PUPPET MAGIC: TRANSFORMING STORYTELLING INTO ENGLISH EXCELLENCE FOR ENGLISH YOUNG LEARNERS

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this project is to investigate how well puppetry works as a storytelling media for young learners, by focusing on *what opinions do the students have about using puppets to present stories. knowing how puppetry functions in language learning can lead to more interesting and successful teaching strategies.This study used a qualitative way to answer the question.This research was carried out in SD Negeri 1 Muhammadiyah Banda Aceh.The writers believed that an interview was the best instrument to utilize because this study involved first-grade elementary school studentsUsing puppets as a medium takes advantage of first-graders' receptiveness to multimodal experiences while acknowledging their developmental stage. The goal is to create a more dynamic and productive learning environment where the use of puppets stimulates students' attention and helps them comprehend the stories that are being told.The overall perception of the young learners who involved in this study is that they enjoyed actively listening to the narrative story and closely paying attention when it incorporated media- puppet - into the story. This finding implies that it is crucial for English teachers working with young students to vary their concrete media, and using puppets is just one way to do this.*

Keywords: *puppet, storytelling, english young learners*

1.   INTRODUCTION

Children are also taught English in pre-primary settings, such as kindergarten and preschool, in several countries. Stated differently, the instruction and acquisition of English for young learners furnishes the pupils with their English language competencies during the golden period of age at which kids can pick up anything with ease. Anything may be taught to children as long as it is presented in an understandable manner. Teaching English also promotes motivation and enjoyment for language acquisition, particularly when it is done in an enjoyable manner (Cahyati, Parmawati, & Atmawidjaja, 2019).

Young learners' language development is a crucial component of their overall cognitive development, impacting their capacity for thought, communication, and academic success. Early childhood is a sensitive time for language learning, and acquiring the fundamentals of English at this age sets the stage for success in school later on. But developing these abilities can be difficult for young students for a variety of reasons, from a lack of exposure to the language to differences in their cognitive maturation.

It is impossible to exaggerate the importance of creative teaching strategies in overcoming these obstacles. It is possible that traditional methods do not always connect with young minds that are creative and dynamic. It is necessary to use teaching strategies that grab kids' interest and make learning fun in order to get them involved in the language-learning process. One tool that can be used to spread a message is the media. Bland (2019) mentioned that it is examined how teachers might accommodate young learners' language needs by using creative teacher talk and storytelling. It is a message container that the message's user wishes to convey to the message's recipient or destination.

In order for learning to be effective, tangible or first-hand experiences must provide the foundation for more abstract experiences. Learning will be more successful when teaching props are used instead of only teaching tools. For the teaching and learning process to be successful, students should be encouraged to use all of their senses. The stimulus can be absorbed through a number of senses, and the instructor tried to show it. The likelihood that the data will be understandable and remembered increases with the number of sensors used to collect and process the information.

Using instructional media is one of the most effective ways for teachers to impart knowledge to their pupils (Mahnun, 2012). Media can be defined as an instrument that supports students' learning by stimulating their thoughts, emotions, focus, and abilities. Teachers can more effectively present their courses and assist students in achieving their learning objectives by integrating media into the educational process.

Romiszowski (2008) has categorized the two roles of the media. Unlike in the preceding example, where they are used as teaching aids, here the media are only used to enhance or improve the teacher's presentation. When used in this way, as the first category, the media effectively function as one-way transmitters, totally incapable of decoding any messages that the learner might transmit. Second, media are used as instructional resources. They offer customized instruction in both traditional and nontraditional contexts.

As Supriyono (2018) pointed out, employing media is one of the finest strategies to get students' attention. It is crucial for primary kids to have real experiences during the teaching and learning process as well as to increase their enthusiasm in learning.Now introduce puppetry, an imaginative and participatory method that has demonstrated potential to improve language learning.

According to Lepley (2001), kids can utilize puppetry as a medium to express themselves and start learning about the many parts of the English language. A puppet, then, is an inanimate creature that is forced to move in front of an audience by human effort. Puppets can be used to bring stories to life and ignite children's imaginations through imaginative role play. You can use puppets to introduce a story, take on the role of the storyteller, or even become the characters you are narrating about. Beginning storytellers may find it easier to relax and have fun while narrating their story with the help of puppet storytelling.

Hammer also provides appropriate methods for using puppets as teaching media in Nur Insani (2017). These methods include: (1) choosing the lesson to teach; (2) choosing the puppet to use; (3) choosing the prop to use; (4) developing the puppets' characters; (5) practicing teaching the lesson with your puppets in front of no audiences; (6) setting up the stage for your puppet; and (7) actually teaching the lesson with your puppets. As stated here from the previous procedures, the teacher got ready before class. She uses puppets to establish the scene for what will happen to her during the session.

Furthermore, Hasanah (2019) explored the transforming power of puppetry on improving students' speaking skills in her study. By means of a thorough analysis, she emphasized the various benefits of this strategy. Hasanah highlighted that puppets are active tools that help with speaking skills development, vocabulary acquisition, and idea demonstration. Additionally, using puppets creates a learning environment that is palpably more enthusiastic and energetic, which facilitates communication. Crucially, when students interact with puppets, their confidence soars, allowing them to express themselves more freely. Hasanah's research provided instructors with important insights into cutting-edge pedagogical approaches while clarifying the strategic efficacy that comes with using puppets as instructional aids. Overall, Hasanah's research highlights the tremendous effectiveness of using puppets as a stimulus to improve kids' speaking ability, providing a comprehensive strategy that combines language development with self-expression and confidence building.

Especially for beginning, intermediate, and young learners, storytelling is a common teaching and learning technique. Telling stories to students is a great way for teachers to help them develop a wide vocabulary (Riyani, I. (2019). When English is introduced and stories are performed in English using puppets, children will find it fascinating and entertaining. Participants should be able to quickly understand the basics of English with the use of this practice, which will aid in their comprehension of everyday language. The teaching method is the lecture approach, and cards that have been colored and affixed to ice cream sticks are used to tell puppet stories. Alphabets, numbers, and colors comprise the provided basic English curriculum. The telling of stories is the next step. The participants' eagerness for the exercise and quick learning of the material were evident in their responses to questions based on the information provided.

One technique for introducing English to first-graders in primary schools is to use puppets. It is hoped that by using this interesting media, students would become more interested in English and be prepared to compete on a worldwide scale. The goal of this study is to ascertain whether first-graders in elementary schools would be interested in studying English with puppets as the teaching tool.

In order to create a comprehensive learning environment, puppetry combines touch, aural, and visual cues. Puppetry makes stories come to life, which enhances the educational and fun aspects of language learning. Young learners gain confidence, participate actively, and gain a deeper comprehension of linguistic nuances through the dynamic interaction with puppets.

The purpose of this project is to investigate how well puppetry works as a storytelling media for young learners, by focusing on what opinions do the students have about using puppets to present stories?. By examining the ways in which puppetry facilitates children's language learning, the writers want to make significant contributions to the field of early childhood education. This research has possible consequences for educators, curriculum creators, and policymakers. It provides evidence-based techniques to improve early learners' language development. In the end, knowing how puppetry functions in language learning can lead to more interesting and successful teaching strategies, ensuring that young learners not only pick up language skills but also grow to enjoy the English language for the rest of their lives.

Under the heading, "Puppet Magic: Transforming Storytelling into English Excellence for English Young Learners", the writers are thus interested in learning more about the use of puppets based on the explanation provided

2.   METHODS
2.1. Research Design

This study used a qualitative way to answer the question. Qualitative research is described as "a form of systematic empirical inquiry into meaning" by Shank (2002) in Ospina (2004). Since case studies involve descriptions, explanations, and evaluations of actions conducted by people and organizations in society as well as attitudes, ideas, and perceptions, they are regarded as assessed studies.

2.2 Source of Data

This research was carried out in SD Negeri 1 Muhammadiyah Banda Aceh. The school selected for this study was done so for a few reasons. The first reason this study was approved to be conducted there is that this school and the organization where the writers work have a memorandum of understanding. The study session for the second, like the last, was perfectly aligned with the school's vacation time. This research did not interfere with the main class period because the students had just finished their exam. The study was conducted over the course of one month, with participants with the academic year 2022–2023. This length of time made it possible to thoroughly assess the effects of the puppetry intervention.

The writers selected a sample of first-grade elementary school pupils, comprising 20 students, since this particular teaching medium is one of the more visually appealing tools available for use in the classroom. The teaching strategy is a lecture approach utilizing colored cards that have been adhered to ice cream sticks to tell puppet stories. Alphabets, numbers, and colors are the forms of the fundamental English resources that are offered. The exercise continued with story telling utilizing additional puppet cards bearing the title "The bear and two friends" once the basic English content was presented.

2.3 Data Collection

The writers believed that an interview was the best instrument to utilize because this study involved first-grade elementary school students. As a result, questions regarding the role of puppets in tale recounting were posed directly to the pupils. In order to gather information through interviews with young language learners in the first grade, a kid-friendly and interesting methodology must be created. To start, the writers made sure the students were in a familiar and comfortable setting so they could relax, got permission from the teacher or legal guardians and clearly explained the reason for the interview, and asked simple and direct questions. These

interview questions used open-ended questions to elicit creative answers. To improve understanding, the writers used a combination of spoken and nonverbal cues, such as gestures and visual aids.

To make the interview process fun for the kids and encourage a more relaxed and honest dialogue, the interview structure is adaptable to young learners' attention spans and energy levels. Lastly, the ethical issues top priority was done by keeping the child's confidentiality, and comfort level under constant observation during the interview. The purpose of the interview was to get qualitative insights into the thoughts and feelings of the students regarding the puppetry sessions. In order to gauge participation, enjoyment, and the perceived efficacy of the puppetry technique, carefully considered questions were created. Students were invited to share their ideas, which produced insightful qualitative data for a more comprehensive understanding.

3.   RESULTS & DISCUSSION

This study was selected to be implemented in the early elementary school grades in order to gauge the students' excitement about English subjects in general, and the use of puppet as the medium of storytelling to build up the students' basic English words.. Students in the first grade of elementary school are known to be particularly sensitive to the use of media, both audio and visual. Here, media is used in the form of puppets. The puppet serves as a supplemental media for the story being read in this session. English is used to read the stories. It is anticipated that the usage of puppets will pique students' interest in paying attention, paying close attention to the story, and comprehending the plot. The purpose of this study is to evaluate young learners' enthusiasm in the early years of primary school, with an emphasis on first-graders who are recognized for having an increased sensitivity to auditory and visual stimuli. Puppets are used in the study as an additional media in English narrative sessions. As vibrant visual aids, the puppets are used to improve the storytelling experience. The purpose of adding this interactive component is to grab students' attention and motivate them to actively participate in the story, which will improve their understanding of the plot. Using puppets as a medium takes advantage of first-graders' receptiveness to multimodal experiences while acknowledging their developmental stage. The goal is to create a more dynamic and productive learning environment where the use of puppets stimulates students' attention and helps them comprehend the stories that are being told.

When delivering stories, the storyteller reads aloud in English while manipulating puppets. They also stress the need for pupils to grasp vocabulary that they may not be familiar with, such as "forest" and other words. After repeating the words, the speakers asked the pupils if they understood what they meant to say. If not, the speaker initially jogged the students' recollections in order to allow them to apply prior information or word-related expertise. Observing the process of narrating stories using puppets, it appeared that the students were highly engaged in listening to stories and making an effort to comprehend the plot by focusing on the puppets being utilized. In addition, they were able to decipher key terms related to the plot, including the characters, their actions, and the events that transpired. Puppets can be utilized as an engaging learning tool in this study's application for a variety of subjects, including the introduction of basic English. Teachers can also constantly use and produce materials such as these to get pupils more excited in the classroom.

In addition, the writers had to understand how the puppet's use affected the teaching-learning process for the pupils. The writers posed a few questions for the students to respond to in order to gather data. Nineteen students responded positively to the first question on their interest in English, while the lone student said that he disliked the subject because it was one of the harder ones.
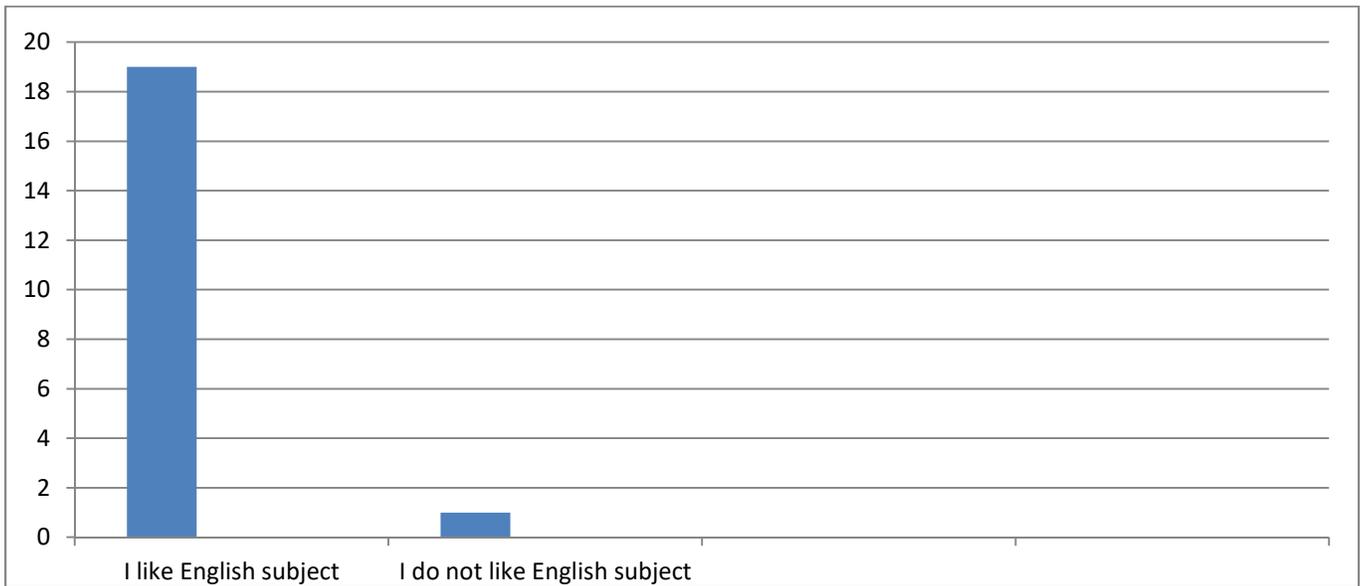
Figure 1. The Students' Perception Towards English Subject

Next, the second and third questions asked the students if they enjoyed hearing the teacher read a story to them and if they paid attention to the teacher's explanation or the story itself. To this, every single student responded positively, saying they truly enjoyed listening to the teacher read a story to them and paying attention to the teacher's explanation or the story if the teacher used the media.
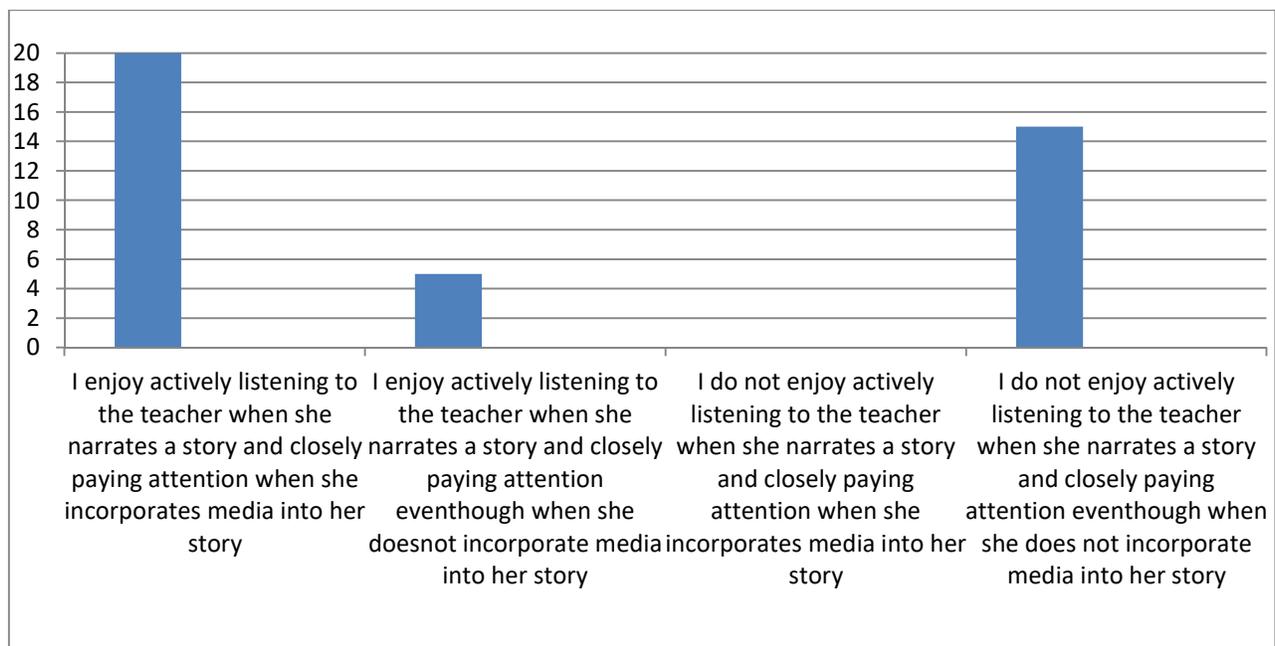

Figure 2. The Students' Perception Towards Their Enthusiasm Listening to The Teacher Telling The Story (Either Using Media or Not)

Furthermore, the students were questioned about whether or not they had heard of the use of puppet in telling stories and. In response, they claimed to have heard of puppet stories. When asked whether they had ever heard puppet stories before, most of the pupils who participated in the interviews also said that they had. The purpose of the inquiry was to assess their familiarity with and awareness of puppet storytelling. The students confirmed their past knowledge of puppet stories in response to the questions, suggesting that they were already familiar with this type of media of storytelling. This acknowledgement highlights the significance and resonance of puppet storytelling within the examined group and supports the idea that students recognize and acknowledge the use of puppet.
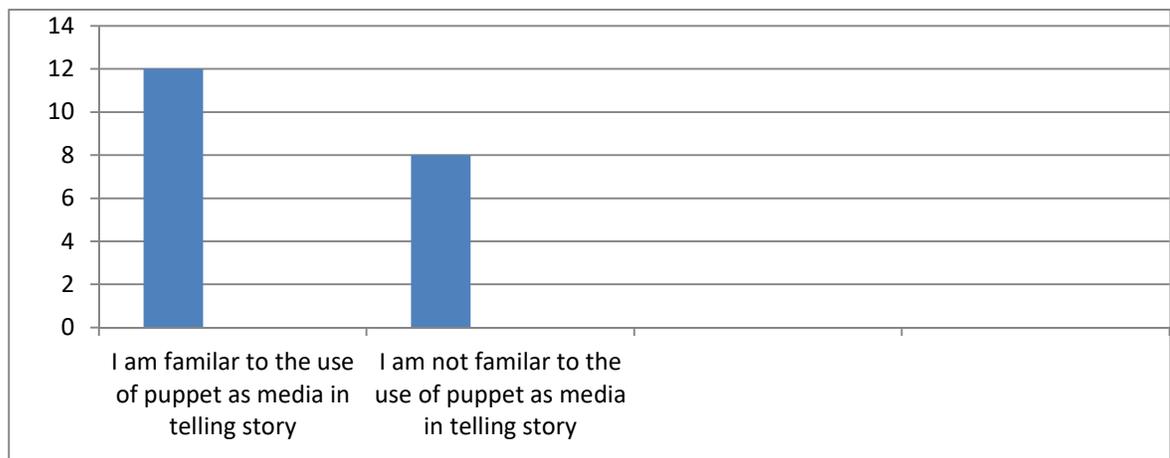

Figure 3. The Students' Perception Regarding Their Level Of Familiarity With The Utilization of Puppets In Retelling Stories.

In addition to the familiarity of the use of puppets in retelling the story, these young learners were questioned whether or not they preferred using puppets as a teaching and learning tool. Responding to this, all of them thought it would be interesting if they could have a puppet as media to help them understand the stories, which piqued their attention. Learning English with puppets is more engaging than listening to a story without any puppets. Therefore, they hope that this type of media can be used as often as possible in the teaching-learning process.
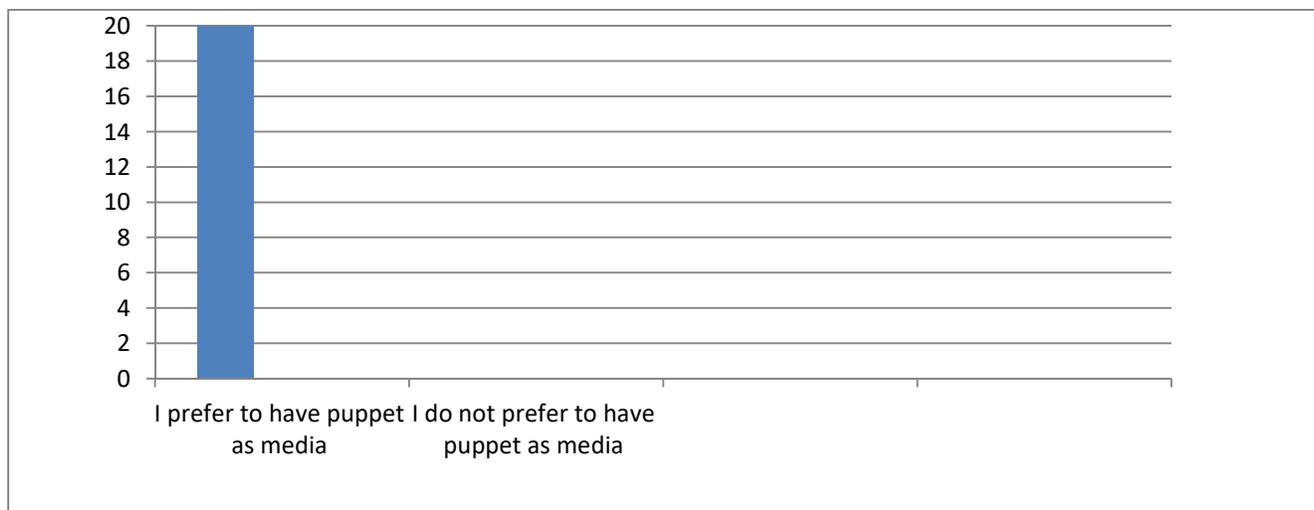
Figure 4. The Students' Perception Regarding Their Preference of Having Puppet As The Media In Teaching -Learning

In order to increase the students' openness to learning, they also advised writers to use diverse media, such as physical objects like toys and visuals like images. This suggestion highlights how important it is to use a range of multimedia materials in order to enhance the appeal and engagement of instructional content. The focus is on using both visual and tactile cues to capture students' attention, as suggested by the use of pictures and tangible objects. The main objective is to create a more conducive learning atmosphere that increases students' enthusiasm to actively engage in their studies while also piqueing their curiosity. The concept essentially promotes a comprehensive approach to pedagogy, acknowledging the role that multisensory experiences have in cultivating a favorable attitude toward learning.
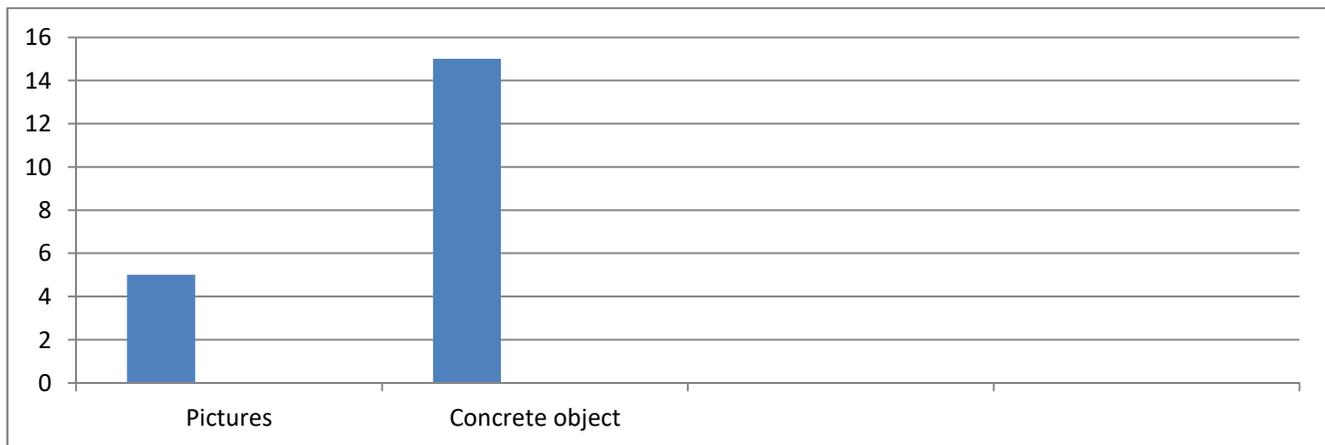

Figure 5. The Students' Perception Regarding Their Preference of Having Diverse Media To Be Used In Teaching-Learning

Every student in this study responded favorably to the teacher's storytelling technique. The students found it beneficial to listen intently to the teacher's explanations, particularly when the media (puppet) were included, in addition to enjoying the experience of hearing the teacher tell a story. Interestingly, a few children had prior experience with puppets as a storytelling tool, demonstrating an interest in a variety of teaching methods. Puppetry has been shown to have a favorable impact on classroom atmosphere, as noted by Kröger and Nupponen (2019). Puppetry is a dynamic and engaging medium that teachers may use to foster inclusivity, empathy, and teamwork in learning environments. Puppets are adaptable instruments that let children engage and communicate with each other, removing obstacles and promoting involvement. Teachers may approach delicate subjects, foster creativity, and improve social-emotional learning with puppetry. Puppets can also foster a sense of warmth and humor in the classroom, which helps create a friendly and encouraging atmosphere where children feel free to express themselves. The study by Kröger and Nupponen emphasizes the value of creative teaching strategies in creating a supportive learning environment where students flourish intellectually, emotionally, and socially.

The young learners' enthusiasm for using puppets as a storytelling tool ran throughout their comments. It piqued their interest in a novel and compelling way, and they thought it improved their comprehension of the stories. The students went one step further and recommended that instructors and authors think about using a range of media to enhance the educational process. In particular, they suggested using tangible items, like toys, and visual aides, like pictures, to speed up the learning of fundamental English.

This encouraging reaction emphasizes how crucial it is to use a variety of cutting-edge teaching strategies in the classroom. Using multimedia components not only makes learning more enjoyable, but it also helps

students grasp the material more thoroughly. The students' counsel to use a variety of media underscores the possibility of developing an engaging and welcoming learning environment that accommodates various learning preferences and styles. Using a variety of storytelling media can prove to be a potent tool in creating an engaging and productive learning environment for kids as educators keep developing with cutting-edge methods.

The study by Muhajidah et al., (2021),explores the critical function that hand puppet storytelling plays in fostering early language development. Their findings shed light on the many advantages this methodology has to offer and provide both parents and educators with insightful information. First and foremost, it becomes clear that using hand puppet storytelling is a powerful way to improve a young learner's speaking abilities. Children are encouraged to express their ideas and thoughts more clearly by interacting with puppet-driven storytelling, which helps them improve their spoken communication abilities. Additionally, this method piques the students curiosity and encourages attentive listening. The students who participate in interactive storytelling sessions become more enthusiastic learners who enthusiastically take in and interact with the stories that are told to them.The study also emphasizes how important hand puppet storytelling is for boosting young learners' self-esteem (as also stated by Arts, 2020). Those who actively engage in storytelling activities strengthen their emotional and social skills overall and feel more confident and empowered to express themselves. The study also emphasizes how effective this approach is at fostering receptive language abilities in kids and enhancing their listening skills. Children who are immersed in story experiences aided by hand puppets become more adept at understanding and deciphering language cues. It is significant to note that hand puppet storytelling is essential for developing young readers. Children who are exposed to storytelling grow to love language and books, which provides a strong basis for their future literacy efforts. Furthermore, this practice facilitates young learners' retelling of stories they have read, which strengthens their comprehension and memory recall. Additionally, it helps kids recognize words and expand their vocabulary, which advances their language development. In the end, Muhajidah et al., (2021 study emphasizes how crucial it is to modify educational activities to fit each young learner's unique learning preferences. Teachers can spark students' interest in learning and support early language development by using a variety of media and captivating techniques like hand puppet storytelling.

4. CONCLUSION

According to the data above, every student found their puppet-based Basic English class to be enjoyable. One method of inspiring young learners learning Basic English is the use of puppets in storytelling. The overall perception of the young learners who were involved in this study is that they enjoyed actively listening to the narrative story and closely paying attention when it incorporated media- puppet - into the story.

Besides the findings, there are some limitations of this study. The first, given the small sample size of 20 students in the study, extrapolating the results to a larger population may be difficult. More thorough insights might be obtained from future studies using larger cohorts. Second, taking into account individual variances in learning preferences and previous experience with puppetry, the research examined the possible influence of extraneous variables on the results. It is important to remember, though, that these variables could cause variances in the outcomes. Third, although the study's duration was adequate to provide preliminary insights, it might not have allowed for a comprehensive assessment of the puppetry intervention's long-term impacts. Long-term effects on language development could be investigated in more detail in longer-term studies. The last, through the use of this comprehensive methodology, the study sought to provide a more nuanced investigation into the potential benefits of puppetry for first-grade students' language development. A well-rounded and rigorous research approach incorporates both quantitative and qualitative data, ethical considerations, and an understanding of limitations.

5. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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