

Using Stories in English Omani Curriculum

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Abstract

Learning a FL may be frustrating for some young learners; however, integrating fun in learning would encourage them to develop positive attitudes towards learning a language (Ellis & Brewster, 1991). Stories are an effective and enthusiastic technique in teaching young learners; they inject lots of amusement and help children enjoy learning language in purposeful communication. This paper is an attempt to explore the effectiveness of the stories in Omani curriculum (*English for Me*) and eventually suggests some efficient techniques and activities in teaching stories based on the analysis. Preliminary findings show that stories in the textbooks are enthusiastic and suit learners' interest and level, and the follow-up activities increase their benefits. However, there are some stories or activities that are repetitive and too long, and need to be modified or replaced by others.

Keywords: storytelling, fairy tale, TPR activity, role play, authentic material, predictive skill, bodily-kinaesthetic activity

1. Introduction

1.1 Teaching Young Learners

Teaching a FL to young learners at early age is different from teaching adults; it is definitely not easier but it is more challenging and interesting. The Critical Period Hypothesis suggests that early exposure of the target language is different from later stages that young learners learn a FL better than adults and (Cameron, 2001). Žigárdyová (2006) as well comments that the earlier learners are introduced to a FL, the better they learn it. Mart (2012) declares that to teach a FL to young leaners involves stimulating their early interest towards the language and developing their awareness of rich language uses. Cameron (2001, p. 1) differentiates young learners from adults as follow:

1. "Children are often more enthusiastic and lively as learners",
2. "they also lose interest more quickly and are less able to keep themselves motivated on tasks they find difficult",
3. "they do not have the same access as older learners to meta-language that teachers can use to explain about grammar or discourse",
4. and "seem less embarrassed than adults at talking in a new language".

Most language teachers concentrate on grammar, vocabulary to teach a FL; however, there are other means to practise a language which are more meaningful and enthusiastic (Žigárdyová, 2006). Having merely interesting pictures does not guarantee that children will enjoy learning or even gain benefits out of them though Reid (2002, p. 35) declares that "... picture books are an invaluable aid to communication across linguistic lines". Children like changes and consequently varied teaching methods may increase their interest in learning.

During the last decades, children's literature has gained an increase interest in language teaching. Inclusion of literature in a language classroom has four benefits: "authentic material, cultural enrichment, language advancement, and personal growth" (Collie & Slater, 1991, cited in Pardede, 2011, p. 15). Despite its benefits, it has been a controversial issue in public schools for a long time. Shell (2005), for instance, finds no reasons for implementing literature in language classes. Pardede (2011) suggests that under time pressure and overcrowded syllabus, it becomes difficult to include literature in language classrooms. In fact, he assumes that it is almost impossible for a language teacher to finish a novel in classes due to its length within limited classroom hours. Besides, it is unpractical to act out a drama in crowded classes.

Now, several literary genres are applied in language classroom such as poems, plays, songs, stories, and narratives (Mart, 2012). Among the various types of genres, stories are the most widely used in educational settings (Wajnryb, 2003). Since their early childhood, children have been having opportunities to listen to various types of stories (Loukia, 2006). There are numerous amounts of stories that have been handed down from one generation to another by grandfathers and grandmothers. A variety of stories are being used now in schools for second language learners as it is believed that they enhance language learning, create a positive atmosphere in classroom and make the feeling that language is fun and enjoyable (Ellis & Brewster, 1991).

There are numerous advantages for applying stories in language contexts. Firstly, they appeal to many teachers as an effective means for language teaching and developing children. They provide a natural context for language structures and vocabulary development and help enhance thinking skills (Slattery & Willis, 2001; Wajnryb, 2003; Tice, 2006; Mart, 2012). Furthermore, stories are an effective and enthusiastic technique in teaching young learners; they inject lots of amusement and help children enjoy learning language in purposeful communication (Slattery & Willis, 2001). Consequently, stories create a desire to continue learning and positive attitudes towards learning a FL (Spack, 1985; Ellis and Brewster, 2002). Wright (1995), as well, comments that "stories are particularly important in the lives of our children: stories help children to understand their world and share it with others." Children in their turn try to discover their fantasy world by imagination. The effects of stories are further discussed below.

1.2 The Effects of Stories on Language Development

Storytelling has been an old tradition in many countries and societies from a long time ago. Children enjoy listening to a variety of stories (Mart, 2012; Martínez, 2007): storytelling has been their favourite time and their intimate companions (Tice, 2006). Krashen (1982) assumes that stories lower the affective filter and this certainly helps learners to acquire the FL easier. Generally speaking, using stories as a teaching tool yields several advantages. Wajnryb (2003), for example, lists two major purposes for storytelling. A basic reason for using stories is to utilise them as a means of entertainment and having fun since they inject lots of amusement and interest. Another aim is to instruct, i.e. stories are meant to give morals lessons, e.g. the good people are rewarded and the bad are punished.

However, the value of stories goes beyond the amusement and instruction that Wajnryb suggests. Every society has long traditions of oral storytelling which often represents its culture (Loukia, 2006; Erkaya, 2005). This arouses children's curiosity to discover different cultures, people and places from other parts of the world (Slattery & Willis, 2001). For example, the *Cinderella story* represents some images of European culture in the past; it shows the way the rich and the poor live, the way Europeans dress, and the kinds of transportation at that time. Another instance is "The Arabian Nights" which consists of a collection of stories that reflect Baghdadis' and Arabians' lives, customs and traditions which are somewhat still alive in these places. Being aware of other cultures has some benefits. For example, learners will enhance their intercultural understanding and thus be tolerant and open-minded to other speakers of FL (Žigárdyová, 2006). Also, the customs and traditions of cultures would be maintained (Wajnryb, 2003); children can notice and compare the changes and developments that have happened during the time in terms of transportation, houses, clothes and other customs and traditions.

In addition to the previous benefits, stories are regarded to be a powerful tool in language teaching by several educationalists. In fact, stories provide authentic uses of language (Loukia, 2006). "It seems a pity to deprive learners of opportunities to hear authentic uses of past tense forms and contrast with the other tenses, in the meaningful contexts of stories..." (Cameron, 2001, p. 166). They are a means to acquire a FL unconsciously and often considered as an appropriate teaching technique to develop language skills (Slattery & Willis, 2001). Listening and reading are important skills that need to be developed in language learners to communicate and stories can develop such skills. Apparently, children always like everything that is enjoyable and interesting such as listening to stories in TV cartoon or reading story books. They like to spend much of their free time watching or reading stories about fairies, knights, kings, princesses, castles, dragons and magicians. In addition, being engaged in story events makes children try to predict what will happen next and guess the meaning of new words. Thus, stories not only develop language skills but also help children broaden their vocabulary repertoire because they will hear many new words while they are listening or reading (Cameron, 2001). Added to this, stories have been recognized as an effective aid for internalising some grammar rules because they provide a rich source of language structures and repetitive sentence patterns (Ellis and Brewster, 1991; Mart, 2012).

On the other hand, storytelling may yield ineffective results. For instance, stories may sometimes open the door for nonsensical beliefs. Children usually believe in everything they hear and fairy tales are accepted by them as reality and make the impression of something that really happens. Thus, it doesn't matter whether one says to

them they are true or not and so children would believe in things that do not exist in reality like fairies, monsters, ogresses, and talking animals. As a result, fairy tales feed the belief of superstitions that can be furthered; children may grow older with false beliefs stuck in their mind as reality. In his book '*The parent's book*', Dr. Karl Oppel (1903), a psychologist, comments that fairy tales prepare children's mind for superstition. No wonder why very large parts of the entire population still believe in superstition.

Moreover, some stories fill children's imagination with horrible images and terrifying figures. Stafford (1934) warns from telling fearful stories to children. Children sometimes cannot get to sleep because they are thinking about those terrible monsters, ogresses, ghosts, or witches in the story they listen. Oppel (1903) criticizes fairy tales because he thought that they have negative effects on children's beliefs. For example, the story of the horrible old ugly witch seduces children to her lovely candy house to haunt and cook the poor children may cause children to feel afraid from any old woman as they think she is a horrible witch.

2. Stories in Omani Curriculum *English for Me*

Recently, stories have been widely used in language classroom in Omani curriculum. Although extensive research has been carried out on language learning in Omani context, no single study exists which adequately covers using stories in curriculum. This paper tries to explore the use of stories in Omani schools in the first cycle (elementary level) by analysing their effects in language learning and suggesting series of story activities with their rationale.

2.1 The Story-based Framework in Omani Curriculum

In the past 40 years, English as a FL is being taught in Omani schools at grade 4 (age 10). The lessons come in 40-minute periods five times a week. Teachers were using the old series of Omani textbooks in their lessons, *Our World Through English* (OWTE), which mainly focuses on grammar, reading and writing skills and little focus is given to oral practice. Stories are not given much attention but the textbook is not the only recourse for stories; there are short stories used as supplementary materials to be read in students' free times (Ministry of Education, 1997-8a, b). In the last decade, there have been considerable changes in English education. A new series of textbooks called *English for Me* (EfM) has been developed which includes more purposeful and meaningful language use that simulates real life situations (Teacher's Guide, 2008). Storytelling starts from grade one and there are about four to five stories in each semester with their associated activities. There are a range of various kinds of stories in the textbook: fairy tales and traditional stories which are common in some particular countries such as 'Little Red Riding Hood' and 'Getting dressed'; picture stories such as 'Biff and the Coconut Tree'; and animal stories such as 'Carl the Caterpillar' and 'The Three Billy Goats Gruff' (Teacher's Guide, 2008).

The stories are taught using different techniques such as using pictures and gestures, adopting TPR activities and listening to stories on tape recorder. Then, they are recycled and reinforced through different follow-up activities in the book such as colouring, retelling the stories, making masks, performing a role play, and other interesting activities (Teacher's Guide, 2008). Although the textbook is provided by the government and that teachers are not allowed to substitute it with a different book, they are permitted to replace some activities they find more appropriate and effective (Al-Harrasi, 2009).

2.2 Analysis of Stories in the Textbook

One of the major objectives of FL teaching is to help learners communicate in the FL. Consequently, teachers should provide their learners with authentic materials to assimilate real-life uses such as stories, newspaper and magazine articles, video, songs, etc. Inclusion of stories in language curriculum has several benefits; however, they should be appropriately chosen for effective language teaching. Pardede (2011) argues that selection of a story is one of the essential roles of language teachers. The selection of a good story involves several principles regarding the content and language. The following section tries to analyse the stories in *English for Me* in terms of its suitability and effectiveness to language learning such as content and linguistic values, amusement, suitability to level and intrinsic needs, cultural enrichment, etc. There are several criteria teachers need to consider which will be discussed below.

First of all, the length of the stories is quiet suitable; it is not too long or too short. Tierney and Dobson (1995) argue that in order to keep track of story events, children must not be exposed to stories that are too long so that they lose their concentration, nor should they be too short. Moreover, the shortness of the stories gives students the feeling that they can handle and finish something in English (Pardede, 2011). Most of the stories in Omani textbooks have been shorten into simple paragraphs; e.g. the story of 'Little Red Riding Hood' in grade 2 (p. 6, 7 and 8) has been adapted to consist only three pages, which is quite suitable for young learners. This accords with Wario's belief as well (1989) who assumes that children lose track of attention in a short time and thus it is

preferable that long stories would be divided into shorter parts and taught separately. Moreover, most of the stories include few characters and therefore learners' attention would not be distracted. For instance, in 'The Three Billy Goats Gruff' story in grade 4, there are only four characters which are three goats and a bear and this helps learners keep track of them easily.

Another positive impact of stories in the textbook is a rich source of language input. Every story evolves a certain linguistic structure; e.g. in the story of 'Lord Claud's New Cloak' page 32 of grade 5, children are exposed to descriptions of different types of clothes such as *a black and yellow patterned t-shirt*. Thus, "stories allows the teacher to introduce or revise new vocabulary and sentence structures by exposing the children to language in varied, memorable and familiar contexts, which will enrich their thinking and gradually enter their own speech" (Ellis & Brewster, 2002: 2). The language presented in the stories of Omani curriculum is quite memorable not only because they provide natural, enjoyable and meaningful context for language exposure but also because there are a lot of repetitive patterns of key words and language structures. For example, in 'The Three Billy Goats Gruff' in grade 3 (page 28), there are three paragraphs that are repeated several times in the story with a few changes, e.g. they will implicitly learn the structure *I've got* as it is repeated several times in the story. Stories provide opportunities to practice language through repetition which is an effective means of language acquisition (Dunn, 1984; Ellis & Brewster, 1991; Mart, 2012). In addition, having the repeated patterns of language structures, children will probably acquire the rhythm, intonation and pronunciation of language (Ellis & Brewster, 2002; Martínez, 2007). Loukia (2006) adds that repetition in the story not only provides language practice but also develops students' imagination and prediction skill.

One of the criteria teachers should also pay attention to is readability of the text; choosing a story that is up to the learners' proficiency level (Tierney & Dobson, 1995; Pardede, 2011). Wajnryb (2003) comments that stories should provide comprehensible input. Generally, the language of most stories in Omani textbook is quite accessible to the learners, i.e. they are not linguistically and cognitively too difficult. Krashen(1981) adds that for language acquisition, learners should be exposed to the language that is a little bit above learners' level; however, apparently sometimes the language of some stories seems to be much above their level which cause comprehension problems though they are made more comprehensible through group work, retelling stories and follow-up activities (Alharrasi, 2009). One example of these stories is "The sky is falling" in grade 4 which consists of several paragraphs that are too difficult for young learners to grasp. The teacher's guide suggests that learners should only get the main gist of the story and ignore any difficult terms (Teacher's Guide, 2008). However, if this story is a little bit adapted to suit their language level, then the children will learn more from it.

Shin (2006) indicate that it is a good idea to associate language activities with children's environment. This is because learning a FL in a context they are familiar with helps to facilitate the learning process since they will be personalized. However, this does not mean that learners should not be exposed to other cultures. Mixon and Temu (2006) agree that stories from different cultures familiarize learners to different cultures but at the same time they support using local or national stories because they believe these stories assist to lower the effective filter since they are familiar to them. Stories in Omani context associate both national and international cultures. For instance, in "*Biff and the Coconut Tree*" in page 6 of grade 5, the name of the characters are Omani and they are wearing Omani clothes as well; while the characters in "*Getting dressed*" of the same grade in page 32 have foreign names and clothes.

An analysis of *English for Me* shows that all stories in the textbook hold lessons and morals to young learners. 'The sky is falling' story teaches children that because the seven birds are stupid, the fox and his family eat them all. Another example is the story of the "Three Pigs" which teaches children that because the two pigs are lazy, they are eaten by the fox; while their brother survives because he actively builds a strong house that prevents the fox from coming in. Other stories as well hold a moral or didactic goal of various aspects.

Moreover, the stories in the textbook appear to develop and exercise children's imagination. For example, there are stories about talking animals which lead learners to imagine them as humans who can utter words and wear clothes such as the story of the "Three Pigs". Ellis and Brewster (1991) suggest that stories are a link between the real world and imagination. Consequently, learners imagine themselves as the main characters living the story events as their own experiences (Tice, 2006). They "can become personally involved in a story as they identify with the characters and try to interpret the narrative and illustrations" (Ellis & Brewster, 2002: 1).

Since children like changes; they should be provided with a variety of techniques so that they will not feel bored of routine work. As a matter of fact, stories in Omani curriculum are taught using different sorts of techniques and methods which makes stories more interesting and memorable: children listen, read, draw, colour, make masks, perform a role play, retell the story and do TPR activities. Moreover, there are activities which are to be

performed individually, in pairs and in groups. In addition, all the stories in the textbook are supported orally through chants and songs, and visually through pictures, colourful drawings, puppets, illustrations, real objects, gestures and facial expressions. For instance, the story of "Little Red Riding Hood" is supported by lovely pictures, illustrations and masks. Also, the story of "Getting dressed" is illustrated by pictures and puppets and the story of "Carl the Caterpillar" in grade 3 (p. 44) is supported by a song (Teacher Guide, 2007). Using visuals not only makes the class environment enjoyable but it is a valuable technique to get learners used to guessing from the context. Tierney and Debson (1995) add that pictures and illustrations not only make stories more attractive and enjoyable but it is also a good means to improve comprehension.

The stories in the textbook are not carried out in isolation. It is integrated with other activities to promote other skills. According to Brown and Hirata (2007) telling stories without engaging students with follow-up activities may lead to passive learning. Children like to move and be active; they like to play, sing, chant, make things, draw, paint, and do other physical activities. Thus, it becomes essential to provide children with some activities that involve lots of movement to suit their needs and make language learning more enjoyable. In Omani context, there are several motivating follow-up activities. As an overall analysis of the textbook, it is apparent that the stories associate many physical activities such as acting out after storytelling, making masks for a role play and doing a TPR activity. For example, after telling the story of "Little Red Riding Hood", the learners are asked to make masks of little red riding hood and the wolf as a preparation for a role play which they are going to perform in the next step.

3. Designing Activities

Effective use of a story would not be determined only by a teacher's qualification; a good selection of the story and the activities associated with it are as essential as its content (Loukia, 2006). Murdoch (2002, cited in Pardede, 2011) assumes that short stories if selected appropriately can be a rich ELT source for language activities. Although the stories in the Omani curriculum are interesting, memorable and useful for language learning, sometimes they do not suit learners' interests and level.

The Teacher's Guide suggests several teaching techniques in storytelling and most teachers in Oman rely heavily on it and do not make the effort to modify something and prepare supplementary materials to make them more appropriate and effective due to work load and time constraints (Alharrasi, 2009). Teacher's guide may be beneficial; however, following it up to words may kill teachers' and learners' interests. Teachers should be equipped with effective techniques and familiar with using and selecting appropriate activities to be used as a replacement for the inappropriate ones in the textbook. Through stories, they can create positive atmosphere in classes and make students willing to continue learning. Tierney and Patricia (1995) assume that teachers should be well-qualified to tell stories. They need to tell stories willingly and patiently and be aware of some effective techniques in storytelling.

This paper tries to show how to exploit a short story "Jack and the Beanstalk" in EFL classrooms through a set of various kinds of associated activities that offer different learning styles.

Time: 120 min (three classes)

Language: attributive adjectives (adjectives before nouns)

Preparation: flashcards, blue tuck, papers, stick

Target learners: primary school children in Oman aged 10 (5th grade).

The Story: Jack and the Beanstalk

Activity 1: Warm up

The teacher introduces the characters of the story and then the students will be shown some beans to elicit the topic of the story. After that, they will be introduced to the key vocabulary that is unfamiliar to them and essential for their understanding of the story such as beans, beanstalk, castle, giant, and axe. The vocabulary will be introduced through real material and flashcards. The other non-familiar words will be learnt from context.

Moreover, the teacher will first introduce the key structure in the story which is 'adjectives before nouns' implicitly before telling the story. With some flashcards, the teacher will describe the object in the picture and the students repeat or mime, e.g. *I like big black dog; She was wearing a beautiful long red dress.*

Activity 2: Muddled Pictures

The teacher sticks some scramble pictures that illustrate the events of the story on the board and let students predict the sequence of the story and try to organize them and put them in the correct sequence.

Activity 3: Telling the story

The teacher will read the story aloud making use of some flashcards as she/he tells the events.

Activity 4: Listening

Then, the students will listen to the story twice. The first time, they will listen to the whole story on tape recorder without pausing. Then, they will join in with telling the story. The teacher will play the tape and pause at some sections to have the learners repeat.

Activity 5: True or False

The teacher tells the story again to the learners but this time with some changes. The learners have to listen carefully to discover what wrong is said about the story.

Activity 6: Throw the ball and continue the story

The learners are put in a circle. The teacher sits in the middle and starts the story. Then, he/she throws a ball to the first child who will continue the story. The ball will be passing around the circle several times till the story is finished. The teacher might want to provide some support for some students who will be stuck or shy.

Activity 7: Making masks

The learners will be divided into groups of four. They will be making four faces of Jack, Jack's mother, the giant and the giant's wife. To avoid wasting time, almost everything will be ready for the children. The groups will be given a collection of: mouths, noses, eyes, hairs, ears and blank faces. The groups will be given a paper that has descriptions of the four faces and they have to make masks according to the descriptions. For example,

Jack has big blue eyes, a small mouth, small ears and curly black hair.

Jack's mother has small green eyes, a small mouth, small ears and straight yellow hair.

The giant has big black eyes, a big mouth, big ears and curly red hair.

The giant's wife has small brown eyes, a big mouth, big ears and curly black hairs.

Before starting the work, the teacher has to make sure that students know what they are doing by demonstrating to them how the masks are made; e.g. one mask can be made as a sample.

Activity 8: A role play

The groups now will be preparing for a role play which will be performed in front of the class. The students would not act out the whole story but some sections extracted from the story: those with dialogues.

4. The Rationale of the Designed Activities

The above activities are designed to fit various principles. First, they are meant to create positive atmosphere in language classroom. It can be clearly noticed that the suggested activities inject lots of fun and movement and this, as Asher (1966) declares, suits children's intrinsic nature. Second, it is known about children that they have a short span of memory (Wario, 1989). Therefore, the previous activities are not too demanding for children; learners would not spend a lot of time and effort on them as they seem to be comprehensible. Though they involve a lot of interaction and comprehension, they are accessible and manageable. In addition to this, the activities have been designed to get learners involved in the stories and participate in the activities as much as possible. Involving the learners physically in some of the activities such as making masks and performing a role play and getting them work in-pairs while retelling the story is a good way to get them engaged and participated in the story events and activities.

The warm-up stage is a fundamental step to start the story. If the teacher immediately goes into the story, the learners might be lost or uninterested in the story. Wario (1989) suggests starting a story with introducing its characters and presenting the things which will be used in the story such as real materials, pictures, flash cards, etc. Therefore, to make the story more interesting and real, authentic materials are used; e.g. the students will be shown some real beans. Wario also proposes to teach the difficult vocabulary which will have an effect on students' understanding before telling the story. Thus, some difficult words that the teacher thinks necessary in the story comprehension will be introduced through real material and flashcards so that learners will not stop for a long time and work intensively looking up a word in a dictionary. The rest will be guessed from context as introducing them all makes students lose their interest in the story. Moreover, introducing the language before starting the story makes students notice the repetitive patterns of language in the story and therefore learners will have the opportunity to learn the structure before listening to the story.

Having a childish activity would de-motivate learners from responding to it (Phillips, 2003) and the contrary

may also be true. Predicting may not be so easy to do for young learners, but it is challenging and motivating. 'Muddled pictures' is a valuable activity to get children predict the sequences of the story and this develops their predictive skill.

Slattery and Willis (2001) assume that stories are the most valuable source to practice the four skills: listening, reading, writing, and speaking. However, it is not easy to let children decode the story and transfer it into pictures of their own imagination. Children enjoy listening to stories but this does not mean that they enjoy reading them. Since the learners are at their lower level and they can hardly read words, then the story will be introduced through listening. The first step, the teacher will read it to them using pictures, gestures and body language. The students will listen to the story on the tape recorder twice. As a first step of storytelling, the children listen to the story for an overall comprehension and engagement. The second listening will be played and paused to get students repeat after some sections. Since children are going to act out some parts of the dialogues, then they need to listen to them on the cassette and repeat the sentences to get accurate pronunciation and intonation (Cameron, 2001). Thus, the second listening aims to create awareness of pronunciation, stress and intonation (Slattery & Willis, 2001).

One of the suggested activities is "True or False" activity which is a good way to check their comprehension. Students' answers reflect their understanding of story events and sequences. Another way to check -their comprehension is retelling the story through "Throw the ball and continue the story" which is an efficient way to get learners engaged and be active in the lesson. Cameron (2001) argues that retelling is a very demanding activity and might be frustrating for children if they are not given scaffolding. Thus, children will be supported with some phrases and pictures to guide them in their retelling of the story as suggested by Wario (1989). Also, this activity is a kind of a game which means it lowers the learner's anxiety and makes them enjoy telling the story to their pairs.

Making masks is fun and at the same time helps to learn the language in a naturalistic context. The learners will collaborate in their groups to make their masks. They have to understand the descriptions in the paper, which is a good practice for the language which is meant to be taught in the story. The masks would be a first preparation for the role play. The role play would not only make the students interested but it is also a useful technique to practice the language in the story (Cameron, 2001). As far as it concerns young learners, bodily-kinaesthetic activities are of a great help to make learning the language easy to understand (Asher, 1966). Also, the role play not only makes students move while performing but it is also a great opportunity to practice fluency of learners' speech.

5. Conclusion

It can be concluded that storytelling is a very powerful language learning technique. Stories in *English for Me* develop children's imagination and contribute to their whole development. Moreover, they help to make the classroom atmosphere more interesting, develop positive attitudes toward learning, arouse students' interests and curiosity and encourage them to participate. Their content suits young learners' interests and makes them curious to know the end and quite suits the age of the learners "...in a way not to be too babyish nor too adult" (Tierney & Dobson, 1995). Some learners might be familiar with particular stories; however, this would not inhibit their enjoyment to listen to them again in the FL and it would be a challenge for them to comprehend the story in another language (Tierney and Dobson, 1995). On the other hand, there are some stories and activities that should be simplified by adopting efficient teaching techniques, or replaced or modified to make them more effective and suitable to the learners' level and interests.

Teaching stories varies from one context to another and thus teachers should be good storytellers and be aware of how to get the ultimate benefits from the taught stories. They should select effective teaching techniques to facilitate teaching stories (e.g. gestures, pictures, illustration, eye contact and tone voice) and adopt effective activities which make use of stories as much as possible. It is not enough to provide a variety of activities; teachers must also make sure that these activities suit children's intrinsic needs. They should be aware of how to utilise associated activities to make students understand and memorise the repeated patterns of language more easily, how to develop their imagination and how to engage them in a meaningful interaction.

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Appendix

This story has been adopted from the Chinese website: <http://www.dainihon.co.jp/ansyo/03.htm>

« 高学年用課題英文 B » Jack and the Beanstalk

Once upon a time there was a little boy.
His name was Jack and he lived with his mother.

One day his mother asked Jack to sell their **old black** cow.
The next day Jack met an old man on the road.
And the man said, “Take my five beans and give me your cow.”
Jack had magic beans but he had no money and no cow.
His mother was very angry and threw the beans outside.

The next day Jack saw a **big green** beanstalk.
He started to climb the beanstalk and climbed up quickly.
At last he came to the top and he saw a **beautiful** castle.

A **giant** man and his wife lived in the castle.
He liked to eat children.
“Fee, Fi, Fo, Foy ! I can smell a little boy!” said the giant.
“There’s nobody here. Sit down and eat your dinner,” said his wife.
The giant ate all the food and went to sleep.

Jack saw a bag of gold.
He took the bag and ran very quickly.
But the giant heard him and woke up.
“Stop, come back,” said the giant.
Jack climbed quickly down the beanstalk.
The **horrible** giant is coming.
Jack and his mother quickly cut down the **big** beanstalk with an axe.
C-R-A-S-H.
That was the end of him !

(From Pearson Education Limited : Jack and the beanstalk, 2000, longman)

※暗唱大会用に一部内容変更