

STORY TELLING IN ESL CLASSROOM

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ABSTRACT: : *The present descriptive study illustrates how storytelling can be used as an aid in learning language in ESL classroom. Initially it traces down the place of literature in language classes by means of storytelling in enhancing knowledge of the learners. The paper then discusses the reason for the downfall of stories in classrooms and its rejuvenation among adults. For so doing the researcher reviewed some of the studies which concentrated on stories and literary work in the place of language learning. Finally, the paper proposed that stories can be used as an effective tool for teaching language skills naturally and reading literary text are good means to teach language despite other sorts of materials which concentrate on skills alone.*

Key Words: *Storytelling, Literature, ESL Classroom, Language skills, creative thinking.*

Introduction:

The term story defines as a narrative form of an event which can be delivered in prose form or in verse form. By tracing the origin of the word, it shows that it came from Latin word *narrere*, which means to pass knowledge. In fact, stories are traditionally embedded in the culture of people all over the world, through which morals are propagated to the next generation with special emphasis to children. Hence it is an inevitable part in the life of the people. Generally, the word story remembers kids at the first utterance. It shows that how it functions as the best tool in sharing knowledge to people. The interest and enthusiasm over a word story not only affix with kids' attention but also people of all ages. Since, the pleasure towards reading and listening to stories exists, storytelling as a genre emerges enormously. Thus Pruitt & Adlin, 2006 stated that, there is a need for listening and sharing stories for human beings by birth. Benedict (1992) defined that storytelling is a lively way to exemplify the past and teaches the impacts of historical events at present. As stories are attractive, full of creativity and expression in elegant language, it receives the attention of people. Therefore, it has been used for many reasons such as entertainment, teaching, documenting the past, transmitting culture and customs. Gruen (2002) acknowledged that Stories are a notable measure all the way through experience and lifestyle of people passing on to the next generation. Besides they motivate the imaginative skill and implant aesthetic sense in human beings and it can be delivered and deduced in different ways too. Quesenberry & Brooks (2010) noted that stories are generally begins with dialogic format by addressing the audience. By concerning language learning perspective, stories are helpful in developing communicative skills of the learners. It is due to the fact that stories are conveyed in a simple and interesting manner and easily approachable too. However, advancement in education through technology changed the mode of implementing literariness into learning. Coming to language learning it is determined that knowledge about the skills are enough in recent era. As a result, literature fades away from ESL classrooms. Yet it is been utilized by teachers for language learning purpose. Accordingly, the present study illustrates how story is important and literariness in ESL context helps to motivate the learners. It also creates awareness among the learners that story is not meant only for children and there is connection between literature and language.

Review of literature:

The effect of storytelling in enhancing reading comprehension of young ESL learners was studied by Huang (2006). He employed three modes of reading which include text-only reading, illustration supplemented reading based on dual-code model, and story listening plus illustrated-text reading. The study intended to identify student's word recall and story retelling test. The findings revealed that; however, students are good in retelling; they lack ability to recall the words. It reveals that student are able to recall the message of the story through verbal and nonverbal cues available in text. Despite other skills including

recognizing meaning of words, decoding skills are not yet highlighted in storytelling. Therefore, the study suggested teachers to train students to use storytelling as a technique to improve their language skills.

Similarly, Kim &McCarthy (2014), in their study "*Attitudes to storytelling among adult ESL learners*" explored the perception of tertiary second language learners towards storytelling as an activity in language learning classrooms. Findings revealed that very few students liked the use of storytelling in their classroom. The reason for low interest in storytelling is due to the thought existing in the minds of learners that it is only for school children. Moreover, students concern over language proficiency is also to be considered. Therefore, the least advanced learners enjoyed the story session than advanced learners and low proficiency learners. One of the important findings of this study is that there is significant relation between the nationality and attitude of the learners. For instance, the study proves that, learners from European countries are good in language fluency, they did not take part in story telling activity with interest. In turn, students from Asian countries liked the use of storytelling in classroom.

The effect of Total Physical Response Storytelling (TPRS) was supported by Foster (2011). In training session teacher used gestures and translation to strengthen the understanding of learners. Thus, she characterized TPRS as input and meaning oriented technique where students are asked to act out their story and assigned mini-situation. However, she projected TPRS as an input technique with story sequence, stress was given more on activities to elicit the output. The activities include retelling, reading, and writing. Students showed improvement in writing skills. The findings revealed that students are good in interpreting as well as producing the text.

Lucy (2013), sustained his support for storytelling by integrating web 2.0 digital story technologies. The study had given importance to social constructionism to ensure the contextual understanding instead of mere language learning. The study was conducted to four groups of students who are assigned to create story by using technological tools like flip cameras and movie makers video. In addition, they used story boards for scripting. The findings revealed that communication is the drawback for students in using storytelling since the respondents delayed the process of conversation. In addition, it shows positive report in identifying the unknown vocabulary in the text. The findings of these reviews revealed that storytelling helps learners to have good vocabulary knowledge and imaginative skills; however, the major drawback in employing storytelling in ESL classroom is communication. With this note the present paper envisioned storytelling and place of literary text reading in ESL classroom.

Literature in language learning classroom

The term literature is open to all sorts of people, invariable to discipline they belongs to. Everyone has pleasure to read and listen to stories. The interest towards story is insisted in the minds of people from their childhood. Therefore, it doesn't require any special attention among the learners. Moreover, literature is considered as a stress relief factor. Learners who initiated reading literary text habit from their childhood habituate it throughout their life. It helps them to attain enough knowledge in language skills as well as conceptual skills. Through continuous reading practice learners prepare themselves to be independent. Reading literature helps learners in many ways as follows.

- *Schemata*: Learners' schema expands through reading as they store the information in brain and rearrange it to create the new one. This schema process facilitates the understanding of the learners and helps them for future learning.
- *Concepts*: As the learners proceeds with literature, they learn about the world which constitutes human emotions and informational facts about the world. By means of repeated disclosure to literary text they learn to categorize.
- *Love of Reading*: Interest for reading is slightly connected with the attitude of the learners. Those who consider literary text as an entertainment resource probably have positive and smooth approach for real life matters. Eventually they learn all the skills related to reading in lighter mode.
- *Enhance relationship*: Reading literary text reduces the stress level of the learners especially when they join together with their friends to know about the new stories. It creates good bonding between them.
- *Solution for real life incidents*: Since, literature is the mirror of life, when students involve in the process of reading literary text, they tend to find solution to their personal problems.
- *Vocabulary learning*: Initially students guess the meaning of unknown words through assumption. Later they recognize its meaning through repeated reading. Gradually they replicate the words in their day to day usage.
- *Improve comprehension*: Continuous reading improves comprehension ability of the learners. They learn the sequence of the text, cause and effect in the plot, comparing situation in the text with other forms of text or with real life situation. Moreover, it gives them ability to question.

- *Creative thinking*: Literature is known for imagination. As the learners develop the habit of learning they start to imagine themselves with the character of the story. Often, they try to reflect them through their behavior. On the other hand they try to create the story of their own as a gift of their reading habit.
- *Phonemic awareness and language skill*: Reading not only promotes reading skill rather it simultaneously ensures other language skills and higher order thinking skills. Similarly, it creates phonemic awareness in learners too. When they tend to read text or listen to text, they are conscious about the sounds and its associations with letters. It helps them to pronounce the words correctly.

Challenges faced in classroom:

- The context of stories differed based on the background of learners. So, it is quite difficult for the learner to accept the tradition or unusual way of happenings when it is contradictory to their own custom.
- Interest of students play key role in storytelling. If the students lack interest to listen or to narrate the motto of story-based language learning ends in vain.
- Some learners are unwilling to share their stories among their groups due to communicative deficiency. In some cases, learners in adulthood have misconception that story is only for children. The idea degrades him to participate in storytelling activity.
- Ensuring authenticity is still a challenging task to be achieved in ESL classrooms. The selection of materials and syllabus which inserted storytelling activity is also lacking.
- Section of content based on the proficiency level is yet another challenge. There are no predetermined criteria for storytelling materials. It depends on individuals experience and exposure to cultural world. Hence it is one of the defects of storytelling.

Conclusion:

As rightly stated by Jensen (1998) memory about the information will be retained long in the minds of the learners when the content is emotionally connected with them by means of activity-based learning. Similarly, storytelling has emotional connect with the learners. For example, people bond themselves with the character of the play or any art form when it resembles them. Moreover, learners attain creativity and imaginative sense in them when they attempt to comprehend the story in sequence and detail. Therefore, it is stated as emotional investment. Through storytelling learners naturally embed cognitive skills. In addition, students involve themselves in sequencing the events according to the context of the story. It ensures their knowledge in syntactic and semantic perspective. Eventually they learn to predict the following events of the story out of their imaginative skills. Hence curriculum for language learning should be framed accordingly with more emphasis on storytelling activity. The materials for teaching language should be taken from literary resources. The difficulty of text level helps to establish the suitability of levels of learners.

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