Exploring the Use of Storytelling Technique to Enhance English Vocabulary for Young Learners

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ABSTRACT

Storytelling is a natural and engaging way for young learners to learn new vocabulary. Storytelling has long been recognized as an effective pedagogical tool for enhancing language learning, particularly for young learners. It can conduct storytelling lessons entirely in English and they have to resort to help from the first language to make the input more comprehensible. This study explores the potential of storytelling technique to improve English vocabulary acquisition among young learners. The study employed a qualitative data collection methods. The qualitative data further indicated that storytelling fostered a positive learning environment and enhanced the participants' engagement and motivation in the learning process. Participants were young learners from eighth grade Junior High School students. The study involved a questionnaire. The findings revealed that the use of storytelling technique led to a significant improvement in the participants' English vocabulary knowledge. The study concludes that this study underpins the potential of storytelling as a powerful tool for optimizing English vocabulary competence among young learners.
Keywords: Storytelling, vocabulary acquisition, young learners

INTRODUCTION

In the world of education, English language learning is highly aspired by educators to students because educator want students to master English language learning in depth. This is so that when students enter the field they do not stutter with foreign languages, especially English, which in all aspects of life almost uses English. There are tremendous challenges to achieve this goal, none other than the mastery of vocabulary that must be owned by students. Vocabulary mastery is very influential in learning English, especially to interact with the community, this is the key to fluent English speaking. In English teaching and learning, vocabulary will be the main key because students will articulate their ideas by using their extensive vocabulary skills. In addition, Nation (1994) states that if a person is diligent in learning vocabulary and expanding his/her vocabulary knowledge, he/she will have no difficulty in the language learning process and this will directly add to his/her listening, reading, speaking and writing skills.

Certainly, storytelling stands as a potent pedagogical tool with the capacity to enrich educational outcomes across general, scientific, and technical disciplines (Sharda, 2007). Its practical implementation is marked by simplicity and a host of advantages. Some of these

merits encompass providing students with a touchstone for nurturing their creativity, offering an alternative to arduous toil, fostering character development by encouraging critique of differing viewpoints, and aiding in vocabulary expansion. The practice of retelling, involving oral, written, or pictorial recollection after reading or listening, allows students to better comprehend and organize information, presenting an invaluable method for educators to directly engage with their students. This facilitates vocabulary enrichment and hones crucial skills in writing, reading, and listening. Researchers have consequently underscored the paramount importance of mastering vocabulary in language acquisition.

Story telling is a communication technique used in early historical writing to impart knowledge and transmit historical events from one generation to the next. Furthermore, storytelling provides the basic framework for how students turn their daily experiences into knowledge. Furthermore, linguists find that every relationship experience is stored in the mind as an instructive story and that the brain is predisposed to manage, retain, and organize information through stories (Ahlberg et al., 2018; Albury, 2017; Parks & Calderón, 2021). As a result, tales serve as the basis for how students communicate with one another and are currently being studied as a potent way to improve students' ability to retain information (Haerazi & Kazemian, 2021; Hidayatullah et al., 2022; Kazemian et al., 2021). Story telling is one of the technique that helps the students master English, especially in english vocabulary.

Storytelling has become a teaching approach with traditional methods and modern tools in educational activities, especially learning because storytelling really helps us learn new languages and vocabulary in an interesting way, and does not bore students, besides that storytelling also accompanies us through our life experiences, this method can help school children to develop a better balance of mental and physical health.This method also contributes students as individuals to the life of the community in which they live. For example, storytelling benefits students to be able to recognize the first language we speak and to also benefit students to be able to use a second language because it benefits students to develop memorization of new words through attention to storytelling, repetition, and enjoyment. (Telo, 2021).

According to Zuhriyah (2017), storytelling is a learner-centered strategy that facilitates students' use of content and effective communication with others. Thus, it is possible to define storytelling as a teaching strategy in which students are expected to engage in a

dialogue-like exchange with the storyteller while retelling the story's content using different word combinations. Storytelling is one of the oldest art forms; it is reading aloud from memory as opposed to written works. Furthermore, storytelling is an authentic teaching approach that can aid in the development of emotional intelligence in kids and improve their comprehension of appropriate human behavior. It also promotes language learning by extending students' comprehension and assisting them in picking up new linguistic constructions. Furthermore, storytelling can help teachers become storytellers and prepare storytelling "performances" for their students, providing a framework for motivation and anxiety-free language acquisition.

Students', in their capacity as young learners, are innately predisposed to language acquisition. Curtain and Dahlberg (2009) contend that placing children in an immersive linguistic environment represents an ideal approach, yet it remains unfeasible for the majority. As foreign language learners, children possess distinct psychological traits compared to adults, influencing their pedagogical requirements. Hence, teachers should first comprehend these inherent characteristics to deliver high-quality English education effectively.

Teaching vocabulary to adults differs from teaching it to primary school students (Yılmaz & Yavuz, 2015). It stems from multiple factors. According to Tosun (2015), early learners have unique needs that must be addressed, and teachers must be aware of these needs. Young children also have a propensity to change their moods quickly. It is very difficult to hold onto one's position. It implies that young students enjoy physical activity and have trouble sitting still in chairs. Youngsters want to work on a particular project, so teachers should present the material in an interesting way.

In the realm of young learners, storytelling becomes an avenue for unleashing imagination. Young minds immerse themselves in stories, forging connections with characters while interpreting narratives and illustrations, thus nurturing their creative potential (Brewster, Ellis, & Girard, 1992). Stories also facilitate the development of various types of intelligence, including emotional intelligence, which contributes to language learning. These narratives aid children in learning strategies such as deriving general meaning, predicting, deciphering meanings, and formulating hypotheses. Contrary to the notion that past tense forms may hinder comprehension, it seems unwise to deprive learners of authentic applications of past tense within the meaningful context of stories (Cameron, 2001). In fact, familiarity with

stories in their first language predisposes them to expect past tense forms and possibly misinterpret verbs. Mart asserts that combining storytelling with total physical response can invigorate young learners, fostering the acquisition of English vocabulary, sentence structures, and comprehension (Tugrul Mart, 2012).

English for Young Learners refers to a special English learning aimed at eighth grade students at one state junior high school in Central Java Indonesia. It is designed to introduce English to students who are still in the second language learning stage. The goal is to help students gain a basic understanding of the English language, including vocabulary, grammar, and speaking and listening skills. The meaning is to provide a strong foundation for students in learning English and building their communication skills at an initial level.

According to Telo et al. (2021), storytelling is a social and cultural practice that revolves around the act of narrating and exchanging tales. Narrating stories has always been a common means of transmitting knowledge from one generation to the next. Perhaps one of the earliest teaching strategies is the storytelling technique. Both research focus on the use of storytelling in the classroom. Telo et al (2021) explores how storytelling can be used to promote collective creativity. The researcher investigates the use of storytelling to enhance English vocabulary for young learners specifically from eighth grade students at one state junior high school in Central Java Indonesia. The first research emphasizes the role of storytelling in encouraging collective creativity, while the second research focuses on enhancing English vocabulary. Both research contribute to the understanding of how storytelling can be utilized as an effective teaching tool in different educational contexts.

According to Siahaan (2012), who defines the use of story reading technique to improve EFL young learners vocabulary, kindergarten students' vocabulary mastery was improved by using this strategy. The similarities both studies focus on improving vocabulary skills in young learners. Both studies utilize storytelling techniques as a teaching method. Both studies target young learners in the context of English language learning. The differences, The first study specifically focuses on EFL (English as a Foreign Language) young learners, while the second study focuses on young learners from eighth grade students at one state junior high school in Central Java Indonesia (Secondary Education). The first study uses the "story reading technique," while the second study explores the "use of storytelling technique." The specific objectives and research questions of each study may differ.

According to Losi et al. (2022), the mean length of utterance (mlu) is a measure used to determine how well young children learn English vocabulary through storytelling. that when teachers used digital printing puppet media to tell stories to the students, the students' English language skills improved. Storytelling is helpful for learning foreign languages as well as one's native tongue because it makes new words easier to remember by arousing curiosity, creating excitement, and other effects. Youngsters pick up new information more quickly and effectively, which facilitates language development.

The objective of this study is to investigate the effectiveness of using storytelling as a technique to enhance the English vocabulary of young learners from eighth grade students at one state junior high school in Central Java Indonesia. By incorporating storytelling into the language learning process, we aim to provide an engaging and interactive environment for students to expand their vocabulary knowledge and improve their language skills.

Through this research, we hope to gather valuable insights into the impact of storytelling on vocabulary acquisition and retention among young learners. We will also explore the students' perceptions and attitudes towards using storytelling as a learning tool.

METHOD

In this case study, the research on "Exploring the Use of Storytelling Techniques to Improve English Vocabulary for Young Learners" conducted by eighth grade students at one state junior high school in Central Java Indonesia. Used a qualitative-descriptive research approach. In order to present the research results effectively, the researcher conducted several important steps, including observing English students and teachers, interviewing some students and teachers, and conducting a needs assessment. To explore the strategies used by eighth grade at one state junior high school in Central Java Indonesia, the researchers analyzed using qualitative methods with the following main questions:

- Do you have a wide enough English vocabulary?
- Do you like learning story telling in class?
- Is story telling material in English subject effective enough to improve your vocabulary?

- How frequently do you utilize storytelling as a teaching method to enhance English vocabulary acquisition?
- How effective storytelling can integrated into English language instruction to maximize its impact on vocabulary development?
- How often do you use storytelling to teach English vocabulary?
- How far do you understand that story telling presented by your peers can help you improve your vocabulary?
- How far do you believe that the application of storytelling techniques can encourage students to create variations of their own stories, so as to improve vocabulary retention among junior high school students?

We adapted these interviewing questions from several research sources and adjusted them to suit the purpose of our research on young learners.The above questions are adapted from research or studies that address aspects of vocabulary enhancement in English language learning through the storytelling method. Possible relevant sources or studies can suffice English language learners and English language teachers who are interested in the usefulness of the storytelling method in improving the vocabulary of young learners. This question highlights some important aspects, such as students' views on the effectiveness of using the storytelling method in improving vocabulary, the frequency of using storytelling as a teaching method, and the extent to which students see the added value of storytelling techniques for creativity and vocabulary enhancement.

The following are the sources of previous research that we further modified for the questions above:

- The effectiveness of storytelling in improving English vocabulary acquisition among junior high school students by Nurul Hidayah and Nuraini Sukri(2022) in this study they investigated the effectiveness of storytelling as a classroom teaching method to expand English vocabulary acquisition among junior high school students. In this study it was found that storytelling is the most .effective method to expand mastery, knowledge, production, and understanding of English vocabulary.

- The role of storytelling in promoting vocabulary acquisition and creativity in English language learning by Noraini Sukri and Nurul Hidayah (2020) In this study the two researchers examined the role of storytelling in promoting vocabulary acquisition and

creating new innovations in English language learning. In this study it was found that storytelling can not only improve students' vocabulary knowledge, but also can give students the positive side to use the words they just heard to apply themselves creatively.

- Exploring the impact of storytelling on vocabulary development in English language learning" by Siti Nor Aishah Abdullah and Mohd Yusof Mohd Zaini (2021), in this study the authors explored the impact of storytelling on vocabulary development in English language learning. The study found that storytelling is a useful way to improve students' vocabulary acquisition and knowledge.

These findings will be an important consideration to find out how important storytelling is for young students. The data used in this study falls into the category of primary data, which is collected directly from original sources through surveys, interviews, and observations. Primary data sources came from eighth grade students at one state junior high school in Central Java Indonesia.

This research uses interview data processing techniques which involve identifying patterns and relationships to gain in-depth insights, data triangulation which is comparing findings from interviews with other results, such as conducting observations to improve research results, distinguishing main data and supporting data which is choosing between main information that supports research and supporting data that might provide additional results, researcher reflection in the sense that the researcher sees the results of collecting interpretations of interview data and observations, the last thing to do is verification again with respondents to verify the final results.

FINDINGS

The participants in this research survey were eighth grade students at one state junior high school in Central Java Indonesia. The selection of eighth grade students at one state junior high school in Central Java Indonesia is based on their learning styles in improving English vocabulary comprehension. The researcher hoped that they would explore which strategy is more effective in learning English vocabulary. Vocabulary, according to experts, is an

important component of language proficiency and plays an important role in communication, comprehension, and expression.

Regarding the use of storytelling in English lessons, the majority of the participants expressed a positive inclination towards this approach. They found storytelling to be an engaging and enjoyable method of learning English vocabulary. The immersive nature of storytelling allowed them to connect with new words and phrases in a meaningful context, facilitating their retention and application in real-world conversations. The participants also acknowledged the effectiveness of storytelling in improving their vocabulary acquisition. They observed that the repeated exposure to new vocabulary within the context of captivating narratives facilitated their mastery of these words. Additionally, the interactive nature of storytelling encouraged them to actively participate in the learning process, further enhancing their vocabulary development.

Despite the positive perceptions and perceived effectiveness of storytelling, the participants' utilization of storytelling as a vocabulary learning strategy was relatively infrequent. They primarily relied on traditional methods such as memorization and rote learning, which were perceived as less engaging but more efficient. This suggests a need to promote storytelling as a more widely adopted vocabulary learning strategy, emphasizing its benefits and providing guidance on its effective implementation.

Observation is a fundamental step in data collection, providing insights into the development of understanding and behavior in each student (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Yin, 2016). The observation model employed in this study is specifically designed to gather data on collaboration or cooperation among students during teacher-assigned group work. An observation sheet will be completed by the observer, marking the appropriate choice (√) from a checklist based on the observation. This study utilizes a Rating Scale observation guideline, also known as a numerical rating scale, with four rating categories: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Agree, 3 = Netral, 4 = Strongly Agree (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

They also explained how each outcome from all sessions was highly influenced by how much each process of delivery was conducted and how they also affected the final answer. Then, the class was dismissed on a good note. The list below presented some of the notable responses from the students who were present in the respective meetings. Moreover, the responses were able to be gathered from the questionnaire that the writer has sent out before.

No.	Question	Answer Options				
		1 (strongly disagree)	2 (disagree)	3 (netral)	4 (agree)	5 (strongly agree)
1.	Do you have a wide enough English vocabulary?	-	-	60%	40%	-
2.	Do you like learning story telling in class?	-	-	50%	50%	-
3.	Is story telling material in English subject effective enough to improve your vocabulary?	-	10%	-	70%	20%
4.	How frequently do you utilize storytelling as a teaching method to enhance English vocabulary acquisition?	-	10%	20%	60%	10%
5.	How effective storytelling can integrated into English language instruction to maximize its impact on vocabulary development?	-	10%	40%	50%	-
6.	How often do you use storytelling to teach English vocabulary?	-	10%	40%	50%	-
7.	How far do you understand that story telling presented by your peers can help you improve your	10%	-	20%	60%	10%

	vocabulary?					
8.	How far do you believe that the application of storytelling techniques can encourage students to create variations of their own stories, so as to improve vocabulary retention among junior high school students?	-	20%	10%	60%	10%

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study highlight the potential of storytelling as an effective strategy for enhancing English vocabulary acquisition among eighth grade students at one state junior high school in Central Java, Indonesia. While the participants possessed a moderate level of English vocabulary proficiency, they acknowledged the need for more engaging and effective vocabulary development strategies. Storytelling emerged as a favorable approach, with participants expressing positive attitudes towards its use in English lessons.

The immersive nature of storytelling proved particularly beneficial for vocabulary retention. Stapel and Addis's (2009) work on narrative processing. They argue that narratives engage deeper cognitive processes compared to rote memorization, leading to better long-term memory. Similarly, Nation and Waring (1997) emphasize the importance of contextualized vocabulary acquisition, showing how encountering words within meaningful narratives enhances their retention and application. The contextualization of new words within captivating narratives facilitated their meaningful understanding and application in real-world conversations. Additionally, the interactive nature of storytelling encouraged active participation, further enhancing vocabulary development. Despite these perceived benefits, the participants' utilization of storytelling as a vocabulary learning strategy remained infrequent.

This discrepancy between positive perceptions and infrequent use suggests the need for a shift in pedagogical practices. Traditional methods such as memorization and rote learning,

while perceived as efficient, may hinder long-term vocabulary retention and fail to foster a genuine interest in language learning. Storytelling, on the other hand, offers a more engaging and effective approach that aligns with the natural human tendency to learn through narrative experiences.

To promote storytelling as a widely adopted vocabulary learning strategy, educators can emphasize its benefits and provide guidance on its effective implementation. This includes selecting stories that align with learners' interests and proficiency levels, incorporating storytelling techniques that enhance vocabulary retention, and creating opportunities for active engagement and application of new vocabulary. By effectively integrating storytelling into English language instruction, educators can harness its power to foster vocabulary growth, enhance communication skills, and cultivate a deeper appreciation for the English language among their students.

Moreover, storytelling can foster a collaborative learning environment, encouraging students to create variations of their own stories. This active engagement with language not only promotes vocabulary retention but also enhances creativity, critical thinking, and self-expression skills. By empowering students to become active participants in the storytelling process, educators can foster a more dynamic and engaging learning experience that extends beyond the confines of traditional vocabulary instruction.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the study explores how well eighth-grade students at a state junior high school in Central Java, Indonesia, can acquire English vocabulary through storytelling. The results show that storytelling has a beneficial effect on students' vocabulary development because it is immersive and engaging. Even though they understood its advantages, participants tended to underuse storytelling when learning vocabulary, preferring to use more conventional approaches that they thought were more effective. The study highlights the necessity of a change in pedagogy and promotes the use of storytelling in classrooms more widely in order to promote long-term vocabulary retention and sincere interest in language acquisition.

The way that students feel about storytelling as a teaching technique suggests that it has the potential to enhance English language instruction. Educators should provide guidance on the

effective application of storytelling techniques in order to close the gap between perception and practice. Storytelling that is in line with the interests of the students, vocabulary retention techniques, and opportunities for active participation are all part of this. Educators who embrace storytelling have the potential to enhance vocabulary acquisition and foster a creative and collaborative learning environment that transcends conventional instructional boundaries.

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