

TEACHING ENGLISH THROUGH STORYTELLING

Shirinqulova Sitora Muzaffar qizi

Student of Samarkand State Institute of Foreign languages

Abstract. This article is about teaching English more interestingly and effectively through storytelling. In this article it is spoken about the importance of storytelling method and several successful reasons of using it at the English lessons. There are lots of benefits of using stories in teaching children.

Key words: storytelling, knowledge, language learners, benefits, motivation, English.

It is common knowledge that there are lots of English teaching methods, for instance, watching movies, playing games, singing songs, memorizing new words, telling stories and fairytales and other ones. According to academic research, linguists have demonstrated that there is not one single best method for everyone in all contexts, and no one teaching method is inherently superior to the others. Also, it is not always possible or appropriate to apply the same methodology to all learners, who have different objectives, environments and learning needs. So, firstly, teachers should have some information about their pupils' interest, outlook, needs and likes. Teachers need new ideas, effective approaches to make each lesson interesting, exciting and to develop creative, mental activity of children.

Storytelling is one of the most natural activities in our lives. We constantly talk about how the day went, chatting with friends, reading stories on the Internet and hearing them. This is so natural for a person of any age, and must be used in teaching a foreign language. Many language teaching specialists worldwide suggest that storytelling is an appropriate and effective way in enhancing young learners' skills and interest in English and improving their learning output. Stories allow the use authentic material, help to work out grammar and vocabulary, contribute to the development of imagination,

speaking, listening, and writing. This technique is perfect for a variety of age groups, children, as well as adolescents and adults.

Language learners can benefit from storytelling because stories help them to develop the ability to understand spoken language and engage in thinking skills. In connection to this, Castro (2002, p. 52) reports on a study carried out in Colombia and stresses that "Listening to stories develops children's listening and concentration skills and their ability to receive and understand information expressed in words. Besides, with the stories children develop learning strategies such as listening for general meaning, predicting, guessing meaning and hypothesizing" [1] .

Storytelling has special pedagogical values for the foreign language classroom, as Rossiter points out below [2]:

Stories are effective as educational tools because they are believable, rememberable, and entertaining. The believability stems from the fact that stories deal with human-like experience that we tend to perceive as an authentic and credible source of knowledge. Stories make information more rememberable because they involve us in actions of the characters. In so doing, stories invite active meaning making.

According to Curtain & Dahlberg [3], storytelling can provide experience with the interpretive mode for children, even at very early stages of language acquisition, when the stories meet the following criteria: the story is highly predictable or familiar to the children from their native culture, with a large proportion of previously learned vocabulary. In early stages it is especially helpful to choose stories that include vocabulary representing the home and the school environments of the children.

There are several reasons why this method can be successfully used in teaching a foreign, in particular English language:

- motivation
- expansion of vocabulary

- development of listening skills
- improvement of writing and speaking skills
- general development

Storytelling and listening develops imagination, vocabulary, motivate and serve as a bridge between fantasy and reality.

Here are few types of using stories in English lessons:

✓The teacher reads a story or a fairytale as listening;

✓The teacher tells the story, introducing the topic or presenting new vocabulary and grammar

✓Pupils themselves make up a story from a series of pictures, phrases, comics and others.

✓After reading the text, pupils retell the story, relying on images, keywords.

In connection to new language we might find in a story, Cameron (2001, p. 169) states [4]:

A story can include some new language, but not so much that the story becomes incomprehensible. The number of new words that listeners can cope with within one story is not clear cut; it will depend on how well the pictures and discourse organization support the meaning of the words, how central the new words are to the plot, and the overall total of new words, which should not be too high. In preparing to use a story, new words and phrases that are crucial to understanding the story should be pre-taught, and support offered by pictures and context for the meaning of other new language should be checked to ensure it is adequate. If necessary, further support can be provided.

In regards to this practice, Cameron (2001, p. 168) states that [5]: "The role of the pictures in combination with the text to form the story as a whole should be considered. If the pictures are indispensable, as is often the case, then

somehow there will need to be enough copies or they will need to be made big enough for everyone to see".

Stories can [6]:

- °Enable children to empathise with unfamiliar people/places/situations.
- °Offer insights into different traditions and values.
- °Offer insights into universal life experiences.
- °Help children consider new ideas.
- °Reveal differences and commonalities of cultures around the world.
- °Promote a feeling of well-being, fun and relaxation.
- °Increase children's willingness to communicate thoughts and feelings.
- °Encourage active participation.
- °Increase verbal proficiency.
- °Encourage use of imagination and creativity.
- °Encourage cooperation between students.
- °Enhance listening skills.

When you tell your first story, there is a magical moment. The children sit enthralled, mouths open, eyes wide. If that isn't enough reason, then consider that storytelling:

1. Inspires purposeful talking, and not just about the story -- there are many games you can play.
2. Raises the enthusiasm for reading texts to find stories, reread them, etc.
3. Initiates writing because children will quickly want to write stories and tell them.
4. Enhances the community in the room.
5. Improves listening skills.
6. Really engages the boys who love the acting.
7. Is enjoyed by children from kindergarten to the end of elementary school.

8. Gives a motivating reason for English-language learners to speak and write English.

Based on this research, storytelling gave so many advantages in teaching English to early childhood education students, this activity is suitable for very young learners and it could be done by teachers in their teaching activities.

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