مجلّة العلوم وآفاق المعارف

Journal of Science and Knowledge Horizons
ISSN 2800-1273-EISSN 2830-8379

STORYTELLING : AN EFFECTIVE METHOD TO TEACH ENGLISH LANGUAGE FOR YOUNG LEARNERS

Hanan Abufares Elkhimry

ha.elkhimry@uot.edu.ly ‹University of Tripoli, Libye [1]

Hanan Abufares Elkhimry

Abstract :

This study examines how the storytelling method was used to teach English to young learners in grade three of an elementary school in Tripoli, the capital city of Libya. Two cycles of the study's classroom action research were conducted. Data were gathered through observations in the classroom and conversations with the teachers and pupils. A descriptive analysis method was used to examine the data. According to the research, students tend to learn English with greater enthusiasm when stories are delivered to them. This suggests that telling stories may be considered a cutting-edge teaching strategy. The majority of them report that they comprehend the lesson more clearly and quickly pick up new language. Due to this wonderful chance, the pupils take pleasure in their academic work. According to the teacher, using the storytelling technique makes the lessons more engaging and enjoyable since the pupils are participating. However, given that teachers are still unable to create stories and use them in a way that is consistent with the curriculum, when putting the strategy into reality, the teachers had several issues.

Keywords: *storytelling; Classroom action; Young learners*

Research Background

The teaching of English to young learners has become one of Libyan's most intriguing challenges in recent years, especially for educators. To enhance the learning outcomes of the pupils, certain learning techniques have been put into practice. However, they found the learning outcomes to be unsatisfactory as a result of the students' limited proficiency in using English as a communication medium and their propensity to memorize vocabulary and grammar.

Therefore, it is necessary to employ an alternate teaching method that might enhance children's learning mastery while also helping to foster an enjoyable environment. Because of this, research on primary school English learning methods is essential and advantageous for enhancing English learning outcomes. This study looked into the benefits of storytelling in an effort to increase the output of English language learning in elementary schools while taking into account various facets of language acquisition.

Teaching English to young learners

In general, teaching English to children differs from teaching English to teens or adults since those learner groups have distinct requirements, interests, and environments as well as different cognitive levels. These variations encourage teachers to take into account specific elements of English instruction for young learners that should be kid-friendly and enjoyable. Storytelling is one of the options for enhancing pupils' learning output.

Storytelling

For a very long time, many communities have used storytelling as a method of instruction. One illustration is the oral tradition taught to kids to instill societal ideals for future generations. These benefits and the appeal of storytelling support English language instruction at all levels, particularly for

young learners. The fact that the tale itself establishes significant settings is one of the benefits of storytelling in education. The method's minimal cost is one of its benefits. It's because storytelling doesn't require pricey media or technology. Even the teachers themselves can act as a multipurpose medium by imitating actions and body language to aid in the pupils' comprehension of the narrative.

According to Cameron (2001), storytelling is an oral activity that is intended to be both listened to and engaged in. Because it is a genuine and natural behavior in communication, intense eye contact between the teacher and the learnrs, in this example between the teacher as a storyteller and pupils as the listeners, is a unique advantage in storytelling.

The story that will be utilized should be well-known to the teachers and attractive to them as well so that they would like reading it and have no difficulty doing so (Wright, 2003). In order for them to be familiar with the vocabulary and like the stories because of the enjoyment and challenge they offer, the story that will be

utilized in language acquisition should be relevant to their reality (Morgan and Rinvolucri, 1983). Additionally, the tale must be entertaining and pertinent for the pupils to learn English (Ellis, 1991 & Cameron, 2001).

In addition to the aforementioned criteria, Carter & Long's criterion can also be utilized to select the tale (1991). They are: first, a language model based on vocabulary and grammar utilized in the tale; second a culture model based on daily life in the target language; and third a self-development model centered on psychology and social issues.Inexpensive tool that has the ability to increase students' motivation in learning English is storytelling. The teacher and students engage in meaningful and natural conversation. Because language is provided contextually, there are various opportunities to employ vocabulary and sentence structures in the tale to benefit in learning.

In contrast, in order to avoid limiting pupils' ability to express themselves and experience the wonder for themselves, the originality and magic that are the

essence of a story should never be compromised by an overabundance of explanations of sentence patterns.

Research Method

The research was conducted over the period of four meetings. The research participants completed a pre-test before beginning the storytelling method. This assessment of the pupils' current English competence was conducted. Two cycles of treatments were administered, and the cycles were organized using the storytelling method. A informal discussion with the teacher and pupils tried to establish whether using stories to teach English to young learners is a worthwhile option. The data was analyzed using a descriptive approach.

Research Findings

According to the pre-test results, most students have a medium level of English proficiency and a strong vocabulary, which will encourage their active engagement in class activities.

The results of the data analysis of the classroom observations indicate that the storytelling approach is effective in enhancing the learning outcomes of young English language learners. There are various signs that support the statements:

First, students learn languages more easily when storytelling is utilized as a teaching technique. Also, students are more engaged in the story's context and linguistic usage when storytelling is used as a teaching method. Other elements, such

as, emotion, mimicry, and body language, can help the children acquire the vocabulary used in the tale. Body motions can also be used as warm-up exercises or to prepare students for the next learning activities. While the tale is being read, having the pupils imitate, move, or make sounds can help them become more engaged in the narrative and practice their language skills. Another study demonstrates that making use of the narrative approach may

make English lessons more vibrant and engaging. The story was being enthusiastically heard and enjoyed by all of the pupils. Because they can retell the tale and respond to questions about characters, emotions, and sentiments, etc., some of the teacher's questions concerning the assigned reading are engaging and difficult for the students.

By choosing specific roles in the story, such becoming one of the animals, storytelling-based learning seems to provide a special environment for the students to develop their imagination and join the topic they are talking about. Additionally, this enables pupils to enjoy emulating the animal's motions and understanding the characteristics of the animal and the words used in the tale. Additionally, evidence gathered from the observation of the classroom demonstrates that all pupils were enjoying and having a good time during an engaging class activity.

Data from an informal teacher discussion indicate that, in general, teachers believe that storytelling is an alternate method of instruction that can be developed to fit the requirements of the students for the following reasons: Storytelling offers students ample opportunities to study the language through verbal and nonverbal actions, and it is particularly engaging for learners when they are contextually involved in the story. The story's facial expressions, impersonations, and body language may help the pupils understand the story's context.

Additionally, the pupils were given the opportunity to display their language skills in front of the class in the storytelling-based classroom. The students' interest might be piqued by colorful and captivating media that is packed with narrative so

that they can use the media when they play specific parts in the story. Therefore, it appears that the students choose storytelling activities to make English learning fun.

In the meanwhile, there are various challenges that teachers have when incorporating the storytelling method into their teaching, including:

First, a large class size makes it difficult for the teacher to maintain order in the classroom. The students appear to be hesitant to pay attention and follow the teachers' instructions.

Second, the diversity of the pupils is another issue because the teacher needs to be aware of their unique characteristics.

Third, the teachers must devote time to planning the lesson plan, the media, and the classroom activities.

Fourth, the weekly time allotment is just 40 minutes. It is not enough to completely execute the storytelling technique based on learning objectives. Fifth the number of stories available on the market is insufficient for teaching, and they have difficulties inventing new ones. The teacher has not used the internet as a source of teaching materials.

The teacher offered the following suggestions to address the issues raised during the discussion:

1. To make the class manageable, the teacher should divide it into two smaller groups and engage helpers from other teachers.

2. More time should be allotted for the English lesson. As a result, the instructor will have adequate time to explain the story.

3. Stakeholders must participate more actively in educational activities and provide the necessary learning environments.

4. Teachers should have access to training courses, particularly those that deal with best practices for teaching English to young learners, in an effort to increase their teaching proficiency and learn more about English learning and teaching innovation.

In contrast, the results of the data analysis from the students' informal discussion   shows that they enjoy learning through a variety of exciting activities for the following reasons:

1. The story the teacher read to the class was well accepted by the pupils.

2. The pupils like acting out and imitating the actions in the story.

3. The pupils like acting out and imitating the actions in the story. 3) They are also pleased by the teacher's utilization of media and realia to make it simpler for them to learn and comprehend the story.

4. They are accustomed to and like acting out scenarios and performing roles. The interview also suggests that pupils require extra time in order to finish learning exercises and storytelling.

Conclusion

The analysis shows that using stories to teach English in primary schools can be more effective than other methods. The end consequence of the learning demonstrates that pupils have a greater command of language. Their enthusiasm in studying is rising as well.

The use of stories in the classroom would encourage students to focus more on the lesson. The environment in the classroom was more quiet, and the pupils felt more at ease learning there. The engaging and participatory nature of the storytelling method benefits in increasing pupils' motivation. Learners can express themselves

through storytelling utilizing the language that comes from their different inventions. Also, the usage of the language gives them experience.

While implementing the technique, teachers encountered a number of challenges, including large class sizes, limited facilities and resources, limited support

from stakeholders, and constrained meeting time. Co-teachers, better resources and facilities, training teachers to increase their competency, and networking with ETYL professors are some ways to overcome these challenges.

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