



WWJMRD 2023; 9(01): 80-86
www.wwjmr.com
International Journal
Peer Reviewed Journal
Refereed Journal
Indexed Journal
Impact Factor SJIF 2017:
5.182 2018: 5.51, (ISI) 2020-
2021: 1.361
E-ISSN: 2454-6615

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Accelerating and sustaining Learning of English via Storytelling

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Abstract

Although storytelling is effective in accelerating and sustaining learning, locally, few studies are done in this regard, so the researchers conducted this study to investigate the role of storytelling in accelerating and sustaining students' learning of English. To this end, the researchers interviewed 5 teachers of English in Nablus City schools: (3) females and (2) males. They also distributed a 30-item questionnaire among 20 male and female teachers of English in Nablus City schools during the second semester of the scholastic year 2019-2020. Results of the two tools showed that storytelling can accelerate and sustain the learning of English. Based on this result, the researchers recommended using storytelling in schools and including them in the curriculum of English to motivate students to quickly and interestingly learn English.

Keywords: storytelling; accelerated learning; sustaining learning; teachers' perspective; students' motivation.

Introduction

"It's better to teach one subject in ten different ways than teaching ten subjects in one way". Based on this assumption, it's very crucial to vary between instructional approaches and methods to meet students' differences in their learning styles and levels. So nowadays there are various methods of teaching which accelerate learning, and motivate students to learn better. Among the different approaches, the researcher tried storytelling and associated it with accelerating and sustaining of the learning of English.

According to Awad & Barakat (2011), there are many different ways in teaching, and each way affects learning differently, so teachers should choose the suitable method for his/her students to achieve active learning. Also, good teachers engage their students in activities, encourage them to use their minds, so students will be more involved, more motivated, because they are a part of learning, not just absorb knowledge as a sponge (Raba' and Herzallah, 2015). Teachers should avoid traditional ways, and use the students-centered method (Raba', 2016).

Learning is better and more active when it occurs in social environments and real situation, Milord (2007) so teachers should connect classroom practices with daily life situations, and because stories are a reflection to one's culture, behaviors, religion, and morals, it is basic to use them frequently to fix students' knowledge, and encourage them to think critically, and retain information. (Mahmoud and Tanni 2014) According to Morgan, 1997 and Weiss, 2000 stories can evoke emotions and because emotions affect learning, learners can easily recall and store learning experiences associated with such stories.

"I heard a story that changed me to rethink in a situation where I have to choose among close options", for this, the researcher chose this topic. Surely people have still remembered some stories from childhood, and some of their details have still fixed in their mind, so storytelling is an instructional method effects on students' characters in general, and on their learning in special. For this storytelling is one of many main strategies that teaches children moral, and it's a suitable way to pass our history and culture on from generation to generation.

The focus of learning is on changing behavior, and that is the true motivation for active learners. so, they want to engage, learn, and practice. So, to change students' behavior,

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teachers should reach their students, and that happened with storytelling. So, storytelling can be used as a best method for teachers to teach, values, cultural norms, and morals in an effective way that attract students' attentions.

Significance of the study

This study derived its significance from the remarkable impact of storytelling in accelerating and sustaining learning. So, the researchers conducted this study to show the magic power of this teaching approach in the Palestinian context and in teaching English in specific

Problem of the study

Teachers of English claim that students feel bored with traditional pedagogies; they are not motivated in their learning, so the researcher tried storytelling to help students learn faster, easier and more motivated.

Questions of study

This study tried to answer these questions:

What is the role of storytelling in accelerating and sustaining the learning of English?

Are there any statistically significant differences at ($\alpha = 0.05$) level about storytelling in accelerating and sustaining the learning of English from the English language teachers' perspectives due to gender, qualification and experience?

Literature review

Storytelling has been proved to be an effective approach on students' learning. According to Benjamin Franklin "Tell me, I will forget, show me and I may remember, and involve me and I will understand ", so this indicates that stories are effective educational tools because students become engaged and therefore remembered. (e.g. Atta-Alla, 2012, and Kim 2010)

According to Caine (2005) storytelling is an effective way in which students have an opportunity to express their ideas, feelings, and experiences, also by it they can easily retain information and knowledge. because they argue that information is naturally organized in our minds according to story format.

In a study conducted by Eck (2006) the researcher showed a strong impact for using storytelling in schools as a teaching and learning method. Also, the researcher assured that storytelling is an effective method in which students can easily store and retained information in regard to brain-based principles, also she argued that storytelling evokes emotion and makes a connection among students' previous personal experiences and story's content, so this technique makes students go deeply through content more than any other method.

Raba' & Tanni (2012) emphasized that storytelling encourages students to speak freely in the classroom, to express themselves enthusiastically, they added that storytelling motivated students to use their language in real situation, increase their self-confidence, and ability to communicate in English.

Duveskog, Tedre, Sedano, & Sutinen (2012) Showed that storytelly approach has many advantages where students share their experiences, feeling and opinions which in turn encourages interaction in classroom, this approach strengthens students' personalities and enhances their self-confidence. It promotes creativity, imagination and critical

thinking. The researchers also showed that storytelling breaks boredom and formality in classroom, and decreases the stress for shy students

Storytelling affects in an ESL (English as a second language) context. also, the researcher explored that Storytelling enhances a faster language development on Swedish learners who learn English, and this development in not isolated from their ever day language. Wallin noticed that there was a progress in their interactions, reading, everyday communication, and listening skills.

In the area of developing the mind via storytelling, Briggs (2015) explained that the mind is motivated to learn best through storytelling. It inspires our minds to enlighten our ideas, effects on our education, and feelings. This study focused on how the learning process is accelerated through storytelling according to a number of learning theories, previous studies, and famous sayings presented in this regard.

Methods and procedures

Research design

The semi experimental design was used in this study. For the purpose of showing the role of storytelling in learning English, the researchers prepped two tools: interviews and questionnaire. The researchers interviewed five teachers of English and they distributed the questionnaire among 20 teachers who were selected randomly from all the teachers of English from Nablus city schools.

Context of the study

The study was conducted with teachers and supervisors of English in Nablus city schools. Twenty male and female teachers responded to the questionnaire and five male and female supervisors were interviewed. The research was carried out during the scholastic year 2019/2020. Those teachers were varied in terms of gender, scientific qualification and years of experience. as shown in Table (1).

Table 1: Distribution of the study sample according to study independent variables.

Variable	Level	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	10	50.0
	Female	10	50.0
Qualification	B. A	7	35.0
	M.A	13	65.0
Years of Experience	1-5	10	50.0
	6-10	4	20.0
	More	6	30.0
Total		20	100

Table (1) shows the personal information of the study sample. It includes the frequencies and percentage of each level for each variable.

Instrument

The instruments used in this study were an interview and a questionnaire. (Appendix A & B). The two tools were administered to test the teachers of English about the role of storytelling in sustaining and accelerating the learning of English. The content of the tools was checked for adequate timing, clarity of instructions, and arrangement of items. In order to estimate reliability of the test, Cronbach formula of reliability measure was employed. The estimated reliability for the test turned out to be 0.75 which was a moderately high index of reliability.

A five-point Likert scale questionnaire was used to measure teachers' perspectives. The questionnaire consisted of 30 items.

Table 2: The key correction according to a five-point Likert scale for the responses on the study tool domains.

Five-point Likert scale for the responses				
5	4	3	2	1
Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree

Table 2 shows the key correction according to a five-point Likert scale for the responses on the study tool items.

Data collection

The population and sample of the study

The process of collecting data only starts with determining the population and sample size of this research. Therefore, the population in this study were all teachers of English in Nablus schools. The sample was 20 male and female teachers of English who were responded to the questionnaire in addition to another 5 teachers 3 females and two males who were interviewed. The research was carried out during the scholastic year 2019/2020. Those teachers were varied in terms of gender, scientific qualification and years of experience. as shown in Table (1).

Research methodology flow chart

Research methodology used in this research consists of six stages, as the following:

Stage one: identifying the problem of research and building the research questions in order to get the required data about storytelling as the best teaching strategy for accelerating learning from the English language teachers' perspectives.

Stage two: reviewing literatures associated with the topic of study by; checking surveys books, scholarly articles, and any other sources relevant to storytelling and learning English.

Stage three: designing the research by using analytical methodology that includes selecting tools for both quantitative and qualitative data to get the required result.

Stage four: collecting data.

Stage five: analyzing data.

Stage six: Obtaining the findings of research.

Stage seven: results and recommendations which will be obtained from the previous stages.

Research validity

The questionnaire was given to a jury of experts whose suggestions and comments were taken into consideration to modify and improve the questionnaire's content by omitting, adding or rephrasing items bringing the number of items 20.

Statistical procedures

The statistical procedures used were:

2. Independent sample t- test
3. One Way ANOVA tests in order to test the hypothesis.

Table 3. Means, frequencies, standard and deviations in order to analyze the study sample responses on the questionnaire items.

No	No in the questionnaire	Items of the questionnaire	Mean	SD	Percentage	Level
<i>Do you think that storytelling.....?</i>						
1.	7	provides fun	4.70	0.73	94.0	Very High
2.	20	is full of pedagogical value	4.60	0.50	92.0	Very High
3.	3	is a highly motivating way of teaching English	4.45	0.60	89.0	Very High
4.	10	is entertaining	4.40	0.75	88.0	Very High
5.	14	creates a serious playful environment	4.35	0.67	87.0	Very High
6.	8	helps students to learn better English	4.35	0.67	87.0	Very High
7.	6	can enhance teaching vocabulary	4.30	0.57	86.0	Very High
8.	1	provides automatic use of the target language	4.30	0.57	86.0	Very High
9.	15	keeps the students focus	4.25	0.55	85.0	Very High
10.	19	should be given a special role in a foreign language teaching program	4.20	0.83	84.0	Very High
11.	16	learning imitates real life situations	4.20	0.83	84.0	Very High
12.	2	accelerates the memorization of vocabulary	4.20	0.61	84.0	Very High
13.	12	removes classroom boredom	4.10	1.07	82.0	Very High
14.	11	helps students to think more	4.05	0.82	81.0	Very High
15.	9	increases students' participation inside the classroom	4.05	0.75	81.0	Very High

16.	4	is very effective in teaching English	3.85	0.98	77.0	High
17.	17	measures students' knowledge	3.80	1.15	86.0	High
18.	18	presents many opportunities to learners to show their skills in all areas of English language.	3.70	0.97	74.0	High
19.	5	is an essential part of the English language teaching curriculum	3.65	0.98	73.0	High
20.	13	in the English class can't be time –consuming	3.45	0.94	69.0	Moderate
Total degree			4.14	0.43	82.8	Very High

To analyze the findings, the researcher used the following scale to represent the estimation level of sample responses as in Table (3).

Table 4: Scale Represents the Estimation Level of Sample Responses on The Study Tool.

Percentage	Estimation level
More than 80.0	Very High
From 70-79.9	High
From 60-69.9	Moderate
From 50-59.9	Low
Less than 50	Very Low

Table 3 shows scale to represent the estimation level of sample responses on the study tool.

Results of the study

Results of the first question: What make storytelling as the best teaching strategy for accelerating learning from the English language teachers' perspectives? To answer this question, means, standard deviations and estimation level were used as shown in following table.

Based on the result above, the total of what make storytelling as the best teaching strategy for accelerating learning from the English language teachers' perspectives is (4.14) which is considered as a very high level.

It is clear from above that the degree of significance was very high on items (1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14 and 15) Where the percentage of response reached 85% above, on the other hand, the degree of significance was high on items (16,17,18,19 and 20). As for the total degree for the storytelling as an effective way in accelerating learning. It was very high where the percentage for the response was 82%. This means that a great portion of teachers who believe that storytelling is an effective technique in accelerating learning.

The above results show that the top the reason of making storytelling as the best teaching strategy for accelerating learning from the English language teachers' perspectives is the item (storytelling provides fun) which scored (4.70) and this result suggests very high level of estimation. The lowest mean was for the item (Storytelling in the English class can't be time –consuming) which scored (3.45) and suggests moderate level of estimation.

Results of the second question

Are there statistically significant differences at ($\alpha = 0.05$) level due to gender, qualification and years of experience? To answer this question, the researcher analyzed the study hypothesis as follow:

Hypothesis testing

In this study - Test for Independent Samples and One Way ANOVA and post hoc tests were used to test the research hypothesis. This test is based on assuming the null hypothesis (H_0) of what make storytelling as the best teaching strategy for accelerating learning from the English

language teachers' perspectives attributed to the variable of gender, qualification and years of experience. The null hypothesis is rejected if significance is less than (0.05). As shown in figure (1) the relation between the independent variables of (gender, qualification and years of experience) and the dependent variable of (the study tool items).

Results of the first hypothesis

There were no statistically significant differences at ($\alpha = 0.05$) level about what make storytelling as the best teaching strategy for accelerating learning from the English language teachers' perspectives attributed to the variable of gender.

To test the first hypothesis, t- Test for Independent Samples was used, and table (5) shows the results.

Table 5. Independent two sample of t-test due to gender.

Total Degree	Gender	N	Mean	S. D	t	Sig.*
	Male	10	4.040	0.43		
	Female	10	4.25	0.42		

* The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Table (5) shows that the value of t was -1,065, this means that there are no statistically significant differences at ($\alpha = 0.05$) level from the English language teachers' perspectives due to gender. So, gender doesn't affect his/her perspective towards the role of storytelling in accelerating learning. The significant was (0.301) which is more than (0.05). So, the first hypothesis is valid

Results of the second hypothesis

There are no statistically significant differences at ($\alpha = 0.05$) level about what make storytelling as the best teaching strategy for accelerating learning from the English language teachers' perspectives attributed to the variable of qualification.

To test the second hypothesis, t- Test for Independent Samples was used, and table (6) shows the results.

Table 6: Independent two sample t test result due to qualification.

Total Degree	Qualification	N	Mean	S. D	t	Sig.*
	B. A	7	4.18	0.43		
	M.A	13	4.12	0.44		

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Table (6) shows that the value of t was 0.283, and that means there are no statistically significant differences at ($\alpha = 0.05$) from the English language teachers' perspectives due to teachers' qualification. The significant was (0.780) which is more than (0.05). So, qualification doesn't affect his/her perspective towards the role of storytelling as a best strategy in accelerating learning. The significant was (0.301) which is more than (0.05). So, the second hypothesis is valid. To test the third hypothesis, One Way ANOVA test was used, and tables (7 and 8) show the results.

Table 7: Means and standard deviations for the levels of the variable of experience:

	Experience	N	Mean	S. D
Total Degree	1-5	10	3.98	0.32
	6-10	4	4.13	0.45
	More	6	4.42	0.50
	Total	20	4.14	0.43

Table 8: One Way ANOVA Test due to the variable of experience.

impact of using storytelling on accelerating learning		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Total	Between Groups	0.727	2	0.363	2.193	0.142
	Within Groups	2.816	17	0.166		
	Total	3.542	19			

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level

As shown in Table 8, the significant was (0.142), which is more than (0.05), which means that more experienced English teachers believe in using storytelling as the best strategy in accelerating learning”)

Analysis of interview data

In order to answer the question of what make storytelling as the best teaching strategy for accelerating learning from the English language Instructors' perspectives, five English language supervisors (2 males and 3females) have been interviewed. The male instructors agree that storytelling technique motivates students and increases their interaction, their listening skills, simplifies the information and enhances the students' self- confidence inside the classroom. Also, females agree that storytelling technique enhances creative thinking, promotes students' achievement, enhances student- teacher interaction, supports their talents, improves students' confidents to participate and express themselves. Moreover, this technique plays crucial role in removing shyness and in increasing learning.

Discussion

Based on the results of this study, storytelling has several advantages as an educational strategy. These advantages include: creating a fun, playful environment that causes clutter in the learning process. Also, storytelling is full of pedagogical values, such as teaching new vocabulary while keeping students motivated and focused. Furthermore, storytelling provides continuous repetition, which results in automatic use of the target language. This technique helps students think more, increases their participation, measures their knowledge, and presents opportunities for students to show their language skills. Therefore, storytelling is an essential part of the English language curricula. These results are in line with the instructors' results that referred to the same advantages regarding this topic. The researcher attributes this to the uniqueness of this technique in teaching English language listening and comprehension skills.

“The results showed that the top effect of this technique was (storytelling provides fun) from teachers' perspectives, which was assured by many researchers, for example, Rose and Nicholl (1997), who indicate that storytelling enhances students' motivation to participate and express themselves, which makes learning more enjoyable in the class.”

According to the results, there is a disadvantage for this technique. Many English teachers claims that storytelling is time consuming, However, Speaker (2000) argued that despite of time consuming, Storytelling increases students'

language development, improves students' listening and reading skill, and increases their vocabulary. Also, Koppett & Denning (2005) claimed that storytelling increases learners' ability to recall information more easily, and kept in their minds a long time, So all of these things enhance learning to become faster than in using traditional ways

The results also show that there are no statistically significant differences at ($\alpha =0.05$) level about what make storytelling as the best teaching strategy for accelerating learning from the English language teachers' perspectives due to the variables of gender, and qualification a. It's clear that the percentage of means and standard deviations were increased for the levels of the variable of experience, and that means when the teachers are more experienced, they believed more in this strategy, and they realized the positive effect of it

The researcher attributes these positive results to the fact that storytelling techniques are modern methods in the teaching process and all teachers despite their gender, qualification and experience understand their importance in accelerating learning.”

The researchers believe in the famous saying by Martin Luther King, ‘The function of education is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically. Intelligence plus character-that is the goal of true education’. So, storytelling stemmed its importance from its roles in reaching students' mind in an effective way as a modern technique. Moreover, storytelling enhances students' creative thinking skills as well as increases their interests, promotes students' achievement, and supports and develops their talents”

According to many previous studies and articles, the researcher noticed that most of researchers as (, Raba', Wallin, speaker, Ahrens, Eck, Cane, Haven and Abrahamson) assured that Storytelling technique is an entertaining technique that can be used with learners in order to develop their listening comprehension. Moreover, it allows the students to share their personal understanding to other people. It increases student's interests to hear over and over again. In this genre, it is an essential element to student's interaction which will increase between the students and teacher. Storytelling empowers student's ability to express his/her thoughts and feelings through oral language new vocabulary can be introduced and easily comprehended within a story context. Social communication increases rapidly, so understanding the material becomes very easy for the students, because students are motivated to talk more, and have the chance to get rid of their shyness. As for learner, they become the centre of learning process and teacher is considered as a facilitator.

Conclusion

The researchers have presented an analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data. It has been found that the total of what make storytelling as the best teaching strategy for accelerating learning from the English language teachers' perspectives is a very high level. Also, the quantitative analysis results were in line with the qualitative ones.

The top effect of this strategy from English teachers' perspective was (storytelling provides fun), the lowest one (Storytelling in the English class can't be time – consuming).

Also, the results showed that there were no statistically significant differences at ($\alpha = 0.05$) level what make storytelling as the best teaching strategy for accelerating learning from the English language teachers' perspectives attributed to the variables of gender, qualification and experience.

Appendix

No.	No. in the questionnaire	Item	Mean	standard deviations	Percentage	Estimation Level
1.		storytelling provides fun				
2.		storytelling is fun and full of pedagogical value				
3.		storytelling is a highly motivating and entertaining way of teaching English				
4.		story telling is entertaining method of education				
5.		storytelling creates a serious playful environment that causes a clutter in the learning process				
6.		storytelling motivates students to learn better English				
7.		storytelling can enhance English language teaching vocabulary for young learners				
8.		storytelling provides a large amount of repetition which result in automatic use of the target language				
9.		storytelling keeps the students focus				
10.		storytelling should be given a special role in a foreign language teaching program				
11.		storytelling learning imitates real life situations				
12.		storytelling accelerates the memorization of vocabulary				
13.		Removes classroom boredom				
14.		storytelling helps students to think more				
15.		storytelling increases students' participation inside the classroom				
16.		storytelling is very effective in teaching English				
17.		storytelling measures students' knowledge when it is used in the classroom				
18.		storytelling presents many opportunities to learners to show their skills in many languages area				
19.		storytelling is an essential part of the English language teaching curriculum				
20.		Storytelling in the English class can't be time – consuming				
Total degree						

Recommendations

1. According to the study results, the following recommendations have been suggested:
2. 1.New teaching trends with storytelling that increase students' interaction should be included in the curricula.
3. Educational stories allow students to create their own stories and share them with their classmates.”
4. schools should send their teachers to workshops and teaching conferences in order to learn about new developments and techniques in the teaching field.
5. New approaches in the storytelling technique are an

important part of applying storytelling in teaching in order to avoid repetition and boredom in the classroom.

6. More researches about using new techniques (Teaching by stories) in teaching English language should be conducted.

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