



relationships with peers, teachers, and families (Vaezghasemi et al., 2023). In this context, quality student-teacher relationships and supportive environments play a pivotal role, with research demonstrating their significant impact on mental health and well-being (Narea et al., 2022).

Well-being is crucial in early childhood education, which focuses on supporting social, emotional, and cognitive development. In Indonesia, ECE programs are relatively new and often influenced by global theories like those of Piaget, Vygotsky, and Montessori (Adriany, 2019). While developing countries aim to boost public investment in early education, policymakers face challenges in prioritizing funding among diverse local programs. The connection between early education experiences and success in transitioning to primary school has drawn significant interest (Nakajima et al., 2019).

Cognitive skills, particularly language competency, are vital for a child's development. In early education, children learn to form longer, clearer sentences, but poor language skills can lead to social, behavioral, and reading difficulties, highlighting the need for systematic language instruction in preschool. Research shows that vocabulary underpins phonological sensitivity, essential for literacy, with the comprehensive language approach (CLA) emphasizing the role of oral language skills in emergent literacy and reading achievement (Dickinson et al., 2003).

Moreover, developing preschoolers' oral language is vital for early literacy prior to formal literacy learning (Alatalo et al., 2023; Brodin & Renblad, 2020). Evidence shows that oral language in preschool is closely tied to the emergence of phonological awareness and print knowledge necessary for literacy acquisition (Cabell et al., 2022). Kindergarteners begin learning to define words, expand receptive vocabulary, and enhance narrative skills, which are critical in primary grades (Pesco & Gagné, 2017). Narrative skills, or storytelling, are essential for successful language acquisition and academic success (Barra & McCabe, 2013). Children learn to understand and produce oral narratives, aiding their comprehension of teacher instructions and facilitating classroom activities (Westerveld & Gillon, 2008). Teachers can stimulate narrative skills by encouraging children to recount daily events or through engaging bedtime stories.

Children's extended discourse develops with age, supported by their language environment (Hellal & Lorch, 2010). Preschool programs can

enhance language skills by engaging children in meaningful conversations (Kahveci & Güneylü, 2020). Strengthening narrative skills is challenging but essential, as difficulties at the discourse level may impact reading. Storytelling assessments can reveal narrative comprehension and predict future reading success or challenges (Klemfuss & Wang, 2017).

Narrative skills also play a crucial role in communication and social interaction. Children with limited narrative exposure may face communication impairments and fewer opportunities to develop social skills (Hart et al., 2004). Good storytellers tend to be well-liked in social settings, providing more opportunities to practice language (McCabe & Marshall, 2006). These skills foster positive peer relationships and enhance learning motivation in school.

To address these expectations, creating a supportive learning environment is essential. Studies indicate that students perform better in classrooms where they feel supported by teachers and peers. A healthy environment fosters positive relationships, which are fundamental for motivation and performance. Research has shown that strong student-teacher relationships significantly impact students' social and academic development, with caring and supportive perceptions being crucial (Muller, 2001). In preschool, teachers must recognize students' needs, providing security, support, and protection. This care is vital, given children's vulnerability related to their age and the school's hierarchical structure (Kärnä et al., 2010).

Several studies demonstrate that children with supportive relationships with their teachers perform better than those in conflictual relationships (Lavy & Naama-Ghanayim, 2020). The teacher serves as a social reference, influencing children's acceptance among peers. Children who form positive relationships with teachers are often more accepted by their classmates, enhancing peer relationships. Child characteristics, such as agreeableness, can contribute to success in both student-teacher and peer relationships. Furthermore, preschool teachers should implement active, creative learning strategies to foster interactions that promote narrative skills. Positive teacher-student relationships enhance student engagement with their environment (Sendil & Erden, 2012).

Supportive teacher-student interactions boost students' comfort, motivation, and engagement, fostering oral narrative skills essential for confidence, communication, and language acquisition. While research often highlights the impact of these relationships on

literacy, their effect on speaking skills, especially narrative abilities, remains underexplored. This study examines the correlation between teacher-student interactions and oral narrative skills in kindergarteners, addressing how teaching methods influence language development and motivation.

This study will first examine how teachers interact with students to support oral narrative skills. It will also explain the impact of teacher-student emotional support on students' self-esteem and investigate how classroom management can enhance narrative skills and confidence. Finally, the study will explore the role of instructional support in improving students' speaking skills. Overall, this research aims to delve deeper into the relationship between student-teacher interactions and preschoolers' oral narrative skills. Specifically, it investigates how these interactions influence the development of children's spoken narrative abilities, taking into account both student and teacher factors.

## 2. Research Methodology

The study used a qualitative case study approach to investigate how student-teacher interactions influence preschoolers' oral narrative skills, focusing on emotional support, instructional guidance, and classroom management. Case studies are particularly effective for exploring "how" and "why" phenomena occur, especially in naturalistic and uncontrolled contexts (Baxter & Jack, 2015). Conducted at Singapore Intercultural Schools (SIS) Semarang, the research aligned with the school's holistic educational principles supporting language development and critical thinking. Probability sampling ensured fair participant selection, using a random technique to choose 14 preschoolers from 40 candidates (Showkat & Parveen, 2017).

The study focused on language acquisition among young children familiar with English, reflecting the intercultural nature of SIS, which enrolls both national and international students. While communication primarily occurred in English, the teaching of narrative skills could be adapted to other languages, utilizing simple media such as posters, storybooks, YouTube videos, or personal experiences. The strategy of implementing supportive interactions encompassing emotional support, instructional guidance, and effective classroom management has played a pivotal role in fostering students' language acquisition while simultaneously safeguarding their overall well-being.

Data collection included observations, semi-structured interviews, and documentation such as audio-visual recordings, capturing the dynamics of teacher-student interactions. Semi-structured interviews, lasting up to one hour each, provided detailed insights and allowed flexibility for unforeseen topics (Adams, 2015). Researchers used a systematic interview guide and preserved participant anonymity through pseudonyms (Palmer & Bolderston, 2006; Ruslin et al., 2022). Data analysis, as described by Creswell (2009), involved reducing and interpreting extensive data using structured methodologies (Belotto, 2018; Cuschieri, 2021). This approach highlighted how supportive interactions foster language acquisition and overall student well-being.

## 3. Finding and Discussion

The findings indicated that most students effectively engaged in communication and storytelling, though eleven out of fourteen needed vocabulary enrichment. Nine students felt shy during show-and-tell activities, especially when presenting in front of the class. Among them, P4 (K2 A) and Seoho (K2 B) faced challenges with English due to limited exposure or being new to the environment, while one student (P11, K2 B) remained notably quiet.

Observation data from May 19, 2023, highlighted the importance of strong teacher-student relationships built on responsiveness, attentiveness, and one-on-one interactions. Warm greetings and personalized compliments fostered a supportive environment where children felt valued. The K2 A teacher emphasized setting a positive tone during drop-offs, stating, *"We have to always appear excited to everything the kids bring to the table,"* boosting students' confidence. Similarly, the K2 B teacher stressed active listening to make students comfortable sharing, which increased participation.

Both teachers encouraged self-exploration and independent problem-solving. A K2 A student seeking guidance on refilling a cup demonstrated the effectiveness of teacher modeling in building confidence. *"Letting children act out of their curiosity is a good go for active interactions and self-development,"* noted the K2 A teacher. Positive reinforcement further supported students' efforts and fostered learning control.

The data revealed that structured routines and quality interactions improved student engagement and speaking skills. While most students participated actively, shy or less confident students benefited from personalized conversations that built trust. One teacher noted,

"A shy kid requires a gentle and patient approach," emphasizing the value of supportive interactions in fostering emotional and social growth.

Teachers emphasized the role of quality interactions in laying the foundation for social and emotional development. Positive relationships foster secure attachments and trust, critical for overall growth and language acquisition (Howes et al., 2013). Teachers used strategies such as responsiveness, growth opportunities, and effective communication modeling. As Loomis (2021) noted, creating "a room" for children to express their curiosity enhances learning. Malloy (2019) highlighted that positive interactions improve social skills and reduce problem behaviors.

Teachers provided reassurance to students experiencing frustration, an approach Broström et al. (2014) identified as essential for emotional well-being and resilience. Personalized learning and one-on-one conversations addressed individual needs, while "tactile behavior" fostered collaboration and confidence (Cekaite & Kvist Holm, 2017). Appropriate emotional responses from adults helped students cope with distress (Goodwin, 2017).

Distinct management strategies enhanced student participation and confidence. The K2 A teacher encouraged autonomy by allowing students to express choices, fostering decision-making and communication skills. She stated, "When it comes to classroom management, I always provide students with options... There'll still be a chance of them saying no and ends up doing something else, which is okay." This approach enabled students to respect differing opinions and negotiate responsibly.

The K2 B teacher focused on structured routines, promoting responsibility and independence. Activities like the "Rise and Shine" morning meeting, which emphasized feelings and kindness, boosted participation. The teacher also encouraged critical thinking by asking deep questions, with Interviewee 2 stating, "I believe the best learning is through curiosity... I allow them to explore and express themselves."

Both teachers used storytelling as a central tool to develop oral communication skills. They employed expressive language, gestures, and tone changes to captivate students. After each story, students were encouraged to ask questions and retell what they had learned, facilitating deeper understanding. Students struggling with reading tasks benefited from visual aids and storytelling techniques that enhanced engagement and comprehension.

Key activities included show-and-tell, pretend play, guessing games, and storytelling sessions. These activities fostered creativity, self-expression, and confidence. Teachers tailored these methods to match the students' developmental levels, ensuring they remained engaged and motivated.

Teachers recognized the importance of addressing individual challenges, such as language barriers and shyness, through genuine support and emotion coaching. Emotional milestones for children aged 4 to 5 included self-awareness and improved emotional expression (Gülay Ogelman & Önder, 2021). Teachers created safe spaces for self-expression and reinforced norms and behaviors through consistent routines (Hudson & Pulla, 2013; Williams, 2001).

Peer interactions were another crucial component, improving well-being, classroom management, and vocabulary (Tan & Perren, 2023). Activities fostering creativity and problem-solving further enhanced autonomy and self-confidence.

The findings demonstrated the impact of supportive teacher-student relationships on social-emotional and cognitive growth. Christenson et al. (2012) emphasized that strong relationships enable better social skills and greater academic engagement. Teachers' efforts to create nurturing environments contributed to improved self-regulation and emotional understanding, laying the groundwork for lifelong learning.

This study highlights the importance of personalized, supportive, and interactive teaching methods in fostering early narrative skills. By combining structured routines, emotional support, and creative classroom strategies, teachers at SIS Preschool successfully addressed challenges like shyness and language barriers while promoting confidence, language acquisition, and overall development. Through these approaches, students not only improved their narrative abilities but also gained the social and emotional skills essential for their future academic and personal success.

Table 1 below is the classroom management strategies that both teachers applied in teaching spoken narrative skills. This table highlights the similarities and differences of the strategies.

Based on the table 1, we can see that both K2 A and K2 B teachers employed similar methods to teach narrative skills, emphasizing open-ended questions and making predictions. The K2 A teacher highlighted the importance of deep thinking, explaining that questions enhance

students' understanding of texts and contexts. She promoted discussions after readings using techniques like text-to-self and text-to-world connections, games about story elements, and guiding students to draw predictions and conclusions. Observation data indicated high student engagement, with enthusiastic responses to questions such as, *“Have you ever experienced something like this?”* or *“What do you think might happen next?”* Interviewee 1 stated, *“In teaching narratives, it is important to teach the students contexts rather than asking them to read and read all the time.”*

Table 1. Classroom Management Strategies to Teach Narrative Skills

No.	Classroom Management Strategies to Teach Spoken Narrative Skills	
	K2 A Class	K2 B Class
1	Open-ended questions	Open-ended questions
2	Making predictions	Making predictions
3	Discussions	Read-alouds
4	Text-to-self/world connections	Vocabulary building
5	Story elements through games	Repeated reading
6	Drawing conclusions	Story illustrations

Similarly, the K2 B teacher utilized interactive read-alouds and vocabulary building through context clues and pictures, pausing to discuss meanings and encourage predictions. Some students needed extra time to comprehend texts, which the teacher addressed by promoting repeated readings to deepen understanding. Interviewee 2 noted, *“I encourage read-alouds and teaching context clues and pictures for vocabulary because sometimes they might not know the meanings.”*

At SIS Kindergarten, early literacy used simple, theme-based stories. Teachers tailored methods to students' ages and levels, boosting confidence and engagement. Varied classroom strategies improved speaking and reading skills, though some challenges remained.

Classroom management encompasses techniques for instructional strategies and managing student behavior (Zein, 2018). Effective management is crucial for optimal learning, involving grouping, seating arrangements, designing routines, timing activities, giving instructions, and providing feedback to foster self-regulation in children (Burchinal et al., 2008; Early et al., 2017;

Sheridan & Pramling Samuelsson, 2013). By age five, children develop independence, understand others' feelings, socialize with peers, and learn to share and follow rules (Linares et al., 2005).

The K2 A teacher emphasized fostering autonomy, allowing children to make decisions and manage tasks independently, which is vital for their well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2018). She avoided demanding language and valued children's perspectives, believing this approach promotes self-motivation and positive outcomes (Neubauer et al., 2021). Her role involved providing opportunities and meaningful choices to help children develop problem-solving, emotion regulation, and communication skills (Leke et al., 2010).

In contrast, the K2 B teacher used music and storytelling to stimulate deep thinking through engaging questions. Music and movement are effective management strategies that facilitate learning through trial and error while enhancing communication and teamwork skills (Vlismas et al., 2013; Yazejian & Peisner-Feinberg, 2009). Storytelling promotes vocabulary and communication skills (Brodin & Renblad, 2020; Reese et al., 2010), while stimulating questions encourage critical thinking and active engagement (Whorrall & Cabell, 2016).

Both teachers' effective classroom management positively influences children's social-emotional development and language literacy outcomes (Mashburn et al., 2008), which are critical for developing narrative abilities. Strategies such as storytelling, open-ended questions, making predictions, vocabulary building, and real-world connections are vital for enhancing early literacy skills (Barra & McCabe, 2013; Dockrell et al., 2010; Pesco & Gagné, 2017). Riley and Burrell (2007) highlighted storytelling as a key method for fostering narrative skills, especially personal narratives that children often share with peers.





To reinforce narrative skills, students were assigned to read a book at home weekly, choosing from the book corner based on their reading skills. This dual approach combined teacher-led and student-driven elements. For example, routines like show-and-tell and storytelling sessions were led by teachers, who assigned topics and helped students prepare. The K2 B teacher emphasized the importance of selecting “meaningful and purposeful” books that offer practical lessons and insights. Interviewee 2 stated, *“For narrative skills specifically, I make use of storybooks and games. Not just any books; the books we read to them must be meaningful and purposeful.”*

While K2 A used storybooks and videos, they also introduced monthly programs like pretend play, where students memorized scripts and engaged with specific narratives. Interviewee 1 mentioned, *“Although we allow the students to choose their favorite stories, they will be assigned*

*for the monthly events such as show-and-tell and play.”*

Table 2 below presents a list of activities to promote spoken narrative skills, as identified through observational data:

Table 2. Speaking and Narrative Skills Activities

Activities for Speaking and Narrative Skills			
Activities	Details	Frequency	Pictures
Show-and-tell	Students are assigned with topics to perform in front of other friends	Weekly	
Pretend play	Students are introduced to some stories before the play, intensive practice to increase comprehension, and given scripts to memorize	Monthly	
Guessing game	One student comes front and hides something behind the back. The student gives some clues to others and let them guess the thing	Occasionally	
Storytelling	This activity requires students to express themselves through stimulating questions and practice to create their own narratives	Twice a week	

Both teachers utilized activities like guessing, whispering, and card games to enhance narrative skills, emphasizing open-ended questions and a nurturing environment aligned with SIS preschool's holistic learning framework. An assessment of children's narrative skills, based on McCabe and Rollins (2013), showed strong vocabulary and coherent narratives in some participants (e.g., P1, P5, P8, and P14) but highlighted areas for improvement, particularly in vocabulary richness and story structure.

The diversity of narratives children are exposed to significantly affects early literacy, with strategies like reading aloud and storytelling fostering both spoken and written language development (Broström, 2002; Reese et al., 2010; Riley & Burrell, 2007). Teachers maintained engagement using tools like card games and videos to explore story elements effectively (Brodin & Renblad, 2020).

Pretend play helps children connect experiences, build confidence, and develop social skills (Babinski et al., 2018; Bateman, 2018). Stimulating questions enhance comprehension and critical thinking, enabling children to elaborate and predict story outcomes (Gort et al., 2012). While challenges in narrative skills may arise from language impairments or cultural differences, practice helps children naturally

improve these abilities (Kahveci & Güneyli, 2020).

#### 4. Conclusion and Suggestion

The study explored the connection between supportive teacher-child interactions and the enhancement of spoken narrative skills in preschoolers, recognizing the increasing expectations for preschool education and the demand for effective language development. It highlighted the importance of quality interactions that encompass social-emotional support, instructional guidance, and effective classroom management, all of which are essential for a child's holistic development and narrative skill enhancement.

Findings indicated that at SIS Preschool highlight the importance of social-emotional development, effective communication, and tailored teaching strategies in early childhood education. Teachers emphasized fostering trust and confidence through personalized interactions, emotional support, and structured routines. Eleven out of fourteen students actively engaged in storytelling and communication but needed vocabulary enrichment, while three remained shy due to language barriers or confidence issues. Classroom management strategies, including storytelling, pretend play,

and engaging games, were employed to enhance narrative skills and speaking abilities. Teachers encouraged autonomy and critical thinking by offering choices and stimulating curiosity, creating a nurturing environment that promoted holistic growth. Activities like show-and-tell and interactive read-alouds boosted language and social skills. Despite challenges such as vocabulary gaps and shyness, the collaborative and responsive approach of teachers helped students build confidence, emotional understanding, and communication skills, aligning with the goal of holistic learning.

The study emphasized the role of supportive interactions in boosting children's motivation and language development, particularly for non-English-speaking students. It recommended fostering emotional support and hands-on learning approaches to create nurturing environments and promote active learning. While conducted in an English-speaking context, the methods are adaptable to non-English settings, highlighting creativity and tailored strategies in developing narrative skills. Future research should explore links between narrative skills, literacy, and reading comprehension, assessing both reading and speaking to understand the impact of supportive interactions on literacy development.

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