The Effects of an Oral Narrative and Expository School-Age Language Intervention: A Low-Dosage Study

Giana H. Hunsaker
Brigham Young University

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The Effects of an Oral Narrative and Expository School-Age Language Intervention: A Low-Dosage Study

Giana H. Hunsaker

A thesis submitted to the faculty of Brigham Young University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science

Connie Summers, Chair
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ABSTRACT

The Effects of an Oral Narrative and Expository School-Age Language Intervention: A Low-Dosage Study

Giana H. Hunsaker
Department of Communication Disorders, BYU
Master of Science

Purpose: This study is Phase One of a multi-phase research initiative. The purpose of this study was to examine how well a low-dose, dual oral narrative and expository language intervention delivered in a small group setting improved expressive and receptive oral narrative and expository language in kindergarten, first grade, and second grade students who have been identified as having language disorder or emerging English academic language. Method: We administered a dynamic assessment of language to 325 kindergarten, first, and second grade students from two elementary schools in two school districts. The results of the dynamic assessment identified 61 students who had a language disorder or emerging English academic language. We randomly assigned those 61 students to a treatment or control group; however, 7 students were removed from the study due to incomplete data sets following the posttest phase. Students in the treatment group received small group oral narrative and expository language intervention two times per week over four weeks (eight 20-minute sessions). We administered narrative and expository assessments immediately prior to intervention to all students in the treatment group \(n = 27\) and the control group \(n = 27\). Those same measures were administered immediately following intervention to both groups. Results: We conducted a series of one-way analyses of covariance (ANCOVAs), using the pretest narrative retell as a covariate for each of the dependent variables. There were no significant differences between the treatment and control groups for any of the dependent variables. However, trends from means indicate that the treatment group was beginning to perform higher than their control-group peers at the conclusion of this Phase One study, suggesting that significant differences between groups may emerge in later phases. To maximize the efficiency of contextualized language intervention by alternating narrative and expository intervention procedures each week under realistic conditions, it is necessary to ascertain when two 20-minute sessions per week, which is the time that most speech-language pathologists dedicate to language intervention for their students, will yield significant results across both narrative and expository outcomes.

Keywords: oral language, expository, narrative, language intervention
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank the following committee members for their meaningful contribution to the current study: Dr. Douglas Petersen, Dr. Connie Summers, Dr. Sarah Clark, and Dr. Shawn Nissen. Their expertise, guidance, and experience were crucial to this project. I would especially like to thank Dr. Petersen for allowing my participation in this project and for all the counsel, wisdom, enthusiasm, and patience that was so freely given throughout this process. I would also like to thank Dr. Summers a second time for stepping in as thesis chair when changing circumstances warranted it. This endeavor would not have been possible without the McKay School of Education at Brigham Young University and the internal grant that funded this project. Special thanks to the research assistants on the PEARL and DYMOND team for their time and effort in collecting the data used in this study. I would also like to thank my family and friends for their support throughout the completion of this thesis and my graduate education.
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DESCRIPTION OF THESIS STRUCTURE

This thesis, *The Effects of an Oral Narrative and Expository School-Age Language Intervention: A Low-Dosage Study*, was written in a hybrid format to adhere to journal publication formats as well as traditional thesis requirements. The initial pages of this thesis fulfill university requirements while the thesis itself is presented in journal article format. Appendix A consists of the annotated bibliography. The Institutional Review Board Reliance Agreement for approval to conduct this study is included in Appendix B. The child assent form for the study is found in Appendix C.
Introduction

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) reported in 2019 that approximately 65% of fourth and eighth graders are reading below proficiency. The simple view of reading indicates that reading is the product of decoding and language comprehension (Gough & Tunmer, 1986). Decoding depends on knowledge of letter-sound correspondence, and the ability to read words in isolation quickly and accurately. Comprehension involves utilizing cognitive processes to construct mental models and form an understanding of the text (Woolley, 2011). Students may struggle with decoding and/or comprehension. These abilities become more independent of each other following initial phases of literacy acquisition, as there are differing cognitive processes required to be proficient in each skill (Torppa et al., 2020).

The Relationship Between Reading Comprehension and Oral Language

Because the cognitive processes used to understand decoded text are highly similar to those used to understand spoken language, reading comprehension must be dependent on oral language skills (Hogan et al., 2014; Kieffer & Vukovic, 2012; Lervåg et al., 2017). Corresponding cognitive processes are necessary for both oral and written language comprehension. Vocabulary knowledge acquired through oral language transfers from speaking to reading and writing. Additionally, the ability to draw inferences from spoken texts is critical to developing listening and reading comprehension. Verbal working memory is necessary to store and process information in order to form a coherent mental model of a spoken or written text. A firm syntactical foundation is also vital to further expand an individual’s lexicon and facilitate listening and reading comprehension (Lervåg et al., 2017).

Lervåg et al. (2017) indicated that the effects that a variety of language skills (vocabulary, grammar, working memory, and inference) had on reading comprehension lined up
precisely with the effects those same skills had on listening comprehension. However, Hogan et al. (2014) noted that while similar language processes are used for listening and reading comprehension, listening comprehension differs in the sense that it is free from the additional cognitive demand that decoding places on a student. Regardless, the ability to comprehend written language is not only evidenced through the understanding of what one reads, but also in the understanding of what one hears. Thus, many children that are later identified as having reading comprehension difficulty may also be identified as having deficient oral language skills prior to learning to read (Hogan et al., 2014).

For a large percentage of the students that struggle with reading comprehension on state and national assessments, oral language is likely a factor in their reading difficulty. For example, The 2018 NAEP Oral Reading Fluency Study reported that typical fourth-grade students can decode a passage with 94% accuracy (White et al., 2021). This means that the difficulty many children experience on the NAEP reading assessments are not primarily due to limitations in decoding. Furthermore, Kieffer and Vukovic (2012) explored the heterogeneity in the sources of reading difficulties for children that are minority language learners as well as native English speakers. They found that in their entire sample of first through third grade students, 80% with low reading comprehension demonstrated weaknesses in language comprehension alone.

**State Standards and Oral and Written Narrative and Expository Language Instruction**

The National Governor’s Association Center for Best Practices and Council of Chief State School Officers stated in 2010 that by kindergarten, students should be able to “narrate a single event or several loosely linked events, tell about the events in the order in which they occurred, and provide a reaction to what happened” (p. 19). In order to be well prepared for college and most careers, it is essential that students possess strong oral language and reading
skills (Brown et al., 2014; Culatta et al., 2010). In the early stages of literacy acquisition, inadequate decoding skills may inhibit the engagement of oral language comprehension skills in order to understand a text (Lervåg et al., 2017). However, the basic skill of decoding and the higher-order skill of academic language comprehension can develop simultaneously and independently rather than sequentially, and both sets of skills necessitate explicit instruction (Rapp et al., 2007). Currently, there is a lack of explicit oral language instruction in the school setting, thus decoding skills improve but complex language comprehension and, consequently, reading comprehension have remained stagnant in the absence of relevant quality instruction (Hogan et al., 2014; National Assessment of Educational Progress, 2019; Ukrainetz, 2006).

**Explicit Narrative and Expository Language Instruction**

In schools, narratives (stories) are used regularly, both as a method for information-sharing, and as a way to contextualize academic tasks (Brown et al., 2014). According to Brown et al. (2014), "Narrative discourse combines familiar dialogue with decontextualized literate language features" (p. 154). Every child in school is expected to learn to use and comprehend the formal academic language that is present in the classroom. Narratives form a bridge between oral and written language, as they require complex, decontextualized language, and reflect outcomes embedded in national and state standards (Coleman & Pimentel, 2012; Petersen & Spencer, 2014a).

Two key factors that play a part in forming cohesive narratives are the presence of story grammar elements and language complexity (Petersen & Spencer, 2014a). Story grammar refers to elements that make up an episode, or a story, such as a character, a setting, a problem, an internal response to the problem, a plan and an attempt to solve that problem, a consequence, and a resolution (Miller, 2002). Petersen and Spencer (2014a) outlined that explicit instruction
regarding story grammar and language complexity must include: “many opportunities for children to respond, systematic scaffolding of visual materials, immediate corrections, and least restrictive prompting [as well as] prompt fading to build independence” (p. 14). Clear, detailed narrative instruction is vital, functional, and relevant to all students (Kirkland & Patterson, 2005; Petersen & Spencer, 2014a).

Expository language, or informational discourse, is also prevalent in the school setting (Culatta et al., 2010; Torppa et al., 2020), and difficulty comprehending expository language can negatively impact how students experience school and life in general (Torppa et al., 2020). It is vital for children to be exposed to and learn to navigate expository language early, before it becomes one of the primary discourse genres through which knowledge is conveyed in the later school years (Culatta et al., 2010). Significant exposure to a genre is necessary in order to develop competence and confidence within that genre, indicating a need for early and explicit expository language instruction. Children must be taught how to compare and contrast, how to recognize elements of text structure, and how to reason within written ideas in order to improve their comprehension of informational text (Culatta et al., 2010).

**Oral Language Curriculum**

Explicit and comprehensive language instruction is needed in early education and elementary school classrooms to promote reading success (Culatta et al., 2010; Kirkland & Patterson, 2005; Petersen & Spencer, 2014a). However, children who are at risk for reading failure will require more explicit, more comprehensive instruction in a more individualized setting, such as in small groups (Foorman & Torgesen, 2001). Several strategies have strong evidence to improve reading comprehension skills in all children, but especially those that have poor comprehension skills, including instruction regarding comprehension strategies, activating
background knowledge, asking questions, monitoring comprehension, visualizing, making
inferences, and retelling (Hogan et al., 2014). These skills must first be taught at the classroom
level to all children. However, for children with language or reading disabilities, or who have
weak English academic language skills, this general instruction will likely be insufficient.
Children who continue to perform below expectations should then receive more intensive
intervention. Ukrainetz (2006) called for a manualized language curriculum that can provide
intensive, interactive language experiences in large groups and small groups.

**Narrative Language**

The acquisition of early literacy skills typically takes place through exposure to
conversation (Norris, 2017) and being read to by adults (Clark, 2007). For most children, there is
minimal explicit oral language instruction required in order to develop this early literacy skill. In
situations where a child has minimal exposure to conversational discourse or is rarely read to,
there may be a delay in the acquisition of early literacy skills. Brown et al. (2014), found that
intervention based in narrative retell was successful in improving the oral language of
kindergartners. Because “narrative retelling requires explicit recall and organization of linguistic
elements” (Brown et al., 2014, p. 155) kindergartners were able to organize and recall these
linguistic elements and apply them to their own narratives after receiving treatment based on
learning elements of story grammar sequentially. Administrators of the school where the Brown
et al. (2014) study was conducted noted a marked difference in the cohesion, complexity, and
flow of the kindergartners' narratives from pre-treatment to post-treatment. Gillam and Gillam
(2016) conducted a study regarding the effectiveness of Supporting Knowledge in Language and
Literacy (SKILL) intervention on improving the narrative retell of school-age children with
developmental language disorder and noted consistently moderate to large improvements in the
proficiency of narratives and increased vocabulary. Explicit story grammar instruction created a bridge for children to access known concepts and create new ones, and to accurately use known vocabulary. It was also noted that the spontaneous use of complex syntax without direct intervention increased as a byproduct of exposure to more complex story grammar (Gillam & Gillam, 2016).

Spencer et al. (2017) conducted a study in which they implemented a multi-tiered narrative language intervention in a Head Start preschool with diverse students. Their study aimed to explore the impact that a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) intervention regarding personal-themed narrative retells would have on the narrative retell abilities of preschool children. The results showed statistically significant increases in the proximal outcome of narrative retells. As the storytelling skills of the students in the MTSS treatment group improved, they also produced longer and more complex sentences. The findings from this study further confirm the effectiveness of narrative language intervention integrated within MTSS, which has been demonstrated in multiple, additional studies (Spencer, Petersen, & Adams, 2015; Spencer, Petersen, Slocum, & Allen, 2015). Given the success of narrative language intervention embedded in MTSS in improving narrative language for all students, this current study aims to extend this research by examining the extent to which oral narrative intervention helps young students meet academic language expectations, including narrative and expository communication.

Petersen et al. (2022) found that after receiving explicit oral narrative language intervention via Story Champs (Spencer & Petersen, 2012) in small groups, kindergarten students that had been identified as being at risk for language difficulty scored significantly higher on narrative retells and the generation of personal stories than their peers in the control group that
had also been identified as being at risk. Additionally, it was discovered that the students in the treatment group performed even better on narrative retell tasks than their peers in the control group who had advanced language abilities. It was also noted that the difference in scores between students with typical language and those at risk were statistically insignificant regarding personal story generation after receiving intensive, explicit, oral narrative language intervention.

**Distal Outcomes of Oral Narrative Language Intervention - Reading Comprehension**

Several researchers have noted that oral language skills have an effect on reading comprehension (Hogan et al., 2014; Kieffer & Vukovic, 2012; Lervåg et al., 2017; Metsala et al., 2021). In an effort to test this hypothesis, Petersen et al. (2020) investigated the impact of *Story Champs* oral narrative language intervention on reading comprehension. They found that second grade students assigned to the treatment group produced more complex oral narratives as well as improved their reading comprehension over and above students assigned to a no-treatment control condition. Additionally, Nelson and Petersen (2020) found that students in India made significant improvements in reading comprehension after participating in large group oral language intervention using *Story Champs*. Both of these studies were relatively small-scale investigations and scale-up studies are warranted.

**Expository Language**

Comprehension difficulties may present themselves in reading expository language rather than narrative language, or in both discourse genres. Understanding of context, vocabulary, figurative language, and morphology all contribute to a child’s ability to comprehend the informational language they encounter (Gillam et al., 2009). The difference in structure between narrative and expository language may make it more difficult for children to comprehend and generate expository language. Narratives may be more effective in engaging a child or eliciting
an affective response, whereas expository texts are structured to state information. These expository texts may be structured descriptively, sequentially, or comparatively, and different understanding of vocabulary, syntax, and morphology may be required for competence in each of these subcategories of expository language. Gillam et al. (2009) suggested that expository texts may be more challenging to understand, recall, and generate because of the lack of causal structure that is a staple in narratives. In a study of fourth graders that included children with typically developing language as well as children with language impairment, it was found that during think-aloud exercises regarding expository passages, 90% of children with typical language produced accurate paraphrases compared to 65% of their peers with impaired language. Incidentally, it was also found that the accuracy with which these children were able to paraphrase the passage correlated strongly to their performance when answering comprehension questions (Gillam et al., 2009). Additionally, Petersen et al. (2022) found that expository language improved as a result of oral narrative language intervention for both at-risk and typically developing students. Of note, at-risk students made such significant gains in expository retell ability that their scores were no longer lower than their typically developing peers. However, Lee (2020) found that large group expository language intervention yielded stronger effects on expository language when compared to oral narrative language intervention alone. Research should explore the effect of a dual oral narrative and expository oral language intervention on expository and narrative language outcomes as well as the effect on other academic measures, such as reading comprehension.

**Purpose**

Research indicates that students are performing poorly on state and national reading assessments due to deficient oral language skills (National Assessment of Educational Progress,
Additionally, research has identified that oral language intervention has a strong effect on oral language skills. Further research is necessary to investigate the effect of long-term oral language intervention (e.g., year-long) on other academic outcomes, such as reading comprehension and expository language. Additionally, the aforementioned research studies demonstrate the effects of narrative and expository oral language intervention approaches separately, not concurrently. With the limited time and heavy workload that educators have (Marante & Farquharson, 2021), it is important to know if the two approaches can be combined and the dosage necessary to yield meaningful outcomes efficiently. Explicit oral language intervention that focuses on both narratives and expository discourse should begin early to support the development of oral and written language comprehension. Research has indicated that relatively short-term doses (e.g., less than half the school year) can yield changes in students’ oral language (Brown et al., 2014; Culatta et al., 2010; Gillam et al., 2009; Gillam & Gillam, 2016; Lee, 2020; Nelson & Petersen, 2020; Petersen et al., 2022; Spencer, Petersen, & Adams, 2015; Spencer et al., 2017), yet there is limited information on the impact of very low-dosage oral language intervention. Furthermore, there is a lack of research on long-term oral language intervention. The overall purpose of this multi-phase research initiative is to investigate the short-term and long-term effects of a dual oral narrative and expository language intervention on oral and written language outcomes of school-age children. The purpose of this current study, which is Phase One of this research aim, was to examine how well a low-dose, short-term dual oral narrative and expository language intervention in small group settings improves oral narrative and expository language outcomes for young students who have been identified as having a language disorder or emerging English academic language skills. The specific research questions were as follows:
1. How well does a low-dose, short-term dual oral narrative and expository language intervention in small group settings improve narrative language in the areas of: (a) retelling, (b) story questions, (c) inferential questions, (d) vocabulary questions, and (e) personal stories?

2. How well does a low-dose, short-term dual oral narrative and expository language intervention in small group settings improve expository language in the areas of: (a) retelling, (b) text questions, (c) comprehension questions, and (d) vocabulary questions?

**Method**

**Participants**

Approval to conduct this study was granted from the Brigham Young University Institutional Review Board (IRB). We administered a dynamic assessment of language (Petersen et al., 2018) to 325 kindergarten, first, and second grade students from two elementary schools in two school districts. The results of the dynamic assessment indicated that 61 students had language disorder or emerging English academic language. Those 61 students were individually randomly assigned to a treatment or control condition. After the posttest phase of the study, 54 students had complete data sets. The dynamic assessment identified 52 students with language disorder and two students with emerging English academic language. Descriptive statistics are displayed in Table 1.
Table 1

Demographic Information for Treatment and Control Students

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Treatment Group n (%)</th>
<th>Control Group n (%)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Number of Students</td>
<td>27 (50.0%)</td>
<td>27 (50.0%)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>16 (59.3%)</td>
<td>17 (63.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>11 (40.7%)</td>
<td>10 (37.0%)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Ethnicity</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>11 (40.7%)</td>
<td>6 (22.2%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>16 (59.3%)</td>
<td>21 (77.8%)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Grade Level</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>17 (63.0%)</td>
<td>17 (63.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>3 (11.1%)</td>
<td>3 (11.1%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>7 (25.9%)</td>
<td>7 (25.9%)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>IEP for Language</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>11 (40.7%)</td>
<td>2 (7.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>16 (59.3%)</td>
<td>25 (92.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Language Disorder</strong></td>
<td>26 (96%)</td>
<td>26 (96%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emerging English</td>
<td>1 (4%)</td>
<td>1 (4%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Academic Language</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Home Language</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>8 (29.6%)</td>
<td>11 (40.7%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>English only</td>
<td>19 (70.4%)</td>
<td>16 (59.3%)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Free/Reduced Lunch</strong></td>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>9 (33.3%)</td>
<td>9 (33.3%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>18 (66.6%)</td>
<td>18 (66.6%)</td>
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Measures

*Dynamic Assessments of Language*

**Dynamic Measure of Oral Narrative Discourse.** First and second grade students were assessed using the Dynamic Measure of Oral Narrative Discourse (DYMOND) dynamic
assessment of language (Petersen et al., 2018). The DYMOND has excellent evidence of validity and reliability (Clark, 2019; DeRobles, 2021; Frahm, 2021). This dynamic assessment is made up of four parts: a pretest, a teaching phase, modifiability rating scales, and a posttest. The administration time of this assessment varied in length depending on student responsiveness, but generally took around 10 minutes to complete.

**Pretest.** During the pretest, the examiner read a short story and then asked the student to retell that story. Each student was assessed on their inclusion of elements of story grammar and language complexity (e.g., because, when, after). These retells were scored in real-time and had the potential to reach a maximum of 35 points after adding the story grammar and language complexity scores together. Each story grammar element was worth two points, for a maximum of 26 points. Students could earn one point (maximum of nine) for each time they used the subordinating conjunctions because, when, or after.

**Teaching Phase.** The teaching phase included two steps, each carefully formulated to help students learn to produce complete narrative episodes (i.e., a problem, attempt, consequence, and ending), and increase their language complexity independently. In the first step, the examiner first presented a set of pictures with corresponding story grammar icons to the child. The examiner then pointed to the corresponding pictures and explicitly taught about the icons that represented the elements of story grammar as they retold the story that had been read at the pretest. After this instruction period, the child retold the story with the help of both the pictures and icons, and the examiner helped ensure that all story grammar elements and language complexity targets were included. Following completion of this retell, the pictures were removed, and the child was asked to retell the story with just the icons. The examiner again helped the child include all story grammar elements and language complexity targets.
If a child skipped a story grammar element during either part of the teaching phase, the examiner stopped the student and asked them an open-ended question about the detail they had missed. If the child failed to provide an adequate response, the examiner modeled an appropriate response and asked the student to repeat it. After receiving either prompt, the examiner asked the child to go back to the last story grammar element before the one they omitted and continue their retell of the story, making sure to include the story grammar element they had previously skipped. If a student successfully included all story grammar elements, the examiner was permitted to encourage the use of subordinating conjunctions to increase language complexity.

**Modifiability Rating.** At the conclusion of the teaching phase, the examiner used a set of modifiability rating scales to rate the student’s modifiability, or ability to learn. Modifiability was rated on a 5-point scale, and each student was rated in six areas. This included responsiveness to prompts, degree of transfer, attention to teaching, ease of teaching, the student’s own frustration, and disruptions (e.g., challenging behavior). The total modifiability score was the sum of all the ratings, with the maximum potential score being 24. The examiner then gave the student a final judgment score on a scale of 0-4, with 0 representing that the student had difficulty learning and a 4 reflecting that the student learned with ease.

**Posttest.** Administration procedures were the same at posttest as they were at pretest, except for the story being told. At posttest, the examiner read a story that matched the pretest story in language complexity elements such as length of the story, inclusion and frequency of tier-two words, use of subordinate clauses, and story structure.

**Predictive Early Assessment of Reading and Language.** Kindergarten students were individually assessed via the *Predictive Early Assessment of Reading and Language*, or PEARL (Petersen & Spencer, 2014b). This assessment entails a pretest and posttest phase that each
measure story grammar, language complexity, and episodes (problem, attempt, consequence, ending). Additionally, there are four mediation phases that occur between pretest and posttest. Performance during the mediation phases was scored on a modifiability scale. Additional administration and scoring instructions can be found in the PEARL manual (Petersen & Spencer, 2014b). Validity and reliability data have been reported in Petersen et al. (2018) and in Henderson et al. (2018).

**Pretest and Posttest Phases.** During both pretest and posttest, the examiner first read a story. The story used at the pretest was different than the one used at posttest, but the two stories were matched in length and complexity. After listening, the student was asked to retell the story. Students were graded on story grammar, language complexity, and complete episodes. Story grammar was scored based on inclusion of a character, setting, problem, feeling, plan, attempt, consequence, ending, and end emotions and was scored on a scale of 0-2. Students received one language complexity point for each time they used words such as when, because, and after, and could receive a maximum of 3 points. The total number of story grammar elements made up the episode score (ranging from 2-5).

**Mediation Phases.** There were four mediation phases that followed the administration procedures in the PEARL manual (Petersen & Spencer, 2014b). Beginning with step one, the examiner laid out five pictures and seven story grammar icons and retold the pretest story. In step two, the child retold the story with pictures and icons as support. In step three, pictures were removed and only the story grammar icons remained available to the child to assist their retell. Both pictures and icons were removed in step four and the child was asked to retell the story independently. As needed, the examiner helped the child to ensure all story grammar elements were included in steps two to four. If a student ever asked for help or sat for more than 30
seconds without continuing the story, the examiner would first issue a Level 1 prompt, which was an open-ended question asking for story details. If a Level 1 prompt was insufficient, the examiner modeled a statement from the story and asked the child to repeat after them.

**Modifiability Scale.** Following the mediation phases, the examiner rated each student’s modifiability by using a set of modifiability rating scales to assess the following: number of prompts necessary, confidence of the child, amount of disruption from the child, and rate of task completion. The number of prompts needed by the child was rated on a 5-point scale, with a score of 5 representing a need for fewer prompts. Confidence related to the level of frustration or comfort that the child experienced throughout the task, with higher scores relating to more comfort and less frustration. Disruption accounted for challenging behaviors or actions that required the examiner to repeat a question or otherwise prompt or redirect the child’s focus back to the task at hand. Rate of task completion was reported based on the amount of time that was required for the child to complete the task, with high scores corresponding to quick narrative retelling. The last rating was a global rating of “how difficult it was for the student to learn to tell the story” (Petersen & Spencer, 2014b, p.13). This global rating was on a scale of 0-4 and took into account the examiner’s previous four ratings of the student’s performance. This global score represented the overall modifiability score for the student.

**Assessing Oral Language: CUBED**

The CUBED subtest for Narrative Language Measures (Petersen & Spencer, 2012) was used to assess narrative retelling and expository language at posttest. The CUBED is a criterion-referenced and norm-referenced universal screener and progress monitoring tool that can be used to measure code-related and language-related factors, including phonemic awareness, letter sounds, irregular word identification, nonsense word decoding in a dynamic assessment format,
and oral and written language comprehension and production using a narrative retell context. The CUBED can be accessed at www.languagedynamicsgroup.com. The validity and reliability of the CUBED has been researched extensively, with many of the study results summarized in the technical manual.

**Narrative Retells.** One Narrative Language Measures (NLM) subtest form from the CUBED was administered during pretest and posttest phases. The NLM consists of four sections that provide information on personal-themed narrative retells, generation of personal stories, understanding of story grammar, and comprehension of inferential vocabulary. For this study, only the NLM narrative retell and personal story generation subtests were analyzed. The NLM has 25 parallel forms for each grade (K-3) and is a standardized, criterion-referenced general outcome measure used to assess the growth of children's narrative language. Standardized administration and assessment procedures are involved. The narrative retelling subtest measures comprehension and production of story grammar and limited aspects of complex language in personal-themed narratives. Analyses of the NLM’s psychometrics indicate that it has good to excellent reliability and validity (Petersen & Spencer, 2012).

During administration of the NLM, research assistants read a model story, asked the child to tell it, and then provided only neutral prompts as they listened to the child retell the story. No images were used to obtain the children’s narrative retells. The NLM includes a scoring rubric designed to score student responses in real time. Stories were scored on clarity and completeness of elements of story grammar (character, setting, problem, feeling, action, consequence, and ending) on a scale of 0–2, with points weighted for episodic elements (e.g., problem, action, consequence). Features of language complexity, such as the use of causal subordinate conjunctions (e.g., because) and temporal subordinate conjunctions (e.g., after, when) were
scored based on frequency. The total retell scores of the NLM were computed by adding story grammar, language complexity, and episodic points together. Students also answered story questions, inferential questions, and vocabulary questions about the story they listened to and retold.

**Personal Story Generation.** Personal stories were obtained by asking the children to tell a story about something that happened to them that was related to the theme of the story that they retold in the NLM retell section. These personal stories were audio recorded and then scored using the Story Grammar and Language Complexity sections of the NLM Flow Chart. Each story grammar element or aspect of language complexity received 0 to 4 points based on complexity and precision. The NLM Flow Chart consists of a total of 55 points.

**Expository Language.** The expository measure used a format similar to NLM narrative retell measures, in which an examiner asked the child to listen to specific information, retell that information, and then answer questions about that information. Scoring took place in real time as the child told the main ideas and supporting details of the text. Two parallel forms were used in this study: one for the pretest, and one for the posttest. The information on each expository measure was intended to be unfamiliar content that students most likely had not previously encountered. Students also answered text questions, vocabulary questions, and comprehension questions relating to the information text they listened to and retold. Examples of the expository measures are available for review in Petersen et al., 2022.

**Procedures**

**Treatment Group: Intervention Procedures**

Students were assigned to receive small group intervention two times per week for approximately 15-20 minutes each session for a period of four weeks. This small group
instruction was conducted by several trained undergraduate and graduate students at Brigham Young University. The small groups consisted of three to four students that were identified as having emerging English academic language or language disorder using a dynamic assessment of language. Intervention adhering to Story Champs’ small group procedures that was first reported by Spencer and Slocum in 2010 was implemented.

**Narrative Intervention.** To target basic story structure, the interventionist selected a story from the Story Champs story book, selected corresponding picture cards, collected all the story grammar icons, and chose a story game. The interventionist first modeled the story by displaying the five illustrations and reading the story aloud. As they read the story, the interventionist placed the story grammar icons on or near the illustrations corresponding to each event. As needed, the interventionist named all the story grammar parts and asked the students to do the same. Second, the interventionist left the story illustrations on the table and distributed the story grammar icons to all students. Beginning with the student that held the character icon, each student told their part of the story while moving through the story grammar parts in order and placing their icon on the corresponding illustration. The interventionist then briefly summarized the story, ensuring that all parts were included.

The small group intervention session then focused on individual retells and personal stories. During the third step, the interventionist left the illustrations and icons on the table and selected one student to retell the entire story. The interventionist helped the student tell all parts of the story, while the other students played a story game to facilitate participation. Following that first individual retell, the interventionist briefly summarized the story, ensuring that all parts were included. The second individual retell (Step 4) proceeded in exactly the same manner as Step 3, except that the interventionist removed the illustrations and left only the Story Grammar
Icons on the table for the child to reference. Following that narrative retell, the small group session then progressed to the first individual personal story (Step 5), where the interventionist left the icons on the table and selected one student to tell a personal story. The interventionist asked the student, “Has something like this ever happened to you?” and helped the student generate all parts of their personal story. All students except the storyteller played a story game as they listened to their classmate tell a personal story. The interventionist then summarized the student’s story. In Step 6, the second individual personal story proceeded in exactly the same manner as Step 5, except that the interventionist removed the story grammar icons from the table. These steps are outlined in detail in the Story Champs manual (Spencer & Petersen, 2012) and in Petersen et al. (2022).

**Expository Intervention.** The interventionist selected a passage from grade level curriculum (approximately 65-130 words) and organized and simplified that passage into a pattern block that outlined the main idea and four key details. Interventionists also used expository passage icons, a small whiteboard that had the main idea and supporting details icons printed on it (Champ Checks), and dry erase markers. The interventionist first modeled the information passage by displaying the pattern block and reading the passage aloud. As they read the passage, the interventionist placed the passage icons on the pattern block as the main idea and key details were read. For the first two sessions, the expository passages were very simple, with a main idea modeled as a sentence, and then single words modeled for the supporting details. Thereafter, the main idea and supporting details were modeled in sentence form. As the interventionist read the passage, students were taught to take brief notes consisting of one to two words or a simple picture. If students were unable to write or draw a note that corresponded with the main idea and key details, the interventionist helped them. Second, the interventionist helped
the students identify words in the passage that were new and placed a *New Term* icon on the pattern block. The interventionist said the new term and defined it, followed by the students repeating the term and its definition. This step was repeated for all new terms in the passage. The third step of expository intervention included a team retell, where the interventionist left the *New Term* icons on the pattern block and gave each student in the group the main idea or a supporting details icon, keeping one for themself as necessary. Beginning with the child holding the main idea icon, each child retold a part of the passage, with help from the interventionist and the other students. Students placed their icons on the corresponding box on the pattern block as they shared a detail about the passage. Following each child’s retelling of a part of the passage, the interventionist modeled what the child should say, including any new terms, and all the students repeated the modeled sentence together. This step was then repeated for all parts of the passage, and the interventionist briefly summarized the passage, ensuring that all parts and new terms were included.

The following steps of the expository intervention focused on individual retells. Step 4 consisted of the interventionist leaving the passage icons on the pattern block and choosing one student to retell the entire passage. The child retelling the passage was allowed to use their notes, and the interventionist and other students helped the student retell all parts of the passage as needed. All students except the child retelling the passage used either their notes or a dry erase Champ Checks board to monitor the passage and ensure that their classmate included all of the parts. During the next individual retell (Step 5), the child retelling the passage was allowed to use their notes and the passage icons. In Step 6, or the third individual retell, the interventionist removed the icons, asking the child to retell the passage with only their notes. Intervention fidelity checks and lesson plans can be found in the *Story Champs* manual.
Alternate Treatment Control Group

All teachers in the participating schools were receiving Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling (LETRS®) training. LETRS® is a comprehensive professional learning program that provides elementary school educators and administrators with in-depth knowledge to become experts in the science of reading. LETRS® was developed by Dr. Louisa Moats and colleagues to teach educators the fundamental skills necessary to teach literacy (Lexia Learning, 1984). Additionally, the schools were implementing 95% Group reading intervention. This program was developed by the 95 Percent Group, which has a mission to raise the percentage of students reading at grade level to ninety-five percent. These programs are customizable based on the specific needs observed in various school districts, and available kits include teacher lesson plans and student workbooks to facilitate literacy acquisition and bridge the gap between students’ current reading levels and those expected for their grade (95 Percent Group, n.d.).

Per an agreement with the school districts, children that were randomly assigned to the control condition were supposed to receive intervention at the conclusion of the study. However, due to effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, we were restricted in the total number of intervention sessions that could be delivered. Thus, the students in the control group received an alternate treatment. The research assistants engaged control-group students in dialogic reading, which entailed reading storybooks with children while incorporating three vital components: (a) evocative techniques, or eliciting answers to questions about the stories or pictures in a book to facilitate engagement; (b) feedback, including expansions and recasts of the children’s responses to questions; and (c) progressive change, or guiding the children toward concepts that are just beyond their current developmental level and into the zone of proximal development (Daro, 2018). This shared storybook reading took place in the classroom and in small groups. Emphasis
was placed on comprehension and vocabulary during every shared storybook reading session. To aid in the acquisition and development of vocabulary, the research assistants identified target vocabulary words, which were selected based on how useful the words would be to the students and their relevance in various academic contexts, in line with procedures outlined by Spencer, Goldstein, and Kaminski (2012). In an effort to make shared storybook reading interactive and facilitate participation, the research assistant engaged students in dialogue that consisted of answering recall and inferential questions and children were encouraged to repeat the definition of words and make associations with their everyday experiences. Target words were then used in meaningful contexts and incorporated into activities unrelated from the story at hand to reinforce vocabulary acquisition. At the end of each session, recall and prediction questions were asked and target words were reviewed.

Results

A series of one-way analyses of covariance (ANCOVAs) were conducted to examine how well the low dose, short-term dual oral narrative and expository language intervention in small group settings improved oral language outcomes. Assumptions that underlie the use of ANCOVA were tested. Data were approximately normally distributed, as indicated by visual and statistical inspection of the distribution of the dependent measures (narrative retell, narrative questions, personal story, expository retell, expository questions). Preliminary analyses that examined the homogeneity-of-slopes did not show significant differences between the oral narrative, personal story generation, or expository outcomes. Results indicated that the covariates (pretest) and dependent variables were not significantly different between groups. Finally, the assumption of homogeneity of variance across the dependent variables was tested. Variances were not found to be significant for any outcomes as per results of the Levene’s test of equality
of error variances. Partial eta squared was used to estimate the effect size of differences between
the treatment and control groups for each of the dependent variables. Effect sizes of .14 or larger
were considered to be large, a value of .06 was considered to be medium, and a value of .01 was
considered to be small (Cohen, 1988). Table 2 shows means and standard deviations for
treatment and control groups at the pretest narrative retell and posttest for all dependent
variables. Unadjusted and adjusted means for all dependent variables are displayed in Table 3.
Significance is reported in Table 4.

**Table 2**

Pretest and Posttest Means and Standard Deviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th></th>
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<th></th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>n</td>
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<tr>
<td>Posttest Expository Vocabulary Questions</td>
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<td>Posttest Personal Narrative Total</td>
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<td>7.45</td>
<td>19</td>
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</table>

*Note. n = Sample Size. M = Mean Score. SD = Standard Deviation*
## Table 3

**Posttest Unadjusted and Adjusted Means and Standard Deviations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th>Adjusted</th>
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</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
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<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narrative</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Retell Total</td>
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<td>5.92</td>
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<td>5.58</td>
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<td>Personal Stories</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retell Total</td>
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<td>27</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>3.38</td>
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<td>3.01</td>
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<td>2.63</td>
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</tbody>
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*Note. M = mean. SD = standard deviation. N = number of participants. SE = standard error.*

## Table 4

**Significance and Effect Size for Dependent Variables**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>p</th>
<th>PES</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oral Narrative Retell (Total)</td>
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<td>0.023</td>
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<tr>
<td>Story Questions</td>
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<td>0.006</td>
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<tr>
<td>Narrative Inferential Questions</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>&lt;0.001</td>
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<tr>
<td>Narrative Vocabulary Questions</td>
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<td>0.033</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oral Narrative Personal Stories</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>0.003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral Expository Retell (Total)</td>
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<td>0.025</td>
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<tr>
<td>Expository Text Questions</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>0.001</td>
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<tr>
<td>Expository Comprehension</td>
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<td>0.001</td>
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<tr>
<td>Expository Vocabulary Questions</td>
<td>0.60</td>
<td>0.006</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. PES = partial eta squared.*
Narrative Language and Personal Stories

An ANCOVA was conducted to analyze the effect of treatment on the dependent variables of narrative retelling, story questions, inferential questions, and vocabulary questions. In each analysis, the narrative retell pretest score was used as the covariate. For narrative retelling, the ANCOVA was not significant, $F(1, 46) = 1.07, p = 0.31$. The strength of the relationship between dual narrative and expository intervention and the dependent variable was small, as assessed by $\eta^2_p = 0.02$. For story questions, the ANCOVA was not significant, $F(1,47) = 0.29, p = 0.60$. The strength of the relationship between intervention and the dependent variable was small, indicated by $\eta^2_p < 0.01$. For narrative inferential questions, the ANCOVA was not significant, $F(1,47) = 0.009, p = 0.93$. Partial eta squared < 0.01 indicated that the strength of the relationship between intervention and the dependent variable was small. The ANCOVA was not significant for narrative vocabulary questions, $F(1, 47) = 1.59, p = 0.21$. The strength of the relationship between dual narrative and expository intervention and the dependent variable was small, as assessed by $\eta^2_p = 0.03$.

An ANCOVA was conducted to examine the efficacy of treatment on a student’s personal story generation, using the posttest personal story as the dependent variable and the pretest narrative retell score as the covariate. The ANCOVA was not significant, $F(1,37) = 0.117, p = 0.73$. The strength of the relationship between intervention and the dependent variable was small, indicated by $\eta^2_p < 0.01$.

Expository Language

A one-way analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was conducted to analyze the effect of treatment on the dependent variables of expository retelling, text questions, comprehension questions, and vocabulary questions. In each analysis, the narrative retell pretest score was used
as the covariate. The ANCOVA for expository retelling was not significant, $F(1,54) = 1.29$, $p = 0.26$. The $\eta^2_p (0.03)$ indicated that the strength of the relationship between intervention and the dependent variable was small. For text questions, the ANCOVA was not significant, $F(1,51) = 0.049$, $p = 0.83$. The strength of the relationship between intervention and the dependent variable was small, as evidenced by $\eta^2_p < 0.01$. The ANCOVA was not significant for expository comprehension, $F(1,51) = 0.048$, $p = 0.83$. The strength of the relationship between intervention and the dependent variable was small, assessed by $\eta^2_p < 0.01$. For expository vocabulary questions, the ANCOVA was not significant, $F(1,51) = 0.286$, $p = 0.60$. The strength of the relationship between dual narrative and expository intervention and the dependent variable was small, as assessed by $\eta^2_p < 0.01$.

**Discussion**

The purpose of this Phase One study was to investigate the efficacy of a low-dose, short-term, dual oral narrative and expository language intervention in small group settings on improving oral narrative and expository language in kindergarten, first, and second grade students who have been identified as having language disorder or emerging English academic language. Previous research has indicated that two 30-minute oral language intervention sessions per week over eight weeks can improve oral and written language outcomes for students (Brown et al., 2014; Culatta et al., 2010; Gillam et al., 2009; Gillam & Gillam, 2016; Lee, 2020; Nelson & Petersen, 2020; Petersen et al., 2022; Spencer, Petersen, & Adams, 2015; Spencer et al., 2017). To our knowledge, no study has investigated whether oral language intervention can effect such changes with an even lower dose, especially with students with language disorder.

Findings from the current study did not yield significant results at the conclusion of the four-week intervention delivered during Phase One of this overall research aim. However, when
comparing the adjusted means of posttest scores from the ANCOVA between treatment and control groups, trends indicate that the treatment group was on trajectory to perform better than the control group on the outcome measures of narrative retelling, story questions, narrative vocabulary questions, oral narrative personal stories, oral expository retell, and expository text questions. There were only three out of the nine outcome measures that trends from means did not indicate an advantage for students in the treatment group as compared to their control-group peers. Those measures that were essentially equivalent between the treatment and control groups at posttest were narrative inferential questions, expository comprehension questions, and expository vocabulary questions. The means for the narrative retell, expository retell, and narrative vocabulary questions were noticeably higher for the treatment group. This may be due to the fact that the intervention focused heavily on retelling and exposing children to Tier 2 vocabulary words. For example, in a typical intervention session that focused on narratives, children listened to a story, and retold it multiple times. Tier 2 vocabulary was also focused on across both narrative and expository sessions. Thus, it is not surprising that the outcome measures that are most proximal to the intervention focus trended higher for the children in the treatment group.

The alternate treatment likely had a positive impact on the outcomes for the students in the alternate treatment control group. Changes from pretest to posttest indicate that the students in the control group did make improvements in most outcomes. Furthermore, the dialogic reading intervention may have had a stronger impact on some outcomes when compared to the treatment provided to the students in the treatment group. For example, on the outcome of inferential questions, the control students’ mean scores at posttest were higher on average than the scores of the students in the treatment group. This may be due to the nature of the dialogic
reading intervention discussing inferencing each session, while the *Story Champs* treatment had not yet progressed to include inferencing. If there was a no-treatment control group, significant differences may have been detected between the treatment groups and the no-treatment control group.

**Combining Narrative and Expository Intervention**

Numerous oral language intervention studies have focused on narratives. Previous studies examining the effects of oral language intervention on oral and written language outcomes in early elementary school students have had great success (Brown et al., 2014; Culatta et al., 2010; Gillam et al., 2009; Gillam & Gillam, 2016; Lee, 2020; Nelson & Petersen, 2020; Petersen et al., 2022; Spencer, Petersen, & Adams, 2015; Spencer, Petersen, Slocum, & Allen, 2015; Spencer et al., 2017). However, these studies have consisted of only narrative language intervention (Brown et al., 2014; Gillam & Gillam, 2016; Nelson & Petersen, 2020; Petersen et al., 2022; Spencer, Petersen, & Adams, 2015; Spencer, Petersen, Slocum, & Allen, 2015; Spencer et al., 2017) or expository language intervention (Culatta et al., 2010; Gillam et al., 2009; Lee, 2020). The purpose of this study was to determine whether combining these intervention approaches can yield similar effects in a more efficient manner. Increasing efficiency of language intervention is important due to the large caseload and heavy workload in the school setting (Marante & Farquharson, 2021). Additionally, a dual genre approach to language intervention may have the ability to increase efficiency because narrative and expository language are being targeted at the same time, eliminating the need to lay a foundation in both genres at separate times.

It is unclear just how much intervention must take place before yielding significant results. This Phase One study design was low-dose, consisting of only one 20-minute session per genre per week, over the short period of four weeks. Results from this Phase One indicate that
this period of time is long enough to see trends toward improvement in the treatment group as compared to the control group, but insufficient to yield significant results for any of the outcome measures. This may be due to the short intervention period, the low dose of one session per genre per week, or a combination of both factors. It is possible that results could have yielded significant outcomes if a block schedule had been followed, where narratives were focused on exclusively for two weeks and then expository was focused on for two weeks (Vaughn et al., 2010).

**Limitations and Implications for Future Research**

There were some limitations to the current study. For example, this study included a relatively small sample size. A larger sample would have provided greater power and may have resulted in greater sensitivity in detecting the effect of the intervention. Future research should investigate a dual narrative and expository language intervention with a larger sample size and should potentially disaggregate the data by grade, race/ethnicity, gender, and other demographic variables. It is possible that younger students may respond differently than older students. This is because younger students might benefit from a more consistent intervention focus where narratives or expository are the focus for a sustained period of time as opposed to alternating the focus each week. It is also possible that students that are English language learners or students that are culturally or linguistically diverse may respond differently to the intervention.

With regard to participant demographics, there were significantly more students that were on an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) for language in the treatment group than in the control group (eleven students in the treatment group compared to two students in the control group). This may have contributed to the lack of statistically significant results. Even though the dynamic assessment identified an equivalent number of students as having a language disorder in
the treatment and control groups, we did not examine the results of the dynamic assessment for severity of disorder. It is possible that the students with an IEP who were primarily in the treatment group had a language disorder that was more severe, thus unbalancing the treatment and control groups.

There is the possibility that researcher bias affected the outcomes of the study. Interventionists were aware of the purpose of the study and the purpose of the intervention. Future research should implement procedures that better obfuscate the purpose of the study by including a separate team of research assistants who only assess the outcome measures and are not involved in intervention procedures. This would ensure that the interventionists are blind as to the specific outcomes of interest in the study. However, the research assistants who delivered the shared storybook intervention were unaware that their participants were in the control group.

Future phases of this research will continue intervention with the students in this current study to investigate at which point intervention becomes efficacious. Results from the short-term study by Spencer, Petersen, Slocum, and Allen (2015) indicated that a higher dose of intervention can yield meaningful results over a short treatment period. However, one of the goals of this research initiative is to maximize the efficiency of contextualized language intervention by alternating narrative and expository intervention procedures each week under realistic conditions. Therefore, it is necessary to ascertain when two 20-minute sessions per week, which is the time that most speech-language pathologists dedicate to language intervention for their students, will yield significant results across both narrative and expository outcomes so that some students may be able to return to Tier 1 (core instruction) within a multi-tiered system of support - thus reducing the school speech-language pathologist’s long-term caseload.
Conclusion

Several studies have shown the efficacy of *Story Champs* over a minimum of eight weeks of intervention on improving oral and written language skills in school-age children (Nelson & Petersen, 2020; Petersen et al., 2022; Spencer, Petersen, & Adams, 2015; Spencer et al., 2017). The only study that had an intervention period resembling that of the current study was conducted by Spencer, Petersen, Slocum, and Allen (2015), whose design included only a 3-week intervention period. However, this study provided treatment with much higher frequency than the current study (four sessions per week, lasting 15-20 minutes each, held in a large group setting) and with sessions targeting only narrative language, rather than both narrative and expository language (Spencer, Petersen, Slocum & Allen, 2015). The results from this current study indicate that four weeks of intervention may be insufficient to yield significant improvement in oral and written language with only two 20-minute small group intervention sessions per week. Additionally, the dual nature of the intervention may warrant a longer overall intervention period to show meaningful improvement in both narrative and expository genres when compared to an intervention that singularly focuses on narratives. Although results of the current study were not statistically significant, the data for the treatment group was trending in a positive direction, suggesting that additional treatment sessions may yield significant, meaningful results.
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https://doi.org/10.1080/10888430701530417


APPENDIX A

Annotated Bibliography


The objective of this study was to observe the effects of narrative retell intervention on the narrative macrostructure skills of young, low-income, African American children that had previously been identified as being at-risk for language disorders. The participants for this study were three 4-year-old children. These children received intervention for 15-20 minutes in small group sessions three times a week. They were explicitly taught story grammar and practiced identifying components of story grammar when listening to a story told orally. They then practiced narrative retell and listened to recordings of themselves to identify story grammar elements in their own narratives. All children in the study showed improvement in narrative retell by the end of intervention and had maintained that improvement at a posttest two weeks later. Findings from this study support that oral narrative intervention has strong evidence of helping to improve oral narrative language skills. Because reading comprehension and writing ideation are based on oral language, skills learned during narrative retell instruction have high probability of generalizing to reading and writing performance.

Clark, C. (2007). *Why it is important to involve parents in their children's literacy development: A brief research summary* (ED496346). ERIC.

The purpose of this research summary was to highlight the importance of parental involvement in children’s literacy development. This summary states that involvement by parents in reading routines is the foremost factor in determining development of language and literacy. The current study states that most children acquire narrative language implicitly, through experiences such as being read to by adults. However, some children may require further, more explicit instruction to acquire the narrative language skills necessary for narrative reading comprehension.


The objective of this study was to determine the accuracy of a dynamic assessment of narrative language in identifying elementary school students with language disorder. Participants consisted of 110 school-age children from two states. Each of these children completed a dynamic assessment of narrative language. Results indicated that this dynamic assessment of language, the DYMOND, exhibited good to excellent levels of sensitivity and specificity. Results from the examination of this dynamic assessment are important to this study, as the DYMOND assessment of narrative language was used to identify children with and without language disorder in this current study.

This book discusses analysis of statistical power in the research of the behavioral sciences. Effect sizes and determinants of significance from Cohen’s analysis were used in analysis of results of the current study.


These Common Core Standards outline reading and literary expectations for school-age children in the United States. Proficiency in comprehending and producing narrative language are embedded in these standards. These standards demonstrate the importance and need for adequate language instruction in school to support children in achieving proficiency.


The primary purpose of this study was to evaluate how a theme-based unit designed to teach expository comprehension skills in a playful manner affected young children’s ability to express and receive expository language. The secondary purpose of this study was to increase teacher’s awareness regarding how expository language can be taught in an age-appropriate manner. A pre-post design without controls was used to explore whether playful expository language instruction would be feasible in a preschool classroom. The theme-based instructional unit was implemented in four preschool classrooms, each having two teachers that taught both morning and afternoon classes. Both classroom teachers held bachelor’s degrees and ten years of teaching experience, as
well as being experienced in developmentally appropriate practice. Seventy-one children were enrolled in the study across all four classrooms, and all were aged between 4:1 and 5:0 years (mean of 4:7) and spoke English as their primary language. One child was being monitored for a developmental delay and eight had phonological production errors. Instruction included eight subunits and was conducted over a 16-week period, with two weeks spent on each subunit. Lessons dealt with problem solving and comparisons, and expository text and structure was included throughout each topic. Instruction included activating children’s prior knowledge, acting out texts, sharing personal accounts, listening to expository texts, mapping conceptual relationships, and practicing expository language in a hands-on manner. Instructional conversations were a vital aspect of this study, and comprehension was assessed by students’ ability to map and recall orally presented expository information. Parents were interviewed to evaluate their perception of the effectiveness of instruction. At the conclusion of the study, children showed significant improvement in their ability to compare and contrast animals based on the same attribute. Gains were also seen in children’s understanding of problem/solution relationships as evidenced by their telling of personal accounts. Teachers noted that children spontaneously spoke about problems and solutions in the classroom and generalized key concepts to regular classroom activities. Several parents reported that children showed an increased interest in information regarding animals they saw in relation to the expository lessons they were receiving lessons on animals. Findings from this study support that oral expository language instruction is both necessary and feasible even at a young age. This instruction, even in a classroom setting, familiarizes children with informational language and forms the basis for the bridge for academic application.

The purpose of this study was to examine the difference in efficacy of two different techniques in a dialogic reading intervention. The techniques investigated were evocative and feedback techniques. Participants in this study included 41 children, and other intervention factors examined included expressive versus receptive assessment of novel vocabulary, and the effect of time on intervention efficacy. This thesis outlines vital components of dialogic reading intervention, including evocative techniques, feedback, and progressive change. A main goal of this study was to tease apart which components are most important in facilitating improvement, however, results indicated no statistical difference between improvements seen when using evocative versus feedback techniques. This supports the continued use of all three components in a dialogic reading intervention, which was used as the intervention for the alternate treatment control group in this current study.


The objective of this study was to examine the accuracy of a dynamic assessment of language in identifying school-age students with language disorder. Participants were made up of 362 school-ag students from Utah, Colorado, and Wyoming, who each
participated in a dynamic assessment of narrative language. Results from this study indicated that the DYMOND dynamic assessment of language had good to excellent levels of specificity and sensitivity. Additionally, it was found that the most accurate predictor of language ability came from the posttest and modifiability score sections of the assessment. Results from the examination of this dynamic assessment are important to this study, as the DYMOND assessment of narrative language was used to identify children with and without language disorder in this current study.


The objective of this literature review was to identify necessary elements for effective classroom reading instruction in general as well as effective instruction for children that are at risk for reading failure. Researchers concluded that effective classroom instruction can maximize the probability that most children can learn to read on grade level. Small groups or individual instruction is necessary in order to effectively address the needs of those children that are at risk for reading failure. The instruction for these at-risk children must be more explicit, more comprehensive, more intensive, and more supportive than the instruction that should be provided in the general classroom. This literature review supports that explicit and comprehensive language instruction is needed in early education and elementary school classrooms to promote reading success as children age. However, children who are at risk for reading failure will require more explicit, more comprehensive instruction in a more individualized setting (i.e., small group instruction).

The objective of this study was to investigate the psychometric values of a dynamic assessment of narrative language for identifying diverse school-age students with language disorder. Participants included 364 school-age students. It was found that the DYMOND dynamic assessment of narrative language had excellent classification accuracy of language status, even in culturally and linguistically diverse students. Results from the examination of this dynamic assessment are important to this study, as the DYMOND assessment of narrative language was used to identify children with and without language disorder in this current study.


The purpose of this study was to analyze the comments made by fourth graders while reading expository text to gain insight into comprehension. The goal of the research was to identify the difference between children with language impairment and those with typical language regarding explicit and implicit comprehension and accuracy of comments, as well as to identify the relationship between accuracy of statements and comprehension of the text in question. Forty fourth grade students with and without language impairment participated in listening to expository passages and discussing them aloud after each sentence. Afterward, they answered comprehension questions and were
asked to retell or paraphrase the passage. In this comparison study, the differences in verbal working memory where children heard sentences and asked true or false questions and think-aloud comments were noted between children with typical language and those with language impairment. The dependent variables were the children’s accuracy answering comprehension questions and recalling details about the passage that was read. It was found that there was no significant difference in verbal working memory between children with typical language and those with language impairment. There was a large difference in number of questions answered correctly and the number of details accurately recalled in that typically developing children both answered more questions correctly and recalled more details from the passages. This indicates that ability to paraphrase depends heavily on comprehension of text. Research has been done regarding narrative language intervention on narrative oral language skills, but there hasn’t been much research yet regarding oral expository intervention and its effect on expository language skills. If the ability to think-aloud about expository passages relates heavily to a student’s ability to comprehend expository text, oral expository language intervention may have a positive effect on expository reading comprehension.

[https://doi.org/10.1097/TLD.0000000000000081](https://doi.org/10.1097/TLD.0000000000000081)

The purpose of this study was to describe Supporting Knowledge in Language and Literacy (SKILL) program as a method for language intervention. SKILL intervention was administered in groups of three or four students with Specific Language Impairment or English Language Learners. The intervention was broken into three phases: explicit
instruction, elaboration, and independent storytelling. Phase I uses graphic icons and storyboard to help teach the child elements of story grammar and organization. Instruction regarding temporal markers such as “before” and “after” are also taught to establish temporal relationships. Phase II targets linguistic structures, concepts, and vocabulary that children need in order to form a narrative with adequate cohesion and complexity. Children are also introduced to dialogue and including multiple events to increase complexity in Phase II. Phase III is focused on helping children develop the metacognitive skills necessary to self-monitor the cohesion of independent narratives. Lessons include generating, telling, editing, and revising stories that are generated by the children themselves. SKILL intervention resulted in moderate to large improvement in narrative proficiency and vocabulary growth. Data also demonstrated an increase in complexity of sentence structure in both narratives that were retold and independently generated, suggesting that simply increasing the complexity of story grammar simultaneously increases syntactic complexity without explicit syntactic focus. Results from this study found that by focusing on the underlying cognitive and linguistic elements of narratives, complex story grammar and syntax increased. The spontaneous generalization of complex syntax as a result of complex story grammar indicates possible further generalization into other academic areas as well, such a reading comprehension and writing.


The objective of this literature review was to propose a model of reading that clarifies the role of decoding in reading and reading disability. Gough and Tunmer assert that reading
is the product of decoding and comprehension, and that reading disability may result from difficulty in one or both of these areas. Reading is the product of decoding and comprehension, and students may struggle in one or both of these areas. Once print is decoded, it must be translated into language and is understood by applying exactly the same processes used in the comprehension of oral language. If reading comprehension is based in the student’s ability to comprehend what they hear, explicit oral language instruction is imperative for the development of literacy.


The purpose of this study was to investigate the accuracy of the Predictive Early Assessment of Reading and Language (PEARL), a dynamic assessment of language, in classifying Navajo preschool children as having typically developing or impaired language. The participants included 90 Navajo preschool students who had previously been identified with language impairment or typically developing language. These children were administered the PEARL to dynamically assess their language. Results from this study indicated that the pretest and posttest phases of the PEARL distinguished children with language impairment with 89% accuracy, and that the modifiability scores of children during the teaching phase of the PEARL identified children with 100% accuracy. Results from the examination of this dynamic assessment are important to this study, as the PEARL assessment of language was used to identify kindergarten students with and without language disorder in this current study.
The purpose of this literature review was to review evidence that listening comprehension is the most dominant influence and most predictive factor on reading comprehension. Discusses the role of deficient listening skills on the growing number of children with poor reading comprehension. The literature review found that over time, the importance of listening comprehension and its effect on reading comprehension grows, as the text children are decoding gradually begins to exceed the child’s language capacity in complexity. There is strong evidence supporting the teaching of reading comprehension by activating prior knowledge, questioning what is being read, monitoring comprehension, visualization, and retelling. As children are just learning to read, the text they are decoding is below their capacity for oral language. Thus, children with deficits in comprehension are “hidden” until later grades. Many of these children can be traced as having listening comprehension deficits as early as 15 months old, indicating a need for oral language instruction and highlighting the dependence of reading comprehension on listening comprehension abilities.


https://doi.org/10.1177/0022219411432683

The purpose of this study was to explore the heterogeneity in the sources of reading difficulties for children that are minority language learners as well as native English
speakers. This was a longitudinal study following 150 students from first through third grade. Students were assessed annually on standardized English and reading measures. In order to investigate the contribution of code-related skills versus comprehension skills, structural equation modeling was used. Among students with low reading comprehension, it was found that over 80% of these students demonstrated weakness in comprehension alone, with no deficit in decoding playing a part in their lower reading skills. Results were similar for both English language learners and native English speakers. Poor readers may have difficulty in decoding, comprehension, or both. However, the large majority of poor readers struggle with comprehension as opposed to decoding, indicating a need for instruction targeting reading comprehension specifically.


The purpose of this article was to examine how teachers can teach children about language both implicitly and explicitly. The article discusses how a child’s oral language skills are strong indicators of how well a student will succeed in school. Authors open a discussion about teachers prioritizing oral language development in elementary instruction to support oral language development and thereby facilitate literacy development. This article supports the need for explicit, detailed oral language instruction for young students, as is discussed in this current study.

The purpose of this study was to examine the effects of a mixed narrative and expository language intervention in the oral language skills of third grade students. Participants were made up of 96 third grade students from two schools. All of the third-grade students in one school (46) were assigned to the treatment group, while all of the third grade students in the second school were assigned to a control group. Both the treatment and control groups received teacher-led oral narrative language instruction in large groups, while the treatment group received additional, investigator-led oral expository language intervention in large groups. The results of narrative language abilities at post-test did not indicate a significant difference between control and treatment groups. The treatment group did make significant gains regarding expository language structure and complexity when compared to their peers in the control group. These results indicate effectiveness of dual narrative and expository language intervention on the oral expository language skills of students. Evidence from this study suggests the efficacy of dual narrative and expository oral language intervention on the oral language skills of third grade students. The current study aims to investigate the effectiveness of dual narrative and expository language skills on other academic measures, such as reading and writing, and in younger students (kindergarten through second grade).

The purpose of this study was to pinpoint the relationship between oral language skills and reading comprehension. Researchers sought to determine 1) whether individual differences in listening comprehension will reflect variations in other component language skills; 2) the interactive effect of decoding and listening comprehension on reading comprehension; 3) whether listening comprehension predict growth in reading comprehension skills; and 4) whether factors such as vocabulary, grammar, verbal working memory, and inference skills predict the development of reading comprehension after accounting for listening comprehension skill. This was a five-year longitudinal study looking at the reading development of 198 Norwegian children, none of which had been diagnosed with developmental disability or sensory impairment. The study began when they were in second grade (mean age of 7.5 years), and every child had begun receiving formal reading instruction in first grade in schools located in working- and middle-class areas. Children were tested six times over five years, beginning in the middle of second grade and ending in the middle of seventh grade. The first four testing incidences took place at six-month intervals, with the final two occurring at 2.5- and 1-year intervals, respectively. Upon initial testing, nine tests were administered to measure language comprehension, two to measure decoding, and one to measure reading comprehension. Only reading comprehension was tested on tests 2-6. At the conclusion of the study, it was found that children’s correct responses increased by an average of 8.36 between the middle of second grade and the end of third grade, and an average increase of 2.49 correct answers per year between the middle of third grade and the middle of seventh grade. It was found that language skills explained 90% of listening comprehension variance. It was found that growth in the four first-order language factors
(vocabulary, grammatical skills, verbal working memory, and inference skills) were unrelated to each other, with their only shared commonality being listening comprehension. It was found that variations in decoding do not carry significance for reading comprehension when a reader possesses good decoding skills. However, variation in decoding does carry significant weight regarding reading comprehension when a reader only has strong listening comprehension skills. Both listening comprehension and decoding predicted early growth, while only listening comprehension was a good predictor for later growth in reading comprehension. It is suggested that interventions focus on a broad set of oral language skills in order to develop adequate reading comprehension skills. Findings from this study strongly support the view that the development of underlying oral language skills directly relate to the development of reading comprehension.


This article discusses how school-based speech-language pathologists treat over half of the students with disabilities across the nation. This has led to massive caseloads and burnout in SLPs in the school setting. The concluding statements of this article encourage SLPs to make adjustments in their work settings, such as incorporating work-load specific changes to routines and participating in advocacy efforts. This is relevant to the current study, because if it is found that a dual approach to narrative and expository language intervention is effective, SLPs may be able to help the students with language
disorder more efficiently. This could potentially lead to less overall time that students require an IEP for language.

Metsala, J. L., Sparks, E., David, M., Conrad, N., & Deacon, S. H. (2021). What is the best way to characterise the contributions of oral language to reading comprehension: listening comprehension or individual oral language skills? *Journal of Research in Reading, 44*(3), 675-694. [https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9817.12362](https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9817.12362)

The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of the oral language skills of vocabulary, syntactic awareness, and morphological awareness on reading comprehension. The study included 116 children later in the initial academic year and followed 87 of those children into the following academic year to assess gains in reading comprehension. Results indicated that morphological awareness in oral language was the strongest predictor of reading comprehension, however, overall findings from the study indicate that improvements in each of the three aforementioned oral language skills leads to increases in the reading comprehension of students. These findings are relevant to the current study because the hope of this current study is that by improving the oral language skills of young students, we can positively impact the distal outcome of reading comprehension as well.


This book outlines several factors that should be taken into account when considering how to teach young students to comprehend what they read. In this book, authors describe story grammar that is required to form a cohesive narrative. This story grammar refers to elements such as a character, a setting, a problem, an internal response to the
problem, a plan and an attempt to solve that problem, a consequence, and a resolution. These same elements of story grammar are used in the *Story Champs* narrative intervention used to explicitly teach young students narrative language in this current study.


The purpose of this study was to investigate the efficacy of oral narrative language intervention on the oral language comprehension, reading comprehension, and writing of second and third grade students in India. Classrooms that were assigned to either a treatment, an alternate-treatment, or a no treatment group yielded 121 participants across second and third grades. The treatment group received 8 weeks of intervention using *Story Champs*, the alternate-treatment group participated in 8 weeks of shared storybook intervention, and the no treatment group did not receive any treatment and served as a control. It was found that oral narrative intervention delivered in a multitiered system of support had a causal effect on the oral language, reading comprehension, narrative writing of the second and third grade students that participated in India. Several studies have indicated the efficacy of oral narrative language intervention on improving oral narrative language skill. This study takes the outcomes a step further and finds that this type of intervention does not only have the capacity to improve oral language, but literacy skills as well. The current study aims to examine the efficacy of dual narrative and expository language intervention on similar measures: oral expository and narrative language, reading comprehension, and writing ideation.
https://doi.org/10.1007/s10643-014-0679-9

This article discusses the difference in language and literacy environments in different childcare settings. Authors describe that a child’s vocabulary by age two is indicative of later success in school. The environments that children spend time, such as childcare centers, are important. The nature of these environments will have an impact on language development, as interactions between children and adults and listening to conversations will impact how children develop oral language skills. This is relevant to the current study, because we argue that for children who have fewer implicit language-learning opportunities – or for whom implicit language learning is insufficient – more explicit oral language instruction may be warranted.

https://doi.org/10.1044/2018_LSHSS-DYSLC-18-0021

The objective of this study was to investigate how well a dynamic assessment of decoding can predict difficulty reading in the future for school-age children. The study included 370 students, who were each assessed using a three-minute dynamic assessment of decoding at the beginning of kindergarten. These same children’s oral reading fluency was assessed at the end of each school year from second to fifth grade. Results indicated that this dynamic assessment of decoding could predict which kindergarten students will struggle learning to decode up to six years from the time of testing with 75-80%
accuracy. This current study used this same dynamic assessment in identification of participants.


The objective of this study was to investigate the efficacy of oral narrative language intervention on the oral language, reading comprehension, and writing of second grade students. Two classrooms of 14 students each were randomly assigned to treatment and control groups. None of the included students received special education or related services for language or reading. All students received two hours of reading instruction per day in adherence to the curriculum set by the school. Students in the treatment group received biweekly 30-minute intervention utilizing Story Champs in place of 30 minutes of their standard 2 hour reading instruction time for eight weeks. Those students who had made insufficient progress after three weeks of large group intervention then received an additional 15 minutes of instruction via Story Champs for the remaining five weeks of the treatment phase. Students who received multitiered narrative language interventions scored significantly higher on all measures (reading and writing included) than their peers in the control group. Several studies have indicated the efficacy of oral narrative language intervention on improving oral narrative language skill. This study takes the outcomes a step further and finds that this type of intervention does not only have the capacity to improve oral language, but literacy skills as well. The current study aims to examine the efficacy of dual narrative and expository language intervention on similar measures: oral expository and narrative language, reading comprehension, and writing ideation.

The purpose of this article was to provide a clinical tutorial on providing explicit language instruction to all students and propose ways in which narrative intervention can be carried out within a traditional educational framework. Narrative language interventions should be implemented in a tiered fashion in order to provide individual children with the instructional intensity that meets their needs. Intervention should be constructed around activities that enhance language as a whole to application can be academically functional. Intervention needs to be delivered in large groups, small groups, or individually, based on children’s individual needs. Oral narrative language intervention is necessary for children to learn to comprehend the language they will be expected to read. Children can be taught language in large or small groups, but slow learners or those with difficulty comprehending likely need to be taught in small group settings or individually.


The purpose of this study was to examine the effectiveness of language intervention integrated with a multitiered system of support regarding the retelling and personal generation of narratives, expository language, and writing output in kindergarten.
students. This study took place with 28 kindergarten classrooms from four elementary schools from the Upper Midwest region of the United States. All 28 classrooms were randomly assigned to either the treatment or the control group, resulting in 14 classrooms apiece. The total number of kindergarten students involved was 686, with 337 of them being in the treatment group. All 337 kindergarten students in the treatment group received tier-1 instruction, and those students that had IEPs for language services were eligible for tier-2 language intervention. All existing interventions were discontinued for the duration of the study. The Narrative Language Measures subtest of the CUBED assessment was used to measure the language abilities of all the students and those that performed below benchmark were also candidates for tier-2 language intervention. Forty-nine children were selected to receive tier-2 language intervention in small groups. Treatment classrooms received 15-20 minutes of language instruction twice weekly for 14 weeks, using Story Champs. Tier-2 intervention students received the same amount of classroom instruction in addition to biweekly 20-minute sessions for 10 weeks. The results showed that students in the treatment group scored significantly higher in all measured areas compared to students in the control group. The 49 students who received the tier-2 intervention scored significantly higher on narrative retells, generating personal stories, and expository retells than their at-risk peers in the control group. Additionally, students who received the tier-2 intervention scored significantly higher on narrative retells than their peers in the control group that had been performing at or above proficiency at pre-test. Students that received tier-2 intervention also achieved scores in personal story generation, expository language, and writing that were not significantly lower compared to the average and advanced peer controls. Results of this study support
the efficacy of oral narrative language instruction on oral language and writing in both narrative and expository genres. However, due to the age of students involved in the study, effects on reading comprehension could not be measured. Further research is necessary to examine the effects of dual narrative and expository language intervention on oral language, written content, and reading comprehension in young elementary school students.


The purpose of this literature review was to identify the cognitive processes that underlie reading comprehension and thereby develop a theoretical perspective pinpointing both the reasons why so many children struggle with reading comprehension as well as how to intervene most effectively. Reading difficulties persist into adulthood if higher-order cognitive skills are not taught. Explicit instruction regarding the higher-order cognitive skills required for reading comprehension is necessary regardless of whether a student has mastered decoding. Children may struggle with reading due to poor decoding or poor comprehension. Rapp et al. show that difficulty comprehending text is independent from mastery of decoding the text and requires separate intervention.

This article outlines how educators may embed vocabulary instruction for young students in storybooks. Vocabulary instruction is vital in language and literacy development and can be a strong predictor of later school success. Authors discuss how target words within storybooks can be selected based on relevance and usefulness to the students in various academic contexts and then educators can embed this vocabulary instruction within shared storybook reading. These procedures were followed in this current study to facilitate vocabulary instruction in the dialogic reading alternate treatment.


The purpose of this study was to identify the causal relationship between oral narrative language intervention and improved written language skills. Three groups of first-grade students received six sessions of oral narrative instruction in small groups over the course of two weeks. At a separate time in the school day from when narrative language instruction occurred, students wrote their own stories. These written stories were then analyzed for structure and complexity according to current academic writing standards. All but one student demonstrated improvement in their story-writing. All four students that showed improvement and for whom maintenance data was available continued to create narratives above baseline after explicit narrative instruction was withdrawn. The effect of oral language intervention on writing has not been studied much to date. This study demonstrates a positive impact of oral narrative language intervention on written narratives. Whether oral expository language would impact expository written language
was not addressed, but it would stand to reason those similar positive effects may be seen with expository language as well.


The purpose of this study was to examine the effectiveness of a narrative dynamic assessment in identifying participants for a tier-2 narrative language intervention. To explore the efficacy of said intervention for culturally and linguistically diverse preschoolers. The study involved two phases: one for testing and one for intervention. Phase 1 involved administering dynamic assessment of narrative retelling to three Head Start preschool classrooms to identify children for participation in intervention. Phase 2 involved 22 children that were identified as candidates for receiving support in small groups at the tier-2 level. Out of all preschool students assessed at post-test, those that were in the treatment group demonstrated significant improvement in skills regarding narrative retells on both proximal and distal outcomes than those students in the control group. The measure of personal story generation, however, did not show significant differences between the treatment and control groups. Several studies have indicated the efficacy of oral narrative language intervention in a multitiered system. Further research is needed to determine the efficacy of dual narrative and expository intervention and its effect on response to academic language.

The purpose of this study was to examine the efficacy of narrative intervention in large groups on the narrative skills of diverse preschoolers. This study followed a pre- and post-test comparison group research design with 71 preschool students. Classrooms were randomly designated to treatment or control groups. The narrative language and comprehension skills of these preschoolers was assessed at pre-test, post-test, and four weeks following the conclusion of treatment to investigate skill maintenance. It was found that there were statistically significant differences in story retell and comprehension for the children in the treatment group. However, the generation of personal stories did not improve from treatment to control at this tier-1 level. Explicit narrative language instruction should occur in the classroom first before identifying children that may need additional language support. This study outlines the efficacy of tier-1 narrative language intervention for preschool students.


The purpose of this study was to examine the effects of narrative language intervention on preschool students’ ability to retell stories and generate personal stories. These students received narrative intervention in small groups. Students in this study demonstrated improvements in narrative retelling as well as personal story generations, and maintained those improvements at follow-up testing two weeks after post-test. This
current study uses the same narrative language intervention in small groups, and seeks to explore the additive effects of combining this narrative intervention with an expository language intervention in the same treatment period.


The purpose of this study was to examine the effectiveness of narrative language intervention integrated with multi-tiered systems of support on facilitating narrative language development in preschool students. To investigate how well Head Start teachers implement multi-tiered intervention with fidelity, how well they administer narrative retell tests with fidelity, to what extent they score those narrative retell assessments with reliability, and how the teachers’ perceptions of feasibility change over time. This study took place in three Head Start classrooms in a mid-size city in a southwest state of the United States. Three other teachers from Head Start centers participated as control classrooms. Participants included 105 children ranging from three to five years old and all children’s language skills at the onset of the study were assessed using the Clinical Evaluation of Language Fundamentals – Preschool. Data regarding outcome measures were collected in fall, winter, and spring in all six classrooms. Narrative language intervention was provided in tier-1 (the classroom), tier-2 (small group), and tier-3 (individual instruction) based on the specific needs of children in the treatment group. Findings from this study indicated that children in the treatment group demonstrated significant improvements on story retelling and language comprehension. Additionally, it was found that children who received treatment were much more prepared for
kindergarten as their language comprehension skills following intervention met several early learning objectives outlined in state standards. Multi-tiered systems of narrative language intervention are imperative to adequately prepare children to progress through school. More research is necessary to investigate the outcomes of dual expository and narrative language intervention on the holistic language skills of young school-age children.


The purpose of this study was to examine the difference between difficulty comprehending a text, and difficulty decoding that same text. The aim was to observe the effect comprehension difficulty has on school well-being and whether difficulty comprehending, decoding, or both, were linked to different academic-based difficulties. The third aim of this study was to identify whether the link between reading difficulty and decreased motivation is gender-dependent. Participants were 1324 Finnish ninth graders from 95 different classrooms. Special education classrooms and non-Finnish speakers were not included in the sample. Students divided into four groups: 1) slow readers (poor reading fluency), 2) poor comprehenders, 3) poor readers (difficulty decoding and comprehending), and 4) readers without difficulty. It was more common for boys to be in any of the groups with reading difficulty than girls. During the spring of their ninth grade year, students were assessed in reading fluency, reading comprehension, reading self-concept, task avoidance, school burnout, and school enjoyment. Data from
all four groups was analyzed and compared. Only one-third of readers with poor comprehension displayed similar difficulty with decoding. It was found that readers that had difficulty with only one aspect of reading were as poor as the combined poor readers in the deficient skill, but not comparable to the typical readers in the non-deficient skill. Girls reported higher task values for literacy and science, higher school enjoyment, higher exhaustion, and less cynicism than boys. Boys reported higher interest in math. Difference in school motivation between boys and girls was significant in all areas except task avoidance. Reading self-concept and literacy task value was much lower for members of all reading difficulty groups than for the typical readers. Both poor decoders and poor comprehenders reported lower reading self-concept and increased cynicism than their typical-reading peers. Poor comprehenders especially reported higher levels of burnout and decreased motivation. There was no significant difference in school enjoyment or burnout between slow readers and typical readers. Reading difficulties were similarly linked to school motivation and burnout regardless of gender. Many children struggle with reading, and they may have difficulty decoding, comprehending, or both. Torppa et al. distinguish between the two difficulties and identify the impact each has on the other as well as on general schoolwork. Limitations of this study include a lack of longitudinal data, and a very specific age range for the sample size. Future studies should be done to identify the difference in impact based on where the difficulty reading lies in both younger and older age groups.


https://doi.org/10.1044/0161-1461(2006/034)
This article responds to Laura Justice’s article on reading instruction and calls for a change the delivery of services offered by speech-language pathologists. Authors discussed how response to intervention framework will change which children qualify for services and how they qualify. They also discussed how speech-language pathologists can improve the services they are delivering. Response to intervention has the potential to change the interaction between typical and special education and have a significant impact on educational speech-language pathology. There is a need for an explicit oral language curriculum in schools alongside traditional reading instruction in order to develop strong readers and prevent reading comprehension difficulties later on. Ukrainetz’s argument that there is a need for explicit oral language instruction indicates the current lack thereof.


The purpose of this article was to review several research studies examining intensive interventions inside a Response to Intervention framework. Authors suggest that less intensive intervention may not be responsible or effective in promoting change in children with more severe reading or language difficulties. This literature review is pertinent to this current study, because we wanted to explore the potentially additive effect of providing narrative and expository language intervention concurrently. Some improvements were noted, but with no statistical significance. It is possible that a dual narrative and expository language intervention may be effective for children, if both
genres were provided in blocks (two weeks of narrative, two weeks of expository) rather than alternating.
APPENDIX B

Institutional Review Board Reliance Agreement

This Institutional Review Board (IRB) Reliance Agreement (“Agreement”) is made by and between Brigham Young University, Provo (“BYU”), and the University of Wyoming, (“Institution”) and is effective on the date of the parties’ signatures below.

Agreement Terms

1.0 Purpose

1.1 This IRB Reliance Agreement (Agreement) establishes the authorities, roles, and responsibilities of each party with respect to the following research studies:
- **IRB2020-328**: Examining the Validity and Reliability of Dynamic Assessments of Reading and Language
- **IRB2021-360**: Accurately Identifying and Responding to Oral and Written Language Learning Potential Using Dynamic Assessment and Contextualized Language Intervention

(Research Projects) described in Attachment A. Those signing below agree that Institution may accept and rely on the review and approval of the Research Project by BYU IRB.

1.2 This Agreement does not preclude either party from entering into or participating in IRB reliance agreements with other entities or taking part in research not covered by this Agreement.

1.3 This document must be kept on file by the parties and be provided to the Federal Drug Administration (FDA), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP), or other applicable regulatory entity upon request.

2.0 Responsibilities of BYU IRB

2.1 The BYU IRB will review and approve or disapprove the Research Project, review and approve or disapprove modifications to the Research Project, approve consent forms, collect reports of unanticipated problems and serious or continuing noncompliance, review information that requires reporting, and maintain required IRB records pursuant to applicable laws and regulations. No subjects may be enrolled in research subject to this Agreement prior to the approval of BYU IRB.

2.2 The review performed by the BYU IRB will comply with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services regulations for the protection of human subjects (45 C.F.R. part 46), applicable FDA regulations (21 C.F.R. parts 50, 56, 312, 812), the terms of the BYU’s OHRP-approved Federal Wide Assurance (FWA), and BYU’s policies. BYU IRB will identify, interpret, and comply with the requirements of any additional international, national, state, and local laws and regulations applicable to the Research Project, including, but not limited to, data security, privacy, and reporting requirements.

2.3 BYU IRB has the authority to suspend or terminate approval of research that is not conducted in accordance with its policies, applicable laws and regulations, or that has been associated with unexpected serious harm to participants. BYU IRB will promptly notify Institution of the suspension or restriction of the Research Project and will copy BYU on communication with the FDA, OHRP, or funding entity on matters relating to the Research Project. Minutes of BYU IRB meetings relating to the Research Project will be made available to Institution upon request.
2.4 The BYU IRB will make determinations regarding the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 and its implementing regulations (collectively, “HIPAA”) applicable to the Research Project. Institution will comply with HIPAA determinations made by BYU IRB and will use the BYU IRB forms related to HIPAA compliance. If it becomes necessary for the parties to use or disclose personal health information, then the parties will work together to determine the steps necessary to ensure that the required information is used or disclosed in a HIPAA-compliant manner.

2.5 BYU will provide meeting space and sufficient staff to support BYU IRB’s review and record keeping duties.

3.0 Institution IRB Responsibilities

3.1 Institution will comply with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services regulations for the protection of human subjects (45 C.F.R. part 46), applicable FDA regulations (21 C.F.R. parts 50, 56, 312, 812), the terms of its OHRP-approved FWA, the Institution’s IRB policies, Institution’s policies, and any additional international, national, state, and local laws and regulations applicable to the Research Project.

3.2 Institution will conduct a facilitated review to accept and rely on the approval issued by BYU IRB.

3.3 Institution will be responsible for ensuring compliance with BYU IRB’s determinations for research conducted at Institution’s facilities.

3.4 Upon completion of the Research Project, Institution will remove BYU IRB as a designated IRB from Institution’s FWA record maintained by OHRP.

4.0 Joint Responsibilities

4.1 Each party is responsible for evaluating the potential financial conflicts of interest of its investigators and research staff associated with the Research Project and for reporting identified financial conflicts of interest to the other party.

4.2 Each party will notify the other party when a regulatory entity has or will conduct an audit or review of the Research Project and will communicate the outcome of the review in writing. If either party determines that it must report the findings of an investigation to a regulatory entity, it will request approval in writing from the non-reporting party in advance, with such approval not being unreasonably withheld. Nothing in this Agreement will be construed to prevent either party from making its own report to regulatory entities in accordance with its written procedures or applicable laws or regulations.

4.3 Each party will cooperate to ensure adequate protection of human research subjects participating in the Research Project and will cooperate to exchange relevant documentation and records when needed.

4.4 Either party may terminate this Agreement with or without cause upon 30 days written advance notice to the other party. The parties may also terminate this Agreement immediately upon written notice that (1) the Research Project is terminated; (2) either party is debarred from participation in federally funded research; or (3) either party is determined to have violated any of the provisions of this Agreement or international, national, state, or local laws or regulations.

4.5 Each party (the “Indemnifying Party”) shall indemnify, hold harmless, and defend the other party, its officers, trustees, employees, investigators, volunteers, and agents (the “Indemnified Parties”) from and against any and all causes of action, liabilities, obligations, judgements, losses, damages, claims, settlement payments, costs and expenses (including reasonable attorney’s fees), interest, awards, judgments, diminution in value, fines, fees,
penalties, or other charges arising out of or relating to the Indemnifying Party’s performance of its obligations under this Agreement or the operations conducted by the Indemnifying Party under this Agreement.

4.6 All correspondence and documents relating to this Agreement will be in English.

4.7 This Agreement will be governed and construed in accordance with the laws of the State of Utah without regard to its conflict of law rules. Any dispute arising between the parties will be resolved in the United States District Court for the State of Utah or the Fourth District Court in Provo, Utah, depending on the nature of the claim.

4.8 This Agreement may be executed in any number of counterparts, either in original, emailed, or faxed form.

4.9 No Amendments or changes to this Agreement will be effective unless made in writing and signed by the other party.

4.10 This Agreement constitutes the entire agreement and understanding between the parties and supersedes all prior communications, contracts, or agreements between the parties with respect to the subject matter of this Agreement.

4.11 Any notices to institutional officials or correspondence regarding IRB review and oversight of the Research Project will be addressed as follows:

If to BYU:
Sandee M.P. Aina, MPA
Associate Director of Human Research Protections (HRPP)
Brigham Young University
Research Administration Office
A-268 ASB Campus Drive
Provo, UT 84602
1-801-422-1461
sandee.aina@byu.edu

If to Institution:
University of Wyoming
Nichole Person
Research Compliance Coordinator
1000 E. University Ave. Dept. 3355
irb@uwyo.edu
307-766-5322

University of Wyoming

By: [Signature]

Name: Diana G. Hulme
Title: Associate Vice President for Research
Date:

Brigham Young University
ATTACHMENT A

<table>
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<td>IRB2020-328: Examining the Validity and Reliability of Dynamic Assessments of Reading and Language IRB2021-360: Accurately Identifying and Responding to Oral and Written Language Learning Potential Using Dynamic Assessment and Contextualized Language Intervention</td>
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<tr>
<th>Name of Principal Investigator</th>
<th>Kendra Hall Kenyon</th>
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<td>Name of Sponsor</td>
<td></td>
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<td>FWA00001266</td>
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<td>IORG0001302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Street Address</td>
<td>A285 ASB Campus Drive</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>State (if US)</td>
<td>UT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zip/Postal Code</td>
<td>84602</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
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<th>Sandee Aina</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Title of Individual</td>
<td>Associate Director, Human Research Protections Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone Number</td>
<td>801-422-1461</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email address</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Byu.hrpp@byu.edu">Byu.hrpp@byu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Organization Relying on BYU IRB Review (hereinafter, “University of Wyoming”):</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UW’s OHRP Federal Wide Assurance (FWA) #</td>
<td>00000186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name of Institutional Official</td>
<td>Diana G. Hulme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Street Address</td>
<td>1000 E. University Ave. Dept. 3355</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City</td>
<td>Laramie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State (if US)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zip/Postal Code</td>
<td>82071</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<th>Nichole Person</th>
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<tr>
<td>Title of Individual</td>
<td>Research Compliance Coordinator</td>
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<td>---------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone Number</td>
<td>307-766-5322</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email address</td>
<td><a href="mailto:irb@uwyo.edu">irb@uwyo.edu</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Child Assent

**What is this research about?**
My name is __. I want to tell you about a research study I am doing. A research study is a special way to find the answers to questions. We are trying to learn about how well students can talk and read.

Your parents have given you permission to be in this study. If you decide you want to be in this study, this is what will happen. I am going to say some made up words and ask you to repeat them. I am also going to tell you some stories and then ask you to tell them back to me. I am also going to teach you how to tell stories. We will probably work together for about 30 minutes. We will audio record you.

**Can anything bad happen to me?**
You might get tired of talking or reading. That’s OK. If you don’t want to tell stories or read anymore, just let me know and we will stop.

**Can anything good happen to me?**
We don’t know if being in this study will help you. But we hope to learn something that will help other people some day.

**Do I have other choices?**
You can choose not to be in this study.

**Will anyone know I am in the study?**
We won’t tell anyone you took part in this study. When we are done with the study, we will write a report about what we learned. We won’t use your name in the report.

**What happens if I get hurt?**
Your parents/legal guardians have been given information on what to do if you get injured during the study. But we won’t be doing anything dangerous, so you probably won’t get hurt.

**What if I do not want to do this?**
You don’t have to be in this study. It's up to you. If you say yes now, but change your mind later, that's okay too. All you have to do is tell us. If you do not want to do this with us, you can join the rest of your class in your classroom.
Before you say yes to be in this study; be sure to ask me any
questions that you have. [For Kindergarteners, say “Do you want to
be in this study?”]

[For First through Sixth Grade, say “If you want to be in this study, please sign and print your name.”]

Name (Printed): _____ Signature _____ Date: _____