

Adult L2 Learners' Attitude toward Storytelling*

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This study investigated adult second language (L2) learners' interest in storytelling and expectations of its effects in L2 English classroom. Instruction and practice in storytelling were given to forty undergraduates during the semester. Questionnaires were administered before and after the treatment to see whether storytelling can be an attractive tool in an adult L2 language classroom and how learners' interest in storytelling and expectations of its effects had changed. The results of the pre- and post-treatment questionnaire showed that participants' interest in storytelling as well as their expectations on its effects was extremely high (over 90%). The results of the post-treatment questionnaire showed that participants' positive attitude toward storytelling changed only slightly. Overall, adult L2 learners carried incredibly high positive attitude toward the effect of storytelling on the improvement of their language skills. The results suggest that initial interest and expectations might play an important role in maximizing the effectiveness of storytelling for adult L2 learners. Since this study does not evaluate learners' skills in terms of reliable tests, however, further study is necessary to generalize the effect of storytelling on the improvement of certain skills.

[L2 learner's attitude/adult L2 learners/storytelling/
L2 / /]

I. INTRODUCTION

Numerous tasks have been developed in adults' English as a foreign or second language (EFL or ESL) classroom for the improvement of L2 language skills (Brown, 2007; Celce-

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Murcia, 2001)¹. Storytelling has been proposed as one of the useful classroom activities to improve both first (L1) and second (L2) language development (Collins & Cooper, 2005; Colon-Vila, 1997; Garvie, 1990; Peck, 2001; Tompkins, 2002; Wright, 1995). Some researchers have advocated storytelling for second language learning. Peck (2001) describes storytelling as a useful technique for children to develop their listening and speaking in L2 English (p. 144). Garvie (1990) holds that a skillful teacher can use stories to develop “more efficient listening, more fluent speaking and the ability to read and write easily and competently” (p. 161). Colon-Vila (1997) emphasizes the interest value of storytelling over other techniques for acquiring and developing oral skills. In *Storytelling with Children*, Wright (1995) concurs: “Stories, which rely so much on words, offer a major and constant source of language experience for children. Stories are motivating, rich in language experience and inexpensive. Stories should be a central part of the work of all primary teachers whether they are teaching the mother tongue or a foreign language” (p. 4).

Studies also provide some empirical evidence for positive effects of using stories in children’s EFL classrooms. Li and Seedhouse’s (2010) comparison of ESL classroom interaction in Taiwan indicated that when storytelling was used, more varied interaction patterns occurred, with students initiating more interaction and implementing a wider range of language functions. Though most of the students’ initiations were in the L1, the authors contend that the large number of initiations and overlaps in speech suggest that the storytelling motivated and engaged the students in its classroom activities, and the transcriptions also reveal a high amount of exposure of the students to unplanned and varied discourse from the extended talk about the stories. Stoicovy (2004) concludes from a case study of two L2 English children from the Micronesian Islands that retelling stories facilitates their ability to reproduce the story in writing.

Storytelling can be an effective classroom activity for fostering second language learning, but most of the research in this area has focused on children, not adults, and little attention has been paid to adult learners’ perspectives on the topic. It is not yet clear whether adult L2 learners are interested in storytelling or believe that storytelling can improve their L2 skills. To maximize the potential benefits of storytelling for adults, it is very important to know as much as possible about their attitudes² toward the technique prior to actual classroom application. This study investigates college students’ interest in storytelling and beliefs about its effectiveness to inform the question of whether and how storytelling can be applicable to adult L2 learners in the classroom.

¹ “L2” (i.e., English in this study) is generally used as a cover term to refer to ESL (English as a Second Language) or EFL (English as a Foreign Language) (Brown, 2007, p. 3).

² Attitude generally relates to a person’s desire to study, interest in, and fascinations (Corbin & Chiachiere, 1995).

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

1. The Definition of Storytelling

In many Asian countries, including Korea, storytelling is often mistakenly equated with story reading. Although essentially similar in content, the two practices differ in audience participation, language development and the development of listeners' imaginations. Both story reading and storytelling use stories as a means to develop language acquisition and literacy. However, storytelling and story reading must be understood differently in order to be effectively used in the context of language teaching and learning (Isbell, Sobol, Lindauer & Lawrence, 2004). In story reading, learners passively read or listen to stories. In storytelling, however, learners actively participate in listening to stories and often in retelling them in their own words. Unlike story reading, storytelling can be an integrated tool to improve all four skills at the same time. Peck (1998) notes that telling stories in the classroom furthers oral and written language development as well as furthering comprehension for reading and listening. In a story reading event, a reader holds a book. However, in a storytelling event, without the book as a barrier, the teller looks directly into the eyes of the audience and is free to use gestures, facial expression and body movements to enhance the telling and to help listeners understand the story better. Thus storytelling is highly interactive (Hamilton & Weiss, 2005).

Storytelling simply refers to telling stories to someone, where stories may cover various genres from folktales to personal tales. According to this definition, anyone who tells a story can be called a storyteller. This definition can be broadly used and applied for various disciplines. When stories are told or performed on the public stage by professional storytellers³, the definition of storytelling has to be concretely specified as follows:

“...at its core, storytelling is the art of using language, vocalization, and/or physical movement and gesture to reveal the elements and images of a story to a specific live audience” (National Storytelling Association, 1997 http://www.eldrbarry.net/roos/st_defn.htm).

This definition fits the “storytelling world” as defined by professional storytellers who practice at festivals and conferences. In recent decades, for example, an international

³ Professional storytellers refer to people who work in the field of oral storytelling. There are numerous professional storytellers in the world (International Storytelling Center 2011, www.storytellingcenter.net). Many of them run their individual websites (e.g., visit <http://www.marilynmcphie.com/calendar.html> for Marilyn McPhie and <http://www.ddavisstoryteller.com/> for Donald Davis). There are also considerable voluntary setting of storytelling in the public library, hospital, and school.

storytelling center in Jonesborough, Tennessee in the United States hosts a well-attended annual storytelling festival (International Storytelling Center 2011, www.storytellingcenter.net). Sobol (2008) characterizes storytelling as a multidisciplinary art form because it has been practically applied in various areas such as education, health care, social work, psychology, ministry, law, the humanities, or other related fields.

2. Why Storytelling in Adult English Language Classroom?

Even if they have studied and practiced English for several years in and out of school, many adult L2 learners in Korea have confessed that they are not able to make sentences, communicate with a foreigner, and they cannot tell an episode or story in their own words. One problem lies in the fact that, in many L2 classroom settings, students are not exposed to opportunities for productive storytelling in the classroom. In order to tell a story in their own words, students ultimately have to use language, productively and receptively, in unrehearsed contexts. Without any theory and practice in storytelling, telling a story in the target words will be a challenged task even for teachers who are proficient in L2 English.

Stemming from the socio-cognitive perspective of the socio-linguistic theory, with an emphasis on meaning and communication, and a goal to develop learners' "communicative competence", Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach evolves as a prominent teaching method and gradually replaced the previous grammar-translation method and audio-lingual method (Brown, 2007). Although the goal of the CLT approach is to instill communicative competence, teachers and textbooks mainly focus on students' acquiring question-answer styled conversation skills, with less emphasis on spontaneous telling skills. Thus, even in college classes thought of as communicative, students are asked to practice and/or memorize goal-oriented dialogues from textbooks. The question-answer and goal-oriented styles of conversation are popular in part because they are comparatively easy to teach and grade; however, students may memorize numerous sentences from conversation but not often use them in actual situations. Moreover, the question-answer styles of conversation do not reflect authentic, more digressive and implicit conversation among native speakers of English and many other languages. As Stenson (2003) puts it, "in everyday conversation between native speakers of English, the question-answer is rarely used. The language learner finds herself lost; she is looking for and waiting for questions and answers. She is looking for both speakers to stay on the same topic. The native speakers, however, are using a different style together. They are using conversational storytelling (p. 137)."

In conversational storytelling, each speaker tells a short story about an event. The next speaker usually adds his or her own story about that event. In fact, one of the best ways to get another speaker to talk about her experiences about a topic is to recount your own

experience first. In many classrooms, the lack of opportunity for conversational storytelling may inhibit students' fluency in L2 English. The goal of the CLT approach needs to be reconceived; communicative competence needs to be understood as including the same strong component of story-telling competence that we see evidenced in daily communication. Storytelling in the classroom, clearly, is likely to be an efficient tool whereby students might gain that competence.

As discussed above, the use and effectiveness of storytelling for adult L2 learners has rarely been discussed. For children, some researchers consider it one of the most effective ways to improve both first and second language development (Colon-Vila, 1997; Ellis, 1997; Garvie, 1990; Peck, 2001; Wright, 1995). Ellis (1997) describes the role of storytelling in classrooms as follows (pp. 21-23):

1. Storytelling is the embodiment of whole language.
2. Storytelling is interdisciplinary—and the perfect thread for tying the curriculum!
3. Storytelling is a perfect tool for meeting different learning styles.
4. Storytelling is a dynamic way to teach higher-level thinking skills.
5. Storytelling facilitates cooperative learning and the development of social skills.
6. Storytelling builds self-esteem and motivates hard-to-reach students.

As described by Ellis, in every storytelling experience there is speaking and listening, and motivation for reading and writing. All four skills can be naturally incorporated and embodied. Thus, storytelling is an integrated tool for improving various language skills (Colon-Vila, 1997; Ellis, 1997; Garvie, 1990; Peck, 2001; Wright, 1995).

When someone listens to a story, she not only hears the words but also understands meanings, draws inferences and interprets the storyteller's nonverbal messages. She can also be encouraged to critically evaluate the story she hears. Someone preparing a story to tell in front of an audience may read story books to find "just the right story" to tell, search for the story's meaning and analyze and evaluate the literature, so that storytelling also enhances reading skills and vocabulary. The process of rewriting a story from a book to retell it in a spoken style helps the learner to internalize structures and collocations. In preparing personal stories in their own words, learners can gain writing skill. In the process of practicing a story for public telling, participants' grammar and pronunciation errors can be easily realized and fixed and their speaking and pronunciation can also be enhanced. Therefore, we can say that storytelling is an efficient tool to improve all L2 skills together.

3. Teachers' and Learners' Attitudes

Despite the fact that storytelling can have some potential effects on language development, the actual application of storytelling in adult L2 classrooms is very limited. Very few colleges have storytelling courses in their curriculum (e.g., *Storytelling: theory and practice* and *Storytelling practicum* at Korean Soongsil Cyber University, www.kcu.ac). It is particularly slow to catch on in adult classrooms. A main reason might be teachers' lack of awareness of how storytelling enhances adults' L2 improvement, given the common association of storytelling with children.

Other reasons may concern the beliefs and attitudes that teachers hold about storytelling. The lack of development of the theory and methodology of using storytelling in the classroom may cause teachers to lack confidence in using the technique. Hamilton and Weiss (2005) describe the importance of the teacher as a model: "If you wish to convince your students to tell stories, you must tell a story, too!" (p. 27). However, many teachers do not know how to deliver and use stories effectively because they have been insufficiently exposed to a telling environment. Teachers may also perceive storytelling as a relatively time-intensive technique. In addition, they must prepare for their own materials and develop classroom activities by themselves because of the scarce of ready-to-use storytelling materials and tasks for the classroom. A number of steps for teachers to prepare for are necessary. First, stories must be chosen, considering students' age, proficiency, and interest (i.e., choose stories). Second, stories must be practiced before telling them to students (i.e., practice stories to tell). Third, materials and activities related with each story must be appropriately developed (i.e., evaluate stories). Since all of these processes should be created by a teacher alone, they can be burdensome.

Lastly, while native speakers vary in their ability to tell a story fluently and coherently, non-native speakers of English (i.e., NNS teachers) may feel additional insecurity relating to their (perceived) level of proficiency.

To our knowledge, these speculations about teachers' attitudes toward storytelling have yet to be substantiated by research. Even less investigation has been done of learners' attitudes and beliefs concerning storytelling. Braunstein (2006) studies 15 Hispanic ESL students with a combination of survey and observation methods and finds that they expect a traditional form-focused classroom but respond very positively to five hours of kinesthetically-oriented instruction that includes the use of TPR storytelling. Similarly, Nicholas, Rossiter, and Abbott (2011) report the results of a survey of five ESL teachers who used personal stories extensively in the classroom and nine of their adult learners. Though the report lacks detail, they conclude that both learners and teachers find the use of stories to enhance both the cognitive and affective aspects of language learning, promoting authenticity, motivation, a sense of community and understanding of genre, as well as

vocabulary and general language competence. These studies illustrate both the incipience of the research on this topic and its potential power for informing us on learners' attitudes before, during and after exposure to the technique. These are the issues pursued by the current research, which examines college classroom learners' interest in storytelling and expectations concerning its effects and how those interests and expectations interact with the process of learning by storytelling.

The close correlation between students' interest and achievement has been discussed in studies such as Renninger, Hidi and Krapp (1992) and Brown (2007) and points to the importance of investigating adult L2 learners' interest and expectations concerning storytelling. The research questions investigated in this study are:

1. Are adult language learners interested in storytelling?
2. Do they believe that storytelling helps them to improve their language skills?
3. Do their attitudes change when they experience storytelling as a classroom technique?
4. How can story-based lessons be applied in adult L2 classroom?

III. RESEARCH DESIGN

1. Participants

Forty college students, who enrolled in a course at a university in Korea, participated in this study. They registered for an elective English course designed for improving language skills. Their ages ranged from 20 to 40, with the majority aged 30. There were 7 male and 33 female students. All participants' native language (i.e., L1) is Korean and target language (i.e., L2) is English. Therefore they all belong to non-native speakers of English (NNS). Their backgrounds were slightly different in terms of major and proficiency levels. Out of 40, 30 participants were English majors and the rest were non-English majors. 30 participants out of 40 have not experienced living in an English-speaking country. Only two participants had lived abroad less than for three years but they did not have formal education during their stay.

Participants' self-assessments of proficiency were elicited by means of questionnaire (see Appendix A), using a five-point likert scale for listening, speaking, reading, writing, and pronunciation. Their overall self-rated proficiency averaged 2.15 (level 2 = poor), indicating that most of the participants felt that they were poor at speaking English. Participants reported that they were not able to communicate with a native speaker of English (NS) at all. Among four skills, especially, speaking was the weakest.

2. Questionnaire

In order to examine the participants' attitude toward storytelling and its effect, anonymous surveys were conducted before and after storytelling instruction. The two questionnaires are presented in Appendices A and B, respectively. The pre-treatment questionnaire elicited information about the participants' biographies (Part A), their self-assessed English proficiency (Part B), and their attitudes toward storytelling (Part C). In Part C, participants were asked to provide information about whether they were interested in storytelling, and how they conceived of the effectiveness of storytelling in improving English skills. For the post-treatment questionnaire, they were asked to evaluate the effect of storytelling related with their improvement of language skills.

3. Storytelling in the Adult L2 Classroom

1) Classroom Setting

The experiment was conducted over fourteen weeks during the semester. The class met once a week for three hours (3 credits). The instructor was a NNS teacher who majored in storytelling as well as English education. She had taught English at colleges for more than 20 years and had developed a couple of storytelling courses in the college curriculum (i.e., use storytelling to teach English). She was also a storyteller who had told stories to children as well as adults in public events.

2) Class Goals and Objectives

Rather than communicative competence, the class goals and objectives, shown in Table 1, concerned telling competence.

TABLE 1
The Goals and Objectives of the Class

Outline	Explanation
Goals	Students will • increase vocabulary. • refine speaking skills. • improve listening skills. • enhance writing skills. • improve pronunciation. • enhance critical and creative thinking skills.
Objectives	<i>Terminal objectives</i> Students will

-
- understand a 10 minute story.
 - tell a 5-10 minute story.
 - make up stories in their own words

Enabling objectives

Students will

- retell the story they heard in the classroom.
 - tell a 5-10 minute story in their own words.
-

3) Class Materials: Stories

No textbook but stories was used in the class. Each class consisted of an introduction, conversational storytelling, story listening and (re)telling, and story reflection activities. A sample lesson plan is provided in Appendix C. Various genres of stories from folktales to personal tales were told by the instructor and students. The students told stories to the whole class, to a small group, or in pairs.

To encourage imagination and visualization, no written materials, illustrations, or visual aids were provided during storytelling. In addition to stories told live, recorded performances of the well-known storyteller Donald Davis (*That's What Mamas Do*, 2001) and other storytellers were presented. The length of each story was about 10 to 15 minutes.

4) Storytelling Procedures and Activities

As illustrated in Appendix C, each lesson consisted of a short introduction, pre-storytelling, storytelling and post-storytelling. In introduction, the class objectives of the week as well as the theme of the story were introduced by the instructor.

(1) Pre-storytelling: Conversational Storytelling

For this warm-up activity, students were arranged in a circle or in small groups and encouraged to tell something about their episodes related to a theme of today's story. For example, if the title of the story was about family members, students were encouraged to tell about any member of his or her family. If a story was from Korea or Japan, students were asked to share their familiarity and travel experiences concerning that country. For example, before hearing a scary story, students were encouraged to share scary experiences or episodes from their early childhood and cultural differences about scary stories. In this activity, students were instructed to have normal conversations in a conversational storytelling style instead of "Q and A" styled stereotyped conversation, producing longer sentences rather than shorter ones, to match the turn-taking practices of typical conversation.

(2) Storytelling: Listening to or Telling Stories

During storytelling sessions, not only the instructor but also students told stories in various genres from folktales to personal tales. The stories were told actively, using various voices, gestures, facial expressions and body movements to make them vivid. Students had the opportunity to interact with the teller. For example, the teller sometimes paused and asked the student to predict the next part of the story. In this way, the students were encouraged to be active listeners rather than passive ones.

Most students also told stories to their group members or to the whole class. Their storytelling events were scheduled in advance, to allow preparation. Since class time was limited, students who wanted to retell stories they heard in class or tell their own stories for language improvement were individually assigned to meet outside class with the researcher and sometimes with group members.

(3) Post-storytelling: Story Reflection Activities

To enhance students' speaking and writing skills, various oral and written reflection activities were conducted. One of the major oral activities was retelling stories. The instructor prompted the retelling by asking in detail from the beginning of the story to the end (see Appendix C). Instead of asking questions, students were asked to describe the part of the story or to tell the specific part of the story. Students were encouraged to elaborate on parts of the story and to tell parts of the story to the group (sometimes practicing with no audience first), using their own words and gestures. In addition, students were asked to tell short fables or personal stories after writing them down and practicing their delivery. For written reflection activities, students completed a story reflection sheet that included a synopsis of the story and descriptions of main characters and themes.

4. Data Analysis

Participants' responses were first categorized as positive (agree and strongly agree), negative (disagree and strongly disagree), and neutral (neither agree nor disagree). In order to see whether participants' attitude toward storytelling had changed over the treatment period, two related samples for the same questionnaire, (i.e., in a pre- and post-test response), were compared. The researcher's observation and interview was also analyzed along with the results of questionnaire to see how they participated in the classroom tasks during the treatment period.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

With respect to adult L2 learners' interest in storytelling and expectations of its effects in L2 English classroom, the results of the pre- and post-treatment questionnaire are comparatively discussed below.

1. Interests in Storytelling

Prior to the pre-treatment questionnaire, participants were briefly interviewed about their knowledge of the terms "storytelling" and "storyteller". When they were asked to define the terms, they replied that they heard the terms but were not able to define the terms correctly. Especially, they were not able to distinguish "storytelling" from "story reading" or "storyteller" from "story readers". Most of the participants replied, "A storyteller is a person who reads stories to children." In Korea, it is often misunderstood for a person to be a storyteller who reads stories. As discussed in the definition of storytelling in section 2.1., a storyteller should NOT READ a story but MUST TELL it. A couple of respondents acknowledged that storytelling was an occupation as professional storytellers. Unlike western countries such as America, England, and France, professional storytellers can rarely be found in Korea. This reflects that there were many story readers, not storytellers, in Korea. In addition, storytelling tasks were rarely used in their L2 classroom. No one responded that they had learned English through storytelling tasks in the classroom before. The results of the pre-treatment questionnaire for their interest in storytelling are summarized in Table 2.

TABLE 2

Participants' Interest in Storytelling Indicated on the Pre-treatment Questionnaire

Items	SD	D	N	A	SA
I am interested in storytelling.	0% (0)	2% (1)	5% (2)	48% (19)	45% (18)
I like storytelling.	0% (0)	8% (3)	22% (9)	38% (15)	32% (13)
I am interested in listening to stories.	0% (0)	2% (1)	8% (3)	52% (21)	38% (15)
I like listening to stories	0% (0)	2% (1)	5% (2)	55% (22)	38% (15)
I am interested in telling stories.	0% (0)	5% (2)	15% (6)	40% (16)	40% (16)
I like to tell stories.	8% (3)	12% (5)	12% (5)	40% (16)	28% (11)
I want to be a professional storyteller.	0% (0)	12% (5)	15% (6)	30% (12)	42% (17)

Storytelling is for children only.	15% (6)	68% (27)	8% (3)	5% (2)	5% (2)
Storytelling is useful for adults.	0% (0)	0% (0)	8% (3)	48% (19)	45% (18)

(SD=Strongly Disagree, N=Neither agree nor disagree, D=Disagree, A=Agree, SA=Strongly Agree; The number of responses is given in parenthesis.)

Surprisingly, participants' interest in storytelling was extremely high. A total of 93% of the respondents (37 out of 40) were interested in storytelling. The same proportion (93%) was interested in listening to stories as well. Despite the fact that they were not able to define storytelling and storyteller in detail, participants showed high positive attitude toward their interest in storytelling. However, when it came to telling stories, the percentage is dropped - 80% of the respondents (32 out of 40). Participants reported that they were afraid of telling stories in front of the audience because they had not had a chance to tell stories anywhere in the past. Telling stories is truly a challenging task for normal college students because of the lack of confidence in L2 English. To the questionnaire on whether they like storytelling or telling stories, even fewer -70% and 68% of the respondents-were positively replied. Most of the participants stated that using storytelling in the classroom was new to them. 80% of the respondents disagreed that storytelling is for children only whereas 93% of the respondent agreed that storytelling is also for adults. The results suggest that L2 learners' high interest in storytelling might be related with their perception on the effect of storytelling in improving their English skills.

The post-treatment questionnaire included similar questions and also addressed participants' interest and satisfaction with the use of storytelling in class. The results are presented in Table 3.

TABLE 3
Participants' Attitude toward Storytelling Indicated on Post-treatment Questionnaire

Items	SD	D	N	A	SA
I am interested in storytelling.	0% (0)	2% (1)	5% (2)	48% (19)	45% (18)
I like the use of storytelling.	0% (0)	0% (0)	25% (10)	53% (21)	23% (9)
I like storytelling.	0% (0)	0% (0)	30% (12)	53% (21)	18% (7)
I like telling stories.	3% (1)	5% (2)	35% (14)	38% (15)	20% (8)
Storytelling is for children only.	18% (7)	78% (31)	3% (1)	0% (0)	3% (1)
Storytelling is useful for adults.	0% (0)	0% (0)	3% (1)	70% (28)	28% (11)

As can be seen in Tables 2 and 3, with respect to the items “I’m interested in storytelling,” and “I like storytelling,” there was little change between the two treatments. Participants showed high positive attitude toward storytelling for both treatments. However, for the items “I like to tell or telling stories,” the positive rate was slightly lower (58% from 68%), indicating that the telling task might be burdensome. The results suggest that storytelling itself seems to be preferable but telling stories can be a difficult task for adult L2 learners.

2. Expectations of the Effect of Storytelling

This section discusses participants’ expectations of the effectiveness of storytelling in improving L2 skills. The results from the pre-treatment questionnaire are presented in Table 4.

TABLE 4
Participants’ Expectation Value (%) of the Effectiveness of Storytelling
in the Pre-treatment Questionnaire (N=40)

Items	SD	D	N	A	SA
Storytelling helps to improve listening.	0% (0)	0% (0)	5% (2)	57% (23)	38% (15)
Storytelling helps to improve speaking.	0% (0)	2% (1)	8% (3)	40% (16)	50% (20)
Storytelling helps to improve reading.	0% (0)	0% (0)	12% (5)	50% (20)	38% (15)
Storytelling helps to improve writing.	0% (0)	5% (2)	22% (9)	48% (19)	25% (10)
Storytelling helps to improve pronunciation.	0% (0)	2% (1)	8% (3)	45% (18)	45% (18)
Storytelling helps to improve vocabulary.	0% (0)	0% (0)	8% (3)	52% (21)	40% (16)
Storytelling is a useful way to improve English.	0% (0)	0% (0)	8% (3)	50% (20)	42% (17)
I was able to improve my English through classroom at school in the past.	22% (9)	30% (12)	22% (9)	10% (4)	15% (6)
Storytelling must be used in the adult classroom.	2% (1)	5% (2)	15% (6)	50% (20)	28% (11)
I am confident to tell a 5-minute story.	20% (8)	30% (12)	20% (8)	12% (5)	18% (7)

Similar to the interest in storytelling, the expectations of its effectiveness were incredibly high. The positive response rates are 95% for listening, 92% for vocabulary, 90% for speaking and pronunciation, 88% for reading, and 73% for writing. Overall, 92% of the respondents positively responded to the effect of storytelling in improving English.

Along with the high positive expectation rate, 78% of the participants agreed that storytelling must be used in the adult language classroom. As expected, most of the participants were not confident about telling a 5-minute story, indicating that telling stories can be a challenging task. Considering the negative responses (52%) toward their improvement of English in the classroom at early schools, the results indicate that teaching as well as learning English in the school classroom needs to be somehow modified to motivate L2 learners. For direct comparison, the results of the pre- and post-treatment questionnaires for each skill in Tables 2 and 3 are presented together in Figure 1.

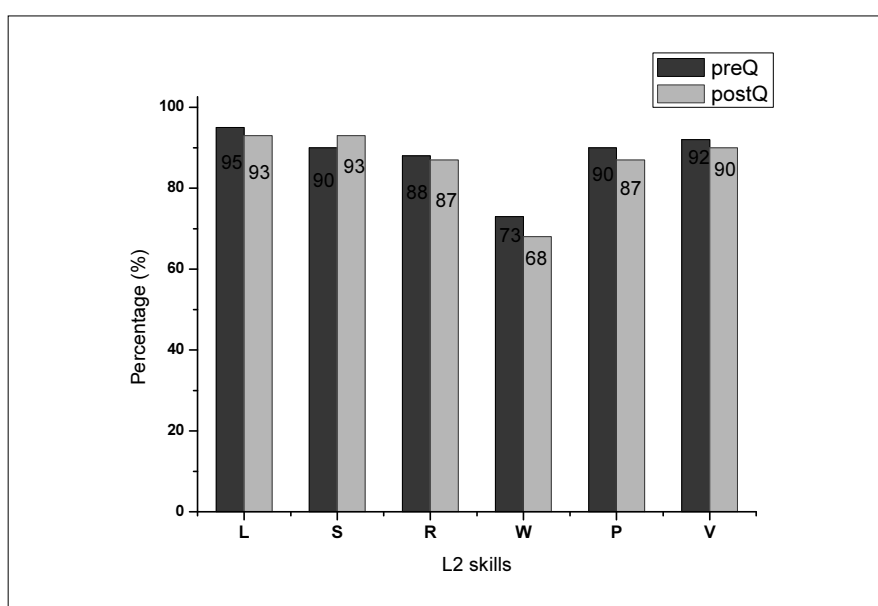


FIGURE 1 Participants' Expectation Value (%) of the Effectiveness of Storytelling in the Pre- and Post-questionnaire

(L=Listening, S=Speaking, R=Reading, W=Writing, P=Pronunciation, V=Vocabulary)

Overall, although the positive rates in the pre-treatment questionnaire slightly decreased (2 to 3 %) in the post-treatment questionnaire for almost all skills except for speaking, they retained throughout the semester. For both questionnaires, participants carried high expectation (around 90%) on the effectiveness of storytelling. With respect to speaking, in the pre-treatment questionnaire 90% of the respondents predicted that storytelling would effectively improve them; the percentage went up to 93% in the post-treatment questionnaire. This suggests that with some practice of storytelling during classes, students felt that storytelling is an effective tool to improve their speaking. However, with respect to listening, in the pre-treatment questionnaire 95% of the respondents predicted that

storytelling would effectively improve them; the percentage went down to 93%, in the post-treatment questionnaire. With respect to reading and writing, 88% and 73% of the respondents decreased to 87% and 68%, respectively, in the post-treatment questionnaire. For pronunciation, 90% went down to 87%. Even for vocabulary, the rate was reduced from 92% to only 90%. Very interestingly, for the items "storytelling is a useful way to improve English," "storytelling must be used in the adult English classroom," and "I am confident to tell someone a 5-minute story, 92%, 78%, and 30% of the respondents slightly increased to 93%, 84%, and 35%, respectively in the post-treatment questionnaire.

How can we account for this change in the participants' attitude? The positive rate on the effectiveness of storytelling in the post-treatment questionnaire roughly corresponded to the rate on the interest in storytelling in the pre-treatment questionnaire. In other words, we can say that the students who were interested in storytelling perceived effectiveness in storytelling. We can speculate that when participants were interested in storytelling they actively attended to classroom activities, and they perceived- improvement, quite possibly actual improvement, because of their efforts. Without interest and effort, it might be hard to experience any effectiveness in storytelling, in accord with the general proposition that attitude influences achievement (Brown, 2007; Weinburgh, 1998). It is a truism that successful learning relies heavily on how much effort learners make. High interest triggers enthusiasm, which in turn affects achievement.

With respect to listening skills, 93% of the participants responded that their listening skills were truly improved. One said, "I think I improve my listening while I listen to stories. I really enjoy listening to stories in class." She stated that in the beginning, it was very hard to understand the whole story, and failure to understand a few words caused her to stop listening. After further experience listening to stories, she was able to understand the stories better and maintain attention despite missing a few words. With a high degree of interest, attention and enjoyment, she felt that she truly enhanced her listening skills through storytelling. Other participants with positive attitudes reported similar experiences.

With respect to speaking skills, 93% (37 out of 40) of the participants responded that they truly improved their speaking through storytelling. Most of the participants who showed high interest and actively participated in telling positively evaluated the effect of storytelling on the improvement of speaking. Only two participants were not sure about the effect of storytelling in speaking. This suggests that almost all adult learners carried a positive attitude toward the effect of storytelling on the improvement of their speaking skills.

Concerning reading and writing, 87% and 68% of the participants responded that storytelling helped to improve those skills. Since they were mainly exposed to story listening and telling, improvement of reading and writing skills was not expected. When

they were asked to write a story reflection, they did not receive any comments or feedback on their writing.

The perceived effectiveness of storytelling on pronunciation and vocabulary was also higher than on listening and speaking skills. 87% and 90% of the participants perceived a positive effect on pronunciation and vocabulary, respectively. Telling stories is likely to have improved their pronunciation by causing participants to identify their own pronunciation errors. With respect to the effect of storytelling on vocabulary, almost half the participants agreed that their vocabulary increased through storytelling. One participant said, "Once I did not get the meaning of words, I lost the whole story line. I realize that understanding the meaning of words is very important to follow the story well. Thus, I try to write a note about the words that I don't understand in the story and ask them to the instructor. Once I know the meaning of words from the story, I find that I don't forget it. This training helped me to increase the amount of vocabulary." Most of the other participants who positively responded to the effect of storytelling on vocabulary in general agreed with her.

To sum up, the perception of the effectiveness of storytelling for the improvement of L2 skills overall was extremely high, especially higher for listening and speaking up to 93%. Although the treatment period was short for one semester, there was high expectation about the effect of storytelling on the improvement of L2 skills. After telling and retelling tasks, some participants responded positively concerning the effectiveness of storytelling especially with regard to listening, speaking, pronunciation and vocabulary. There may have been a close relationship between interest and perceived achievement (Brown, 2007; Weinburgh, 1998).

V. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The present study examined adult L2 learners' interest in storytelling and expectations of its effects in an L2 classroom. Instruction and practice in storytelling were given to forty college students during the semester. The results of the pre- and post-questionnaire showed that adult L2 college learners' interest in storytelling as well as their expectations on its effects was extremely high (over 90%). A remarkably high proportion of the participants expected storytelling to improve their English skills, especially listening (95%), vocabulary (92%), speaking (90%) and pronunciation (90%). Similarly, the proportion of participants interested in storytelling was remarkably high (93%). As seen in the results of the two treatment questionnaires (see Figure 1), participants' positive attitude toward storytelling changed only slightly. Overall, adult L2 learners carried a highly positive attitude toward storytelling and its effect of storytelling on the improvement of their language skills.

There seemed to be a close relationship between learners' attitude and their sincerity in the classroom. Participants' positive interest levels correlated positively with their active participation in the classroom as well as their successive achievement. Participants with positive attitudes toward storytelling made sincere efforts during the treatment period and believed their listening, speaking, pronunciation and vocabulary truly improved. In addition, they enjoyed using storytelling in their L2 classroom, gained some confidence in their ability to deliver a 5-minute story in their own words, and were able to correct their grammar mistakes and improve their pronunciation. However, students with negative attitudes toward storytelling reported that they did not make any progress. The results suggest that participants' positive attitudes played a significant role in their perceiving progress through continuous efforts they made in the practices of storytelling. The results suggest that initial interest and expectations might play an important role in maximizing the effectiveness of storytelling for adult L2 learners.

In order to effectively apply storytelling in the adult L2 classroom, practitioners must consider important things as follows. First, the misunderstanding that storytelling is appropriate for children but not adults might cause teachers and students to avoid using storytelling in their classrooms. The antidote to this problem is widespread acknowledgement that teaching and learning English through storytelling can be very effective even for adult L2 learners. Second, a teacher needs to be qualified to use storytelling. Part of effective teaching with storytelling is modeling the practice. Currently, in many countries, the demand for native speakers to teach English is overwhelming. For NNS teachers to step up and meet the need, appropriate methods are necessary. Storytelling can be an option. Although teachers do not have to be professional storytellers, to use the technique in the classroom they need to at least experience the effect of storytelling in improving language skills and make an effort to adapt it to their classrooms. Thirdly, storytelling materials must be appropriately developed from adult L2 learners' point of view. Additionally, EFL teachers should consider how storytelling activities are incorporated into their classroom. It can be an option to develop storytelling classes to the college curriculum for adult language learners. The results suggest advantages in the creation of a separate class for those inclined to see storytelling as effective in improving their language skills. Some universities already include various storytelling courses in their curricula (see, for example, East Tennessee State University at www.etsu.edu, Korea Soongsil Cyber University at www.kcu.ac.kr, and Hannam University at <http://www.hannam.ac.kr>). This practice has the potential to be widely spread to other universities.

Several limitations to this study can be addressed in future research. Since the results are based on the self-questionnaire, we cannot tell that there is a significant effect on their improvement of L2 skills. In order to evaluate the effect of storytelling, participants' L2

skills must be evaluated using reliable official tests (e.g, IBT). Moreover, the treatment period was not long for learners to accomplish certain goals. Given these concerns, it is difficult to claim that the results from this study can be applied equally to other adult L2 language learning situations. Further research is necessary to generalize.

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APPENDIX A

Pre-treatment Questionnaire

Part A. Biographical information

1. Gender: MaleFemale
2. What is your age? _____
3. What is your native language? _____
4. What is your major here in college? _____
(if you grew up with more than one language, please specify)
5. What is your status here in college? _____
6. Have you ever lived in an English speaking country? Yes No

- 6-1. If yes, how long, where and when? _____
7. Describe how you learn English? _____
8. What do you think the best effect way in improving English? _____

Part B. Rate your proficiency in L2 English

1. Please decide whether you belong to Very Poor (VP), Poor (P), So-so (S), Good (G), and Very Good (VG) about L2 English proficiency. Place an (X) in the box that shows your opinion.

Statements	VP	P	S	G	VG
My overall comprehension ability in English					
My overall speaking ability in English					
My overall reading ability in English					
My overall writing ability in English					
My overall pronunciation ability in English					
My overall vocabulary ability in English					
My overall ability in English					
I can communicate with a foreigner in English well.					

2. What skill do you need to improve the most?

Listening Speaking Reading Writing Pronunciation Vocabulary

Part C. Storytelling in English

1. Please decide whether you strongly agree (SA), Agree (A), Neither Agree Nor Disagree (N), Disagree (D), strongly disagree (SD) about the statements. There is no correct answer but all you have to do is give a sincere response. Place an (X) in the box that shows your opinion.

Statements	SA	A	N	D	SD
I am interested in storytelling.					
I like storytelling.					
I am interested in listening to stories.					
I like listening to stories.					
I am interested in telling stories.					
I like to tell stories.					
I want to be a professional storyteller.					
Storytelling is for children only.					

Storytelling is useful for adults.
Storytelling helps to improve listening.
Storytelling helps to improve speaking.
Storytelling helps to improve reading.
Storytelling helps to improve writing.
Storytelling helps to improve pronunciation.
Storytelling helps to improve vocabulary.
Storytelling is a useful way to improve English.
I am confident to tell a 5-minute story.

2. Do you have any comments on your language or storytelling background which you think are important but which you were not asked about in this questionnaire?

APPENDIX B

Post-treatment Questionnaire

1. Please give sincere answers as only this will guarantee the success of the study. Please decide whether you Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Neither agree Nor disagree (N), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD) about the statements. There is no correct answer but all you have to do is give a sincere response. Place an (X) in the box that shows your opinion.

Statements	SA	A	N	D	SD
I was interested in storytelling.					
I was interested in listening to stories.					
I am interested in telling stories.					
I liked the use of storytelling in the classroom.					
I like storytelling					
I like telling stories.					
Storytelling is for children only.					
Storytelling is useful for adults.					
Using stories were favorable to me.					
Overall, storytelling was enjoyable in the classroom.					
Storytelling helps me to improve listening.					
Storytelling helps me to improve speaking.					
Storytelling helps me to improve reading.					
Storytelling helps me to improve writing.					

Storytelling helps me to improve pronunciation.
Storytelling helps me to improve vocabulary.
Storytelling is a useful way to improve English.
Storytelling must be used in the adult language classroom.
I am confident to tell a 5-minute story.

2. Please give at least three comments on what you are thinking of the use of storytelling in the classroom at college. Your sincere comments are welcome!

APPENDIX C

A Sample of 3rd week Lesson Plan

Contents	Time / who	Strategies / Activities	Skills enhanced
Introduction	15 min. Instructor	Class Objectives of the week -The instructor describes this week's story theme	Listening, speaking, and pronunciation
PRE-STORYTELLING: conversational storytelling	30 min Instructor and students	-encourage students to share about funny experiences or stories about their family members. -Talk about experiences in their childhood. -Students are volunteered to answer the instructor's questions. -Talk about a story background to tell	Listening and Speaking
STORYTELLING	30-45 min. Instructor others	-Students listen to stories from the instructor. Listening Tips -Try to have five <i>Wh-question</i> types in your mind while you listen to the story as follows: -Have an imaginary story map about the story like a tree and branches -Write down the words that are not clear to understand during the listening.	Vocabulary, Listening and Speaking
POST-STORYTELLING :: Story reflection (oral or written)	30-45 min. Instructor and student	After the story, the instructor asks students how they understand the story. Depending on time, either oral or written reflection is conducted in the classroom.	Speaking, Writing, pronunciation

Examples in: English

Applicable Languages: English

Applicable Levels: Tertiary

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