

Cultivating Young Learners' Creativity Through Story Telling in Remote Learning

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ABSTRACT

During COVID 19 pandemic, all teaching and learning process seem to be changed a lot in terms of teacher-student interaction, teaching method, assessment and so on. Despite of the changes, teachers are urged to manage themselves to cope with this situation. One of the most essential thing is to find ways to create fun learning environment despite of other factors that may be out of teachers' control such as the students' home environment. The thing is learning process needs to go straight to its objective. In this paper, it will be explained how story telling can be a fun and engaging activities, creativity stimulant for students especially for the young learners, and still directed to the objective of the language learning especially for speaking skill in which many students labelled it as an unsettling activity.

Keywords: *remote learning, language, teaching, young learners.*

1. INTRODUCTION

In remote learning era, students are required to study by only using computer, maybe notes, and a teacher and classmates they meet virtually. Most of the time, they easily get bored because they are forced to live and socialize virtually. This atmosphere can affect negatively to students' learning motivation that may hinder their academic progress. Thus, teachers need to find some fun ways in order to delve into their enthusiasm.

In language learning, young learners are expected to be confident to speak the language they are learning. Teachers often find that young children are reluctant and anxious about speaking foreign language. Meanwhile, foreign language, like English, should be practiced in order to reach the level of language mastery. Challenges are often mounted when it comes to foreign language in remote learning because teachers are also challenged with the way to motivate students, to participate, to reduce their speaking anxiety, and to keep track of their progress. However, teachers, parents, and students need to deal with the current situation, COVID-19 pandemic by running online language teaching process.

In English online classroom, students can be encouraged to learn the language better by providing shareable online games, songs, videos through the online learning platform.

This article presents about how story telling in which teachers usually do it for students in a face-to-face learning activity can be designed as the creative thinking and activity in English classroom.

1.1. Creativity

Having a creative thinking is one of the thinking skills needed in the modern era and in the future. Thus, it is a must for students to have creative thinking to modify something and to create something new from the existing thing.

In order to become truly communicatively competent, learners should be provided with manifold opportunities to become autonomous language users through activities that support their natural desire to interact with peers and allow them to make use of their "rich resources of imagination, creativity, curiosity, and playfulness" [1]

1.2. Story Telling as a Creative Speaking Activities

Storytelling is a powerful tool for young children to express their creativity. [2] states that storytelling provide opportunities for creative thinking, socio emotional development and social interaction. Through storytelling,

young learners are expected to be truly communicatively competent.

[3] assert that storytelling has been set as a creative speaking approach which is aimed at promoting productive language use for young learners. It is illustrated into some of these following levels.

Level I: Reproductive Language Use

At this level, young learners have been given fixed expressions so that they are able to communicate successfully. The speaking activity is guided according to the input given in class. Young learners are exposed to imitate include saying rhymes and chants, singing, and retelling stories. This approach is appropriate for beginners as they are expected to actively participate from a beginning level as well as to empower their self-confidence. The model of reproductive language use can be seen in this following figure.

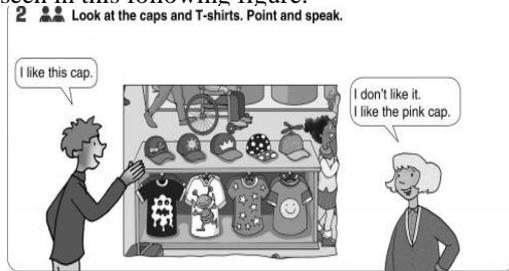


Figure 1 Fully scripted activity about likes and dislikes [3]

Level II: Creative Language Use

In the level of creative language use, young learners should combine fixed expressions independently. Teachers provide partial scaffolding to the learners such as phrases that can help them speak accurately. There are some examples of activities at this level, such as: partly scripted guessing games, information-gap activities, story skeletons and gapped songs, chants or rhymes.

Level III: Creative and Productive Language Use

At this level, young learners are encouraged to use their linguistic knowledge creatively in a meaningful context. By having the autonomy to use words or expressions, there is also a great chance for having greater errors. However, teachers' tolerance for errors should be high and feedback should be given clearly in order to get the improvement of the next performance. [4]

2. CONTEXT AND RESEARCH METHODS

The study took place at a private school, Binjai, Indonesia. There are 20 primary students, in the 1st grade, in a class. They study English and Bahasa Mandarin as the foreign language, but English is mainly used as the instructional language. They can understand teachers' instruction when they use English, but they tend

to reluctant and lack of self-confidence to use the language.

By referring to this, the researcher would like to present a way to encourage the young learners to have learning autonomy especially in expressing their ideas. So, the researcher provides some animals cartoon as the object of their story. They are free to choose the cartoon, name it, and create a story about the character. But the researcher determines the theme for their story telling; it must be related to their English lesson, that is about Free Time Activities. So, they are encouraged to freely create a story about an animal character, what it does in its free time. Besides, they are also assigned to make a video-recording of themselves telling the story.

3. FINDINGS

Based on the practice of storytelling during the remote or online learning, it is found that young learners make some efforts in this project. Some of them choose to write the story on a piece of paper and tell them to the audience via their video recording. This kind of effort is made by most of the students in the lower-group. It is understandable since they actually have a lot to improve within themselves such as: their language skill, lack of self-confidence, or anxiety. Meanwhile, most of the young learners, in this case, the grade 1 students, are so expressive about their storytelling. The students said that they liked the pictures and felt happy because they could create a story about a free time activity of a cartoon animal independently.

4. CONCLUSION

Assigning young learners to speak in their foreign language is not an easy thing to do. Moreover, it is for the remote learning era. Finding something attractive and encouraging are two things all foreign language teachers need to create in their classroom. Besides, a more tolerable on mistakes during their beginning process of speaking or expressing ideas in foreign language is another thing that teachers need to consider in order to maintain their students' self-confidence and self-efficacy.

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