IN THE NAME OF GOD

Allameh Tabataba'i University

Faculty of Persian Literature and Foreign Languages
Department of English Language and Literature

On the Effect of Storytelling on Iranian EFL Learners' Reading
Comprehension and Motivation for Reading Stories in English

Advisor:
Dr.Nowruzi

Reader:
Dr.Khatib

A Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies in
Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for the Degree of
Master of Arts in Teaching English as a Foreign
Language (TEFL)

By:
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We Hereby Recommend that this Thesis by
Amir Hossein Esmkhani

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کتابخانه مرکزی دانشگاه علامه طباطبائی

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کلید واژه ها به زبان فارسی:

۷- داستان	۴- پیوستگی	۱-اصالت متن
۸- پردازش Top-down	۵- سواد	۲-پردازش Bottom-up
	۶- انگیزه	۳-درک مطلب

کلید واژه ها به زبان انگلیسی:

1-Authenticity	4-Integration	7- Story
2-Bottom-up processing	5- Literacy	8-Top-down processing
3-Comprehension	6- Motivation	

چکیده

الف. موضوع و طرح مسئله (اهمیت موضوع و هدف): اینکه آیا می توان از داستان گویی در کلاس زبان به منظور ارتقاء درک مفاهیم و انگیزه خواندن داستان زبان آموزان بهره جست.

ب. مبانی نظری شامل مرور مختصری از منابع، چارچوب نظری و پرسشها و فرضیه ها:

داستان گویی همواره مورد توجه دانشمندان و بزرگان رشته زبان به عنوان منبع غنی زبانی و فرهنگی برای آموزش زبان به خصوص به کودکان، بوده است. محقق بر آن بوده است که از روش موثر داستان گویی برای بزرگسالانی که در حال یادگیری زبان انگلیسی می باشند بهره جوید. در این راستا تاثیر داستان گویی بر مهارت خواندن و درک مفاهیم و همچنین بر انگیزه زبان آموزان برای خواندن داستان، توجه محقق را به خود معطوف نموده است.

پرسش های طرح شده بدین ترتیب می باشند:

۱- آیا هیچ ارتباطی بین داستان گویی و افزایش انگیزه خواندن داستان زبان آموزان وجود دارد؟

۲- آیا هیچ ارتباطی بین داستان گویی و ارتقاء مهارت خواندن و درک مفاهیم زبان آموزان وجود دارد؟

فرضیه: هیچ ارتباطی بین داستان گویی و توانایی خواندن و درک مفاهیم و همچنین انگیزه برای خواندن داستان زبان آموزان وجود ندارد.

پ. روش تحقیق شامل تعریف مفاهیم، روش تحقیق، جامعه مورد تحقیق، نمونه گیری و روشهای نمونه گیری، ابزار اندازه گیری، نحوه اجرای آن، شیوه گرد آوری و تجزیه و تحلیل داده ها:

این تحقیق در آموزشگاه زبانسرای ایران زمین واقع در شهر زنجان برگزار شد. جامعه تحقیق شامل زبان آموزان دختر سطح intermediate ۱۸ تا ۲۵ ساله بودند. ابتدا زبان آموزان از نظر سنی یکنواخت شدند. زبان آموزان کمتر از هجده و بیشتر از ۲۵ سال در گروه های آزمایش و کنترل ثبت نام نشدند. امتحان اولیه خواندن و درک مفاهیم همگن بودن گروه ها را نشان داد. هر دو گروه در ابتدا امتحان خواندن و درک مفاهیم و پرسش نامه انگیزه خواندن داستان را برگزار نمودند که آمار و ارقام یکسان بودن دو گروه را نشان داد. گروه آزمایش که شامل سی نفر زبان آموز به مانند گروه کنترل بود جدا از مطالب درسی مشابه، از داستان گویی معلم در هر جلسه به مدت بیست دقیقه به طول بیست و پنج جلسه بهره برد. داستان ها از کتاب ملانصرالدین الکساندر هیل انتخاب شده بودند.

ت. یافته های تحقیق:

بعد از اتمام دوره، برگزاری دوم امتحان خواندن و درک مفاهیم و پرسش نامه انگیزه خواندن، نشان دهنده تغییر تقریبا" محسوسی صرفا" در حوزه انگیزه بود. بعد از جمع آوری نمره ها و داده ها در قسمت آماری تحقیق، روش Sample T- test با سطح سنجش یک دهم ۰/۱ مورد استفاده قرار گرفت که بر اساس آن انگیزه خواندن داستان گروه آزمایش نسبت به گروه کنترل تغییر مثبت تقریبا" محسوسی کرده بود. این در حالی بود که مهارت خواندن و درک مفاهیم گروه آزمایش تغییری حاصل نکرد.

ث. نتیجه گیری و پیشنهادات:

با توجه به تاریخ داستان گویی در زندگی بشر و تاثیر داستان گویی بر مهارتهای زبانی همانگونه که در بخش مرور پیشینه داستان گویی نیز آمد، محقق در انتظار به دست آوردن نتایج و تاثیرات مثبت بکارگیری داستان گویی بر مهارتهای زبانی در کلاس آموزش زبان بود. این تحقیق تنها توانست تاثیر داستان گویی بر انگیزه خواندن متون را در زبان آموزان ثابت کند در حالیکه بر اساس این تحقیق داستان گویی تاثیر بسزایی بر مهارت خواندن و درک مفاهیم زبان آموزان نخواهد داشت. با دقت نظر در این خصوص می توان پی به تناقض درونی در این تحقیق برد. اگر داستان گویی بر انگیزه خواندن زبان آموزان تاثیر گذارد، متعاقبا زبان آموزانی که انگیزه بالایی برای خواندن داستان داشته باشند بیشتر به این امر مبادرت خواهند ورزید و منطقا در نهایت موجب افزایش مهارت خواندن و درک مفاهیم آنان نیز خواهد شد.

پس می توان گفت اگر این تحقیق تحت شرایط متفاوت با طول زمان بیشتری انجام شود ، احتمالا تاثیر داستان گویی بر مهارت خواندن و درک مفاهیم نیز هویدا خواهد شد.

محقق این تحقیق بر این باور است که با استفاده از داستان گویی می توان فضای بسیار مطلوب زبان آموزی در کلاس های زبان بوجود آورد که در آن زبان آموزان با استفاده از محاسن آن شاهد پیشرفت چشمگیری در امر زبان آموزی خود باشند.

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Abstract

The need to communicate globally and to improve in most technical, scientific, commercial and other aspects, people have been driven to learn the international language of the world, namely English. There have been a lot of methods and techniques proposed to learn English language rapidly and properly. This study aims at proposing a storytelling technique which plays a crucial role in the development of mother tongue. Language therapists and psychologists have emphasized the importance of storytelling in the process of linguistic and psychological growth of children. In this regard we can list such advantages as, vocabulary retention, listening comprehension improvement, intonation and stress acquisition and the rest. The present study claims that storytelling can be incorporated in the curriculum of even adult foreign or second language learners to help them improve their language through an effective technique. Sixty intermediate level English language learners, who were all female, were divided into two experimental and control groups respectively. The pre-test consisted of, 1.A twenty true or false item reading comprehension questionnaire and 2.A quick motivation test for reading stories, containing twenty items. In the control group the teacher narrated a story for about twenty minutes in each twenty four sessions. After the treatment both groups took both the exams, the first of which differed in the questions while the motivation test remained the same. Using the T-test it was found that; storytelling does not lead to the improvement of reading comprehension whereas it increases the EFL learners' motivation to read stories in English which in turn will provide the students with valuable material to progress in English language learning. The level of significance was 0.1.

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Chapter one

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Learning a second language especially English has become the concern of millions of people all over the world. The root of this concern can be sought in different areas, the most important of which is to understand and speak to the world.

Parallel with the notion of globalization much more need is felt to learn English to jump on the bandwagon. Throughout the history of teaching foreign languages there have been lots of approaches, methods and techniques in paving the way for equipping people with probably the most powerful social device , so to speak language, each of which claiming to be the best and the most effective. In primary classroom today, pupils need to master the four language skills. There are listening, speaking, reading and writing activities. Through these four language skills, the school can provide an appropriate atmosphere for the learners. So, they need a good language teaching to teach all these four skills. In order to have a good language teaching, we need to have good teachers, good learners, good habits, good methodology and last but not the least good materials. Insufficient materials can bungle the job of teaching as we have witnessed in so many schools, institutions and even universities. The absence of coherence and cohesion, the inappropriateness, the absence of a firm theoretical foundation, the lack of clear objectives and aims and finally non-authenticity can all lead to the development of poorly designed materials which can lead to the failure either in delivery or reception of language learning. It is indeed a hard task to design appropriate quality material which meets the standards and can well combine and integrate the language skills. In this regard we can take advantage of a resource, named story to provide us with a highly culturally and linguistically rich content to deliver language teaching properly provided that it is used efficiently and adequately.

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The use of literature to teach second/foreign languages can be traced back to over one century ago. In the nineteenth century, second/foreign languages were taught with the help of the Grammar Translation Method. Students would translate literary texts from the second/foreign language to the native language. When this method was replaced by methods that emphasized structures and vocabulary, literature was no longer used. Thus, neither the Direct Method nor the Audiolingual Method utilized literature to teach second/foreign languages. In the seventies, methods such as the Community Language Learning, Suggestopedia, the Silent Way, Total Physical Response, and the Natural Approach did not utilize literature to teach second/foreign languages, and neither did the Notional-Functional Syllabus.

For the past two decades or so, literature has found its way back into the teaching of EFL; however, not the way it was used with the Grammar Translation method. Instructors have realized that literature can be used to reinforce the skills and complement language teaching. Ghosn (2005) affirms that "with students at the beginning and intermediate levels, instructors can use literary texts for language practice, reading comprehension, and possible aesthetic appreciation". In contrast, with advanced students literary texts may be utilized for the "development of knowledge of world literature, practice in reading and discussing creative work, and the introduction of literary concepts, genres, and terminologies—e g, recognition of figures of speech, levels of meaning, and other stylistic features" (Ghosn, 2005). Moreover, students can gain insight into literature by gaining entrance to a world familiar or unfamiliar to them due to the cultural aspects of stories, and taking a voyage from the literary text to their own minds to find meanings for ideas, leading to critical thinking.

Stories are everywhere. We write them, we hear them, we tell them and we read them. Sometimes we feel the stories we tell or we are told and very often it becomes part of our identity or become part of the story. Stories are used to share experiences and knowledge, to convey thoughts and to negotiate ideas. We even at times use stories to motivate people about things, to entertain them and to show our feelings. Using stories can also enhance our memory and visualization skills. It is a way of relaying not just our own experiences but the others to the readers or listeners. Beside all these advantages storytelling has been used as a powerful learning tool and we have seen advantages of using stories in different ways such as, reading, writing, listening and speaking task. McDrury and Alterio (2008) believe that a widespread acceptance of storytelling by many scholars in the field of education has paved the way for transition of this tool to educational settings. They go on to justify the use of storytelling in higher education as claiming for the existence of a relationship between storytelling and critical thinking (McDrury, Alterio, 2008). We know that storytelling has helped us understand the world around us in meaningful and enjoyable ways and it has also led us to think reflectively about ourselves, our experiences and our problems. McDurry and Alterio (2008) also believe that storytelling facilitates learning through reflective thinking. Reflection has gained a lot of attraction all over the world and is seen as a very powerful agent in education. Storytelling can show us ourselves through the deeds of others thus reflecting us indirectly. Another merit of stories is the delivery of linguistic elements in a socio-culturally rich context which is a key to meaningful learning. As we have read and heard a lot about the importance of contextualized learning materials as opposed to decontextualized, non-authentic ones, we come up with the substantiality of using stories in language classes. Cited in McDrury and Alterio (2008) the importance of context in relation with learning is central to

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Vygotsky (1987). Moon (2001) believes:"with the rising numbers in higher education, the opportunity for the expression of the individual can become lost. Storytelling, in its many manifestations, allows individual expression to shine through. It is a way of combining creative and reflective capacities in a manner that well supports learning (cited in McDrury, Alterio, 2008, p.30). When storytelling is formulized in thoughtful and meaningful ways, it captures everyday practice moments and turns them into learning opportunities (McDrury, Alterio, 2008). Byatt (2000) says: "storytelling is 'as much part of human nature as breath and the circulation of blood'"(cited in McDrury, Alterio, 2008, p. 166). With the abovementioned quotations and a lot more ideas about the advantages of using storytelling in education specifically learning languages, the lack of this culturally, socially and linguistically powerful tool is felt in our educational settings especially in TEFL.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Storytelling is a practical and powerful teaching tool, especially for language learning. Teachers in language classrooms, however, may hesitate to incorporate storytelling into language instruction because of an already overloaded curriculum. English teachers may complain about additional problems such as having little prior experience with integrating storytelling into language teaching, locating appropriate stories, and lacking the cultural and language abilities to handle storytelling in English. Despite all the advancements in the field of language teaching in the world, there are some problems in this regard in EFL teaching setting in Iran, mostly at schools and state education centers. To some extent this is due to using non-authentic

material to deliver linguistic elements. The lack of authentic material to foster language properly is obviously felt.

The value of storytelling as a rich source of literature, culture, and linguistic elements is known to most of us not always through scientific proofs but our own experiences of developing our mother tongue. Knowing this fact we expect the utilization of storytelling in language classes. The present study hopes to find out whether storytelling can be adopted as an effective technique to help learners improve their learning a foreign language, here English. In this study the researcher works on two traits which might be affected by storytelling, one is reading comprehension and another motivation for reading stories in English. In other words, if storytelling plays an important role in the development of L1 acquisition, can it have the same role in the learning of L2?. No need to say, for storytelling to be used in EFL classes it needs sufficient scientific and empirical support.

1.3 Significance of the study

Learning foreign languages, specifically English has become the concern of millions of people all over the world. People from different nations and countries feel the necessity to be equipped with a unique device to communicate with the whole world, namely language. English as an international language plays a significant role in commerce, art, sports, politics, science and so on. As some people argue the whole world has turned into a global village where the inhabitants need to communicate, convey, advertise, teach, learn and share experiences with each other. The basic need to learn English is obviously clear to everyone. In a sense we have quite a clear picture of "what" we should do. The controversy is more revolving around the "how" of doing