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STORYTELLING AS A PEDAGOGICAL TECHNIQUE IN IMPROVING STUDENTS' SPEAKING SKILLS IN SUBURBAN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Abstract

The aim of the study was to find out the influence of storytelling on improving students' speaking skills in Kazakhstani suburban secondary schools. Speaking is considered as one of the most challenging skills of four language skills. Scholars identified several reasons for difficulties in developing speaking competence. First is fear of making mistakes, second reason is passive participation of learners in English classrooms, and third is L1 interference. Scholars found various solutions to solve the issues that they had detected and one of them is using the technique of storytelling at EFL lessons to improve students' speaking skill. The quasi-experimental research was used to examine whether the storytelling technique has positive impact on students' speaking skills. There were two groups: experimental groups, where students were taught with the help of the storytelling technique, whereas the control group students were taught in traditional way. The findings of the study revealed that the storytelling technique has a positive impact on students' speaking skills, they have improved their communicative competence, enlarged vocabulary, enhanced pronunciation and fluency. Their perception of learning with storytelling technique was efficient, their motivation to learning English increased, which is essential in overcoming the challenges that they come across with in EFL classroom. Implementing storytelling technique makes learners more active and enthusiastic in carrying out tasks in classroom. Moreover, students often share what they have learnt during the class with family and friends outside the lessons as well.

Keywords: Storytelling technique, speaking skill, telling stories, improving speaking skill, teaching EFL

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ҚАЛА МАҢЫНДА ОРНАЛАСҚАН МЕКТЕПТЕРДЕ СТОРИТЕЛЛИНГ ПЕДАГОГИКАЛЫҚ ТӘСІЛІН ҚОЛДАНУДЫҢ ОҚУШЫЛАРДЫҢ АЙТЫЛЫМ ДАҒДЫСЫН ДАМЫТУЫНА ӘСЕРІ

Аңдатпа

Мақаланың мақсаты сторителлинг техникасының қала маңында орналасқан мектептегі оқушылардың айтылым дағдысына әсерін зерттеу. Төрт дағдының ішінде айтылым дағдысы ең қиындық келтіретін дағдылардың бірі. Ғалымдар зертей келе оның себептерін анықтаған, олар: қателік жасаудан қорқу, Т1 – дің әсері, ұялу, пассивті немесе сабақта мүлде қатыспау. Аталған қиындықтарды зертей келе ғалымдар әртүрлі шешу жолдарын тапты, соның бірі-сторителлинг техникасын ағылшын тілі шетел тілі сабақтарында қолдану арқылы оқушылардың айтылым дағдыларының дамуына әсер етуі. Бұл зерттеуде, сторителлинг техникасының айтылым дағдысын жақсартуға әсерін тексеру үшін квази эксперименттік зерттеу қолданылды. Тәжірибеде екі топ болды: эксперименталды топта оқушылар сторителинг техникасы арқылы сабақтарды оқыды, ал бақалау тобында оқушылар дәстүрлі түрде оқыды. Зертеудің нәтижелерін талдай келе, сторителлинг техниксының оқушылардың айтылым дағдысына, әсіресе оқушылардың сөздік қорларына, сөздерді дұрыс айта білуіне, және еркін сөйлеуіне жақсы әсер еткен. Оқушылардың сторителлинг арқылы оқуға деген көзқарасы оң, жағымды, олардың ағылышын тілін үйренуге деген мотивациялары артқан, ол пәнді оқуда және кездескен қиындықтарды жеңуде өте маңызды рөл атқарады.

Оқушылар сабақта тапсырмаларды орынлауда белсендірек және оптимистірек болғаны және сабақтан тыс кезде де ағылшын тілі сабағында үйренгедерін отбысымен және достырамен бөлісуі байқалды.

Түйін сөздер: Сторителлинг техникасы, айтылым дағды, әңгімелерді айту, айтылым дағдыны дамыту, ағылшын тілі шетел тілі ретінде оқыту

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СТОРИТЕЛЛИНГ КАК ПЕДАГОГИЧЕСКАЯ ТЕХНИКА РАЗВИТИЯ НАВЫКОВ ГОВОРЕНИЯ УЧЕНИКОВ В ПРИГОРОДНЫХ ШКОЛАХ

Аннотация

Цель исследования заключалась в том, чтобы выяснить влияние техники сторотеллинга на улучшение навыков говорения учащихся в пригородных средних школах Казахстана. Говорение считается одним из самых сложных навыков среди четырех языковых компетенций. Ученые выявили ряд причин, объясняющих трудности в развитии навыков говорения. Во-первых, боязнь ошибок в речи, во-вторых, пассивное участие учащихся в уроках английского языка, и, в-третьих, сильное влияние родного языка. Ученые нашли ответы для решения проблем, которые они выявили, и один из них это применение техники сторителлинга на уроках английского языка для повышения уровня владения языком. Квазиэкспериментальные исследования были использованы с целью выявления положительного влияния сторителлинга на развитие навыков говорения. В эксперименте принимали участие две группы: экспериментальная группа, в которых студенты обучались с помощью техники сторителлинга, в то время как студенты контрольной группы обучались традиционным способом. Результаты исследования показали, что техника сторителлинга положительно влияет на навыки говорения студентов, они улучшили их коммуникативную компетенцию, расширили словарный запас, повысили произношение и беглость речи. Их восприятие обучения с помощью техники сторителлинга было эффективным, мотивация обучающихся к изучению английского языка возросла, что имеет важное значение для преодоления проблем, с которыми они сталкиваются на уроках английского языка. Внедрение техники сторителлинга делает учащихся более активными и мотивированными в выполнении заданий в классе. Кроме того, учащиеся часто делятся тем, чему они научились во время занятий с членами семьи и друзьями во внеурочное время.

Ключевые слова: техника сторителлинга, навык говорения, рассказывать истории, улучшение навыка говорения, обучение английского языка как иностранного языка

Introduction. Storytelling is considered one of the oldest and effective techniques in teaching and learning a language no matter whether it is native or foreign language. As Wright (2004) states in his book "Storytelling with children", "All of us need stories for our minds as well as food for our bodies" [20]. The aim of the study is to find out whether the storytelling technique has impact on improving students' speaking skill. In order to achieve the purpose of the study there are research objectives, they are: 1. To identify whether the storytelling effects developing EFL students' speaking skills in positive way. 2.To find out the experimental group students' perceptions of using the storytelling technique in EFL lessons.

Research problems of the study are: 1. By conducting the research we are going to overcome students' speaking challenges in English; 2.The reason for undertaken this research is because we are natural storytellers, so as teachers our duty is to awake our students this potential of telling short stories and improve their speaking skill.

Significance of the study: 1. Theoretical value of the research: incorporating storytelling as an educational strategy to enhance speaking skills among secondary school students. EFL

teachers, Bachelor, and MA students can get more detailed information as a resource and idea for their following dissertations or research; 2. Practical value of the study: this research contributes to the ongoing efforts to improve teaching practices and create meaningful learning experiences for students in secondary schools; For EFL teachers: they will enrich their teaching experience; improve their students' speaking skills by using story telling. For EFL learners: they will improve their speaking skills along with the use of storytelling techniques.

The storytelling technique is implemented to assist learners in improving students speaking skill. The researchers searched some studies that have done before to know and explore more about other scholars' contributions to this theme. They found many studies about the storytelling technique, as observed by Kalantari and Hashmeian (2015), Julia (2015), Fikriah (2016), Zuhriyah (2017), Hidayati (2019), Fajriani (2021), Noprianti (2021), Omidbakhsh (2021), and Budiarti et al. (2022), all of them stated that the storytelling technique has positive impact on students' speaking skill and improved their speaking skill.

Researchers identified issues, which were related to students challenges to develop their speaking skill as they have small amount of time dedicated to EFL lessons per week and they practiced English not often outside the lessons. Thus, the plan was created into study entitled "the impact of storytelling in developing speaking skill in suburban secondary schools".

Main body. Literature review. In 2007, the first President of Kazakhstan Nazarbayev proposed the project "The Trinity of Languages" which was focused on integration into the world economy [18]. According to this project citizens of our country should be able to use Kazakh-state language, Russian-the language of interethnic and regional, interstate communication, and English- as a foreign language needed for entering the world educational and economic space. "The ability to speak a language is synonymous with knowing that language" [13]. Thus, we understand that speaking skill plays a great role in our lives. Bailey and Savage (1994, p.7) looked at the role of speaking in foreign language as the most challenging one out of the speech skills, as it integrates facets of language knowledge such as pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar. [13; p.1] It is a well-known fact that all of us learn speaking after a lot of listening to the sounds, words, phrases, and sentences from our surroundings (Anuradha, Raman & Hemamalini 2014). [9; p. 14] And as Spaulding (2011, p.14) wrote in his book "The Art of Storytelling": Every one of us is a storyteller from the moment we come to this world and produce our first sounds: - Here I am! Where am I? Obviously, it is informal language, but nevertheless it can be easily understood, as it is telling the story of life. [2; p. 20] Consequently, we can say that we are already innate storytellers from the birth. By telling stories we express ourselves, which is very important process, because we are human beings and each of us experience certain kind of feelings, emotions, and opinions and we need to share them with others. Telling stories is proven by years, or even ages that it is highly effective in passing knowledge of older generation to the next one. Moreover, Abrahamson (1998) declares that "because of the process of storytelling provided on going transferring from one generation to another, people managed to save their cultures." [3; p. 355]

Learning is more achievable for students, when teachers conduct the lessons using stories that are familiar with students' life and the words in the story should be appropriate to students' level, have meaning to them and directed to enrich their language knowledge. [1]

Pardede emphasizes the efficiency of using short stories as the main and supplementary teaching tools in EFL classes. Based on the experimental research, he acclaims that short stories develop communicative competence, cultural awareness and critical thinking skills. Pardede notices that digital stories are more effective than printed ones in developing language skills [17].

Mukminatus Zuhriyah in her work describes two cylces of the experimental research related to storytelling. On the whole, storytelling procedure is described as the following:

1. students are divied into groups of 5 or 6

2. a teacher gives pictures to students

3. based on a sequence of pictures with key sentences each group of students make up a story and tell it on front of the class.

Mukminatus Zuhriyah emphasizes that the results of cycle two speaking showed high motivation and interest of students in the topic [20; p. 130, 134].

According to Alireza Omidbakhsh storytelling technique positively influences on oral production of students. Storytelling activities develop such language skills like reading, writing and speaking [16; p. 345].

Alireza Omidbakhsh suggests that teaching students through storytelling motivate them think more creatively and make learners express their understanding clearly. Moreover, providing EFL students with reading and telling stories positively affects on learners`s inner imagination and helps increase authentic language in classroom [16; p. 349-350].

Budiarti considers storytelling as the best way to teach ESL learners a second language. As storytelling is defined as not as reading but narrating a story from the memory, technique of storytelling helps improve students` speaking abilities because it makes students focus on meaning rather than form. Majority of students is interested in storytelling at English classrooms, though some of them find it difficult to memorize all the sentences. In spite of this, students learn to speak fluently and well, boost their confidence in language competence [4; p. Fikriah sticks to Budiarti. Fikriah has carried out research with storytelling in primary school and has come to conclusion that using this technique has enhanced students` speaking skills. Storytelling is quite efficient in producing accurate, grammatically correct and fluent speech. Moreover, this strategy helps students overcome speaking problems exposed in speaking classes [6; p. 98-99].2288].

Another scholar Yunita Hidayati has investigated positive effect of storytelling technique on students` speaking skills among tenth-grade students. Ultimately, pre-test and post-test results showed significant difference in scores. Based on the score it can be indicated that students' performances in post-test were better than in pre-test. This finding demonstrates increasing in students` speaking skills [7; p. 139-140].

Based on experiment Fajriani presents the difference in achievements between learners who were taught by using storytelling technique and who were taught without that method. However, the findings by Fajriani indicates that learners usually experience anxiety during storytelling in classroom, but experiment shows low or moderate level of anxiety, so the studies gives to authors further directions on reducing anxiety in using storytelling [5; p.82-83].

Farzaneh Kalantari1 and Mahmood Hashemiani state that storytelling is important in changing boring environment in class to a warm atmosphere full of active participation and production on the part of students. Technique of storytelling provides learners with enjoyment and pleasure, evokes students' motivation and helps create vivid mental images. A teacher may introduce new stories through Power Point software that provides students with visual representation of the story. Storytelling can be used in teaching almost any subject such as English, history. Besides, traditional storytelling can be used in sharing traditions between different generations, it makes children be involved into discovering wonderful world of books and reading [11: p. 230-231].

Maulida Rizka Mardiyanti underlines the effectiveness of storytelling supported by using picture. Picture media 'facilitate students' understanding, strengthen memory and can connect learning material with the real world'. Furthermore, picture media along with storytelling attracts students` interest, arouse their curiosity. So, it means that the image media assisted storytelling method affects the speaking skills [14; p.76].

There was interesting experiment conducted by Jismayadi with implementing storytelling together with personal photograph in learning. Experiment procedure included listening to the story by learners, making a draft of the story and telling the story to the whole class. Daily test score has proven the increase the average value in speaking [10; p. 112-113].

Hsu Tsu-Chia Julia investigated the effect of

storytelling in group on motivation of learners. So students can be stimulated to use their imagination by this method, teachers encourage learners` interest through practices [8; p.14-15]. The same quasy-experimental research was carried out by Sri Noprianti who came to the conclusion that using the storytelling method increases motivation of learners. Noprianti advises to use media tools in order to foster enthusiasm for learning English [15; p.475].

It is evident the significant role of storytelling in English language education success of the students. It has been determined by Kerim Karabacak that using books in English classes make students adapt to various activities that increases learners` success in education. During the experiment Kerim Karabacak has found out that the results of experimental group were higher than the outcomes of controlled group [12].

Research methods. The researcher used the storytelling method to collect data. The study was quasi-experimental research which included the experimental and control groups.

The aim of this study is to find out the impact of storytelling on developing students' speaking skills at secondary schools. To reach the goal we used mixed research method, that included quantitative and qualitative methods' tools.

Research questions of our study:

1. What is the impact of storytelling on developing speaking skills of suburban secondary school students?

2. What are the EG students' perceptions towards the use of storytelling technique in EFL classes?

3. What are EFL teachers' ideas, beliefs, and experiences of using storytelling technique in their lessons?

To answer to research question 1 we conducted a comparative study, that is we have two groups at 5th grade: 1 focus group and 1 control group. Before conducting the study students have taken pre-test: speaking test. We have conducted lessons with the help of storytelling technique in experimental group, while the other group were learned by conventional way. It lasted two months: two times a week. At the end of the study there was post-test: speaking test.

To find out the answer to the research question 2, we have used a survey. Students answered questions of the survey, which was intended to explore the experimental group students' perceptions towards the use of storytelling technique in EFL classes.

Finally, semi-structured interview was applied from EFL teachers to find out their ideas, beliefs, and experiences of using storytelling technique in their lessons. 15 EFL teachers: 3 teachers from 5 schools were taken to conduct semi-structured interviews. Interviews were recorded, transcribed, analyzed by using thematical analysis.

Results and Discussion. Research design. One of the Secondary School was chosen to be as an area of research in Panfilov District, Zhetysu Region. Convenience sampling strategy was used in the study. We have chosen this sampling strategy as it is convenient for us and for respondents, it saves our time, because nowadays teachers have busy schedules and commitments to do every day. It is clear, that taking and transcribing interviews, showing them respondents in order to be ensure their validity and reliability, take time and effort.

Data collection tools are: 1. comparison pre-test and post-tests' average grades of control and experimental groups. 2. Questionnaire in Google forms generates the results automatically. 3. Interview: thematic analysis.

There were 39 students (22 in experimental and 17 in control) and 15 teachers as respondents in our research. We have chosen the 5th grade students as they have finished the primary school and started their first year at secondary school to build good foundation from the beginning of the secondary school. There was pre-test at the beginning of the study and post-test at the end of experimental work to identify whether there is a difference between two groups. Students' performances were evaluated with the help of rubrics that was adapted from the speaking rubric of Maulani (modified from Zukhriah M, 2017).

Criteria	Comprehension	Vocabulary	Grammar	Fluency	Pronunciation
5	Appears to understand everything without difficulty	Speaks in L2 with accurate English words	Produces complete and accurate sentences	Speaks in L2 very fluently and effortlessly	Speaks in L2 Intelligibly and has few traces of foreign accent
4	Understands nearly everything at normal speed, although occasional repetition may be necessary	Speaks mostly in L2 with few L1 words	Produces some phrases instead of complete sentences with consistent and accurate word order or produces consistent omitted sentence	Speaks in L2 less fluently due to few problems of vocabulary/ selection of word.	Speaks mostly in L2 intelligibly with mother tongue accent
3	Understands most of what is said at slower than normal speed with many repetitions	Produces 4-6 English words	Produces inconsistent and incorrect sentences/ phrases	Speaks mostly in L2 with some long pauses and Hesitancy	Speaks mostly in L1, but produces 1-3 English words and pronounce them in intelligible mother tongue accent
2	Has great difficulty understanding what is said, often misunderstands the Qs	Produces 1-3 English words (brands or place names such as KFC, Roppan, etc. do not count as English word/vocabulary) due to very limited vocabulary	Answers mostly in L1, with 1-3 English words/ phrases	Speaks mostly in L1, Tries to speak in L2 but so halting with so many pauses and "er.."	Speaks mostly in L1, but produces 1-3 English words, Needs some repetition in pronouncing the words to understand them
1	Unable to comprehend the material so that unable to express/ respond the questions correctly	Vocabulary limitations so extreme as to make conversation in L2 virtually impossible so that the student speaks in L1 all the time	Unidentified because of speaking in L1 all the time	Unidentified because of speaking in L1 all the time	Unidentified because of speaking in L1 all the time

Table 1. *The Criteria of Speaking Aspects*

During the study the experimental group students' have been taught with storytelling technique, whereas students in controlled group have been taught traditionally. The research lasted for two months. Overall, lessons procedures were as follows:

1. For two weeks students worked in groups of 5 or 6 in order to get used with storytelling technique and overcome their anxiety

2. Each lesson has topics according to curriculum and topics were explained in the form of stories, that at each lesson there were certain characters, who has their stories to tell based on the theme

3. A teacher used ppt, visual aids, body language, simple words, definitions, translations of some challenging words at the beginning stage

4. Students comprehended the story, learned the technique to tell it by their own words, first two weeks working in groups, then 3 weeks with pairs, and for two weeks individually.

	pre-test	**post-test**	**difference**
Experimental group	2,23	3,05	+0.82
Control group	2,12	2,41	+0.29
Difference	0,11	0,64	0,53

Table 2. *Comparison of average grades of experimental and control groups*

At the end of the study there were post-test from speaking skills, in which students should answer the questions based on what they have learnt in two units. As you can see from the table 2, the results of experimental group students were higher than the controlled group students' outcomes. Based on this and the results of the questionnaire from experimental groups students' answers we can say that the storytelling technique has positive impact on students' speaking skill, especially to their vocabulary, pronunciation, and fluency, they started less hesitating when they speak and being more confident in their speech. Students' motivation to study English has also increased it is seen from their interest at the lessons when they do the tasks actively and enthusiastically.

Conclusion. In conclusion, it is considered that speaking is challenging skill which students need to encounter, and scholars found reasons for it. Scientists also find different solutions to the issues that make speaking skill difficult. One of them is applying storytelling techniques at EFL lessons. Storytelling technique has a positive impact on EFL leaners to improve their self-esteem, defeat students' fear of making mistakes, directed them to be more spontaneous and creative. In addition to it, storytelling develops learners' motivation, increase their desire to learn, which is very essential as it is a starting point, because if people have desire, they have will to accomplish the tasks. The result of the study proved that the storytelling technique has beneficial effect on students' speaking skills. The experimental group students' perceptions of storytelling technique were positive, though, they were a little bit anxious at the beginning of the study to speak in front of their classmates. It is recommended to conduct more study in this theme with other age groups to see the advantages of the storytelling technique and share experiences with other EFL teachers in order they also use it in their lessons to improve their students' language knowledge and speech skills.

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