



AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF ARMENIA
ՀԱՅԱՍՏԱՆԻ ԱՄԵՐԻԿԱՆ ՀԱՄԱԼՍԱՐԱՆ

AUA is a U.S. accredited graduate institution affiliated with the University of California

Department of English Programs

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Degree of Master of Arts in Teaching English as a Foreign Language
(TEFL)

*The Implementation of Storytelling and its
Effect in Students' Oral Proficiency in an
Armenian setting*

Thesis Supervisor: Irshat Madyarov, PhD

Thesis Reader: Melissa Brown

Statistics Consultant: Alexan Simonyan, PhD

by: Niery Nikoghosian

Yerevan, Armenia

2011

American University of Armenia

We hereby approve that this thesis

by

Niery Nikoghosian

***The Implementation of Storytelling and its
Effect in Students' Oral Proficiency in an
Armenian setting***

be accepted in partial fulfillment for the requirements of the degree of

M. A. in TEFL

Committee on the Thesis

Supervisor: Irshat Madyarov, PhD

Reader: Melissa Brown, MA

Catherine Buon, PhD

**Associate Dean, Department of English Programs at
American University of Armenia**

Yerevan, Armenia

2011

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would never have been able to finish my master's thesis without the guidance of my professors, help from friends, and support from my family. I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. Irshat Madyarov, for his excellent guidance, caring, and patience. I would like to thank Mrs. Brown, who patiently corrected my writing and supported my research. I would like to thank Angela Balasanyan, who as a good friend was always willing to help and give her best suggestions. Many thanks to Hasmik Hakobyan, Anna Ghazaryan and Armine Ghazaryan for helping me evaluating the samples, my research would not have been possible without their help. I would also like to thank my parents, and my sister. They were always supporting me and encouraging me with their best wishes.

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| Introduction | 7 |
| Research Questions: | 8 |
| Research Hypotheses: | 8 |
| Literature review | 9 |
| What is storytelling? | 9 |
| Selection of stories: | 10 |
| Methodology..... | 14 |
| Participants and Setting | 14 |
| Materials | 15 |
| Instrumentation | 16 |
| Research design | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| Tests..... | 16 |
| Pre-test design..... | 16 |
| Post -test design | 17 |
| Treatment..... | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| Chapter Four: Results and Discussions..... | 19 |
| Calibration | 17 |
| Data description | 19 |
| Comparing between groups | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| Comparing within the groups..... | 20 |
| Reliability | 20 |
| Students questionnaire | 21 |
| Analysis of Qualitative Data..... | 22 |
| Results of the study..... | 22 |
| Conclusion | 23 |
| Summary of the research findings, limitations and suggestions | 23 |
| Appendices | 27 |

ABSTRACT

This study investigated the effects of practice in retelling stories on the improvement of students' oral proficiency. The subjects in this study were 30 students (9-15 age range) of English language courses of Experimental English Classes in American University of Armenia. Students were beginner language learners. At each of the 17 sessions, the subjects listened to the teacher telling a story and then they retold the story. The achievement was measured with two oral tests: before the treatment and after the treatment.

The results of this study did not support the hypothesis that by storytelling, students' oral proficiency will be developed. The findings of this study show that the students of the experimental group did not demonstrate improvement, which means the storytelling did not improve the students' oral proficiency.

Introduction

This research intends to study the role of storytelling in an EFL classroom. There are many reasons why stories are chosen as a tool for teaching language in this study; first they help in stimulating children's imagination and underrating, they have always an important role in children's growth (Koki, 1998). They can also attract the learners' attention and promote communication (Cooter, 1991). The excitement and drama of stories can hold students' attention (Cooter, 1998) and this can be a great alternative for classroom management and control, especially in young learners' classes.

Stories have the potential of teaching vocabulary and grammar. According to Wright (1995) stories which rely so much on words, offer a major and constant source of language experience for children. The follow-up exercises provide opportunity to work on learners' oral skills as well as reading and writing (Colon- Villa, 1997). These exercises also might encourage learners' imaginative thinking and their creativity.

According to Wright (1995), storytelling is relating a tale to one or more listeners through voice and gesture and it is not the same as reading a story aloud or reciting from memory. Storytelling creates mental images for both listener and teller. Stories can create an opportunity for introducing the target culture to the learners (Koki, 1998).

Several activities can be conducted for storytelling such as telling a story, hand out pictures or cards with short sentences and having students sequence the events, having students write stories from spelling or new vocabulary lists, using storytelling to convey facts and concepts and many other activities (Colon- Villa, 1997).

This research intended to examine the effects of storytelling in an EFL setting. In this study, teacher is the storyteller and students retell the stories and a tool for developing oral communication in English.

Research Question:

Is there a relationship between the implementation of storytelling and students' achievement in language learning and oral proficiency in an Armenian setting?

Research Hypotheses:

There is no relationship between the Implementation of Storytelling and its Effect in Students' Oral Proficiency in an Armenian setting; storytelling does not contribute to learners' oral proficiency development.

Literature review

In this part, a short definition and why it can be helpful as a teaching tool will be discussed. Three previously conducted similar researches will also be presented.

The advantages of storytelling

According to Wight (1997), there is a wide view of what stories are. However, storytelling has been used as a strong tool for communication (Koch, 1998). Stories are based on words, and they give meaning to words (Wight, 1997).

Besides, the rich vocabulary and grammatical contexts, stories are interesting and storytelling can create interest in children to learn, they can also develop more complicated language structures (Bower 1976; Chomsky 1972; Cohen 1968; Durkin 1966). Children can learn these structures without knowing that they are learning, since they are busy understanding and enjoying it.

In short, it might be said that storytelling is a linguistic, as well as life experience; the story shows the children their surrounding world and help them, create a reality of its won (Malikina, 2010). The Russian psychologist Zaporozhets pointed out that storytelling gives a child a play-like experience. He believes that the child is able to mentally participate in the story events and identify with the characters (Malikina, 2010).

However, one instructional strategy that can be used for language learning is retelling the stories. Retelling the stories involves students in the verbal reconstruction of text (Gambrell, 2009). Through retelling the listener engages even more in events and the story. Active

participation in literary experiences enhances the development of comprehension, oral language, and a sense of story structure (Blank & Sheldon 1971; Bower 1976). For example, one research done in 1975 by Brow, suggests that children's story comprehension is facilitated when they are involved actively in the reconstruction of a story (Morrow, 1985). Amato & Ziegler (1973) also suggest that retelling stories is an active procedure that can help comprehending the concept and structure of a story and develop oral language. It allows children to play a large and active role in reconstructing stories and there is an interaction between the teller and the listener.

Selection of stories

It is very important to select the right stories in the classroom. Tough fairy tells are fascinating, they might have old and difficult language. Teachers can use tales with natural language and a traditional story grammar or rhetorical structure to make the story predictable and easy to comprehend (Malikina, 2010). Another important factor for selecting stories is considering the age of the child and selecting the right story appropriate for that age. Age determine the number of story elements children can include when retelling the story. For instance, children aged 4-6 include settings, beginnings, and outcomes, older children (at the beginner level) will also include reactions, attempts, and endings (McConaughy, 1980).

Storyteller is also important when implementing stories in the classroom. The storyteller's tone of voice, face and body gestures and the way he or she communicates with the students is significant. According to Pedersen (1995), the art of storytelling lies within the storyteller and a story might be altered by the storyteller's choice of setting and detail, and the rapport established with the audience. The voice, face, and hands of the storyteller are his tools in order to create a product which is a shared human experience based on words and imagination. Therefore,

storytelling is an interactive process that facilitates imagination, creative thinking, language abilities, and cooperative learning (Palmer, Harshbarger & Koch, 2001).

storytelling, ‘that most ancient and compelling of human activities’, as a favorable ‘communicative’ alternative to traditional language teaching methods (Morgan and Rinvoluceri, 1983). Stories have a wide range of communicative situations and various social situations and can offer this opportunity to the learners to practice suitable language functions and the corresponding language structures (Ilieva, 2007). Stories engage learners and facilitate learning through ‘unconscious’ processes. Elley (1991) also reports that children appear to learn the language incidentally. Young learners employ different ways of negotiating meaning while reading or listening to the stories to understand the story (Sneddon, 2008).

Storytelling in research

Several studies suggest that retelling significantly improves kindergarten children's comprehension, sense of story structure, and oral proficiency (Morrow, 1984, 1985, 1986; Pellegrini & Galda, 1982; Zimiles & Kuhns, 1976). The assumption among researchers is that retelling indicates something about the reader's or listener's assimilation and reconstruction of information and, therefore, reflects comprehension (Gambrell, 2009).

One study, conducted by Pellegrini and Galda (1982) on story reconstruction and comprehension, suggests when role playing stories, active involvement and peer interaction contributed to the children's increased performance (Morrow, 1985). In another study Pellegrini (1984) suggests that the thematic-fantasy play may be considered to be an effective in facilitating the comprehension.

Another research was conducted in 1985. The participants were kindergarten children. There were two groups (experimental and control), each comprised of 15 children. The format for listening to stories was the same for the experimental and control children. A story was read to the class during the regular story time and some pictures were shown to the children meanwhile.

After the story was told, the control children were asked to draw a picture about the story. The children in the experimental group retold the story on a one-to-one basis to the teacher (or researcher). After each session, a test was administered. It was a one-to-one, question-and-answer test. Students were supposed to answer them after listening to a story. The test was held half hour later. Quantitative data was collected and analyzed and the results of study indicated some improvement for the experimental group over the control. The significant difference was for the total comprehension score.

According to Lesley Mandel Morrow (1985), frequent practice in retelling might have a noticeable effect on comprehension (Morrow, 1985).

Blank and Sheldon (1971) has also done a similar research, the results show that the experimental group which had the opportunity to retell the stories developed a better semantic recall and syntactic complexity in the language, compared to a control group that did not have the opportunity to repeat. The subjects were children aged 4-6.

On the other hand Freedman and Owings (1978) found children with greater language ability remembered more from stories than children whose language ability was not as well developed.

The findings of another study done by Garner (1987) shows that students' retelling of silently read discourse can improve comprehension and later recall of what been read. Specifically, these studies suggest that retelling induces greater elaboration and cognitive structuring of information that has been read. Retelling has frequently been used as an assessment.

Methodology

This chapter describes the process of conducting the current research which attempted to explore students' attitude towards storytelling, and to find out if there is an effect of implementing this technique in an Armenian setting in comparison with the traditional method. This chapter consists of three sections: *participants, setting, instrumentation, procedure and analysis.*

Research Design

Qualitative and quantitative methods were used in this research. The quantitative method was analyzing the two tests, which were taken before after the treatment. The tests were oral tests. The test taker was the rater and there were co-raters. The answers were rated according to a rubric (see appendix I).

The quantitative part was comprised of observations (other teachers) and teacher's observations. In addition to that a questionnaire was given to the students of the experimental group to identify their opinion and reactions to the treatment (storytelling).

Participants and Setting

The participants for the study were 30 students studying at the American University of Armenia (AUA) in the Experimental English Classes (EEC). EEC classes are organized by one of the departments of AUA, the Department of English Programs (DEP). The EEC courses are organized for students' age ranging from 5-17 of different levels. The purpose of the courses is to familiarize students with the communicative language teaching. The courses cover all the

skills of language which is a motivating factor for the people to attend. Besides, the classes are conducted with appropriate facilities such as equipments or materials which serve as stimuli for the students' enhancement of the learning. Before taking the course, each student has to take a proficiency test in order for the authorities to decide the level of the course he or she is to take. At the end of each term, each student takes a final test that certifies his or her achievement. One term of the course lasts 10 weeks. Each week two sessions are conducted lasting one hour. Each class consists of approximately 15-20 students of different ages but the same level.

The average age of participants for this study was 10 from 9-12. There was no randomized placement of students and there were 20 boys and 10 girls in groups. The level of participants is beginner. The classes consist of both males and females. Most of the students have been exposed to English for at least 1 year. Learners are students at Armenian schools. The classes are held mostly in the morning because the classes were held during summer and the students have time to participate in English classes.

Materials

The textbook used for the class for this research was: English Live: A communicative Course for Children: Book8 (Text & workbook). The book is consisted of 8 lessons. It aims at developing learners' communicative ability at the survival level. There is a workbook as a supplementary material. Besides the textbook and the workbook, pictures, flash cards, comic strips, and puppets were utilized for teaching and telling the stories.

Instrumentation

The data for the study were collected through the following instruments:

- The quantitative data were collected through:
 - ✓ A pre test (see appendix IV)
 - ✓ A post test (see appendix V)
- The qualitative data were collected through:
 - ✓ Field notes (see appendix II)
 - ✓ Observer's notes (see appendix III)
 - ✓ Questionnaire

Tests

A Pre test and a post test were utilized to measure the students before and after oral proficiency. The tests were interviews, questions about pictures. The last part was a comic strip, the test taker told the story showing the picture and then the children were supposed to retell the story, by watching the comics as a help for remembering. Before the pre test was administered, it was tested on three volunteer children. After the improvements were done, it administered for the students.

The improvements concerning the test (piloting) showed that some of the pictures must be modified.

Pre-test design

Pre-test was an interview consisted of two parts, question according to pictures and a story which was told by the teacher upon a cartoon stream. Questions were previously written and the test was piloted on three children beforehand. The content was based on what the student

had learned in the previously studied three books (the students were transferred to the next level and they had already started English Live 5, 6 and 7). All the vocabulary and grammar was taken from what they had learned as well as some new structures (how many...? what happens....?) which were from the new book they were going to study on that semester.

Post -test design

The post test was designed according to the same procedures, except that the content was different (the vocabulary, questions and the story was different). Each group (experimental and control) students took the test on one day. The test was recorded.

Calibration

One of the toughest issues in grading the tests is making sure that ratings are fair. To solve this unfairness problem, calibration was applied as part of the rating process. Calibration tried to make sure that the teacher and the co-rater apply similar standards in assessing the performance of the students. It helped drive the truth into the process.

In order to do that, 6 tests were chosen (from each pre-test and post-test) randomly. They were rated and categorized as three groups of weak, medium and strong test-takers. There were two co-raters, plus the teacher-rater who rated both pre-test and post-test with the co-raters. Co-raters were became familiar with the tasks on the test, they were guided on scoring the tasks and during the grading process, the teacher-rater and the co-raters were calibrated themselves by stopping the process of grading and listening to the pre-set three categories of different levels (weak, medium, strong). This can give the rater a perspective to rate the interviews. The rater returned to the sample levels, after every three or four ratings in order to check the fairness of the ratings.

Throughout the process of grading, for some cases the difference of the grade given by the teacher and the co-rater was more than 1 point. In this case, the other co-rater came to the help. That particular test was reviewed and three raters have come to agreement on the appropriate rating for that test-taker.

It should be indicated that the interviews were taken at the American University of Armenia. The interviews were recorded and then rated.

The interviews were grade according to a 1-4 scale analytical rubric (See Appendix I). The rubric had four components: Communicative success, pronunciation and fluency, vocabulary and grammar.

Treatment

The students in both classes (control and experimental) was at the beginner level and the book according to which they used to be taught was English live 8. The lesson plan was the same for both groups except the last 15 minutes that the experimental group received the treatment (or storytelling) and the control group was taught another extra material. The content of these extra materials for control group was the same as the content the teacher was trying to teach through stories. For instance, in one lesson it was a game about animals and the story for the experimental group was a story about animals. In another lesson, which was about colors, the lesson was taught through flashcards for the control group and for the experimental group a story about a chameleon was told (see appendix VI).

The teacher in the classroom can be a story teller and a helper (Wright, 1997). For the experimental group once the teacher told the story the students listened and then they had to

retell the story. They had given a cartoon stream to follow the story when the teacher was recounting and it was also a help to remind them the parts of the story when they were retelling.

The two groups involved in the research used the same textbooks and had English classes for the same amount of time (1 hour per session, for 10 weeks). The research lasted for 10 weeks, starting from April 1 to June 16, 2010. Classes were conducted twice a week for one hour each (a total of 14 hours).

When the term starts, one group will be taught through storytelling while other group will not be. Nevertheless, storytelling is a complementary alternative for the first group and it will not be applied as the only means for instruction. It should be mentioned that according to interviews done with EEC teachers who have the experience of teaching with the English Live book (this is the textbook which is used in EEC classes), several supplementary materials are also used alongside the book. In the research both classes will have the same schedule for teaching the lesson in the book and both classes will get the same amount of time for extra material, in the case of the experimental group the stories.

Chapter Four: Results and Discussions

Data description

Research Question:

Is there a relationship between the implementation of storytelling and students' achievement in language learning and oral proficiency in an Armenian setting?

Research Hypotheses:

There is no relationship between the Implementation of Storytelling and its Effect in Students' Oral Proficiency in an Armenian setting; storytelling does not contribute to learners' oral proficiency development.

Comparing within the groups

Since the sample sizes are small, we apply non-parametric, k related samples Friedman tests instead of parametric Repeated Measures ANOVA.

Friedman test is comparing mean ranks of four sets of scores; teacher pre-test, co-rater pre-test, teacher post-test and co-rater post-test. The first Friedman test is related to the control group. For this Friedman test the Chi-square test statistic value is equal to 1.774 and the probability $p=0.621$ which is more than 0.05. This means that there is no significant difference between mean ranks of those four sets of scores.

Similarly, for the experimental group, the Friedman Chi-square test statistic is equal to 0.383 and the probability $p= 0.944$ which is not less than 0.05. Therefore, there is no significant difference between mean ranks of these four sets of scores.

Table I- Friedman Test within the group comparison

| | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Minimum | Maximum | Percentiles | | |
|----------|----|--------|----------------|---------|---------|-------------|---------------|--------|
| | | | | | | 25th | 50th (Median) | 75th |
| posttest | 15 | 2.3438 | .61661 | 1.00 | 3.12 | 2.0312 | 2.5625 | 2.8750 |
| pretest | 15 | 2.1016 | .97491 | .25 | 3.12 | 1.0625 | 2.3750 | 2.9688 |

Table II- Ranks

| | Mean Rank |
|----------|-----------|
| posttest | 1.50 |
| pretest | 1.50 |

Table III- Test Statistics

| | |
|-------------|-------|
| N | 15 |
| Chi-Square | 1.774 |
| df | 1 |
| Asymp. Sig. | 0.621 |

| | |
|-------------|-------|
| N | 15 |
| Chi-Square | 0.383 |
| df | 1 |
| Asymp. Sig. | 0.944 |

Students questionnaire

A questionnaire has been given to the students of the experimental group, to spot their overall impression about the stories. The students prefer the teacher tell those stories and they do not prefer the tasks that require them to make or recreate the stories. However, the overall impression was positive about the storytelling.

The questionnaire was open-ended and had three questions:

1. Do you like the stories?
2. Do you like to listen to your teacher telling the stories?
3. Do you like retelling the stories?

All students responded that they liked the stories, however most students answered the last question negatively, it means they only like to listen to stories telling by their teacher and they do not like to retell the stories. This might be an indication of them having difficulty speaking English. They might be stronger in listening and comprehending than speaking.

Analysis of Qualitative Data

Results of the study (Qualitative)

The null hypothesis was not rejected. There were improvements in neither group, meaning that the treatment (story telling) did not improve the students' oral proficiency. According to the teacher observations (See Appendix II) the control group showed a more organized and disciplined attitude toward the lessons. The students were more competitive to learn more and to perform better and they were studying more serious. On the other hand the experimental group became more and more indifferent toward studying throughout the semester. The class was hard to control since the students were noisy and not organized. This was recorded by one observer, observing both groups several times.

Experimental groups' non organized behavior might be as a result of a not serious and playful ambiance that the stories conveyed. The teacher conducted a questionnaire at the end of the semester asking the students opinions about the stories. The students seemed to like the stories but they like the teacher telling them but not them retelling. When the teacher, noticed the indifferent behavior of the experimental group at the middle of the semester, tried the same story in the control group. This was a new experience for them and they showed a more appropriate performance towards the story.

The other factor on not getting the desired result, that is student's improvement in oral production, was hazard. The students of the experimental group were turbulent and talkative but the control group students were more orderly.

The other problem might be the small sample size and the short period of time dedicated to research that prevent attaining more clear results.

Conclusion

Summary of the research findings, limitations and suggestions:

According to the results, there was progress in neither group. Therefore, there is no relationship between the implementation of the storytelling and the students' oral proficiency development. On the other hand, the qualitative results revealed that the students of control group showed more discipline towards learning than the experimental group. This might be concluded that the stories created an effect that made the students (of the experimental group) did not take the lessons seriously, and do not show an organized approach towards learning. The other problem was managing to ask all students retell the story (or part of the story). This did not happen every time since the session was limited time-wise.

Limitations of the Study

One of the limitations of the study was the sample size. The size of the sample was small and the study time was also limited, this might have deteriorated the results of the study from what it was expected.

In addition to that, the teacher attitude and the way of presenting the stories might also been a problem on changing the results. The fact that the stories were not piloted before being told in the class might also be a hinder, particularly the stories invited by the teacher. Since in the research two types of stories were used, old stories and the ones made by the teacher.

Further Research Suggestion

Taking into account the above-mentioned limitations, further research can be conducted in a longer period of study time and with a larger sample. However, in order to manage the class discipline the teacher may have an assistant to help control the class organization. Besides, the stories can be told not every session but every other session or less frequently, so that it does not lose its freshness and would not become an ordinary ritual in the class.

References

- Amato, A. R., Emans, R., & Ziegler, E. (1973). The effectiveness of creative dramatics and Blank & Sheldon 1971; Bower 1976
- Blank and Sheldon (1971)
- Cameron, L. (2001). *Teaching Languages to Young Learners*. NY: Cambridge University Press
- Colon-Vila, L. (1997). Storytelling in an ESL Classroom. http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa3666/is_199702/ai_n8755771/ (Retrieved 06/07/2011)
- Cooter, R. B. (1991). Storytelling in the language arts classroom. *Reading Research and Instruction*, Cited in Black, Sh (2005), *Adventures With Words: Storytelling As Language Experience for Gifted Learners*. http://www.prufrock.com/client/client_pages/GCT_Readers/Language_Arts/Ch._8/Language_Experience_for_Gifted_Children.cfm (Retrieved 12/05/2011)
- Egan, K. (1986). *Teaching Story Telling: An Alternative Approach to Teaching and Curriculum in the Elementary School*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press
- Elley, W. (1989). *Vocabulary Acquisition form listening to Stories*. *Reading Research Quarterly*, XXIV, 2, 174-187.
- Elley, W. B. (1991). "Acquiring literacy in a second language: The effect of book-based programs." *Language Learning* http://www.primarylanguages.org.uk/policy_research/research_and_statistics/spotlight_on/storytelling.aspx (Retrieved 09/09/2011)
- Freedman and Owings (1978)
- Gambrell, L.B., Koskinen, P.S. and Kapinus, B.A. (1991) "Retelling and the Reading Comprehension of Proficient and Less-Proficient Readers" *The Journal of Educational Research*. Vol. 84, No. 6 (Jul. - Aug., 1991), pp. 356-362 (article consists of 7 pages) Published by: Taylor & Francis, Ltd.

Ilieva, Zhivka (2007), Stories in Spoken Communication Skills Development: Teachign English to Young.<http://www.tesolfrance.org/Documents/Colloque07/Ilieva.pdf> (Retreived 10/08/2011)

Jeffrey, D. (2003). *Participation Points System to Encourage Classroom Communication* .The Internet TESL Journal, Vol. IX, No. 8, August 2003 <http://iteslj.org/> (retrieved 10/12/09)

Levi- Straus, C. (1966). *The Savage Mind: (la pensee sauvage)*.Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain

Malikina,N. (1995). Storytelling in Early Language Teaching. Vol 33 No 1, January - March 1995 Page 38 <http://exchanges.state.gov/> (Retrived 10/04/2011)

McConaughy, 1980).

Morgan, M. andRinvoluceri, M. (1983). Once upon a time: Using stories in the language classroom. New York: Cambridge University Press.http://www.primarylanguages.org.uk/policy_research/research_and_statistics/spotlight_on/storytelling.aspx (Retrieved 09/09/2011)

Morrow, L. M (1985). Retelling Stories: "A Strategy for Improving Young Children's Comprehension, Concept of Story Structure, and Oral Language Complexity".*The Elementary School Journal*. Vol. 85, No. 5 (May, 1985), pp. 646-661 . Published by: The University of Chicago Press

Palmer, B. C., Harshbarger, S.J. and Koch, C.A. (2001), "Storytelling as a Constructivist Model for Developing Language and Literacy"*JOURNAL OF POETRY THERAPY Volume 14, Number 4, 199-212, DOI: 10.1023/A:1017541527998.*

Patricia S. Koskinen, Linda B. Gambrell, Barbara A. Kapinus and Betty S. Heathington (1988), "Retelling: A Strategy for Enhancing Students' Reading Comprehension". *The Reading Teacher*:Vol. 41, No. 9 (May, 1988), pp. 892-896 . Published by: International Reading Association.

Pedersen, E. M. (1995). *Storytelling and the Art of Teaching.* <http://exchanges.state.gov/englishteaching/forum/archives/1995/docs/95-33-1-b.pdf> (Retreived 08/09/2011)

Schouten-van Parreren, C. (1992). *Individual Differences in Vocabulary Acquisition: A Qualitative Experiment in the First Phase of Secondary Education*. London: McMillan

Shew Baw, S. (2009). *Resurrecting Students Interest in the English Language Classroom*. Essential Teacher volume 6, issues 3-4, October 2009

Sneddon, R. (2008). 'Young Children Learning to Read with Dual Language Books. *English Teaching: Practice and Critique* .http://www.primarylanguages.org.uk/policy_research/research_and_statistics/spotlight_on/storytelling.aspx (Retrieved 09/09/2011)

storytelling in a library setting. *Journal of Educational Research*.

The Effects of Thematic-Fantasy Play Training on the Development of Children's Story Comprehension. *American Educational Research Journal* Fall 1982, Vol. 19, No. 3, Pp. 443-45

Vale, D. & Feunteun, A. (1995). *Teaching Children English: A Training Course form Teachers of English to Children*. NY: Cambridge University Press

Wright, A. (1995). *Storytelling with Children*. NY: Oxford University Press

Wright, A. (1995). *YOU are a story absorber and a story teller* www.teachers.com (Retreived 08/06/2011)

Appendices

Appendix I- Analytic rubric for oral test

Communicative Success (Would a listener accustomed to the speech of learners understand?)

| | |
|---|--|
| 4 | Understand the entire message. |
| 3 | Understand the general message and most of the details. |
| 2 | Understand general message, but only some of the details. |
| 1 | Have some idea of the general message, but would not be sure to have understood. |
| 0 | Do not understand what the speaker is trying to say. |

Pronunciation & Fluency

| | |
|---|---|
| 4 | Speech is smooth; speaker is comfortable and confident in use of the language. No mispronunciation that would interfere with comprehension by a sympathetic native speaker. |
| 3 | Speech is occasionally hesitant; some rephrasing. Mispronunciation causing misunderstanding occurs only rarely. |
| 2 | Speech is hesitant (e.g. frequent rephrasing, sentences left unfinished, long pauses). Several misunderstandings arise from mispronunciation of words or errors in intonation. |
| 1 | Speech hesitant and choppy; conversation is almost impossible. Mispronunciation and inaccurate stress make understanding difficult. Has to repeat a lot to be understood; OR not enough speech to evaluate. |
| 0 | Speech limited to isolated words, or mispronunciation makes comprehension impossible. |

Vocabulary

| | |
|---|---|
| 4 | Shows control of a wide range of the vocabulary taught in class and always uses this vocabulary appropriately. |
| 3 | Shows control of an adequate range of the vocabulary taught in class and most often uses this vocabulary appropriately. |
| 2 | Some control of new vocabulary, but relies on fixed expressions/basic vocabulary or uses vocabulary inappropriately. |
| 1 | Shows very limited control of the vocabulary taught, making discussion of related topics extremely difficult; OR not enough speech to evaluate. |
| 0 | Shows no command of the vocabulary taught, making communication impossible. |

Grammar

| | |
|---|---|
| 4 | Shows consistent control of the structures taught in class and communication is never impeded. |
| 3 | Usually controls structures taught in class. |
| 2 | Shows partial control of structures taught in class. |
| 1 | Speech is very difficult to understand due to lack of control of structures taught; OR not enough speech to evaluate. |
| 0 | Extreme lack of control of structures taught in class. |

Appendix II- Observations

21/06/2010

The first day of the classes I already knew them from the pre-test, the story for the experimental group (little red riding hood) went well. The students seemed interested.

23/06/2010

Students in both classes seemed eager to learn. They did their homework and were organized.

25/06/2010

One of the students in experimental group is more knowledgeable and he wants to answer all the questions .he understands stories well and can retell them excellently. Other students should be involved too. The experimental group is very orderly.

28/06/2010

For the experimental group the task was quite difficult today. They had to listen to the story and perform it in three groups. I did not expect them understanding the task but they did well. They were very noisy while working on the groups. The control group was OK. There is a one noisy boy in the classroom but he learns well and after some notifications he behaved.

30/06/2010

In control group there is a student with strange behavior. I assumed his mom spoils him but at the same time she does not have proper attitude towards him. He got angry at him in front of me.

The other students do not like him and when he does not want to co operate (for instance, doesn't want to read an exercise) other students cried out. The story in experimental group went well.

2/07/2010

It's a Friday and last day of week.

5/07/2010

I gave the students of experimental groups a comic strips I told them the story and they have to retell. For the other group they had to do a puzzle. The lesson of this day was Food and recipes for both classes I prepared paper balls and dishes as well as paper bottle of milk, sugar and other ingredient and I taught them how to make a simple cake. Then they came to the board and they made a cake or an omelet and other easy food they knew. Surprisingly the control group liked this very much. Everyone wanted to come to the board and make something. They tried hard to use the English words to describe the recipes even the problematic boy was interested and taught how to make a cake with enthusiasm. The same exercise for the experimental group was not that successful. Some of them became volunteers, reluctantly to teach something. But in general they did not seem to be enthusiastic in comparison with other group. I think the reason of success in the control group was the paper dishes and eggs and other things. The students wanted to experience working with them. Maybe the experimental group is more familiar with colored pictures and handouts.

7/07/2010

Students in both groups were introduced to family words and they listened to a song about family members and they sing the song after listening to it a couple of times. Some students in both groups were intimidated to sing others were freely to sing.

9/07/2010

The experimental group students are getting hard to control.

12/07/2010

Some students are leaders. At this point of term show their personality a little more than before.

For instance, Levon and Azatuhi are highly competitive. Harout likes to participate a lot and he also controls others. It is still hard to get Dalar to speak. The problematic boy (Gegham) starts to participate more. There are group of girlfriends in both groups. They tend to talk lot. Maksim likes to answer all the questions and doesn't let others to answer.

14/07/2010

Everything went smoothly and nothing special happens.

19/07/2010

Students in experimental group tend to talk more and they are very active during the lesson as well as very noisy but students in control group tend to be more introverted but they are more organized and they do their homework more attentive. They like to learn vocabulary and grammar but the experimental group students like to play games more.

21/07/2010

Students role play a conversation in both groups. Students in experimental group act out a conversation. Students in control group tried to show a proper memorization of lines.

23/07/2010

Students in control group experienced sentence making exercise. They have problem in putting the different parts of the speech in order. The same problem observed in experimental group when retelling the story.

26/07/2010

It is hard to control the experimental group.

28/07/2010

The lesson was about can and can't. Both groups watch the very short cartoon about a fish (emphasizing can and can't). The cartoon watching went smoothly in control group in terms of class organization. However the experimental group students learnt the structure faster.

30/07/2010

Students in control group were very competitive.

**Appendix III-
Reflective Essays on Classroom Observations by: Armine Ghazaryan**

I have spent twenty hours throughout the summer semester observing an English class teacher who teaches in Experimental English Classes at the American University of Armenia. While I was observing this school teacher and her students, I looked for the students' behavior and relation together and with their teacher. I recorded the lesson. I looked at her and her students to see if they had a connection. I wanted to see if the teacher knew who her students were, and if she knew her students' needs, strengths, and interests. Then my attention was drawn to the children to see if they followed a certain procedures or routines. There were two classes that I observed both at the same level (beginner) but one class was taught through stories and the other one without them.

CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS RECORD

| Date | Time of Observation | School | Teacher |
|------------|---------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------|
| 06/07/2010 | 10:00am-11:00am | Experimental English Classes (EEC) | Niery Nikoghosian |
| 06/07/2010 | 11:00am-12:00pm | EEC | Niery Nikoghosian |
| 14/07/2010 | 10:00am-11:00am | EEC | Niery Nikoghosian |
| 14/07/2010 | 11:00am-12:00pm | EEC | Niery Nikoghosian |

**Appendix IV-
Pretest (Questions)-**

What is
this?



Can you show me where his nose in this picture is?

Can you show me his eyes?

Can you show me his teeth?

Can you tell me what the color of this tiger is?

How many eyes this tiger has?

Can you tell me what is he doing?

Can tiger run?

Can tiger jump?

What does this man
do?



Do they help people?

Do you want to be a doctor?

What are these?

What are the colors of these pens?

What are they?

What are the colors of these shoes?

Is the doctor eating?

Is he drinking?

Is this a boy or a girl?

What is the color of this
bicycle?



Do you like bicycle?

What is he doing?

Do you have a bicycle?

Do you ride your bicycle?

STORY



This is a girl and she is very happy this is a sunny day and the girl wants to go for a walk in the forest. She walks for a long time and she gets hungry and tired. She sees a house and she knocks on the door and nobody answers so she opens the door and goes into that house. This is a very beautiful and nice house. She sees a piece of cake on the table. And as she was very hungry she eats the cake. Then she goes and finds the bedroom this house and she sleeps in that bed. Suddenly the wolf comes; actually this is wolf's house. Wolf comes and sees there is no cake on the table and sees someone sleeps in his bed and he gets very angry and he says to the girl now that you eat my cake I eat you, but you are lucky. I am not very hungry now and I eat you for my dinner. So he keeps the girl in this dark room and she cries but suddenly snoopy the dog comes by this house and sees the girl from window and asks her about her story and she tells him the story and snoopy breaks the window and goes into the house and saves her.

Appendix V-
Post test (Questions)-

1. What is this? (a duck)
2. Is this an eagle?
3. Is this a bear?
4. How many eyes does the duck have?
5. Show me his eyes. Where are his eyes?
6. What color is the duck?
7. Can the duck jump?
8. Can the duck run?
9. Can the duck fly?

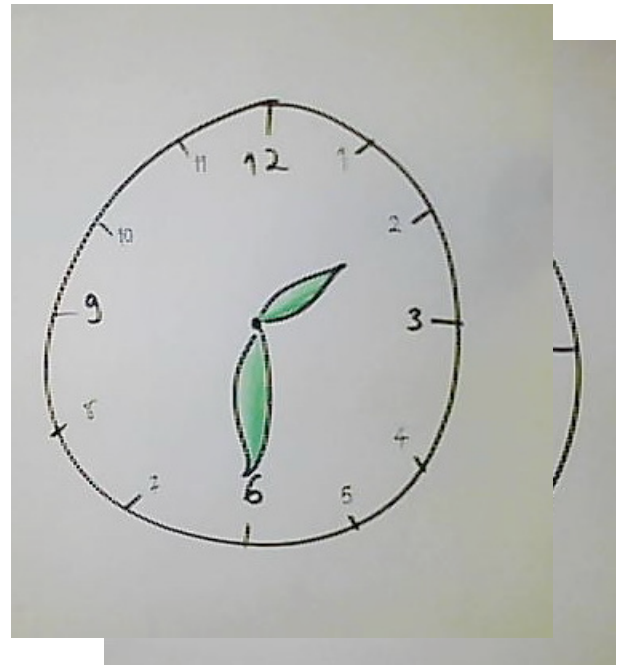
Very good! Thank you very much. How about another picture?



-
1. What is this? (a whale)
 2. Is this a fish?
 3. Is this a bear?
 4. Show me his eyes. Where are his eyes?
 5. What color is the whale?
 6. Where does the whale live?
 7. What does the whale eat?
 8. Can the duck jump?
 9. Can the duck run?
 10. Can the duck fly?



1. Is this a girl or a boy?
2. Is this a woman or a man?
3. Who are they?
4. Is she her mother?
5. Is she her daughter?
6. What is this?(the oven)

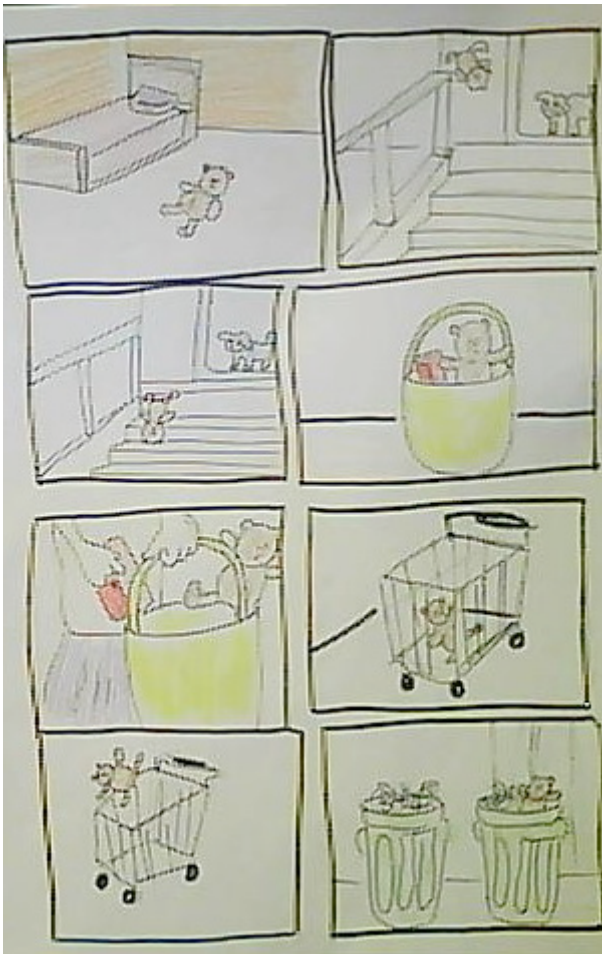


8. What color is the table?
9. What are these? (the eggs)
10. How many eggs are there on the table?
11. What is this? (point to the mother's t-shirt)
12. What color is his t-shirt?
13. What is this?(point to her hat)
14. What are these?(point to the daughter's shoes)
15. What color are her shoes?
16. What is the girl doing? (beating the eggs)
17. What are they doing? (They're making a cake)

18. Do you help your mother?
19. What time do you wake up?
20. What time do you have lunch?

Now, let me show you another picture...

1. Can you tell me what time is it here? (It's 3 o'clock)
2. What time is it here? (It's 2:30)





I'm going to tell you a story. Do you like stories?

The story is about Teddy bear. He's Sally's toy bear. Sally is a little girl. One day Sally goes to the kindergarten (school for little children), Teddy is not happy because Sally is not there to play with him.

Suddenly a bad dog comes and throw Teddy away, Teddy falls down ...He falls down into Sally's mother's bag. Sally's mother goes to the supermarket. She takes her bag. When she wants to take money, Teddy falls into the trolley (have you seen trolleys in the super market?). Then the trolley moves and Teddy falls into the garbage bin. Then the lorry comes to take the garbage away. Teddy is in the lorry. The lorry puts the garbage here (pointing to the picture). Then a big bird comes and takes Teddy. The bird flies. Now, Teddy falls in the garden. Then the post woman finds him and gives him to a kindergarten. They put Teddy with other toys. Wow, this is Sally's kindergarten, Sally comes and sees Teddy:" What are you doing here, Teddy?" Teddy is happy, because he finds Sally again.

1. Did you like the story?

2. Now can YOU tell me this story? ... What happens first? ... And then what happens?
And then ?
3. Who's this? (pointing to the bear)
4. Is he happy? Why he's not happy?
5. Who throws the Teddy away?
6. Is he a good dog?
7. Where does Teddy fall into?
8. Where does Sally's mother go?
9. Where does Teddy fall into?
10. What's this? (lorry)
11. What animal takes teddy away?
12. Who give Teddy to the kindergarten?
13. Is Teddy happy in the end?

