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Students' Perception on Learning English Language through Conventional and Digital Storytelling

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Abstract

Storytelling is one of the methods used in English language teaching. Several teachers have taught it, as it was found to be helpful and useful to the students. It can be achieved in two different styles, both traditional and digital. Hence, this study was conducted to see what the perceptions of the students regarding both storytelling approaches are when applied in the classroom. The findings will help teachers choose the correct way to apply storytelling that can later help students learn English. A survey was carried out at one of the schools in Sentul District, Kuala Lumpur, on the selected Year 4 pupils. The results showed that the students displayed greater interest in second language learning when these two storytelling methods were introduced. It changed the learning attitudes of the students as they found the learning to be more fun, enjoyable and attractive which enabled them to pay more attention in the classroom. They also preferred the approach of digital storytelling rather than the other, since it helped them better understand the story. The results also show that if the interactive storytelling technique were implemented in the classroom the students wanted to participate in the lesson again.

Keywords: Conventional Storytelling, Digital Storytelling, Perceptions, Learning English As A Second Language, Primary School

Introduction

One of the methods found in education is educational storytelling. It was regarded as one of the teachers' popular instruments for teaching and learning (Choo, 2003). Conventional storytelling has been implemented as the oldest teaching method in language learning (Firmansyah, 2007). It is thought to be a beneficial approach that teachers can use to teach the second language since its efficacy is undeniable (Choo, 2003). Because of its importance, some researchers like Wilkinson (2006) and Herman (2007) agreed that this approach should be maintained in education as it helps not only to learn a language, but also in other subjects. Conventional storytelling has shown important increases in pre-to-post test outcomes in prior research. It has been found help students improve their understanding and vocabulary and develop their English skills (Takumi Uchiyama,

2011). The research undertaken by Elisavet Chlapana and Eufimia Tafa (2014) also showed the same kind of outcomes. The findings showed favorable improvement in the vocabulary teaching of the respondents when tested.

Meanwhile, digital tool is now being integrated into the implementation of storytelling due to the rapid development of the technology. It is referred to as digital storytelling. Digital storytelling combines a traditional storytelling with the use of technology (Smeda et al, 2014). It enables teachers to tell a story with multimedia variety such as digital audios, videos, and images (Robin, 2016). Unlike conventional storytelling, the pictures are limited to those inside the books, and the sounds are manually composed. Using technology, teachers can now make the storytelling pleasant and appealing where learners can listen to audio, look at the true coloured images and watch live videos. It enables boost student engagement in teaching (Smeda, Darkich & Sharda, 2014) as well as enhance their teaching motivation (LoBello, 2015).

In reaction, instead of merely practicing standard storytelling, educators may also want to use digital storytelling as an alternative instrument for second language teaching. This is very helpful for teachers because they have discovered and identified the distinct teaching preferences learners may have. Not only that, it would be very useful to the learners as it makes them conscious of a different manner of teaching that might fir their styles. This is because the label of this young generation is 'Digital Natives' (Prensky, 2001). When educators apply the use of technology in teaching and learning, the impact of using technology as an instrument to teach in the classroom of the 21st century is unquestionable and dramatic, as mentioned by Tamim et al (2011).

This research is therefore conducted to explore the use of two different styles of using storytelling to learn the second language in one of Kuala Lumpur's elementary school learners. The research results will allow learners to think about the differences when experiencing both teaching methods and to explore which method to choose to be their best teaching choice. This research is anticipated to make students conscious of the digital storytelling strategy in order to learn the language other than the standard manner that can assist them to become better language learners. The study's goals are thus to examine the students' understanding of the standard storytelling strategy in English language learning as well as to examine the students' perception of the digital storytelling strategy in English language teaching.

This research aims to find out what the students' understanding of the two distinct approaches to storytelling is and what strategy the learners preferred in teaching the second language more than scaffolding them.

Background of the Study

Conventional storytelling is one of the most significant practices in education. According to Choo (2003), this approach is widely known as one of the most popular tools used by educators in teaching and learning. Firmansyah (2007) also posited that in learning a code, conventional story telling was one of the earliest learning techniques to be introduced. The effectiveness of this technique to efficiently teach a second language is undeniable thus naming it a beneficial approach that can be used by teaches (Choo, 2003). Wilkinson (2006) and Herman (2007) also highly recommended this approach to be implemented continuously in education, not only in learning languages, but also other subjects.

Along with that, language arts module was also deemed important as it was incorporated in the revised Malaysian curriculum which is Kurikulum Standard Sekolah Rendah (KSSR) by the Ministry of Education (2012). One of the elements in the language arts module that was emphasized contains stories. Teachers are highly encouraged to use storytelling and incorporate stories in their alternatives to teach the English language. From Year 4 up to Year 6, short stories as well as graphic novels are compiled in two different textbooks for each student to use in their learning session. This integration aims to promote the conduct of interesting and effective language teaching and learning among teachers (Ministry of Education, 2012).

Progressing with fast development of technology, integration of the digital instrument into storytelling approach is no surprise. It is known as digital storytelling. Digital storytelling is an integration of traditional storytelling and technological advances (Smeda et al, 2014) in allowing teachers to tell a story with the aid of multimedia as digital audios, videos and images (Robin, 2016). Teachers are now able to have more interesting and enjoyable storytelling session with real colored images and live videos, as contrast to conventional storytelling where images and audios are limited to those in the textbooks.

Conventional storytelling has been a widely implemented approach in teaching and learning. This is because of it is proven worthy as a teaching tool in encouraging students to learn English. Furthermore, students have been introduced to technology since young, making it more relevant to incorporate digital elements into their learning process. As the young generation is labelled as “Digital natives” (Prensky, 2001), the application of technology in teaching and learning may give larger impacts to them. As Tamim et al (2011) posited, the impacts of implementing technology in the 21st century classroom are not questionable and give dramatic effects.

Thus, teachers should want to consider the use of digital storytelling rather than the conventional method as an alternative in teaching language. This is very beneficial as it could be a way for teachers to identify students’ different learning preferences. In regards to that, this could also be an approach to introduce to the students about different learning styles and makes them conscious of various media to be incorporated in their preferred learning method. Hence, this study is conducted to explore students’ perception on the use of digital and conventional storytelling when these two approaches are implemented in their classrooms upon learning the English language.

Problem Statement

English is known as a second language in most of the countries including Malaysia. Notwithstanding, it is the international language, English is not the go-to language most Malaysians prefer to use. Learning English becomes onerous due to Malay medium instructions, inconsistency in education policy and society’s perception of the English language. Since Malay is the national language, the majority of the citizens are well-versed in it from kindergartens to universities, Malay – medium instructions are mostly used by teachers and lecturers to educate their students as it is more comprehensible.

On the other hands, English is only being brought to attention during English lesson. Exposure to the language becomes limited. Due to this, Malaysian students facing an impasses in learning the language. For English teachers, creating fun, meaningful and memorable classes should be the highest priority. The ESL students would profit from such courses to learn English in a more relaxing and pleasant way. It would assist them to learn English more efficiently if the learners really enjoy

themselves during the class. Learning should be enjoyable because learners would be extremely driven to really learn when learning fun is effectively accomplished (DiCarlo, 2009).

There are many studies conducted to examine how educators in Malaysian English schools teach listening, speaking, reading and writings as well as grammar and language arts. For example, Choy and Troudi (2000), Lim (2013), Thang, Ting, and Nurjanah (2011) and Normazidah, Lie, and Hazita (2012) glimpsed pedagogical practices and the reality of teaching and learning in Malaysian classrooms. English teachers seem to concentrate more on the job of preparing learners for public examinations; not because they wanted to, but because of the increasing pressure of generating excellent outcomes in domestic exams. Consequently, their pedagogical approaches seem to congregate around memorization and rote teaching; where abilities are more frequently taught as a collection of language mechanics with fixed ways of using the language and are very isolated from its communicative use, only to be learned and mastered for particular circumstances in the classroom.

As stated by (Normazidah et al. 2012), the focus on mastering and rote learning of skills and applying them in examinations eventually eroded communicative competence. The lack of soft skills amongst Malaysian undergraduates is partly attributed to the rote learning style adopted by Malaysian school children who are pressured to excel academically and, in the process,, they fail to develop an inquisitive mind and analytical skills (Ahmad, 1998; cited in Roselina, 2009). Hence, Ministry of Education is trying to change the system of the education in Malaysia where students have the opportunity to think creatively and critically with teachers' guidance.

Despite of that, based on the issue stated above, this study was conducted due to the problem faced by the students where they were only taught using the conventional storytelling as opposed to the digital storytelling to learn English language. Students still learn English language in traditional way rather than using all the ICTs. Teachers' digital storytelling is a rare practice in their English language teaching and learning. Teachers claimed that it is hard to implement digital storytelling in their teaching because they are not acquainted with the software. The software is digital applications that will help teachers generate storytelling digital materials. This fresh medium has led them to spend their time exploring and learning the application in their classroom before practicing it.

Purpose of the Study

1. To identify students' perception on the use of digital storytelling method when it is implemented in their classrooms upon learning the English.
2. To identify students' perception on the use of conventional storytelling method when it is implemented in their classrooms upon learning the English.

Research Question

1. What are students' perceptions of the conventional storytelling method when it is implemented in their classrooms upon learning the English language?
2. What are students' perceptions of the digital storytelling method when it is implemented in their classrooms upon learning the English language?

Significance of the Study

This study aims to explore students' perception on the use of digital and conventional storytelling thus enabling students to compare both approaches and explore the methods that suits their learning

preference the most. Hence, this study will also help teachers and students aware of the digital storytelling approach in teaching and learning the English language and help them become better learners.

Operational Definition

(i) Storytelling

Storytelling is an art of telling a story orally using words and actions to a listener (Mckay, 1997). It is one of the methods commonly used in the second language teaching of English. It includes the components of gestures, intonations, the images in the storybook, the song or sound to be described, and the actions to be elaborated. It is also recognized as an instrument to enable students through suitable tales to know about other cultures, individual, locations as well as universal life. The successful of using the storytelling depends on the storyteller's skills of delivering it to the audience (Mckay, 1997).

(ii) Digital Storytelling

According to the Digital Storytelling Association (2011), digital storytelling is a modern way of telling a story; from conventional way of using storybook to telling a story through a screen. It incorporates the use of digital cameras, computers, and non-linear authoring tools to form short, multimedia narratives (Meadow, 2003). The use of digital images, videos and sounds to assist spectators know the tale in depth. It also allows the story to be presented using the software like Moviemakers, iMovie and Photo Story in creative and interesting ways. These softwares enable the story to be told with special effects and animation (Editorial team, 2013). Meadows (2003) stated that digital storytelling is a personal story which makes use of digital cameras, computers, and non-linear authoring tools to form short, multimedia narratives.

(iii) Differences between oral storytelling and digital storytelling

Based on the research done by Tecnam (2012), there are six characteristics to differentiate between the oral traditional storytelling and the digital storytelling. The differences are shown in the table below:

| Items | Conventional storytelling | Digital storytelling |
|--------------------|---|--|
| Time of advent | Thousands ago | In 1994 by Atchley & Lambert at the Center for Digital Storytelling |
| Type of main style | Human voice and gesture | Multimedia components such as video, image and sound. |
| Content delivering | Verbal communication | Through information devices such as PC and tablets. |
| Data forms | Typically painted or printed papers | Stored electronically in digital form. |
| Way of learning | Verbal delivery-centered / one way speaking and listening | Multiple way delivery / interaction and collaboration. |
| Main character | Primarily oral combined with gestures and expressions | To unfold a highly sensory experience with narrative voice, images, sound and music into illuminated understandings. |

Summary

This chapter explains the reason why this research needs to be conducted. It highlights on the introduction, background of the research and discussed the problem statement. Furthermore, it has also presented the purpose of the study, research questions, significance of the research, limitation of the study and finally the operational definitions.

Literature Review

Language learning approaches

All learners may prefer certain methods to teaching (Wong & Nunan, 2013). They choose the methods they believe best suits as they go through the learning cycle. They are not even aware that these methods sometimes help them learn. They become natural and automatic when they continue to practice the methods. The pupils also do not know in some cases whether or not the approaches they have been practicing are appropriate (Wong & Nunan, 2013).

Embi and Amin (2010) described linguistic teaching as learners' behavior and/ or plans to improve their linguistic learning (Embi & Amin, 2010). Meanwhile, Oxford (2003) describes linguistic teaching strategy as the learners' particular behavior or thinking process to enhance their learning of another language. It is also defined as an option that learners take while learning the target language to cater for their issues (Rubin, 2013). It is essential to introduce these teaching methods as they assist students develop their target language skills. This is because learners become helpful instruments for the language learners to use effectively when they are conscious of the methods used.

Therefore, at some stage it is essential for teachers to introduce learners with distinct teaching methods in order to expose them to the pupils. If the methods implemented satisfy the requirements of the learners, they can be applied by the teachers during class learning (Gibbons, 2002). This will also benefit teachers as they have learned the preferences of the learners based on the students' feedback (Moon, 2005).

What are the Characteristics of Good Story?

There is some guidance provided by the past academics for the teachers to choose the narratives to be used. A good story, according to Fog et al (2010), is made up of four elements that are message, conflict, characters and plot. The message the author is attempting to communicate to readers or listeners must be evident and comprehensible. This is to ensure that the moral value highlighted in the tale can be delivered to the end well. Conflict is essential in the meantime because it defines the story's movement (Fog et al, 2010). The movement plays a part in addressing the readers or listeners' emotions and feelings that are engaged. Characters in the tale should also be determined to prevent confusion among readers or listeners (Fog et al, 2010). In which characters can readily be recognized throughout the tales, it should be obviously indicated. Plot also plays a key role in ensuring the narrative is well- arranged and consistent (Fog et al, 2010). The conveyed story cannot be linked without a solid plot and some portion of the storyline may be missing or let out.

How to Deliver the Story?

Barzaq (2009) mentioned some of the characteristics that the educators might want to consider in providing a tale. First, there is a need for two-way communication during the storytelling

phase. It has to occur between the crowd and the story teller. Secondly, the story teller must assist the audience construct their imagination of the characters, setting and situation by offering them with visual images, verbal descriptions or straightforward explanations relating to the experience or previous understanding of the audience. Third, the story-telling method must occur naturally. In order to create their knowledge and interpretation, the story teller should allow the audience to interrupt. Fourth, storytelling includes a process of sharing between those concerned. The audience may want to connect their experiences or previous understanding to the tale they hear. Therefore, while the storytelling method is taking place, the storyteller should not limit them from providing or adding some input. Fifth, it also gives the audience the opportunity to express their thoughts or feelings about the story they listen to. As long as the public justifies and clarifies their positions, it can be either positive or negative. Finally, the storyteller may indirectly stress fresh vocabulary with which the audience is not yet acquainted. With the assistance of images and creative gestures, learning the words and understanding the tale would make it simple or them.

The Effects of Conventional Storytelling

Conventional storytelling is one of the common approaches to teaching English as a second language, due to its advantages. Two different types of traditional storytelling were used in Takumi Uchiyama's (2011) research; Character Imagery (CI) and Simple Reading (SR). From the methods employed, all story modes showed a significant increase in pre- and post-test results. This shows that SR and CI were good at initially helping the students learn the vocabulary. CI has been found to help students improve their understanding and vocabulary, while SR has been found to help students develop their English skills. The study conducted by Chlapana and Tafa (2014) also showed the same sort of results. Although different instruction techniques were applied to tell the stories that were 'interactive instruction' and 'direct instruction', the results showed positive improvement in the vocabulary learning of the participants when tested.

Inal and Cakir (2014) have discovered positive effects by applying storytelling. The results showed that both groups of participants performed at approximately the same level initially. But the difference was shown in the post-test, as the experimental group performed better than the control group that was supposed to use the traditional teaching technique. In addition, storytelling was also found to allow students to learn through the correct stories about other cultures, individuals, places as well as universal life.

Not only that, with the other elements included such as gestures, intonations used while telling the story, the pictures in the storybook, the song or sound produced to describe as well as the actions the teacher could apply, the pupils can guess and acquire the new vocabulary. Gardner (2003) stressed this as he clarified the different intelligences that students may have in learning the second language vocabulary such as visual-spatial, body-kinaesthetic, musical, and linguistic that each student has may scaffold them.

Johnson (2005) also stressed the effectiveness of the application of conventional storytelling particularly in language learning. It enables students to listen to the words, and make sense of the meaning through the teacher's stimulus (Eng & Chandrasekaran, 2014). It occurs as the students can anticipate them through the tale plot as well as other cues such as images, movements and intonation used during the storytelling. Hassan Soleimani and Akbari (2013) also support this, as they claimed

that the students are able to understand the story even though the meanings of the words are not understood.

Other than that, choosing the right story genre can also influence vocabulary learning for the pupils. The stories used during the storytelling session must be short and simple to achieve the target, which is definitely not a long novel, a complex drama or even a complicated poetry. Lau (2002) illustrated this, where short and simple stories make it easy for the pupils to stay focused as it was understandable. Loukina (2006) also emphasized this concept from the viewpoint of the cognitive abilities of the pupils. Appropriate stories chosen make it attractive for the pupils and can be an effective tool for learning vocabulary.

Not only that, it has been found in earlier research that conventional storytelling helps students stay focused in the lesson. As the students focus, they also allow for more language acquisition (Walker, 2001). In addition, conventional storytelling allows the students to participate in the learning process. This is the most important learning criteria that could be challenging for the other methods to obtain (Rossiter, 2002). This helps the students to hear the information provided through the stories and to immerse themselves in the material (Abrahamson, 1998; Morgn & Dennehy, 1997).

Storytelling is also thought to help the pupils increase their imaginations. This is because some innovative works are involved that enable the pupils to discover new experiences (Harmer, 2007). At the same time, this approach implicitly leads to the greater incentive of pupils to continue learning the language that is new to them (Tarakçioğlu & Tunçarslan, 2014), makin the lesson a fun learning experience (Damar, 2009). This is also found in the study conducted by Nguyen, Stanley & Stanley (2014) when they stated that using storytelling helps to increase the learning interest of the participants which later enabled them to engage in the use of the target language.

Meanwhile, Abdulla's study (2012) showed that the two groups he tested in using storytelling as a mean of vocabulary learning had no obvious results significantly differing. Nevertheless, the experimental community students have more advantages in how to express the story using their own ideas, styles and language. They only mastered the vocabulary compared to the control group but encountered difficulties in writing and retelling the story. It indicates that the participants were able to understand the narrative well so that when the contextualized storytelling was introduced, they could retell the story. As suggested by Tan and Parimala Chandrasekaran (2014), contextualized storytelling would be important for the pupils as it improves their comprehension of the unfamiliar words.

Not only that, Thou and Wenli (2012) have emphasized the benefits of using storytelling while learning second languages. Results from their study have shown that the students were able to improve their language skills when they communicated in the target language. This indirectly helped enhance contact in the classroom between the students and the staff as well as the students and teachers as they expressed their opinions and experiences. It happened as storytelling is a face-to-face mechanism that enables the audience to respond to what they have heard (Heathfield, 2015). However, when the contact took place, it helped the students to gradually develop their understanding of the stories told (Thou & Wenli, 2012).

Storytelling has also been shown to allow teachers to build a stress-free environment on the classroom. Hemenover (2003) discussed this, that the psychological stress of the students can be minimized when the students started sharing their related personal stories. They began building their relationship and believed they were secure for the world. Heathfield (2015) also pointed out that the

teachers can encourage the students to do mixed-language storytelling to ensure that this stress-free atmosphere is preserved for the beginning learners.

The students are also exposed to different cultures and societies, through listening to the stories. This occurred as the storybook authors conveyed the cultural information to the readers by setting the stories they had told (Ellis & Brewster, 2014). Sometimes, the pictures provided by the authors in the storybooks also revealed this. This also helps the students to be conscious of cultural diversity and identity through this common culture awareness (Baldasaro, Maldonado & Baltes, 2014).

Conventional storytelling can also be used throughout the curriculum when it gives teachers the opportunity to integrate the stories with various subjects learned at school. This is suggested by Ellis and Brewster (2014) when they clarified that the teachers' stories may include other topics, such as science and geography. Students can learn about the different places in different countries, as an example. This would make understanding the world map easier for them if the teachers used it to describe the various places learned from the stories. Other than that, this cross-curricular link can also be a platform for students to learn new terms, in the target language as they listened to the stories, for example in science subjects (Ellis & Brewster, 2014). This, later, would help to broaden the vocabulary of the students.

The Effect of Using Digital Storytelling

Virtual storytelling is offered to present the students with another learning strategy that can be beneficial for them as the language learners. Digital storytelling is a mechanism that blends the conventional storytelling approach with the technical use (Armstrong, 2003). This involves incorporating digital media such as audio, video and images into the desired applications. It was found to be appealing to the students because it combines the handling of digital tools with their current skills. This is attributable to the students becoming identified as digital natives (Prensky, 2005). They are surrounded by different technologies, which give them various learning experiences. Hence, applying a teaching approach that involves the tool the students are familiar with can help them become better learners.

First, using storytelling enables to boost the learning commitment of the learners. This is shown in the research undertaken by Smeda, Darkich and Sharda (2014) that all of their respondents from Year 7, Year 9 and Year 11, who face issues with low commitment and absence of concern, showed favorable outcomes when implementing this teaching material. All of them showed an increase in their level of teaching commitment towards the end of the classes. Dupain and Maguire (2005) also show this when their learners showed improvements in teaching as they are supported by the recent technology they used to use.

Not only that, it is thought that digital storytelling will help the students boost their learning motivation. This content enables learners to use the technology effectively, according to Morris (2011). They have the right resources to discover the things they needed to edit and produce the results they wanted. The learners gradually learn to put more effort when this occurred because they wanted to come out with the finest video quality. Sadik (2008) and Robin (2008) are also in agreement with this result as encouraging the learners to use this fresh strategy helps maximize the passion of the learners.

LoBello (2015) also emphasizes the increase in the motivation of learners by using digital storytelling. The technology used to implement this material draws the learners in teaching to maintain their attention. This is because technology is the standard nowadays for learners. With this development, they develop and grow which can trigger them in providing their concentration. The software and the media used to design the narratives capture their attention on the screen. Not only that, LoBello (2015) also highlights the use of technology that enables teachers to show the students the actual situation or descriptions. It improves their imagination by recognizing the meaning and integrating it into their learning.

In addition, there are different senses involved in digital storytelling (Gils, 2005). There are hands, eyes, and ears involved. It makes teaching fun and pleasant as it meets the requirements of the learners. This occurs when this material requires learners to practice adjusting the difficulties they encounter in order to achieve the result they wanted when producing their own digital stories. Since the learners are just listening to the tales in this study, however, it only includes them with two primary senses, eyes and ears. These two senses play a major role in engaging learners because they are encouraged to learn to interact with colleagues (Smeda, Darkich & Sharda, 2014).

Digital storytelling also helps cater for the distinct teaching preferences of some learners. This includes the use of photos, videos and sounds. These components incorporated into the material enable learners to learn better, particularly those with musical, verbal-linguistic and visual-spatial learning intelligences (Gardner, 2010). Musical intelligence enables the learners to better comprehend the narratives as the learners can create sense as well as create relationships between the sounds and emotions. Meanwhile, they can interpret the written or spoken phrases in the video for verbal-linguistic learners, which later make them know the significance behind the delivered tales. For visual-spatial learners, through the pictorial pictures shown in the video, they can understand the narratives. Not only that, they can imagine the stuff they see with the significance of the tales and relate them.

Methodology

Research Design

A survey design was used to conduct this study. It was launched because it could help the researcher uncover the target reactions (Fink, 2009), which are the views of the learners on the use of digital storytelling as well as the standard approaches to storytelling in teaching the English language.

Sampling

One of the Chinese National Type Schools in Sentul – Sentul Zone, Wilayah Persekutuan Kuala Lumpur, took the respondents engaged in this study. Through systematic random sampling, they were selected. This method was chosen because the researcher was guided to select a number of

students from different classes to participate in the research (Fink, 2009). Students from numbers 1 to 10 were selected from the name lists provided by the class teachers to join this research. Since there are five Year 4 classes, there were a total of 50 participating learners.

Year 4 was chosen instead of selecting the learners from other years because the students were now subjected to short stories that had been inserted in their syllabus. This was one of the modifications made by the Ministry of Education (2012) following the restructuring and improvement of the past curriculum, Kurikulum Bersepadu Sekolah Rendah (KBSR). The revised curriculum launched, which is the Kurikulum Standard Sekolah Rendah (KSSR), incorporated the component of arts that enable learners to learn languages from a multitude of materials such as poems, songs, graphic novels and short stories.

Data collection

The tool used to retrieve student information was a questionnaire. Nguyen, Stanley & Stanley (2014) tailored the question items from a research. This study was chosen because it concentrated on the same region that the researcher wished to perform in this studies that implemented storytelling in second language teaching. However, some modifications have been produced to satisfy the level of skill of the present learners.

First, the researcher altered the response alternatives to three-likert scales instead of providing questions on five-likert scales. This was performed to make it easier for these learners at the primary level to give their answers. If a questionnaire of five-likert-scales was used, students might have difficulty giving answers as they could not distinguish between 'highly agree,' 'agree,' 'don't understand,' 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree'. Therefore, to 'agree,' 'not sure' and 'disagree' the investigator simplified the response choices. Not only that, in the response columns, the researcher also added emoticons. This was only to offer clear advice to the learners while answering the questions.

Second, the researcher used only the closing questions instead of mixing them with open-ended issues as in the initial research. This was intended to meet the participants' requirements. They were randomly chosen based on numbers, not their accomplishments. Therefore, learners must freely write the responses based on their experiences when using the open-ended questions. Advanced learners may be able to offer views as they had the ability to explain using the language. However, for the weak students who struggled to write because they could hardly explain what they experienced, it might be hard. Therefore, it may be hard for the investigator to get the relevant information to be examined.

The researcher finally divided the questionnaire into two parts. One was used by conventional storytelling to collect perceptions. Another chapter has been used to gather digital storytelling perceptions. This separation was created because the researcher wished to ensure that the two methods were able to differentiate the students' perceptions. In both parts, the question items stayed the same except that the researcher altered only the word of the teaching strategy used to create it specific.

Before being applied, the tool used was first piloted. It was used on a group of 20 learners who had experienced both techniques of storytelling. This pilot testing was performed to guarantee that the tool used can assist in gathering the information needed by the researcher (Fink, 2009). Fink (2009) also stressed the importance of this pilot test to ensure that respondents are able to react well to the issues as they are able to understand the language. Based on the outcomes, the learners concerned showed that owing to the unfamiliar terms used, they had difficulty understanding some of the issues. Consequently, the questionnaire language has been evaluated and streamlined. To verify the grammar used, a linguistic expert was referred.

It took about two weeks to collect data. The teacher conducted the classes during the first week using conventional storytelling. There's been one story told. The questionnaires were circulated to the learners at the end of the week to give their answers. The teacher informed the students a distinct tale later in the second week, but in the digital form. For the learners to give answers, the questionnaires were spread again towards the end of the week. For conventional and digital storytelling, the questionnaires were provided individually to prevent confusion among the learners. In addition, gathering answers as quickly as one method was implemented would assist the investigator gain significant information as the concepts are still fresh in the minds of the learners.

Results

The questionnaires were answered by all 50 participants involved. The results obtained are separated based on the different storytelling approaches used, following the previously stated research questions. The data was shown below.

The Perceptions of Students about the Conventional Storytelling Approach in English Language Learning

Table 1

| Questions | Agree | Not sure | Disagree |
|---|-------|----------|----------|
| 1. I give my full attention during the storytelling activities. | 44% | 54% | 2% |
| 2. I enjoy doing the storytelling activities. | 78% | 22% | 0% |
| 3. I could imagine the characters, time, places and/or activities taking place. | 38% | 56% | 6% |
| 4. Storytelling activities help me to understand the content better. | 38% | 56% | 6% |
| 5. Storytelling activities are interesting and attractive. | 58% | 36% | 6% |
| 6. Storytelling activities make me feel confident to take part in class. | 28% | 60% | 12% |
| 7. I am able to learn to speak English during the activities. | 66% | 32% | 2% |
| 8. I feel safe to participate in the storytelling activities. | 42% | 44% | 14% |
| 9. I feel that learning English is fun. | 72% | 28% | 0% |
| 10. I would like to participate in future storytelling activities. | 32% | 52% | 16% |

Based on the table 1 above, it can be seen that the highest perception was related to the enjoyment of lessons. 78% of the respondents agreed that they liked the conventional way. In the meantime, 72% agreed that this approach made English learning more fun compared to the teacher’s regular learning approaches in the class. About 66% also agreed that when this approach was applied, they could learn to practice and improve their language skills in the target language. Meanwhile, only 58% of the students found this conventional approach to be interesting and attractive.

The results also showed that when the story was told, only 44% of them paid attention in the class. The remainder of them, about 54%, were uncertain whether they remained focused or not, with 2% admitting that they paid no attention during the class. Less than half of the class, about 42%, felt the environment in the classroom was safe for them. If the conventional storytelling strategy was to be applied, this could have led only 32% of them to want to enter the class again. Surprisingly, the data also showed that only 38% of them could understand the story as well as imagine the character involved and the settings. The remaining students, with 6% totally disagreed, seemed unsure about 56%. As a result, only 28% of them felt confident that they would participate in the storytelling

activities. 60% of the remaining students seemed uncertain, with 12% admitting that they were not at all confident.

The Perceptions of Students about the Digital Storytelling Approach in English Language Learning

| Questions | Agree | Not sure | Disagree |
|---|-------|----------|----------|
| 1. I give my full attention during the storytelling activities. | 72% | 26% | 2% |
| 2. I enjoy doing the storytelling activities. | 88% | 8% | 4% |
| 3. I could imagine the characters, time, places and/or activities taking place. | 60% | 38% | 2% |
| 4. Storytelling activities help me to understand the content better. | 78% | 18% | 4% |
| 5. Storytelling activities are interesting and attractive. | 68% | 28% | 4% |
| 6. Storytelling activities make me feel confident to take part in class. | 54% | 40% | 6% |
| 7. I am able to learn to speak English during the activities. | 70% | 26% | 4% |
| 8. I feel safe to participate in the storytelling activities. | 66% | 30% | 2% |
| 9. I feel that learning English is fun. | 82% | 16% | 2% |
| 10. I would like to participate in future storytelling activities. | 76% | 24% | 0% |

Table 2

Table 2 above showed that the highest perception of using the digital storytelling approach in the classroom was related to the 88% enjoyment of the classroom. 82% of them said that digital storytelling made language learning fun and 78% agreed that they could better understand the content of the story. If the teacher applies the same approach again, 76% agree that they want to re-participate in the session of teaching and learning. Approximately 72% also reported that when the lessons took place they managed to give their full attention. Meanwhile, 70% said that during the activities they had the opportunity to learn to speak. 68% of students also found that using the digital storytelling approach, the lessons were interesting and attractive, with 66% responding that they felt safe to join the activities. Using digital storytelling, 60% of the students also enabled the characters to be imagined and set well with the help of the pictures shown. More than half of the students (54%) also felt confident that they would participate in the activities regardless of their frequency level.

Discussion

The Perceptions of the Students Regarding the use of Conventional Storytelling in English Learning

This study shows that students perceived the use of conventional storytelling as enjoyable in learning English. Perhaps this is because the children love to listen to stories. It also involves the teacher's use of various intonations and facial expressions while delivering the story. For example, it can make the students feel excited and stimulated by the sounds made to portray the animals. These reflect the idea suggested by Barzaq (2009) earlier that the creative gestures and intonation included in the process make the students enjoy the lesson. This can also make the students think that learning English is fun in fact.

The students perceived this approach to be used during the lessons as it enables them to learn the target language. This may happen when students can interact with the teacher in two ways directly where they can ask questions if they want to seek more explanation. Not only that, students may also have the opportunity to speak in the language when they have been allowed to interrupt if they want to connect with their previous knowledge between the stories they have been listening to. This supports the thoughts provided by Thou and Wenli (2012) that allowing them to practice speaking is the ability to share the thinking of the students.

The students also considered the classroom use of conventional storytelling because they believe that this activity of storytelling is interesting and attractive. This could be due to the opportunity given to the students to discover new storytelling experiences like what Harmer (2007) mentioned. The students, for example, get to expose and learn about different situations, cultures, people or other places they do not know about. In the story told, the students experienced a small child who lived in the jungle with different animal types. If this situation really happens, it can give the students a different view of life.

The students also perceived that they could pay attention in the classroom with this approach. This may be due to the situation where students need to listen carefully to understand the story. Furthermore, the interesting and creative ways used when the story was told may also attract students to get immersed in the story, allowing them to stay focused and engage throughout the learning process as Rossiter (2002) suggested.

The Perceptions of the Students Regarding the use of Digital Storytelling in English Learning

The study shows that 88% of students perceived this approach to digital storytelling as enjoyable when learning the target language. Perhaps this is because of the materials the teacher uses to deliver the story, which is technology. The children, as well informed, are now exposed to technology from a young age. As digital natives, they are labeled (Prensky, 2005). When asked to respond to the activities given after listening to the story, they acquire the ability to handle the tool. Therefore, when applying this approach, students feel that they enjoy the class because it meets their current learning needs. This factor also makes students perceive indirectly that learning English is fun.

The students also perceived that digital storytelling enables them to better understand the story's content. This can happen when the students receive the video and audio when they listen to the story. These videos and audio help to scaffold the understanding of the students by watching the story as well, instead of just listening to it, to make sense of the meaning of the unfamiliar vocabulary used. This could have to do with the use of various learning senses. The integration of different learning senses, as stated by Gills (2005), allows students to learn best from their own preferred approach.

Since at first the use of digital storytelling was perceived as enjoyable and fun as well as making the learning comprehensible, the students had chosen to participate in the lesson again if this activity was carried out by the teacher. Approximately 76% agreed to join, informing the teacher of a good sign of interest in learning. This could be due to the benefit the students could gain from the classroom, which is primarily intended to improve their English. Today's students realized that acquiring this language as a second language is important. Having identified one of the appropriate approaches to help them learn, it would be best for them to participate to assist their development of learning.

The students also perceived that digital storytelling might help them pay attention. More than three-quarters of them agreed that they could remain focused in the class. This can be due to the students being able to engage with the lesson as they are interested in the implemented tools. Like the study that Smeda, Darkich and Sharda (2014) showed earlier, learning engagement is useful as it contributes to positive learning outcomes. This is due to the increase in language use that occurs during the learning process.

Implication, Recommendation and Conclusion

This research showed the perceptions that students of the Year 4 had when exposed to two different storytelling approaches. Most of the perceptions given are positive by using digital storytelling method rather than using conventional storytelling method. Moreover, if they want to implement the approaches next time, they are beneficial for teachers to be referred to. These perceptions, other than for teachers, also allow students to recognize which learning approach they may prefer to integrate as their strategies for language learning.

In-depth research on implementing these two storytelling approaches on a larger sample may help provide useful information, particularly to Malaysian teachers and students, on the benefits of using conventional storytelling and digital storytelling to improve the quality of English language learning.

The findings of the study showed that between these two approaches, students tend to learn better by using digital storytelling method. Students tend to pay more attention to the lessons with this approach compared to the conventional approach which has been used by their teacher. The conclusion that can be drawn is that the use of digital storytelling method promotes active participation in class among learners. During the class, the learners appear to participate actively rather than just being passive learners; they ask questions, answer questions from teachers, and even share ideas and thoughts with their peers. This phenomenon is quite different from what has been experienced by teacher, when teaching English language using the conventional method (using chalk and talk). So in order to overcome the problem regarding teaching English in the classroom, teachers should use digital method or known as interactive method to attract students' attention during English lesson and make the lesson more meaningful. Teachers could use this opportunity to create more fun, enjoyable and effective English lesson so that the students will understand more about English. In addition, learning English language with the aid of videos produced by using the digital storytelling method really does have a great impact on both teachers and learners. Ultimately,

teaching English language using digital method is more significant and helpful compare to conventional methods in the learning process for learners and teachers alike.




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Appendix A




Conventional storytelling survey form

| |  Yes |  Maybe |  No |
|--|--|---|---|
| 1. I give my full attention during the conventional storytelling. | | | |
| 2. I enjoy doing the conventional storytelling. | | | |
| 3. I could imagine the characters, time, places and/or activities taking place. | | | |
| 4. Conventional storytelling help me to understand the content better. | | | |
| 5. I believe that I will remember some parts of the story and the lessons learned for a long time. | | | |
| 6. Conventional storytelling makes me feel confident to take part in class activities later. | | | |
| 7. I am able to learn to speak English during the activities. | | | |
| 8. I feel safe to participate in the conventional storytelling. | | | |
| 9. I feel that learning English is fun. | | | |
| 10. I would like to participate in future conventional storytelling. | | | |

¹ This questionnaire is adapted from a study conducted by Nguyen, Stanley & Stanley (2014) available at <https://core.ac.uk/download/files/214/5066850.pdf> (downloaded on 29th March 2019)

Appendix B

Digital storytelling survey form

| |  Yes |  Maybe |  No |
|--|--|---|---|
| 1. I give my full attention during the digital storytelling. | | | |
| 2. I enjoy doing the digital storytelling. | | | |
| 3. I could imagine the characters, time, places and/or activities taking place. | | | |
| 4. Digital storytelling help me to understand the content better. | | | |
| 5. I believe that I will remember some parts of the story and the lessons learned for a long time. | | | |
| 6. Digital storytelling make me feel confident to take part in class activities later. | | | |
| 7. I am able to learn to speak English during the activities. | | | |
| 8. I feel safe to participate in the digital storytelling. | | | |
| 9. I feel that learning English is fun. | | | |
| 10. I would like to participate in future digital storytelling. | | | |

¹ This questionnaire is adapted from a study conducted by Nguyen, Stanley & Stanley (2014) available at <https://core.ac.uk/download/files/214/5066850.pdf> (downloaded on 29th March 2019)