

The Role of Contextualized Storytelling in Helping Jordanian University Students Develop Their Reading Skills

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Abstract

This paper aims at investigating the role of storytelling in helping the Jordanian university students develop their reading skills. It also aims at contrasting the effects of reading based on contextualized storytelling with reading based on dual-code model, text-only and multi-sensory approach reading to investigate the performance differences in reading comprehension and word recall. The participants were 30 first year undergraduate university students, who study English language and Translation at Isra University located in Amman, Jordan. They included 15 males and 15 females. The data were collected from a word recall test, an activity of story retelling in addition to a short questionnaire. The data were analyzed quantitatively in the light of the research questions. The findings revealed that there is no significant difference between the mean scores of the three groups: two experimental groups and one control group) in term of the word recall test and the proposition. The multi-sensory approach is considered more effective intervention than Dual-Code Model and text-only

reading in EFL learners' overall reading comprehension was not proved in this study.

Keywords: Dual-Code Model, Multi-sensory Approach, Reading Comprehension, Storytelling.

1. Introduction

Developing the students' reading skills is considered one of the important challenges that face both the students and the teachers. Many tools have been adopted to develop this skill. Storytelling is one of these tools. It is considered one of the oldest ways of human communication and one of the most essential instruments in the field of teaching and education. The previous studies have proven that storytelling has a great influence on improving the students' comprehension and increasing the ability of the students in reading. Providing a precise definition of the storytelling is a challenging task. Many scholars have tried to define this concept. For example, Storytelling is defined by McDrury and Alterio (2003:31) as

Uniquely a human experience that enables us to convey, through the language of words, aspects of ourselves and others, and the worlds, real or imagined, that we inhabit. Stories enable us to come to know these worlds and our place in them given that we are all, to some degree, constituted by stories.

Dyson and Genishi (1994) propose that storytelling is a method where both the narrator and the receptor use mental imagery, the narrator uses the mental imagery to transfer his or her ideas to the receptor, whereas the receptor uses mental imagery in order to give the narrator a feedback which can be verbal or non-verbal. Hsu (2010:7) defines storytelling as "the use of voice, facial expressions, gestures, eye contact, and interaction to connect a tale with listeners".

This paper aims at investigating the role of storytelling in helping the Jordanian university students develop their reading skills. It also aims at contrasting the effects of reading based on contextualized storytelling with reading based on Dual-Code Model text-only and multi-sensory approach reading to investigate the performance differences in reading comprehension and word recall. Cary (1998) proposed the Contextualized storytelling and stated that it is based on the use of multi-sensory approach which depends on the idea of finding a connection between the verbal and non-verbal ways of communication. Cary (1998) used the Contextualized storytelling to enhance the English acquisition of ESL learners. This study seeks answers to the following questions:

- (1) To what extent does the contextualized storytelling based on a multi-sensory affect the students' reading comprehension?

- (2) Is contextualized storytelling based on a multi-sensory approach a more effective intervention than Dual-Code Model and text-only reading in the Jordanian University Students' reading?
- (3) Does the gender have any effect on contextualized storytelling based on a multi-sensory approach?

2. Literature Review

Researchers have investigated the role of storytelling in helping L2 learners develop their reading skills. For example, Ta'amneh (2018) shed the light on the role of storytelling in developing Saudi EFL university students' reading comprehension by converting the lessons of New Head Way Plus (Elementary Student's Book) into storytelling texts. In other words, he tried to measure the effect of storytelling on the Saudi EFL students. The participants were forty first year science university students at Tabuk University. Each group consists of twenty participants. The participants were assigned into two groups: control and experimental. The responses of the participants were analyzed quantitatively in the pre and post reading comprehension tests. The study revealed that storytelling has a great influence on developing the student's reading comprehension.

Huang (2006) examines the effects of contextualized storytelling on EFL young readers' reading comprehension and word recall. Huang compared the performance of three groups of school students by adopting three approaches: reading the text only, reading the text with illustrated pictures (Dual-Code Model) and reading the texts by adopting multi-sensory approach. The participants were twenty-Seven sixth grade students from a public primary school in Taiwan. Story retelling tests and word recall tests were used in order to observe whether there are any differences in the performance differences. The results revealed that the level of experimental group was better than the other groups in terms of story retelling.

Sahibzada, Ahmadzai, Niaz, Laftah (2020) examine the relationship among the storytelling, the critical thinking and reading comprehension of EFL students at Kandahar University. They tried to find out the effects of storytelling and critical thinking on the reading comprehension. Twenty-seven Afghan EFL students participated, they were selected after a Placement test in order to make sure that they fall within the same level. The participants were divided into two groups: experimental and control group. The results revealed that there is significant developing in post-tests in term of reading comprehension and critical thinking in group of storytelling. However, the developing is higher in reading comprehension section than critical thinking.

Yulianawati, Nurhadi, Mayasari (2022) examine elementary students' engagement and perception of the use of storytelling in reading comprehension. Thirty-one students have participated in this study. The data were collected from classroom observations, questionnaires, and interviews. The data were analyzed qualitatively. The findings revealed that the activity in storytelling plays a vital role in encouraging students to read and improves the students' behavior and attitudes in EFL reading activity.

3. Theoretical Framework

As earlier mentioned, this study aims at measuring the effects of storytelling on the reading comprehension of Jordanian University students. The measurement in this study is based on adopting some important results of previous researches on psycholinguistics and second language acquisition such as Dual-code Hypothesis and Multi-sensory Approach.

Dual-Code Model

Dual-Code Model was proposed by Paivio in (1971), this hypothesis tries to create a balance between the verbal and non-verbal processing. In other words, it tries to shed the light on the importance of employing both the verbal memory and image memory.

Paivio (1986: 53) states:

Human cognition is unique in that it has become specialized for dealing simultaneously with language and with nonverbal objects and events. Moreover, the language system is peculiar in that it deals directly with linguistic input and output (in the form of speech or writing) while at the same time serving a symbolic function with respect to nonverbal objects, events, and behaviors. Any representational theory must accommodate this dual functionality.

Paivio (1991:149) stated:

Dual coding theory (DCT) explains human behavior and experience in terms of dynamic associative processes that operate on a rich network of modality-specific verbal and nonverbal (or imagery) representations.

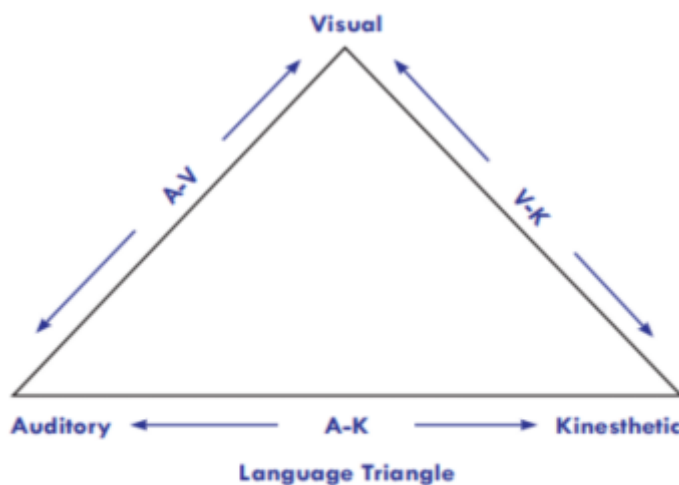
Multi-sensory approach

A multi-sensory approach is one of the newest approaches that is used in the field of second language acquisition. (Murphy, 1997, p. 1) states that multi-sensory is "also known as VAKT (visual-auditory-kinesthetic-tactile). (Mercer & Mercer, 1993) state that the students can understand the information better when they are exposed to it in more than one way

“A multisensory approach is an eclectic approach that teaches all children regardless of their preferred learning style “(Murphy, p. 19).

Morgan (2019) mentions that the aim of creating the Multisensory teaching methods was to enable the children who suffer from speech and hearing disabilities to read probably. (Gillingham & Stillman, 1997; Kotler, 2018; McGinnis, 1939). Multi-sensory teaching shed the light on the creation a link among three aspects: the first one is what the students see (visual) , what the students hear (auditory), and what the feeling that comes to the student when pronouncing the sounds of the words (kinesthetic) (Gillingham & Stillman, 1997). Figure 1 , is known as the Language Triangle (see Figure 1), shows the three links (i.e., visual,

auditory, kinesthetic) that are considered essential to construct the language.



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Figure 1. The Language Triangle from "The Gillingham Manual,"
 by A. Gillingham and B.W. Stillman, 1997, p. 30. Cambridge, MA,
 Educators Publishing Service.

4. Methodology

Data Collection Procedures

The data were collected from a word recall test, an activity of story retelling in addition to a short questionnaire. The aim of using the word recall test is to measure the retention of subject word after reading.

In the activity of story retelling, the students were asked to retell the story in their own words. The short questionnaire was used to elicit demographic information from the participants. This study is based on comparing the reading performance and word recall of three different groups: two experimental groups and one control group. To achieve the purpose of the study, two short stories were chosen. The first one is called "Christmas in Prague" and the second one called "The Death Of Karen Silkwood." There are many reasons for choosing these stories. The first reasons is that both stories were written by Joyce Hannam. These two stories consist of 400 words, which means that its length is reasonable for first year students in addition to that both stories have illustrated pictures which play a very important role in understanding the whole story. As earlier mentioned, the students were divided into 3 groups. Group A: Control B: experiments (Dual code approach) Group C: multi-sensory approach). The control group has been exposed to text-only story; the second group has been exposed to illustrated written story (Dual-Code approach), and the third group listened to the story and then have been exposed to illustrated written texts of the story (multi-sensory approach). After exposing each group to the above mentioned stories, the word recall test took place, it lasted for 30 minutes. after finishing the word recall test, the part of retelling the story started, the researcher asked each students to retell the story in his or her own words. The test

consisted of 60 words: 30 words from the story and 30 distracting words. The activity of the retelling the story was recorded and the recording was stopped once the student told the researcher that he/she had finished.

5. Participant

The participants are 30 first year undergraduate university students, who study English language and Translation at Isra University located in Amman, Jordan. They included 15 males and 15 females. Their age range was from 18-20 have been chosen after a proficiency test in order to make sure that all students fall within the same level. After the exam the students were randomly divided into three groups one control group and two experimental groups. Each group consists of 10 students.

6. Data Analysis Procedures

After finishing the word recall test, the activity of story retelling and the short questionnaire, a quantitative study was conducted to measure on the effects of Contextualized Storytelling Approach on the development of reading comprehension of a group of EFL learners in Jordan has been performed.

7. Findings

To answer the first research question “To what extent does the contextualized storytelling based on a multi-sensory affect the students’ reading comprehension?”, means and standard deviations of the word recall tests were calculated. Table (1) shows the descriptive statistics of the first word recall test for the first story the Christmas in Prague. According to the results of the first word recall test it can be noticed that the contextualized storytelling can influence the retention of vocabulary but not to a great extent.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics of the First Word Recall Test

Group	Mean	Number	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Group A	17.4	10	4.67	10	25
Group B	20.5	10	3.17	15	26
Group C	16.9	10	1.85	14	19
Total	18.26	30	3.68	10	26

Table (2) shows the results of the Analysis of Variance for the first story retelling and it can be noticed that there is a significant difference in the performance among the group performances in the analysis of variance (ANOVA) for the first story.

Table 2
Analysis of Variance for the first Story Retelling

Group	SS	df	Sms	F	P
Between Groups	76.06	2	38.03	3.231	25
Within Groups	317.8	27	11.77		0.0
Total	393.86	29			

In order to answer the second research question: Is contextualized storytelling based on a multi-sensory approach a more effective intervention than Dual-Code Model and text-only reading in the Jordanian University Students' reading? the average and the variance for the results of each group were calculated. Table (3) presents the average and the variance for the results of each group, as can be noticed that there is a significant difference in the average. The average of group A is 17.4, group B is 20.5 and the average of group c is 16.9. According the results of the analysis it can be noticed that group B, the group that have adopted the dual code model has achieved the highs average. which aligns with the claim that Dual-Code approach is more effective and productive that other approaches. In other words, it answers the second research question.

The proposition about the multi-sensory approach as a more effective intervention than Dual-Code Model and text-only reading in EFL learners' overall reading comprehension was not proved in this study.

Table 3
The average and the variance for the First story Retelling

Group	Average	Variance
Group A	17.4	21.82222222
Group B	20.5	10.05555556
Group C	16.9	3.433333333

Table (4) shows the descriptive statistics of the second word recall test for the second story The Death Of Karen Silkwood. According to the results of the second word recall test it can be noticed that the mean for Group A is 17, for group B is 21.7 and for Group C is 18.1 which means there is no big difference between the performance of the three groups.

Table 4
Descriptive Statistics of the Second Word Recall Test

Group	Mean	Number	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Group A	17	10	3.265	12	23
Group B	21.7	10	4.522	15	30
Group C	18.1	10	3.541	12	24
Total	18.93	30	4.20	12	30

Table (5) shows that there is a significant difference among the group performances in the analysis of variance (ANOVA) for the first story.

Table 5
Analysis of Variance for the Second Story Retelling

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P
Between Groups	120.86	2	60.43	4.15	25
Within Groups		27	14.55		0.0
Total	513.86	29			

Table 6
The average and the variance for the Second story Retelling

Group	Average	Variance
Group A	17	10.66666667
Group B	21.7	20.45555556
Group C	18.1	12.54444444

Group B has achieved the highest average which means that the dual – code approach is more productive than other approaches.

In order to answer the third research question: **Does the gender have any effect on contextualized storytelling based on a multi-sensory approach and Dual Code mode?** A t-test was used setting the significant point at $\alpha < 0.05$. The following table presents the differences between males and females regarding adopting multi-sensory approach, dual-code mode in reading comprehension.

Table 7
Difference in adopting multi-sensory approach, dual-code mode in Relation to Gender

Approach	t test		Gender			
	T	P	Male		Female	
			M	SD	M	SD
multi-sensory approach	-0.13	0.8	51.3	9.0	53.1	12.6
Dual-code mode	0.02	1	22.5	12.3	22.4	6.8

The results revealed that there was no significant difference between males and females in adopting multi-sensory approach ($t = -0.13, p = 0.8$). Furthermore, there was no significant difference between males and females regarding adopting the use of Dual-code mode ($t = 0.02, p = 1$).

These results align with the findings of Obregon (2023) who stated that males and females do not differ in terms of narrative performance. Hutchison (2012) also indicated that no group differences in macrostructural narrative language ability.

The results of the first and the second word recall test have revealed that the contextualized storytelling doesn't have a great influence on the retention of vocabulary. The proposition about the multi-sensory approach as a more effective intervention than Dual-Code Model and text-only reading in EFL learners' overall reading comprehension was not proved in this study. The results revealed that there was no significant difference between males and females in adopting multi-sensory approach ($t = -0.13, p = 0.8$). Furthermore, there was no significant difference between males and females regarding adopting the use of dual-code mode ($t = 0.02, p = 1$).

8. Conclusion

The goal of this study is to examine the role of storytelling in helping the Jordanian university students develop their reading skills. It also aims at contrasting the effects of reading based on contextualized storytelling with reading based on dual-code model, text-only and multi-sensory approach reading to investigate the performance differences in reading comprehension and word recall. As it was presented, Reading is one of the most challenging skill for the EFL students, because those students need the aid of the instructors. Based on the results of the study, the use of the storytelling to develop the students reading comprehension is recommended. Moreover, the researcher recommends other researchers to shed the light on adopting other techniques such as story completion to examine its effect on developing students' other language skills such as speaking and listening.

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Appendix 1

First Word Recall Test
Name :-----
Score :----- / 40

	Border		Sun
	Bill		Poor
	Bus		Pool
	Bloom		Wet
	City		Weather
	Concert		Rehearsal
	Taxi		Revision
	City		Tears
	Conductor		Teeth
	Field		Sad
	Difficult		Sat
	Hurt		Twin
	Hit		University
	Lie		School
	Live		Sky
	Loud		Sugar
	Load		Prague
	Moon		London
	Free		Alone

Appendix 2

Second Word Recall Test
Name :-----
Score :----- / 40

	Medical		Click
	Manager		Cat
	Negative		Company
	Positive		Nurse
	Safe		Television
	Test		Time
	Exam		Go
	Scanner		Blue
	Uranium		Carpenter
	Identity card		Sad
	Career		Wool
	Job		Silk
	Alarm		Truth
	bar		Honest
	Beer		Reference
	believe		Eye
	care		Paper
	Check		Back
	Book		Sara

Appendix 3

Story Retelling Scoring Sheet

Story retelling(40 points maximum)	Score
Setting : Time and place	(4 points)
Characters	(6 points)
Initiating event/problem(s) to be solved	(8 points)
Internal response	(2 points)
Attempts and the happenings in the process	(10 points)
Direct consequence(s)	(2 points)
Resolution and ending	(8 points)

Total score:**Copyright Disclaimer**

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