

Introduction

The last two decades have witnessed a marked increase in the interest for teaching English as a foreign language specifically at the university level , this trend has come at a time when the field of EFL is showing a noticeable and a growing acceptance of communicative language learning and teaching techniques .This latter is based on the fact that language is social and students are expected to be good communicators in using it .

In the classroom context, EFL learners should learn the language naturally and teachers should provide them with ample opportunities to develop in the classroom the types of interactive skills that most closely approximate communication in the 'real world' .As a matter of fact , new challenges have appeared for teachers to seek for new strategies that may contribute in realizing the O.E course objectives if they are effectively designed and implemented .In this paradigm , introducing storytelling as a technique to teach this course is viewed as a pre requisite for being able to achieve the learners` proficiency to perform academic listening and speaking tasks. So, it is well known that both listening comprehension as well as speaking play a key role in FLT. Storytelling activities ,if appropriately selected and organized they can offer a range of opportunities to develop FL learners` oral performance in a playful and enjoyable context

1-Statement of the problem

The ideal environment for improving the oral performance in a foreign language is the one where the target language is spoken and heard at all times . In a country as Algeria when English is learnt as foreign language , opportunities for oral practice are fewer than other skills. With FL learners throughout their learning experience , more emphasis is laid on the development of reading and writing .Thus , being students for more than five years in which there is always a temptation to just relax and learn on a traditional way followed by tests that simply measure their passive knowledge , depriving them of the most creative part in the process of learning a foreign language , we find that they are unable to understand English if it is spoken in a natural context at normal speed, nor are they able to speak this language

appropriately .They feel less confident about their language competence because they receive inadequate practice in these two skills.

Learners in such a context are characterized to be low motivated by the foreign language and may be poor achievers in terms of using this language .In the recent classroom status , the O.E lecture is attributed the same characteristics cited above , its way of being taught is proved to be inefficient, dominated by teacher's talk , the teacher is the main source of input in the target language and in most of the cases , he acts as a model in speaking , the main pedagogical materials are exposes treating a variety of issues expected to be presented orally ,but in deed they transform the session to a reading one in most of the cases.

Learner 's lack of being exposed to the foreign language in the natural context presented by native speakers in an authentic manner as well as their urgent needs to be given the opportunity to do so ,led to think about new challenges an alternatives to present the course, so to achieve its main objective which lies in improving learners` ability to understand the spoken language and respond correctly using the target language .

We tend to investigate the effect that 'introducing story telling' could have on student's oral performance . The subjects of our investigation would be second year students at the English department at Batna university .

. Hence , throughout this study , we will try to seek an answer for the following question:
- How would story telling play a helpful role in developing the students' oral performance (listening and speaking abilities)?

A possible answer to this question is to formulate the following hypothesis

2-The hypothesis

Using story telling activities in an oral expression course is an effective technique in developing the learners' oral performance.

3-The objectives of the study

Throughout this present study , we set ourselves some objectives to attain;

- To identify and spot the factors underlying students lack of achievement to understand the target language as well as to use it appropriately ,through consulting students attitudes towards the learning of this module the content and the teaching techniques related to it, besides seeing the problem from teachers ` perspectives and thus, to correlate the responses of the two samples

-To suggest an alternative technique in carrying out an oral expression course through introducing story telling and showing its efficiency in improving the learners' listening and speaking abilities .

- To enhance the students' oral communication by giving them plenty of opportunities to use the English language in an authentic manner .

On the other hand , we targeted to attract the teachers' attention to adopt the new suggested technique ,knowing that most of them hesitate to incorporate story telling into language instruction as they claim having little prior experience with integrating story telling into the Oral Exp course, locating appropriate stories and lacking the culture and language abilities to handle story telling in English.

So, we intend to demonstrate that the story telling technique could be used in different ways with different purposes in the language classroom ,aiming to contribute in the field of language teaching , and advice teachers to exploit this technique at their best.

4-Background and significance of the study

Although many studies have been carried out in the field of teaching the oral expression course, in our context, the investigated study is significant on the basis that few studies that dealt with this aim of "developing students' oral performance " ignored the fact that story telling is among the techniques that enhance students' speaking and listening abilities as well as promoting their cultural awareness ;and even if these studies exist , they do not fit the Algerian reality.

Besides, the poor amount of literature concerning the subject. While we find a considerable confirmation about the value of story telling in the learning process and developing language skills, still we have insufficient sources and researches to support that .

5-Basic assumptions

The current study is going to be undertaken with the assumption that adequate input of language presented through storytelling activities based instruction in the O.E course leads not only to improve the learners` listening comprehension but also it acts as a spring board in terms of speaking .

It is believed in this study that stories inn TEFL if appropriately selected , con prove to be very useful in offering a valuable way of contextualization and introducing new language , making it meaningful and memorable .They are associated with feeling and memories , as they are distinctive manifestation of cultural values and perceptions.Besides,they linguistic forms , grammar ,phrases and vocabulary.

The use of storytelling activities in classroom , we assume ,may allow students to internalize important aspects for story beginnings and endings, settings , characters and plot lines. They will be offered a natural language experience and a full chances to express themselves and ideas using colorful and descriptive language in a well structured sequence and choose affective action words .

Throughout story telling students will be encouraged to experiment with voice, tone,. It also encourages reading motivation , aids listening comprehension and why not lead directly to story writing .

6-Limitation of the study

like any kind of research in education, the findings to be reached in this study will be limited in time and population .The present work investigates the relationship between second year students of English department at Batna university and the oral expression course for the academic year 2006-2007 .According to the findings reached, the learners are going to be taught with and without being exposed to story telling activities for the reason of showing the positive impact of the new suggested technique on the students' oral performance.

7-Research methodology design

7-1. The choice of the method

When conducting research , the researcher notices a variety of methods .But, there is no ideally accepted scheme for classifying them .However , the nature of the issue , the type of data needed , the aim of the study , the sample involved and so on are variables which impose the kind of approach most appropriate to the work(Turney and Robb.1971).

Since our present work is in the field of teaching foreign languages, it attempts to collect evidence about the efficiency of introducing story telling on improving the students' listening and speaking abilities .So, in order to achieve the set objectives , the experimental method was properly adopted to explore the relationship between variables(Nunan. 1999)and to test further our hypothesis ;

' the experimental method establishes cause-effect relationship between dependent and independent variable by eliminating alternative hypothesis, uses quantitative data' (Davis,1998,2).

7-1-1.The independent variable

It is the suggested teaching technique , which consists in introducing story telling activities in teaching an oral expression course to second year students.

7-1-2.The dependant variable

In the current study , it is the development of the students' oral performance(listening and speaking skills) .

7-2.Population

Following our research requirements, we needed both students and teachers` populations .Students `population for two main reasons. First, for the administering of the questionnaire designed for students, then to carry out the experimental treatment. The population of teachers for the administering of the questionnaire designed for them .For students` population ,we have chosen to deal with second year students of the English department at Batna university for two reasons:

First, second year students may be accepted as having rather a homogenous level in the English language.

Second , student of second year are already acquainted with the listening comprehension activities as well as being introduced to the module in the previous year.

Teachers population consists of 5 second year teachers of O.E in addition to three others teaching the same course but to other grades for consolidating our data.

7-3.The sample

`Sampling is the procedure a researcher uses to gather people, places, or things to study . Research conclusions and generalizations are only good only as the sample they are based on. Samples are always subsets or small parts of the total number that could studied` (Davis,1998,7).

Since the nature of our topic implies the necessity to opt for the experimental method, Thus , to realize the experiment , there a clear need for a sample because conducting this latter on the whole population 253 students is really tiresome , time consuming and difficult to control.

Therefore, the sample of the study consists of to main equal groups (a control and an experimental group) formed by a random sampling assigned to assure greater chances to every individual in our population to be selected. This type of sampling appear to be

appropriate in such a case because the majority of the population `s participants share common characteristics ;

-Having the same previous tuition , 5 years in both middle and secondary schools.

- Having the same university learning experience; one year of study at the English department.

- Having the same amount of time devoted for the Oral Expression course; one hour and half which s claimed to be insufficient .

Apart from the already mentioned similarities there was one basic difference which is the different educational backgrounds students come from(literary, scientific and technological).

Second year students of the English department at Batna university for the academic year 2006-2007 are represented by 10% in our sampling procedure for the genres (girls and boys) .This size would better fit the suggested teaching technique requires a limited size of students. The experimental group consists of 25 participants (males and females) and the control group consists of 25 participants (males and females).

7-3-1.Sampling procedure:

We have written the names of all second year students , separating girls `names from boys ones and put each in a separate list. We started picking up 25 subjects for the CG and 25 others for the EG through what is called a systematic sampling which is :

'A random sample compiled in a systematic manner'

(Hefner, 2004,12)

For this type of sampling , a list and a student `s number on that page was determined at random. This would represent the first subject and the starting point for choosing the remaining subjects. A random number was generated at 15 , then every 15 th student would become a subject until we have selected enough subjects for the two groups. The same procedure was adopted for selecting boys where the random generated number was 7 (girls are numerous than boys)

7-4.The data gathering tools

To collect the necessary data about the efficiency of introducing story telling in teaching an oral expression course and the impact it has on the learners oral performance, we will use two main data gathering tools ; two questionnaires , the first was administered to 100 year students, the second questionnaire was administered to 5 second year teachers of O.E in addition to 3 others teaching the same discipline to first and third grades

Observation grids are used to attain necessary data about the participants oral performance progress through the various designed tests in both listening and speaking sections along the experimental study . In the three tests, the EG receives a storytelling activities based treatment. Concerning participants of the CG , they undertook an ordinary course based instruction.

7-4-1.Questionnaires:

" We use questionnaires when we want to tap into the knowledge , opinions , ideas and experiences of our learners, fellow teachers ,parents or whatever ."

(Wallace ,1998, 124).

In the current study, the questionnaires are designed to be administered for two samples (learners , teachers) to obtain different perspectives, opinions, viewpoints about the items under investigation. The two questionnaires ` items are set out in a systematic way are expected to be answered by reading the questions , then ticking responses or writing in short answers. The items vary to present the necessary issues to be investigated , they are presented through different formats; numerical scale 1-4, ranking, yes /no and open ended responses...

When designing the questions meticulous attention was paid to ensure that they are relevant, appropriate, precise and unbiased.

-Students` questionnaire was not piloted because it was directly administered to students and the instructions were explained to them.

- Teachers ` questionnaire was piloted on a sample (2 teachers) representative of the concerned population (8 teachers).

7-4-2.Tests ` observation grids

They aim to test students `performance progress by comparing the means of the two groups concerned by the experimental study in the three tests with their both sections. this latter are based upon tasks and activities to improve students` listening and speaking abilities .

Observation grids ` results in addition to the two questionnaires findings have validated the research hypothesis by demonstrating that storytelling activities have a positive impacts on developing learners` oral performance