching strategies and criteria. In addition, I describe the data extraction criteria and illustrate how I extracted data to synthesize modalities and benefits of storytelling by hand-coding. Moreover, I outline how I generated the implications of storytelling approaches in early childhood education through thematic analysis. After that, I also describe my finding generation process and address some considerations about trustworthiness and limitations.

#### 3.1 Systematic Literature Review

This research is a systematic literature review, which proposes to have explicit research questions and conduction procedure, comprehensive reviewed range, and reproducible results for further reviewing (Fink, 2005; Okoli & Schabram, 2010). As Aromataris and Pearson (2014) state, SLR “aims to provide a comprehensive synthesis of many relevant studies in a single document” with collected, assessed, and summarized data (p. 54). By following and combining the recommended steps from

Okoli and Schabram's Systematic Literature Review approach (2010), I adopted and summarized seven steps which involved in my systematic literature review.

1. Identifying the appropriate purpose and explicit research questions for the systematic literature review.
2. Searching the relevant literature and justifying the comprehensiveness and trustworthiness of the search.
3. Screening explicitly for the included and eliminated literature according to the criteria.
4. Extracting the applicable information from each included literature and ensuring the consistency of what information is qualified to answer the research questions.
5. Synthesizing the extracted data according to the research methods (i.e., qualitative, quantitative, or mixed-methods) and constructing the related information.
6. Writing the review findings in detail for generalization and further research.
7. Providing conclusions and recommendations which are closely linked to the synthesis findings.

In the following sections, I outline the searching strategies and screening criteria and describe how I extracted and analyzed the data. I then explain how I established trustworthiness in my SLR and refer to the possible limitations.

## 3.2 Searching Strategies and Screening Criteria

I initially conducted data search with keywords such as “storytelling, children, and multimodal” in the electronic searching database. The initial search on the Western Libraries platform showed that there were 4794 related results from 1974 to 2021. For instance, the initial search involved 2519 articles, 912 book chapters, 778 theses and dissertations. I then used some searching strategies and screening criteria to gather sufficient, reliable, manageable, and more targeted data. The following describes how I implemented the database, Boolean Logic, key term searching strategy, document type, and range selection for systematic data collection.

### 3.2.1 Selecting the Searching Database

According to Ridley (2012), it is reliable and convenient to access the literature from the electronic search facilities. Gurevitch et al. (2013) also state that it is extremely useful to use the electronic database for published data searching, while “no database is complete and multiple databases will make the search more comprehensive” (p. 40). Therefore, I utilized Western Libraries Summon to access multiple databases, such as databases from ProQuest and EBSCO platforms.

The ProQuest database platform provides vast content with “research topic from multiple perspectives and across multiple formats,” and there are “more than 450,000 ebooks and rich aggregated collections of the world’s most important scholarly journals and periodicals” (ProQuest, 2021, n.p.). As the “world's largest full-text research database for education students,” the EBSCO™ platform includes “more



than 950 active full-text, non-open access journal” and “more than 530 full-text books and monographs” (EBSCOhost, 2021, n.p.) and it is also reliable for researchers to access sufficient and applicable literature.

I firstly searched data in the *Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)*, *Canadian Business & Current Affairs Database (CBCA)*, and *Education Database* from the ProQuest platform, and I also employed the *Academic Search Ultimate* from the EBSCO platform (see Table 1).

**Table 1: Selected searching database**

Database Platform	Selected Databases
EBSCO Platform	Academic Search Ultimate
ProQuest Platform	Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) Canadian Business & Current Affairs Database (CBCA) Education Database

I searched data in Canadian Business & Current Affairs Database (CBCA) because it is “the largest source of Canadian information” (ProQuest, 2021, n.p.), which can provide additional data from Canada to my research. I then employed the Education Resources Information Center (ERIC) database. The ERIC database has been regarded as the “world’s largest digital library of education literature” (ERIC, 2021, n.p.) with its all-inclusive and high-quality education documents. It provides researchers and educators reliable and diverse information sources across the countries, which has been the benchmark in the field with the premier source (Strayer,

2008). I then utilized the Education Database for gathering more valuable data from broader international perspectives. The Education Database offers researchers access to educational publications and 75% of resources are scholarly journals (ProQuest, 2021, n.p.). In addition, Academic Search Ultimate provides “an unprecedented collection of peer-reviewed, full-text journals,” contributing to broader and more global perspectives for the research (EBSCOhost, 2021, n.p.).

### 3.2.2 Key Term Searching and Boolean Logic

In this section, I introduce how I searched for the relevant studies based on the Boolean phrase. According to Ridley (2012), Boolean logic operators are beneficial for searching specific information about the proposed inclusion and exclusion, and it is useful to combine the words with AND, OR, and NOT. The document with all these words would appear by searching studies with AND, and it is convenient and helpful to find and broaden the search text with “similar term” (Ridley, 2012, p. 57) when searching with OR. Therefore, I firstly inputted the terms “storytelling AND children” in the advance searching bar. In order to broaden the amount of related data, I conducted five advanced search terms in the following table. My systematic literature review is about synthesizing forms, modalities, pedagogies, and benefits of various storytelling approaches in early childhood education. The following Table 2 illustrates my search terms in detail, which enriches my data collection from relevant literature.

**Table 2: Five related search terms to storytelling AND children**

Search terms	“Storytelling AND children AND kindergarten”
	“Storytelling AND preschoolers AND class”
	“Storytelling AND early literacy education AND class”
	“Storytelling AND modalities AND early childhood education”
	“Multimodal storytelling AND children”

### 3.2.3 Selecting the Literature Type and Time Range

When searching the advanced controlled term in the database, the preferred document type and date range are available as the criteria to include or exclude studies for consideration (Okoli & Schabram, 2010). The document type function is mainly for researchers to decide the available information sources, and the most common types are books, journal articles, reports, thesis, dissertation and so on (Ridley, 2012). I selected journal articles in the last decade as my investigation resources, as journal articles are “written by different researchers or practitioners in a particular field” (Ridley, 2012, p.44) with high professional analysis; therefore, the quality is ensured. And Galvan (2009) asserts that journal articles contain the most primary and professional sources from empirical studies, which is valuable in conducting systematic literature reviews. Table 3 and Table 4 describe the five-terms searching results which pertained to my research questions in the EBSCO and ProQuest databases, and all these selected journal articles were from 2011 to 2021.

**Table 3: Term searching results from ProQuest databases**

<b>Search terms</b>	<b>No. of articles from ERIC database</b>	<b>No. of articles from CBCA database</b>	<b>No. of articles from Education database</b>
Storytelling AND children AND kindergarten	41	3	35
Storytelling AND preschoolers AND class	2	0	5
Storytelling AND early literacy education AND class	6	0	4
Storytelling AND modalities AND early childhood education	3	0	1
Multimodal storytelling AND children	13	1	16

**Table 4: Term searching results from EBSCO databases**

<b>Search terms</b>	<b>No. of full-text articles from Academic Search Ultimate database</b>
Storytelling AND children AND kindergarten	32
Storytelling AND preschoolers AND class	2
Storytelling AND early literacy education AND class	0
Storytelling AND modalities AND early childhood education	0
Multimodal storytelling AND children	7

**Table 5: Total searching results of ProQuest and EBSCO databases**

<b>No. of Articles from the ProQuest Platform</b>	130
<b>No. of Articles from the EBSCO Platform</b>	41
<b>No. of duplicated Articles</b>	42
<b>Total No. of articles from ProQuest and EBSCO platforms</b>	129

As Table 5 illustrates, the searching outcomes consisted of 130 journal articles from the ProQuest database and 41 journal articles from the EBSCO database, and the total

number was 129 when I removed the duplicated journal articles. When searching the data, I found that some of the journal articles pertained to one or more research questions (see Section 1.2). I included all related data because they were beneficial for establishing trustworthiness in my research. In addition, I removed the non-English journal articles and the articles which had insufficient publication information. Finally, there were 129 remained journal articles.

### 3.2.4 Quantitative and Qualitative Empirical Research

This Systematic Literature Review intends to ignite the power of the storytelling approach in early childhood classrooms, such as kindergartens and preschools, enriching early childhood educators' understandings of storytelling and offering applicable suggestions for incorporating storytelling approaches in practice. I extracted data from empirical research, which refers to obtaining systematic knowledge and information with planned observations and addresses other systematic elements such as observation targets and observation methods in the process (Patten & Galvan, 2019). On the other hand, conceptual research is conducted based on the present data and information collection, and it does not include the practical experiment (Miles et al., 2018). For trustworthiness and further reviewing, I extracted data based on empirical studies in my systematic literature review.

I extracted both qualitative and quantitative data for my systematic literature review.

Pan and Baden-Campbell (2017) state that qualitative research actively engages participants in the studies, enabling researchers to pay attention to personal experience,

emotions, motivations, and responsiveness in particular situations and themes (Cohen et al., 2007; Dixon-Woods, 2010). And quantitative data also benefits the comprehensiveness and robustness of qualified systematic review, meeting my synthesis purposes efficiently and improving this study's trustworthiness. My systematic literature review emphasizes children's storytelling practices in schooling and focuses on both quantitative and qualitative data, understanding, and implications. Moreover, some studies were irrelevant to my research questions and focus, so I excluded them. According to the above illustration, I totally excluded 96 journal articles and 33 papers remained.

### 3.3 Extracting Data for Thematic Analysis

In my systematic literature review, I employed both inductive and deductive thematic analysis. The theme "captures and unifies the nature or basis of the experience into a meaningful whole" (DeSantis & Ugarriza, 2000, p. 362), and it is also valuable for capturing significant pieces with the research purpose (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Thematic analysis is "a method for identifying, analyzing, organizing, describing, and reporting themes found within a data set" (Nowell et al., 2017, p. 2), which is an effective method for synthesizing the perspectives, summarizing key elements, and generating organized implications (Braun & Clarke, 2006; King, 2004). In terms of the related theory, prior research, and analytic interest (Boyatzis, 1998), the deductive thematic analysis in this study mainly emphasized the predetermined themes in the reviewed findings, implication, and conclusion. For instance, some deductive themes

in this study reflected the recorded storytelling forms and their benefits to children, such as traditional oral storytelling, play-based storytelling and acting, digital storytelling. When it comes to the inductive approach, the theme is initially generated from the extracted data (Boyatzis, 1998; Nowell et al., 2017), and I incorporated these emerging segments into the inductive themes.

### 3.3.1 Deductive Themes

Boyatzis (1998) states that the code for deductive thematic analysis can be generated from prior research and related theories. Accordingly, I coded the themes related to multimodal literacies, storytelling and story acting, digital storytelling and so on. For more detailed pre-determined themes, I also reviewed and scanned the reported findings, discussion, and conclusion parts from my selected journal articles. I numbered each article, documented and manually highlighted the related key terms for better vision, and I also listed the relevant article information in forms. The following tables describe my pre-determined deductive themes for analyzing the selected journal articles.

**Table 6: Deductive themes related to the forms of storytelling**

<b>Deductive themes related to the forms of storytelling</b>
1. Traditional oral storytelling
2. Play-based storytelling and story acting
3. Digital storytelling
4. Arts-related storytelling



**Table 7: Deductive themes related to the modes and media of storytelling**

<b>Deductive themes related to the modes and media of storytelling</b>
1. The linguistic mode
2. Actions and body gestural modes
3. Visual modes
4. Traditional print-based media
5. Multimedia resources

**Table 8: Deductive themes related to the involved pedagogies in storytelling**

<b>Deductive themes related to the involved pedagogies in storytelling</b>
1. Play-based pedagogy
2. Student-centered pedagogy
3. Multimodal pedagogy

**Table 9: Deductive themes related to the potential benefits of storytelling**

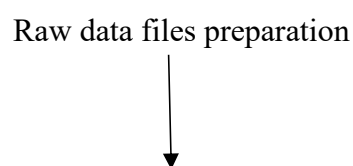
<b>Deductive themes related to the potential benefits of storytelling</b>
1. Enhancing the early learning atmosphere and motivating and engaging children's participation in the school community
2. Effectiveness on attracting children's attention in class
3. Benefits for children's multiple development needs
a) being effective for children's literacy development
b) boosting children's self-confidence in the storytelling
c) fostering children's imagination and creativity development

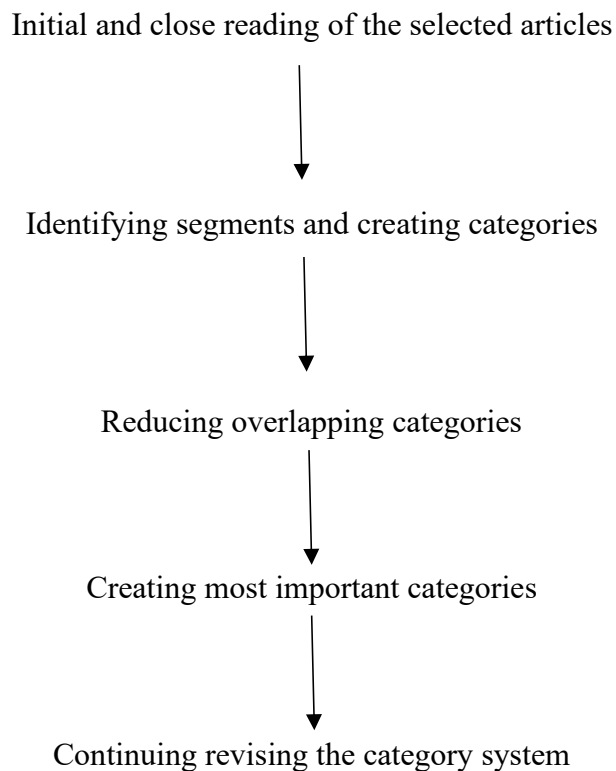
d) supporting children’s development of problem-solving skills
e) stimulating children’s decision making
f) broadening children’s cognitive meaning-making and understanding of the cultural world
g) promoting children’s social-emotional and social skills competence
h) stimulating children’s reasoning skills development
4. Helping educators understand children better

### 3.3.2 Inductive Themes

The qualified thematic code is supposed to “capture the qualitative richness of the phenomenon” and “have the maximum probability of producing high interrater reliability and validity” (Boyatzis, 1998, p. 31). The inductive themes have emerged from the data, which is common in qualitative data analysis. Inductive coding begins with reading the selected articles and the inherent information from data, and researchers can evaluate and identify important segments for creating categories (Thomas, 2006). I employed the inductive coding process from Creswell (2002) and Thomas (2006). Figure 3 depicts how I created categories and generated major inductive themes.

**Figure 3: The inductive coding process**





In the inductive analysis, I read all the 33 selected articles in detail and looked for the possible emerging themes. I particularly emphasized the reviewed articles' finding, discussion, and conclusion sections in my theme coding process. Based on my review, I created five themes from the reviewed text, and I then reduced the overlapped categories. In sum, there were three categories that remained, and they pertained to two research questions. Table 10 shows the three inductive themes in the thematic analysis.

**Table 10: Inductive themes**

<b>Inductive themes</b>
1. Interactive storytelling form
2. Supporting children's learning and education

a) supporting children's content area learning opportunities
b) being effective on moral values and character education
c) promoting school and family relationship and cooperation
3. Improving children's behavior and enhancing self-regulation abilities

### 3.4 Establishing Trustworthiness in the Research

This systematic literature review aims to encourage and provide implications for early childhood educators to implement storytelling approaches in practice. Therefore, it is significant that other researchers, educators, and practitioners in the education system regard the findings as legitimate information.

Trustworthiness is one aspect for reviewers to conceive the validity and reliability of data, methods used, and findings in the study (Connelly, 2016), which can be generally reflected by four criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), credibility is the most significant element in establishing trustworthiness. In my systematic literature review, I promoted credibility through triangulation (i.e., data source triangulation), and it is a powerful tool for demonstrating the validity of data (Cohen et al., 2018). For instance, I screened and collected data for storytelling in a global early education setting, and the data sources were from several countries. And the collected data both incorporated the perspectives from children and educators for the validation of this study. As the systematic literature review is supposed to be reproducible for results and further reviewing (Okoli & Schabram, 2010),

transferability is one way to ensure generalizability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I provided an explicit and thick description of procedures (e.g., searching strategies, screening criteria, data extraction, and data analysis) and finding report. Thus, when other researchers or practitioners scan my study, a proper understanding of my study can be generated, and they can apply the findings and conclusion of storytelling to a wider context. Researchers also can achieve dependability through a “logical, traceable and clearly documented process” (Tobin & Begley, 2004, p. 392). And readers are able to determine whether and how far they can accept the emerged findings and conclusion by reading the detailed methodological description parts (Shenton, 2004). Accordingly, readers can find my related data gathering details and findings in tables and Appendices in the thesis. Confirmability refers to the legitimate interpretations and findings, which is “established when credibility, transferability, and dependability are all achieved” (Nowell et al., 2017, p. 3). I also connected the theoretical section with analysis through the study, making sure other researchers and readers can understand my findings and conclusion.

### 3.5 Limitation of my Systematic Literature Review

As mentioned, I employed five terms for searching data in four databases (i.e., ERIC, CBCA, Education Database, and Academic Search Ultimate), and I selected journal articles within the last decade as my data source. Because of the searching data range and the specific focus on journal articles, the size of the data source is one of the limitations. Meanwhile, I extracted data from the English-only published journals, the

language bias and all these criteria may impact the interpretation and conclusion of this systematic literature review. Nonetheless, I conducted the research based on the seven-step approach and reflected my analysis and findings as honestly and neutral as possible. Besides, I conducted this study with my supervisor and committee member's agreement and support, their professional feedback and expertise helped me ensure the reliability of this study. I also provided the detailed methodological description, data gathering, and extraction process in Chapter 3, which is helpful for providing the evidence and the impartial and comprehensive synthesis in Chapter 4.

## Chapter 4

### 4 Findings

In this chapter, I present the data that I extracted and synthesized from the 33 reviewed journal articles to respond to my research questions: (1) What are the various forms that storytelling in early childhood education can take? What modes and media are involved? What kinds of pedagogies are included? (2) What are the reported benefits of storytelling in early childhood education? I report both the deductive (see Table 6, 7, 8, 9, and Appendix B) and inductive themes (see Table 10 and Appendix C) of the forms, modes and media, pedagogies, and benefits in storytelling from the 33 reviewed studies. All these results contribute to the discussion and implications in Chapter 5, providing possibilities for organizing storytelling activities in formal early education classrooms.

#### 4.1 Findings Related to the Deductive Themes

Thirty-three journal articles met the study inclusion criteria (see Appendix A). I first analyzed each article according to the deductive themes of this study. There are four main categories of deductive themes linked with the research questions in this study: Forms, modes and media, pedagogies, and benefits of storytelling in early childhood education classrooms. The following findings show the analysis related to the deductive themes in this study.

### 4.1.1 Findings: Deductive Themes Related to Storytelling Forms in Early Years Classroom

All the 33 reviewed studies contained some forms of storytelling in early education settings, and some of them documented two or more forms of storytelling at the same time (see Table 11). I generated the following deductive themes based on the existent literature: (a) traditional oral storytelling, (b) play-based storytelling and story acting, (c) digital storytelling, and (4) arts-related storytelling.

**Table 11: Findings for the deductive themes related to the storytelling forms**

<b>Deductive Themes of Storytelling Forms</b>	<b>No. of Studies Reporting Themes</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Traditional Oral Storytelling	22	66.7%
Play-based Storytelling and Story-acting	19	57.6%
Digital Storytelling	13	39.4%
Arts-related Storytelling	8	24.2%
Include two or More Storytelling Forms	21	63.6%



#### 4.1.1.1 Findings for Traditional Oral Storytelling

Of the reviewed studies, 66.7% included an oral storytelling approach in early childhood classes (Abasi & Soori, 2014; Aksoy & Baran, 2020; Aminimanesh et al., 2019; Bartan, 2020; Binder, 2014; Cremin et al., 2018; Decat et al., 2019; Duncan et al., 2019; Gosen, 2015; Gunnestad et al., 2015; Hadzigeorgiou et al., 2011; Kahuroa et al., 2021; Kara & Eveyik-Aydın, 2019; Lenhart et al., 2018; Lwin, 2016; Maureen et al., 2018; Morais et al., 2019; Reed et al., 2015; Şadiye & Feryal, 2014; Stoican & Ştefănescu, 2017; Temiz, 2019; Tin et al., 2013). For traditional oral storytelling, the main approach was either educators or children telling stories with or without using a text, story cards, and other resources (e.g., Bartan, 2020; Şadiye & Feryal, 2014; Temiz, 2019). The focus of this approach in the reviewed studies was also to enhance children's interests to listen to the narrative and participate in narrative sharing with joy and curiosity.

The reviewed studies expressed that oral storytelling was a meaningful and engaging means of illustrating story plots and cultural knowledge, as well as a way to share life experiences and help children make sense of story components (e.g., elements, sequence, and schemas) and the world (Abasi & Soori, 2014; Lenhart et al., 2018; Maureen et al., 2018). This approach provided opportunities for children to “listen actively to the words of others” (Tin et al., 2013, p. 1450), share personal stories, and communicate more with others when they discussed the story-related illustrations. In these reviewed studies, early childhood educators were usually the organizers of the

oral storytelling activities, and some ECEs used oral storytelling to improve children's vocabulary acquisition and other literacy skills. The studies indicated that when the educators utilized this approach, they usually introduced the stories to children first and asked several story-related questions for further discussion and perspective-sharing activities (e.g., Bartan, 2020; Hadzigeorgiou et al., 2011; Lwin, 2016; Şadiye & Feryal, 2014; Temiz, 2019; Tin et al., 2013). For example, in a bid to improve children's vocabulary, the educator participants in Abasi and Soori's (2014) study read half of a story to preschoolers and asked them questions based on the pictures and children's life experiences, and they also utilized flashcards to introduce the new words to children and "asked children to draw some pictures of the new words" (p. 9). Lwin (2016), for example, conducting research on how professional storytellers used diverse voice modulations and facial expressions in storytelling time to draw four-to-five-year-old children's attention to the vocabulary. Furthermore, 16 of the 22 studies connected traditional oral storytelling to other storytelling approaches, which shows oral storytelling is prevalent in early years classes and educators could utilize it as an independent storytelling approach as well as a part of joint approaches in practice (Aksoy & Baran, 2020; Aminimanesh et al., 2019; Bartan, 2020; Binder, 2014; Cremin et al., 2018; Decat et al., 2019; Duncan et al., 2019; Gunnestad et al., 2015; Kahuroa et al., 2021; Kara & Eveyik-Aydın, 2019; Lwin, 2016; Maureen et al., 2018; Morais et al., 2019; Şadiye & Feryal, 2014; Temiz, 2019; Tin et al., 2013).

### 4.1.1.2 Findings for Play-Based Storytelling and Story Acting

The play-based storytelling and story acting approach emphasize play-related elements, and educators have used its instructional potential in pedagogical practices for many years (Cremin et al., 2018; Koivula et al., 2020; Wohlwend, 2012). By employing this storytelling approach, educators encourage and motivate young children to participate in the shared activities in their playworld, and they also make use of other play elements such as puppets and story-based playlets (Nicolopoulou et al., 2009; Nind et al., 2014; Paley, 1990). One representative form of play-based storytelling is story acting, which the literature showed as being especially prevalent in preschool and kindergarten classrooms. As found in the reviewed literature, educators employed this approach to encourage children to narrate stories to the entire class and then children could choose peers to help them act out the stories with the educators' assistance (e.g., Aksoy & Baran, 2020; Binder, 2014; Duncan et al., 2019; Maureen et al., 2020).

Nineteen papers involved the play-based and story acting approach in storytelling sessions, and it was the second most popular storytelling approach in the reviewed studies (Aksoy & Baran, 2020; Aminimanesh et al., 2019; Bartan, 2020; Binder, 2014; Cremin et al., 2018; Duncan et al., 2019; Fantozzi et al., 2018; Halimah et al., 2020; Kara et al., 2013; Kara et al., 2014; Kara et al., 2014; Kara & Eveyik-Aydın, 2019; Koivula et al., 2020; Lwin, 2016; Maureen et al., 2018; Maureen et al., 2020; Şadiye

& Feryal, 2014; Temiz, 2019; Tin et al., 2013). For engaging children in this storytelling form, educator participants not only utilized puppets, games, story performances but also included some interactive storytelling toys.

Nine of these 19 studies under this subtheme reported that early childhood educators were accustomed to using props (e.g., puppets or toys) to illustrate story plots, attract children's attention, and help children create and express their own stories (Aksoy & Baran, 2020; Aminimanesh et al., 2019; Bartan, 2020; Halimah et al., 2020; Kara et al., 2013; Kara et al., 2014; Maureen et al., 2018; Temiz, 2019; Tin et al., 2013). Eight of the 19 studies reported the story acting activity in storytelling process (Aksoy & Baran, 2020; Binder, 2014; Cremin et al., 2018; Duncan et al., 2019; Maureen et al., 2020; Şadiye & Feryal, 2014; Temiz, 2019; Tin et al., 2013). For example, in Binder's (2014) study, the educators "read the dictated story" and "worked with the class on some drama techniques using body gestures and facial expressions" (p. 13) to promote young learners' engagement in understanding, telling, and acting the plot, which showed how they used Paley's story acting approach as the methodological framework in storytelling practice. As Cremin et al. (2018) described, the body posture, action, gesture, and speech in story acting "reflected aspects of life experience and cultural influence from the classroom and beyond" (p. 14), and children were able to express their understanding with their distinctive performance styles. In general, educators invited children to choose the story character in story acting, and they read the plots aloud during the children's performances. For example, a child in Binder's study (2014) directed the peers' roles, acted as the main characters,

and assisted peers' performances during story acting, which showed that they empowered children's voices, and they were acting with confidence in their playworld.

#### 4.1.1.3 Findings for Digital Storytelling

In the reviewed literature, 13 studies reported that educator participants incorporated the form of digital storytelling approach to create media-rich encounters in early years curriculum (Bartan, 2020; Boras et al., 2016; Decat et al., 2019; Fantozzi et al., 2018; Kara et al., 2013; Kara et al., 2014; Kara et al., 2014 Maureen et al., 2018; Maureen et al., 2020; Morais et al., 2019; Skantz Åberg et al., 2014; Tin et al., 2013; Yuksel-Arslan et al., 2016). To illustrate, it engaged both children and educators to create stories based on personal experience, historical culture, and understanding by using diverse digital resources, such as iPads, computers, interactive whiteboards, and PowerPoint. In most cases (e.g., Boras et al., 2016; Decat et al., 2019; Kara et al., 2014; Skantz Åberg et al., 2014), educators provided the instructions of the appropriate technology tools to children at the beginning of digital storytelling, ensuring equal participation opportunities. For instance, the teacher in Skantz Åberg et al.'s (2014) study introduced digital storytelling to children by giving instructions on using the portable computer and software, making sure every child understood the rules and helping them during the digital storytelling process.

According to these 13 studies, educator participants conducted and organized digital storytelling as a vibrant classroom activity, "a learning tool, a self-reflection tool"

(Yuksel-Arslan et al., 2016, p. 434) and a tool for establishing students' self-confidence and supporting their literacy development (e.g., Boras et al., 2016; Maureen et al., 2018). For instance, Fantozzi et al. (2018) pointed out that "the iPad provided an avenue for students to share stories about who they are and what they can do" (p. 684), and children showed more confidence and particular interests in this digital storytelling activity. Specifically, Boras et al. (2016) reported that teachers in Croatia utilized digital storytelling to enhance children's computational and mathematic competence. Tin et al. (2013) stated that collaborative digital storytelling could facilitate children's information gathering and problem-solving skills. This perspective resembled that of Fantozzi et al. (2018)'s study, which reported that "the iPad allowed for and encouraged collaboration" (p. 684) and students had the opportunities to "work together in pairs or groups" (p. 685).

#### 4.1.1.4 Findings for Arts-Related Storytelling

Eight reviewed papers involved the dramatic arts-based storytelling approach (Aksoy & Baran, 2020; Aminimanesh et al., 2019; Binder, 2014; Dashti & Habeeb, 2020; Decat et al., 2019; Gunnestad et al., 2015; Kahuroa et al., 2021; Morais et al., 2019). The reviewed literature described such storytelling as enabling opportunities for children's imagination to interact with various materials, and children can share perspectives, communicate experiences, and express fantasies through the use of artistic media (Eckhoff, 2008). When using the arts-related approach in storytelling, early childhood educators valued children's painting, clay sculpting, singing, and

other arts-related modalities in storytelling. These reviewed studies regarded these arts-related resources as active anchors in storytelling activity, especially for those children who have difficulties in expressing themselves by words or writing. For instance, a child who was a second language learner in Binder's (2014) study used drawings to mirror her ideas in storytelling and represent her prior knowledge, and the viewers were "able to read the story from the drawing" (p. 18) with a deep understanding of its experiences.

Drawing sessions were common in the arts-related storytelling activities from the reviewed studies. For instance, educator participants in Dashti and Habeeb's (2020) study encouraged children to draw the "story using paper and materials available in the classroom's art corner" (p. 524). Similarly, Morais et al. (2019) conducted research that allowed younger students to express their understanding and experience based on drawings after storytelling. Also, Kahuroa et al. (2021) recorded that teacher participants in New Zealand employed the arts-based approach and storytelling to understand preschoolers' "experiences, emotions, and funds of knowledge about COVID-19" (p. 11). In addition, Aminimanesh et al.'s (2019) study reported that musical shows and painting sessions were held weekly in storytelling activities, enriching the class storytelling experiences with art-related elements. In sum, all the educators in these eight papers conducted drawing sessions during or after storytelling activities. By doing so, educators empowered children's voices and artifacts and sought to understand pupils' ideas and feelings in the art-rich environment.

## 4.1.2 Findings: Deductive Themes Related to Modes and Media in Storytelling

This section explores the deductive themes of modes and media of storytelling in the 33 review studies. Almost all the papers included information pertinent to completing this section, and most of them indicated that there were several modes and media employed at the same time. I have listed five deductive subthemes about modes and media in storytelling: the linguistic mode, action and body gestural modes, visual modes, print-based media, and multimedia resources.

### 4.1.2.1 Findings for the Linguistic Mode

Overall, all 33 papers documented that the employment of linguistic mode in storytelling in early childhood classroom (Abasi & Soori, 2014; Aksoy & Baran, 2020; Aminimanesh et al., 2019; Bartan, 2020; Binder, 2014; Boras et al., 2016; Cremin et al., 2018; Dashti & Habeeb, 2020; Decat et al., 2019; Duncan et al., 2019; Fantozzi et al., 2018; Gosen, 2015; Gunnestad et al., 2015; Hadzigeorgiou et al., 2011; Halimah et al., 2020; Kahuroa et al., 2021; Kara et al., 2013; Kara et al., 2014; Kara et al., 2014; Kara & Eveyik-Aydın, 2019; Koivula et al., 2020; Lenhart et al., 2018; Lwin, 2016; Maureen et al., 2018; Maureen et al., 2020; Morais et al., 2019; Reed et al., 2015; Şadiye & Feryal, 2014; Skantz Åberg et al., 2014; Stoican & Ştefănescu, 2017; Temiz, 2019; Tin et al., 2013; Yuksel-Arslan et al., 2016). In general, the linguistic mode of expression is the most common mode in storytelling activities as individuals always tell stories by words (Hamilton & Weiss, 2005), especially for children who are



learning for a higher language proficiency level. Corresponding with the literature review in Chapter 2, telling stories is a natural and old tradition; it has been significant and prevalent since the early stages of meaning-making (Isbell et al., 2004). In addition to hearing and telling stories with family members, the findings from Bartan (2020) and Temiz (2019) confirmed that the storytelling activities in formal classrooms assisted children in connecting their own experience with others' worlds; the activities also promoted peer interaction in a shared community. Liu et al. (2011) also pointed out that storytelling was a co-narration process for "participant[s] to communicate and exchange ideas verbally" (p. 874). Furthermore, all the researchers in the 33 reviewed studies suggested that storytelling in preschool classrooms should involve sufficient linguistic opportunities for children to express themselves individually and communicate collaboratively. For instance, Temiz (2019) mentioned that researchers in class read the book first, asked some questions about the plot, and then invited the children to retell the story, discuss the questions, and communicate about their own related experiences with peers. This was the most common storytelling process in the reviewed studies (e.g., Bartan, 2020; Binder, 2014; Cremin et al., 2018; Lwin, 2016).

#### **4.1.2.2 Findings for Action and Body Gestural Modes**

In general, the reviewed studies suggested that gestural modes and action modes were prevalent in early childhood storytelling activities. There are 17 reviewed articles that reported action or gestural modes in detail (Aksoy & Baran, 2020; Aminimanesh et al.,

2019; Bartan, 2020; Binder, 2014; Cremin et al., 2018; Duncan et al., 2019; Fantozzi et al., 2018; Halimah et al., 2020; Kara & Eveyik-Aydın, 2019; Koivula et al., 2020; Lenhart et al., 2018; Lwin, 2016; Maureen et al., 2020; Reed et al., 2015; Şadiye & Feryal, 2014; Temiz, 2019; Tin et al., 2013), and nine of them identified both modes in storytelling.

Fourteen studies showed the connection between action and storytelling in early childhood classrooms, and these educator participants advocated children's active participation in a vibrant environment by acting out stories (Aksoy & Baran, 2020; Aminimanesh et al., 2019; Bartan, 2020; Binder, 2014; Cremin et al., 2018; Duncan et al., 2019; Fantozzi et al., 2018; Halimah et al., 2020; Kara & Eveyik-Aydın, 2019; Koivula et al., 2020; Maureen et al., 2020; Şadiye & Feryal, 2014; Temiz, 2019; Tin et al., 2013). For instance, all these papers addressed role play and acting. Binder (2014) commented that children enjoyed "a multimodal lens of understanding" (p. 12) by acting stories out. Similarly, Cremin et al. (2018) reported that pretend play offered collaborative opportunities for the "individual story-teller, other children and the practitioner" (p. 13). Specifically, Binder (2014) depicted the process in which children organized and assisted others "in how they should portray their actions" (p. 16), indicating children's increased engagement in making choices, representing the character, and being a part of class collaboration.

Furthermore, 12 studies reported gestural elements in storytelling (Aksoy & Baran, 2020; Bartan, 2020; Binder, 2014; Cremin et al., 2018; Duncan et al., 2019; Kara &

Eveyik-Aydın, 2019; Koivula et al., 2020; Lenhart et al., 2018; Lwin, 2016; Reed et al., 2015; Şadiye & Feryal, 2014; Temiz, 2019), and the gestures included the positioning of the hand, head, arm, and facial expression to assist the speech. For example, Lwin (2016) reported how teachers used “mimic, metaphoric, proposition, deictic gestures” (p. 75) and facial expressions accompanying the words to support children’s inferring of meaning-making and to draw their attention to certain words. Sometimes the tellers only used simple hand gestures or facial expressions without elaborate actions in storytelling. In general, gestures and actions worked together to generate better listener comprehension of the stories.

#### 4.1.2.3 Findings for Visual Modes

As mentioned in the findings of oral and arts-related storytelling forms (see Section 4.1.1), paintings, drawings, and other visual modes were popular in early childhood storytelling activities. Twenty-two papers showed that educator participants utilized visual images and hands-on drawings in storytelling, arousing children’s interest and supporting self-expression opportunities (Abasi & Soori, 2014; Aksoy & Baran, 2020; Aminimanesh et al., 2019; Binder, 2014; Boras et al., 2016; Dashti & Habeeb, 2020; Decat et al., 2019; Duncan et al., 2019; Fantozzi et al., 2018; Gunnestad et al., 2015; Hadzigeorgiou et al., 2011; Kahuroa et al., 2021; Kara et al., 2013; Kara et al., 2014; Kara & Eveyik-Aydın, 2019; Koivula et al., 2020; Lwin, 2016; Maureen et al., 2018; Morais et al., 2019; Reed et al., 2015; Temiz, 2019; Tin et al., 2013). According to the report from Morais et al. (2019), educators encouraged children to make meaning and

represent their understandings with visual modes such as images, drawings, and graphics. And Kahuroa et al. (2021) reported that preschoolers reflected personal experiences, understandings, and feelings about COVID-19 in their arts-based storytelling. The researchers explained that although “these concepts would have been difficult to explain verbally” (p. 14), the children were able to express themselves visually. These 22 reviewed papers showed how visual modes of storytelling made connections between children’s prior experiences and others’ understandings and how young children depicted their funds of knowledge and opinions in visual ways.

#### 4.1.2.4 Findings for Storytelling with Traditional Print-Based Media

Fourteen reviewed studies reported that educators and children participants applied print-based media (e.g., written language as in printed books) in storytelling (Abasi & Soori, 2014; Aksoy & Baran, 2020; Bartan, 2020; Binder, 2014; Decat et al., 2019; Duncan et al., 2019; Fantozzi et al., 2018; Gosen, 2015; Kara & Eveyik-Aydın, 2019; Morais et al., 2019; Reed et al., 2015; Skantz Åberg et al., 2014; Temiz, 2019; Tin et al., 2013). Traditionally, educators have utilized print-based media such as storybooks in early years storytelling classrooms (Flewitt, 2013), and all the educators in the 14 studies provided children with opportunities to read or listen to storybooks. The storybooks’ combination of words and images contributed to the children’s understanding of plots, reading, and writing. For example, reading storybooks to children was the main form of storytelling in Kara and Eveyik-Aydın’s (2019),

Gosen's (2015), and Temiz's (2019) studies. As Temiz (2019) reported, teachers "read the book" and "asked some questions about the characters and the places where events took place, and then let children volunteer to retell the story" (p. 20). Likewise, educators in Bartan's (2020) study also utilized story cards to encourage children's participation in storytelling. In sum, print-based media was commonly employed with the oral storytelling form in the reviewed studies.

#### 4.1.2.5 Findings for Storytelling with Multimedia Resources

As mentioned in the last section, traditional print-based media was used as the original and prevalent resource in storytelling, while young children are also surrounded by screen-based and digital media in day-to-day circumstances.

Fourteen of the studies reported such opportunities for children and educators to use technology-related media in storytelling (Bartan, 2020; Boras et al., 2016; Dashti & Habeeb, 2020; Decat et al., 2019; Fantozzi et al., 2018; Kara et al., 2013; Kara et al., 2014; Kara et al., 2014, Maureen et al., 2018; Maureen et al., 2020; Morais et al., 2019; Skantz Åberg et al., 2014; Tin et al., 2013; Yuksel-Arslan et al., 2016). All these articles addressed the elements of multimedia. These papers indicated how digital devices played a crucial role in storytelling, and these technology-related devices (e.g., computer, iPad, software, audio device) with multimedia resources such as video, animation, digital text, and moving images provide more expression opportunities for participants. As detailed in Chapter 2, some literacy researchers (e.g., Flewitt, 2008; Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001; Skouge et al., 2007; Walsh, 2010) have proposed that

meaning-making can occur at the intersection of diverse modes and media and the blended semiotic resources (i.e., text, visual, audio, gestural media format). The reviewed studies echoed these propositions and expressed that multimedia could offer children multiple opportunities to participate in storytelling. As there were several instances of blended media use in the reviewed studies, I report multimedia elements of storytelling in the following section. In sum, 28 studies reported multimedia elements (e.g., text, audio, animation, graphic) of storytelling in early childhood classrooms (Abasi & Soori, 2014; Aksoy & Baran, 2020; Aminimanesh et al., 2019; Bartan, 2020; Binder, 2014; Boras et al., 2016; Dashti & Habeeb, 2020; Decat et al., 2019; Duncan et al., 2019; Fantozzi et al., 2018; Gunnestad et al., 2015; Hadzigeorgiou et al., 2011; Kahuroa et al., 2021; Kara et al., 2013; Kara et al., 2014; Kara et al., 2014; Kara & Eveyik-Aydin, 2019; Koivula et al., 2020; Lenhart et al., 2018; Lwin, 2016; Maureen et al., 2018; Maureen et al., 2020; Morais et al., 2019; Reed et al., 2015; Skantz Åberg et al., 2014; Temiz, 2019; Tin et al., 2013; Yuksel-Arslan et al., 2016).

Burn and Parker (2003) have stated the combination of multimedia and digital devices can be regarded as “a kind of multimodal mixing-desk” (p. 23), and it could promote participants’ interaction and attendant engagement during the process. For instance, Boras et al. (2016) reported how educators and preschoolers used images from the web, digital texts in Prezi, and video for expression, discussion, and collaborated activities in storytelling. Similarly, Bartan (2020) encouraged children’s participation in class storytelling with text, graphics, and audio elements, which supported

“children’s understanding of the story and attention span” (p. 81).

### 4.1.3 Findings: Deductive Themes Related to Pedagogy in Storytelling

To respond to the third question (i.e., what kind of pedagogy is involved in class storytelling activities for the early years?), I mainly generated three related deductive subthemes from the literature: play-based pedagogy, student-centered pedagogy, and multimodal pedagogy.

#### 4.1.3.1 Findings for Play-Based Pedagogy

In the findings on the deductive theme of storytelling forms (see Section 4.1.1.2), I reported that there were 19 papers related to the play-based storytelling and story-acting approach. Accordingly, these 19 reviewed studies identified the contribution of play-based pedagogy in children’s class storytelling activity (Aksoy & Baran, 2020; Aminimanesh et al., 2019; Bartan, 2020; Binder, 2014; Cremin et al., 2018; Duncan et al., 2019; Fantozzi et al., 2018; Halimah et al., 2020; Kara et al., 2013; Kara et al., 2014; Kara et al., 2014; Kara & Eveyik-Aydın, 2019; Koivula et al., 2020; Lwin, 2016; Maureen et al., 2018; Maureen et al., 2020; Şadiye & Feryal, 2014; Temiz, 2019; Tin et al., 2013). These reported findings addressed that pretend play and games in storytelling were exceptionally significant for children, and that both imaginary free play and play with support and guidance from educators were effective on children’s active participation, internalized thoughts, and shared imaginary collaborations in storytelling (Cremin et al., 2018; Halimah et al., 2020; Temiz, 2019).

If educators integrated play-based pedagogy in teaching and learning, the children tended to be highly motivated because the rules and directions in play activities were devised, recognized, and accepted by them instead of being simply decided by educators (Nicolopoulou et al., 2009). One typical example of play pedagogy in early childhood education pertains to the storytelling and story-acting practice, which had widespread adoption in the reviewed studies. For instance, Aksoy and Baran (2020) integrated the play-based pedagogy in storytelling class, and they concluded that it benefitted children's social skills. Binder's (2014) research findings referred to the visual representation (e.g., drawing) and playing in storytelling. Binder (2014) reported that a child had a strong desire in directing the acting as well as being the main character in story acting. And the child "paid attention to details and kept the integrity of her story" (p. 16), which "reflected her agentic capacities" (p. 16) and the interaction process among peers. Additionally, Binder (2014) concluded that the play pedagogy with storytelling created "a classroom community" (p. 18) where narratives, children's imagination, and creativity were shared publicly in a relaxed atmosphere. The study by Cremin et al. (2018) also engaged children in the co-construction of storytelling and story-acting, and the "interplay between diverse modes," "embodiment" (p. 34), and illustration provided rich opportunities for "peer collaboration and multimodal engagement" (p. 35).

#### 4.1.3.2 Findings for Student-Centered Pedagogy

I identified student-centered pedagogy as one of the themes in this study, as educators



especially emphasized children's initiatives, interests, and expression in early childhood storytelling activities (Cremin et al., 2016). I understood student-centered pedagogy in storytelling as pedagogy where children are not dependent on the educators' explicit instructions throughout the storytelling-focused learning opportunities and where instead, they are invited to be active participants in individual or collaborative storytelling activities (Gillen & Hall, 2013; Nicolopoulou, 2009; Vasudevan et al., 2010). For instance, child participants in the reviewed studies had opportunities to choose the storytelling content (e.g., Fantozzi et al., 2018, Kara et al., 2014; Sadiye & Feryal, 2014) and select modes and media for the expression of their ideas (e.g., Binder, 2014; Decat et al., 2019; Morais et al., 2019). Furthermore, the educator participants played the role of supporting children in the creation of an active and collaborative classroom atmosphere. Thirteen papers included student-centered pedagogy in the storytelling process (Aksoy & Baran, 2020; Binder, 2014; Dashti & Habeeb, 2020; Decat et al., 2019; Fantozzi et al., 2018; Kahuroa et al., 2021; Kara et al., 2013; Kara et al., 2014; Kara et al., 2014; Koivula et al., 2020; Morais et al., 2019; Şadiye & Feryal, 2014; Skantz Åberg et al., 2014), which empowered children's self-learning, interests, identities, and experiences. For instance, educators in Fantozzi et al.'s (2018) paper engaged children to participate in "class and individual e-books" (p. 683) composition activity which based on the iPad, and children "shared stories about who they are and what they can do" (p. 684) without educators' direct instruction. Similarly, the study from Decat et al. (2019) reported that children used the ActiveInspire software to create stories and drawings, and then the educators put

all individual stories together as a form of community memory, invoking student-centered and peer-oriented pedagogies. Decat et al. (2019) noted that when students were sharing “experience and communicating” (p. 11) specific information during the process, they became more engaged and curious because the communication ways were chosen by themselves. Şadiye and Feryal (2014) also reported a student-centered lesson plan in their study. When the children gave creative and interesting responses in dialogue, the educator added the children’s feedback instantly to the story, and they explained that “it was important that children’s fun answers were appreciated” (p. 192) in storytelling activities.

#### 4.1.3.3 Findings for Multimodal Pedagogy

All 33 reviewed articles included the elements of multimodal pedagogy in the class storytelling activities (Abasi & Soori, 2014; Aksoy & Baran, 2020; Aminimanesh et al., 2019; Bartan, 2020; Binder, 2014; Boras et al., 2016; Cremin et al., 2018; Dashti & Habeeb, 2020; Decat et al., 2019; Duncan et al., 2019; Fantozzi et al., 2018; Gosen, 2015; Gunnestad et al., 2015; Hadzigeorgiou et al., 2011; Halimah et al., 2020; Kahuroa et al., 2021; Kara et al., 2013; Kara et al., 2014; Kara et al., 2014; Kara & Eveyik-Aydın, 2019; Koivula et al., 2020; Lenhart et al., 2018; Lwin, 2016; Maureen et al., 2018; Maureen et al., 2020; Morais et al., 2019; Reed et al., 2015; Şadiye & Feryal, 2014; Skantz Åberg et al., 2014; Stoican & Ştefănescu, 2017; Temiz, 2019; Tin et al., 2013; Yuksel-Arslan et al., 2016). In literacy, multimodality indicates that meaning-making can be achieved through the inter-relationship between different

modalities (e.g., speech, images, gestures, actions, music and so on), highlighting that communicative signs or symbols are not limited to the linguistic mode (Kress & Jewitt, 2003). In multimodal pedagogy, educators and learners regard all the modes as potential contributors to meaning-making. When connecting it to the reviewed studies, Binder (2014) and Lwin (2016) explored the potential of multimodal approaches in children's class storytelling activities. In Lwin's (2016) study, mimic gestures, images, body posture and actions, and voice modulations were utilized in a "visually and vocally salient, contextualized way" (p. 77), which promoted children's motivation and highlighted the strength of interconnected communicative resources within multimodal ensembles. Similarly, Duncan et al. (2019) reported the combined modes of movement, language, and image influenced children's language ability and supported them in co-constructing meanings through the interaction and the interplay of myriad modes. All 33 papers indicated different multimodal ensembles in detail, while they all corresponded to the multimodal pedagogy and took into account how different children encountered storytelling based on their funds of knowledge and their selected modes for expression and interactions.

#### 4.1.4 Findings: Deductive Themes Related to Reported Benefits of Storytelling

As for the benefits in children's class storytelling activity, I generated four deductive themes with several bullet points from literature, and they are: (1) benefits of fostering the relaxing and enjoyable atmosphere, motivating and engaging children's

participation in the school community; (2) effectiveness on attracting children's attention in class activities; (3) benefits for children's multiple development needs; (4) helping educators to understand children's views, interests, and identities. In total, 33 reviewed papers reported different benefits related to these deductive subthemes in class storytelling activities, and I report my findings in the following four parts.

#### 4.1.4.1 Findings for Storytelling's Benefits in Enhancing the Early Learning Atmosphere and Motivating and Engaging Children's participation in the School Community

Sixteen papers reported findings on how storytelling activities in early childhood education fostered a relaxing and enjoyable pedagogical atmosphere and motivated children's expression, interaction, and collaboration (Binder, 2014; Boras et al., 2016; Cremin et al., 2018; Dashti & Habeeb, 2020; Decat et al., 2019; Duncan et al., 2019; Fantozzi et al., 2018; Gosen, 2015; Halimah et al., 2020; Kahuroa et al., 2021; Kara et al., 2014; Kara et al., 2014; Morais et al., 2019; Skantz Åberg et al., 2014; Tin et al., 2013; Yuksel-Arslan et al., 2016), which accounts for almost fifty percent of the reviewed studies ( $n = 33$ ). For instance, Halimah et al. (2020) reported that children had high enthusiasm in the storytelling process and storytelling highly promoted the interactions among peers. Kahuroa et al. (2021) also noted that storytelling became an attractive and powerful tool for children "to communicate their experience, ideas, and emotions in different ways" (p. 18). And the report from Gosen (2015) showed that a

personal event sharing component during storytelling was beneficial to children's interactional competence development in the community. Similarly, Fantozzi et al. (2018) found that the utilization of iPads in storytelling "encouraged collaboration in multi-author playful works" (p. 684), and the researchers also emphasized that the class atmosphere for sharing stories became "safe and engaging" (p. 685).

#### 4.1.4.2 Findings for Storytelling's Effectiveness on Attracting Children's Attention in Class Activities

Four articles found storytelling's significant influence on children's attention span (Aminimanesh et al., 2019; Bartan, 2020; Halimah et al., 2020; Kara et al., 2014). As shown in their findings, the diverse modes and media in class storytelling activities held children's attention. For example, Bartan (2020) examined the effects of different storytelling methods on children's attention span and provided early childhood educators with more effective approaches. They reported that implicating the digital in storytelling was attention-grabbing but Aminimanesh et al.'s (2019) study found that puppets in storytelling also significantly increased children's attention. Although these four reviewed studies explored different storytelling methods, they all confirmed storytelling's positive effects on children's attention span.

#### 4.1.4.3 Findings for Storytelling's Benefits on Children's Multiple Development Needs

Twenty-three reviewed articles extensively reported that storytelling was beneficial in numerous areas of children's development, which corresponded with my following

deductive bullet points as mentioned in Chapter 3:

- (a) being effective for children's literacy development
- (b) boosting children's self-confidence in the storytelling
- (c) fostering children's imagination and creativity development
- (d) supporting children's development of problem-solving skills
- (e) stimulating children's decision making
- (f) broadening children's cognitive meaning-making and understanding of the cultural and world
- (g) promoting children's social-emotional and social skills competence
- (h) stimulating children's reasoning

Fifteen studies showed storytelling's benefits on children's literacy development

(Abasi & Soori, 2014; Aksoy & Baran, 2020; Boras et al., 2016; Decat et al., 2019; Duncan et al., 2019; Kara et al., 2013; Kara & Eveyik-Aydin, 2019; Lenhart et al., 2018; Lwin, 2016; Maureen et al., 2018; Maureen et al., 2020; Şadiye & Feryal, 2014; Skantz Åberg et al., 2014; Temiz, 2019; Tin et al., 2013). For instance, the outcome in Abasi and Soori's (2014) study indicated that "storytelling was an effective way to improve the abilities of vocabulary learning for children in kindergartens" (p. 10). Similarly, Kara and Eveyik-Aydin (2019) and Şadiye and Feryal (2014) investigated that Teaching Proficiency through Reading and Storytelling (TPRS) had a notable

influence on young children's receptive and productive vocabulary acquisition and lexical development. Temiz (2019) reported that bilingual children from low socio-economic status produced more structured narratives and improved their narrative competence by participating in storytelling activities.

Additionally, three reviewed studies (Boras et al., 2016; Maureen et al., 2018; Maureen et al., 2020) reported that storytelling activities could develop digital literacy skills. For example, Boras et al. (2016) identified that the children who participated in digital storytelling activity had significant improvement in computational skills. The finding from Maureen et al.'s (2020) study also showed that early digital literacy skills such as the usage of digital devices and communication through digital platforms were effectively developed. The study from Yuksel-Arslan et al. (2016) confirmed that storytelling was effective for heightening individual self-confidence because children had "taken ownership of learning activity" (p. 437), and they had the sense of belonging to share experiences and opinions freely.

As for how storytelling influences children's imagination and creativity, four articles (Halimah et al., 2020; Kara et al., 2013; Stoican & Ștefănescu, 2017; Tin et al., 2013) showed crucial findings. Kara et al. (2013) found that when children were playing with storytelling toys, more creative narratives occurred. Halimah et al.'s (2020) and Tin et al.'s (2013) findings also agreed that storytelling could increase pupils' rich imagination and creativity. Koivula et al. (2020) and Tin et al. (2013) also noted that storytelling promoted individual problem-solving skills. One study from Decat et al.

(2019) highlighted the utilization of storytelling software and confirmed its benefits for stimulating “children to be decision-makers about every detail in their work” (p. 15). When reporting findings on how storytelling broadens children’s cognitive understanding of culture and the world, five reviewed studies (Bartan, 2020; Hadzigeorgiou et al., 2011; Kahuroa et al., 2021; Kara et al., 2013; Tin et al., 2013) reported the related information. For example, Tin et al.’s (2013) paper confirmed that storytelling approaches could “help children gain knowledge of the culture” (p. 1453), and Kara et al. (2013) agreed storytelling had stimulated children’s cognitive process of meaning-making. In addition, Kahuroa et al. (2021) noted that children developed their understanding of COVID-19 through the art-related storytelling approach, which reflected the process of making sense of the world and events.

Two studies addressed storytelling’s effectiveness on children’s social-emotional and social skills development (Aksoy & Baran, 2020; Koivula et al., 2020). For instance, Aksoy and Baran (2020) explored that storytelling-based activities had a positive influence on social skills training. They reported that storytelling was more effective than the social skills educational program in preschool, and the effects were permanent, inspiring educators to utilize storytelling practices to support children’s social skills training.

In sum, the reviewed studies reported that storytelling offered extensive varieties of benefits to children’s numerous areas of development.



#### 4.1.4.4 Findings for Storytelling's Benefits on Helping Educators Understand Children Better for Further Reflection

Two reviewed studies (Binder, 2014; Yuksel-Arslan et al., 2016) specifically mentioned that storytelling activities allowed educators to understand children's perspectives, feelings, interests, and identities, which informed educators' reflections and adjustments for further practice. Yuksel-Arslan et al. (2016), for example, reported that teacher participants organized digital storytelling in kindergartens, and the results showed that digital storytelling provided "equal opportunities for all students" (p. 438) to express themselves and it could be regarded as "an impetus for change in teachers' practices" (p. 438). In Binder's (2014) study, children were encouraged to use multimodal resources in storytelling, such as body gestures, drawing, oral expression in interaction and collaboration. And Binder (2014) confirmed that "multiple modes of communication and expression afforded us entry into children's life worlds" (p. 19), which supported educators' consideration of the further pedagogical adjustment.

#### 4.2 Findings Related to the Inductive Themes

In the following sections, I report the identified inductive themes from the 33 reviewed articles. And these frequently reported patterns pertained to two aspects of research questions (1) What are the various forms that storytelling in early childhood education can take? (2) What are the reported benefits of storytelling in early

childhood education?

#### 4.2.1 Findings: Inductive Themes Related to Interactive Storytelling

Three reviewed papers (Kara et al., 2013; Kara et al., 2014; Kara et al., 2014) reported interactive storytelling based on the same smart storytelling toy. As shown in Kara et al.'s (2013) study, two different flash modules were included. In the first module, children were encouraged to link the appropriate character to the correct narrative record. And in the second module, children were encouraged to choose “any story subjects on the interface” (p. 31), and then they could create a unique story based on their selective subjects with different animation shown on the screen. Three reviewed articles showed that children had high motivation with the interactive storytelling approach, which approved that interactive storytelling “stimulates cognitive processes and causes rich narrative activities” (Kara et al., 2013, p. 42).

#### 4.2.2 Findings: Inductive Themes Related to the Benefits of Class Storytelling Activities

I have identified two inductive themes which are related to the benefits of storytelling activities in the reviewed 33 studies, and they are: (1) supporting children's learning and education, and (2) improving children's behavior problems and enhancing self-regulation abilities.

In sum, ten reviewed articles identified storytelling activities in supporting children's

learning and education, for example, promoting content area learning opportunities and the cooperation between school and family (Boras et al., 2016; Decat et al., 2019; Duncan et al., 2019; Fantozzi et al., 2018; Gunnestad et al., 2015; Hadzigeorgiou et al., 2011; Halimah et al., 2020; Morais et al., 2019; Tin et al., 2013; Yuksel-Arslan et al., 2016). Six of the reviewed studies reported that storytelling effectively supported children's content area learning opportunities (Boras et al., 2016; Decat et al., 2019; Duncan et al., 2019; Hadzigeorgiou et al., 2011; Morais et al., 2019; Tin et al., 2013). For instance, Boras et al. (2016), Decat et al. (2019), and Tin et al. (2013) reported that storytelling could develop children's mathematic skills, and the paper from Morais et al. (2019) reported that the storytelling based on science elements could arouse preschoolers' interests in chemistry and science education. What's more, the findings from Duncan et al.'s (2019) study showed that it also accelerated preschoolers' motor competence in physical education.

And three of the 10 reviewed papers reported that class storytelling activities had advantages for children's moral values and character education (Gunnestad et al., 2015; Halimah et al., 2020; Tin et al., 2013). Although the teacher participants in these three studies utilized different storytelling approaches to teach moral values and ethics, they all confirmed that they were effective in utilizing storytelling for internalizing character education. Halimah et al. (2020), for example, demonstrated that character education could be in progress through storytelling with puppets, and pupils were encouraged "to implement character education in their daily life" (p. 5). Similarly, in Gunnestad et al.'s (2015) project, storytelling "became a useful tool for

teachers in supporting children's understanding of the value of forgiveness" (p. 1907).

Two reviewed articles noted that storytelling had a positive influence in "overcoming parents' resistance across early childhood education" (Yuksel-Arslan et al., 2016, p. 434), which showed storytelling's benefits on strengthening school and home connection. For instance, Fantozzi et al. (2018) reported cooperative storytelling in class "fostered a sense of strong community of family, friends, and school" (p. 688).

Furthermore, two papers reported that storytelling had improved children's behaviors and enhanced their self-regulation capacities (Aminimanesh et al., 2019; Koivula et al., 2020). Aminimanesh et al. (2019) specifically confirmed that storytelling with puppet shows "were suitable replacements for drug therapy" (p. 3) in improving preschool children's behavior problems.

In Chapter 4, I reported the findings which pertain to the forms, involved modes and media, pedagogies, and benefits of storytelling in early childhood education classes. I first presented the findings related to the deductive themes, and then reported the inductive themes emerging from the reviewed studies.

## Chapter 5

### 5 Discussion, Implication, and Conclusion

In this chapter, I re-address the study questions in relation to the literature and theoretical framework I have outlined in Chapter 2 and the shared findings in Chapter 4. I then reflect on the potential implications for organizing storytelling activities in early years classrooms and for teacher education. The purpose of this systematic literature review is to identify and summarize diverse aspects of storytelling in practice from the existing scholarly articles, and I intend to generate new implications for early childhood educators to include storytelling in practices and enrich the teacher education. I framed the discussion and implication sessions concerning my mentioned research questions in Chapter 1: *What are the various forms that storytelling in early childhood education can take? What modes and media are involved? What kinds of pedagogies are included? What are the reported benefits of storytelling in early childhood education? And what are the implications for educators to utilize storytelling pedagogies in early childhood education?*

#### 5.1 Discussion of the Storytelling's Forms in Early Years Classes

I identified and analyzed five deductive and inductive themes regarding the kinds of storytelling forms from the included literature in this systematic review. According to the findings, this systematic literature review identified that traditional oral storytelling was the most commonly utilized form in the reviewed studies. However,

the classroom oral storytelling activities sometimes limited some children's expression and understanding to some extent, especially for those children who have little proficiency in narratives (Skouge et al., 2007). And if educator participants used a combination of several storytelling forms, the reviewed papers expressed that the child participants tended to show more interests in class interaction and collaboration. In sum, almost 63.6% of the reviewed studies included two or more forms of storytelling in practice.

The findings show some educators organized storytelling activities with print-based literacy, while others considered digital technologies as attractive and significant resources to enrich children's storytelling experience. These findings related to storytelling forms suggested that the gap between practical organization and the current advocacy for multimodal storytelling practices still exists (Binder, 2014; Cremin et al., 2018; Stoican & Ștefănescu, 2017), which echoes the lack of "modal approaches" (Lenters & Winters, 2013, p. 227) and insufficient multimodal literacy learning opportunities (Walsh, 2009) that I have highlighted in Chapter 1. Another important insight is related to how pre-service educators should focus on improving educators' storytelling skills in this information explosion age (Bartan, 2020; Reed et al., 2015; Tin et al., 2013).

## 5.2 Discussion of the Included Modes and Media in Early Years Storytelling Classes

According to the reported findings for the modes and media in storytelling, these

reviewed studies contained various modes and media in storytelling, from the linguistic mode to action and gesture, from traditional print-based media to diverse digital media. As a whole, every reviewed study identified the utilization of the linguistic mode in the storytelling expression process, which confirms that storytelling is a natural and indispensable activity for school-aged children's literacy practices. In addition, educator participants in the reviewed studies involved visual modes, action, and gesture in storytelling, which corresponds to the mentioned oral, arts-related, play-based storytelling and story acting forms. The findings also indicated that multimedia resources such as video, animation, and printed-based media provided children opportunities to expand communication and meaning-making options, and their produced artifacts were valued in peer interaction in such multimodal encounters.

The analysis outlined in Chapter 4 shows educator participants in the reviewed articles utilized multiple modes and media in storytelling, and this phenomenon echoes the theory of multimodal literacies in Chapter 2, offering instructional potentials for young children's storytelling. These results also indicate that all modes work together in helping children's expression and interaction during storytelling, encouraging educators to understand children's interests and needs for incorporating diverse modes to support children's storytelling experiences.

## 5.3 Discussion of the Involved Pedagogies in Early Years Storytelling Classes

Findings related to the involved pedagogies in the reviewed studies indicate that the educator participants encouraged child participants to participate in imaginary play with or without their supports. For instance, over half of the reviewed studies included play-based pedagogy in storytelling, and eight of them advocated collaborative play such as story-acting with peers (see Section 4.1.1.2). For instance, educator participants in these studies involved play-based pedagogy in storytelling to engage younger children's enthusiasm and provided multimodal opportunities for their free play. Some children from different cultural backgrounds showed more enthusiasm and they made strong connections between their interests and the understanding of the story in the play-world.

And all of the reviewed studies included the elements of multimodal pedagogy in storytelling, and these two pedagogies were always interrelated (see Section 4.1.3). The educator participants in the reviewed studies highly appreciated and understood the potential value of play and its significance, and they always incorporated the multimodal ensembles within the play-based activities. For example, a child who spoke English as a second language in Binder's (2014) study "began to display more confidence through the process" (p. 17), and her multimodal artifacts (e.g., drawing, verbal illustration, and story-acting) in storytelling activity offered additional insights for peers and educators to understand her experience and prior cultural background.



According to the observation in the study, the child tended to speaking and interacting more in peers' collaborative communication and activity.

In sum, the findings suggest that the play-based pedagogy provides an open environment for self-expression with multimodal elements and multimodal ensembles also powerfully support individual learning and development.

It is worth noting that some children in the reviewed studies did not fully enjoy the planned play activity, and they did not have so many initiatives and interests in the process. For instance, two children in Binder's (2014) study expressed that they were not interested in free drawing and story acting, while they were willing to contribute to the class book composition. In other words, educators should consider creating diverse play activities and providing scaffolding during children's play. For instance, educators can offer multimodal resources to meet individual interests and encourage children's participation and responses. Another critical point is that teacher education should pay attention to reconceptualizing and recreating the storytelling-related communities by using diverse methods instead of invariant storytelling styles.

## 5.4 Discussion of the Reported Benefits in Early Years Storytelling Classes

The reviewed studies demonstrated storytelling's various benefits for both children and educators, which were in line with the current literature and theory about storytelling. The findings show that educators participants understood their students better and created opportunities to respond to children's needs effectively through

storytelling (see Section 4.1.4.4). And it dramatically enhanced the development of children's multiple abilities such as literacy learning, creativity, and reasoning skills. However, storytelling's benefits for promoting educators' further practice improvement were reported limited to educator participants' understandings within a short term, and researchers could take into account the data-based findings with long-term exploration in further research. As for the benefits for children, storytelling promoted diverse areas of development such as literacy, imagination, digital and social skills, while child participants relied heavily on educator participants' support for these developments in the reviewed studies (e.g., Decat et al., 2019; Koivula et al., 2020). According to Koivula et al. (2020), the most obvious reason is that children were in an intensive phase of making meaning of the world, and they could benefit from opportunities with diverse modes and educators' scaffolding during storytelling. Therefore, educators should improve their scaffolding skills and improvisation capacity to maximize storytelling's benefits for children.

## 5.5 Implications for Involving Storytelling Pedagogies in Early Childhood Education

The findings related to the first three research questions indicate how early childhood educators incorporate storytelling in daily routines and activities. The findings suggest that when educators employed multimodal resources and diverse storytelling forms in practice, young children had high motivation to participate in the activity, and this kind of approach supported children's multiple development needs in numerous areas,

peer interaction and collaboration. For example, the reviewed studies demonstrated that storytelling was related to children's literacy learning, creativity development, cognitive meaning-making, social-emotional competence, and collaborative learning (see Section 4.1.4.3). In addition, storytelling was beneficial for educators to understand children's perspectives, feelings, backgrounds, and interests, which provides educators a way to enter into children's lived world and creates a learning environment that responds to their students' needs and interests. The overall picture formed by the above results encourages educators to involve storytelling in their pedagogies and co-construct the learning and playing environment with children. In sum, storytelling in early childhood education plays a significant role in strengthening the interactions among participants and encouraging self-expression with curiosity and enjoyment.

Multimodal pedagogy is advocated in early childhood education, and when connecting it to storytelling, the literature encourages educators to incorporate traditional visual and print-based media as well as push beyond for digital communicative and expression experience in this technology explosion age. However, Decat et al. (2019), Yuksel-Arslan et al. (2016), and Maureen et al. (2018) reported that some preschool educators were hesitant to integrate technology in classes. Accordingly, teacher education should offer particular digital knowledge, skills, and practice for educators, boosting their confidence for using technologies in further practice. As shown in the finding report, some educator participants provided equal access for all children to enjoy technology-related storytelling (e.g., Boras et al., 2016;

Decat et al., 2019; Kara et al., 2014; Skantz Åberg et al., 2014), and this kind of guidance and support for digital storytelling was extremely significant. This is because some children may have limited access to digital tools, and they have difficulties participating in digital storytelling. In order to solve this issue, teacher education and training might become significant resources in supporting educators' instructions, practical demonstration, and guidance strategies to encourage children to utilize digital devices (e.g., computers, digital cameras, and voice recorders) effectively.

Inadequate opportunity in storytelling is another consideration that we should notice.

In the reviewed articles, some researchers (e.g., Binder, 2014; Dashti & Habeeb, 2020; Sadiye & Feryal, 2014; Yuksel-Arslan et al., 2016) indicated that children had different dispositions, prior knowledge, background, and interests, and some of the children did not have interests in some general storytelling activities. Likewise, it is common that individuals have different perspectives and feelings even in the same situations. With the goal of activating and valuing everyone's participation, educators can organize diverse and distinctive storytelling activities and ask some personalized questions during the story discussion process. For instance, educators can give children opportunities to include their interested elements in storytelling instead of only dealing with predetermined storytelling activities. Therefore, there is also a need for educators to understand children's interests and different needs. In the reviewed studies, only two of them (Fantozzi et al., 2018 & Yuksel-Arslan et al., 2016) showed the interaction between home and school for storytelling. According to this situation,

the implications for preparing storytelling activities that integrate families in the process are especially significant in this systematic literature review, advocating educators to strengthen the connection between school and family. Involving families in classroom storytelling activities can provide educators and other peers opportunities to enter into the child's lived world, which would support further collaboration and interaction in a class shared atmosphere and strengthen the interconnections between schooling and home education.

Furthermore, to maximize the benefits of storytelling for children, early childhood educators require training for scaffolding and improvisation capacity. As mentioned in Chapter 4, some children relied on educators to make meaning of story contents and solve conflicts in the reviewed studies (e.g., Decat et al., 2019; Koivula et al., 2020). These reported findings fit the literature and sociocultural theory that educators' knowledge and expertise for scaffolding should be enhanced. This study also raises our awareness of how to assess and support children's multimodal artifacts after storytelling in future research. Because educators in these reviewed articles only emphasized the importance of encouraging children's multimodal participation in the process and did not especially pay attention to the teaching strategies and feedback after storytelling activity. Hence, it is valuable to explore a series of trained multimodal scaffolding strategies in further research, which would create space for educators to support and enrich preschool-age children's storytelling experiences.

## 5.6 Conclusion

To conclude, the findings of this systematic encompass the various forms, included modes and media, involved pedagogies, and benefits of storytelling in early childhood education. Based on these findings, most of the children in the reviewed studies immersed themselves in rich and multi-layered storytelling experiences with multimodal ensembles, and the storytelling process produced considerable immediate and long-term effects for them. Within this circumstance, there is now a rising need for early years educators to understand the potentials of storytelling (Binder, 2014; Cremin et al., 2016; Tin et al., 2013) and involve diverse storytelling approaches in their pedagogical practices. This systematic literature review contributes to the current understanding of storytelling in early childhood education, which also offers possible storytelling options and instructional implications to enrich children's storytelling experiences. Overall, this study provides evidence of diverse employed storytelling forms, instructions, and its benefits in the reviewed studies, which would benefit teacher education and training for storytelling in early childhood education. And this study suggests further explorations about how educators can provide scaffolding feedback according to children's multimodal performances during storytelling.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A: The References of the 33 Reviewed Articles

Article No.	33 Selected Article References
1.	Abasi, M., & Soori, A. (2014). Is storytelling effective in improving the English vocabulary learning among Iranian children in kindergartens? <i>International Journal of Education and Literacy Studies</i> , 2(3), 7-11.
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3.	Aminimanesh, A., Ghazavi, Z., & Mehrabi, T. (2019). Effectiveness of the puppet show and storytelling methods on children's behavioral problems. <i>Iranian Journal of Nursing and Midwifery Research</i> , 24(1), 61–65.
4.	Bartan, M. (2020). The use of storytelling methods by teachers and their effects on children's understanding and attention span. <i>Southeast Asia Early Childhood Journal</i> , 9(1), 75-84.
5.	Binder, M. (2014). The Storied Lives Children Play: Multimodal Approaches Using Storytelling. <i>Journal of Childhood Studies</i>



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6.	Boras, D., Lesin, G., & Mikelic Preradovic, N. (2016). Introduction of Digital Storytelling in Preschool Education: A Case Study from Croatia. <i>Digital Education Review</i> , (30), 94–105.
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15.	Halimah, L., Arifin, R. R. M., Yuliatiningsih, M. S., Abdillah, F., & Sutini, A. (2020). Storytelling through "Wayang Golek" puppet show: Practical ways in incorporating character education in early childhood. <i>Cogent Education</i> , 7(1)
16.	Kahuroa, R., Mitchell, L., Ng, O., & Johns, T. (2021). Children's working theories about COVID-19 in Aotearoa New Zealand. <i>European Early Childhood Education Research Journal</i> , 29(1), 6-20.
17.	Kara, N., Aydin, C. C., & Cagiltay, K. (2013). Investigating the activities of children toward a smart storytelling

	toy. <i>Educational Technology &amp; Society</i> , 16(1), 28-43.
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20.	Kara, K., & Eveyik-Aydin, E. (2019). Effects of TPRS on very young learners' vocabulary acquisition. <i>Advances in Language and Literary Studies</i> , 10(1), 135-146.
21.	Koivula, M., Turja, L., & Laakso, M. (2020). Using the storytelling method to hear children's perspectives and promote their social-emotional competence. <i>Journal of Early Intervention</i> , 42(2), 163-181.
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23.	Lwin, S. M. (2016). It's story time! : Exploring the potential of multimodality in oral storytelling to support children's vocabulary learning. <i>Literacy</i> , 50(2), 72-82.
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	<p>literacy and digital literacy development in early childhood education using storytelling activities. <i>International Journal of Early Childhood</i>, 50(3), 371-389.</p>
25.	<p>Maureen, I. Y., van der, M. H., &amp; de, J. T. (2020). Enhancing storytelling activities to support early (digital) literacy development in early childhood education. <i>International Journal of Early Childhood</i>, 52(1), 55-76.</p>
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28.	<p>Sadiye, Demir, &amp; Feryal, Cubukcu. (2014). TO HAVE OR NOT TO HAVE TPRS FOR PRESCHOOLERS. <i>Asian Journal of Instruction</i>, 186–.</p>
29.	<p>Skantz Aberg, E., Lantz-Andersson, A., &amp; Pramling, N. (2014). “Once upon a time there was a mouse”: children’s technology-mediated storytelling in preschool class. <i>Early</i></p>

	<i>Child Development and Care, 184(11), 1583–1598.</i>
30.	Stoican, O., & Ștefanescu, C. (2017). THE ROLE OF STORYTELLING ACTIVITIES IN FOSTERING CREATIVITY FOR PRESCHOOL CHILDREN. <i>Romanian Journal of Experimental Applied Psychology, 8.</i>
31.	Temiz, Z. (2019). Storytelling intervention to improve the narrative skills of bilingual children coming from low socio-economic status. <i>Early Child Development and Care, 189(1), 16-30.</i>
32.	Tin, H. W., Nonis, K. P., Lim, S. E. A., & Honig, A. S. (2013). Teachers' perceptions of the importance of stories in the lives of children in Myanmar. <i>Early Child Development and Care, 183(10), 1449-1467.</i>
33.	Yuksel-Arslan, P., Yildirim, S., & Robin, B. R. (2016). A phenomenological study: Teachers' experiences of using digital storytelling in early childhood education. <i>Educational Studies, 42(5), 427-445.</i>

**Appendix B: The Reviewed Articles Related to the Deductive Themes**

<b>Deductive Themes Related to Storytelling</b>	<b>Study ID</b>	<b>No. of Studies</b>
Traditional Oral Storytelling	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 16, 20, 22, 23, 24, 26, 27, 28, 30, 31, 32	22
Play-based Storytelling and Story Acting	2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 10, 11, 15, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 23, 24, 25, 28, 31, 32	19
Digital Storytelling	4, 6, 9, 11, 17, 18, 19, 24, 25, 26, 29, 32, 33	13
Arts-related Storytelling	2, 3, 5, 8, 9, 13, 16, 26	8
The Linguistic Mode	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33	33
Actions and Body Gestural Modes	2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 10, 11, 25, 20, 21, 22, 23, 25, 27, 28, 31, 32	17
Visual Modes	1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 16, 17, 19, 20, 21, 23, 24, 26, 27, 31, 32	22

Traditional Print-based Media	1, 2, 4, 5, 9, 10, 11, 12, 20, 26, 27, 29, 31, 32	14
Multimedia Resources	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 29, 31, 32, 33	28
Play-based Pedagogy	2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 10, 11, 15, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 23, 24, 25, 28, 31, 32	19
Student-centered Pedagogy	2, 5, 8, 9, 11, 16, 17, 18, 19, 21, 26, 28, 29	13
Multimodal Pedagogy	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33	33
Enhancing the Early Learning Atmosphere and Motivating and Engaging Children's Participation in the School Community	5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 15, 16, 18, 19, 26, 29, 32, 33	16
Effectiveness on Attracting Children's Attention in Class	3, 4, 15, 18	4
Benefits for Children's Multiple	1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 9, 10, 13, 14, 15,	23

Development Needs	17, 20, 21, 22, 24, 25, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33	
Helping Practitioners Understand Children Better	5, 33	2



**Appendix C: The Reviewed Articles Related to the Inductive Themes**

<b>Inductive Themes Related to Storytelling</b>	<b>Study ID</b>	<b>No. of Studies</b>
Interactive Storytelling	17, 18, 19	3
Supporting Children's Learning and Education	6, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 26, 32, 33	10
Improving Children's Behavior and Enhancing Self-regulation Abilities	3, 21	2

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