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DAFTAR ISI

Teaching EFL through Storytelling in Indonesian Elementary School Setting: Some Perspectives from PGSD Students

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Abstract

This paper is part of a bigger research project that investigates PGSD (elementary school teacher training program) students' skill in delivering stories in the context of teaching English as a foreign language in Indonesian elementary school setting. This paper attempts to identify the challenges faced by PGSD students in teaching English through storytelling to the elementary school students. Four PGSD students who were doing teaching practice and conducting classroom action research for their bachelor thesis were recruited as the respondents of the study. Each of them taught three graders in four different classes in one of the private schools in Bandung. All of them were delivering a story in their English lessons. Two participants delivered the stories using a storytelling method, whereas the rest delivered the stories using a story-reading method. This study employed a qualitative descriptive method with questionnaire, in-depth interview, video recordings and field notes as research instruments for the data collection. The collected data were organized and prepared for analysis before coding. The next step was eliminating redundancies in the coding process by sorting, comparing and contrasting and labelling the codes into several categories. The last stage of the data analysis was identifying key concepts/themes emerging from the categories. The result suggests that the PGSD students faced two stages of challenges in teaching English through storytelling to the elementary school students, namely, 1) the preparation stage and 2) the implementation stage.

Keywords: Storytelling – Teaching English to Elementary School Students – Indonesia – PGSD.

1. Introduction

The teaching of English in Indonesian elementary school is not without problems. The problems mainly come from the quality of teachers who teach English at elementary school level. The teachers teaching English to elementary school students should master English as the target language, and at the same time should also understand the characteristics of the students. Therefore, teaching English in elementary school should be conducted in a meaningful and fun way by considering the characteristics of 6-12 years old children. There are some fun activities that could be done by the children, such as singing, playing games, and listening to a storytelling.

Storytelling is one of the suitable activities to be implemented in the context of English language learning for children (Brewster, Ellis & Girard, 2002; Phillips, 1993; Wright, 2006). Furthermore, Brewster *et al.* (2002) contends that storytelling could

enhance children's linguistic ability since teacher could introduce and review target vocabularies and sentence structure. Storytelling could also develop children's imagination which is important for children's mental health (Davies, 2007; Gadzikowski, 2007; Kuyvenhoven, 2009). In the field of English teaching, Garvie (1990) states that storytelling is one of the effective vehicles to reach the goal of language learning. Meanwhile, McConaghy (1990) argues that having a story time in a lesson at school is the beginning for children to be exposed to literature. By listening to a story, children can develop their critical thinking while they are discussing the characters, the place, the plot and ideas of the story.

Furthermore, Collins (1999) states that the implementation of storytelling has given a big contribution to the elementary school students' development. It is explained that storytelling facilitates the students to develop thinking skill, which enhances language skills, namely speaking, reading, and writing. Storytelling also functions as a scaffolding media which provides variety of language models that could be imitated by the students (Collins, 1999 and Kuyvenhoven, 2009).

Pennington (2009) shows storytelling has an important role in the children's second language development. In the context of teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) at the elementary school level, storytelling is believed as one of effective activities to develop fluency and vocabulary acquisition (Farrel dan Nessell cited in Isbell et al., 2004) and considered as the most comfortable activity which prioritizes students' utterances as a meaningful context during the lesson (Hislam, 1995).

In addition, Damayanti (2007) recommends storytelling to be applied as one of the techniques in teaching English at Indonesian elementary school, since it is believed as a cheaper media yet, has lots of benefits. Damayanti argues that storytelling could compensate Indonesian elementary schools located in the remote area which are said to be under-resourced since they do not have good facilities of children story books to develop its students' language skills. By applying storytelling in the English teaching, teachers could create learning sources without being dependant to the books from publishers.

Teaching English through storytelling is one of the ways to create fun learning activities. When a teacher decided to implement storytelling in an English lesson, there are some storytelling challenges that should be faced by the teacher. Kuyvenhoven (2009) identifies some challenges that should be faced by the teachers when teaching English through storytelling, such as the risk of remembering. The teachers are advised to remember and understand the plot of the story. That could be said as a big challenge since the story should be told in English. Another challenge in teaching English through storytelling, the teachers should be able to act out the story. During the storytelling process, it is suggested that the teacher could maintain his/her voice, intonation, body movement and facial expression. Based on a research (Ananthia, 2010), this challenge is quite difficult for the teachers and makes the teachers tend to avoid storytelling activity during the English lesson.

Groce (2004) investigates American teachers' perspectives towards a storytelling training conducted for the in-service training teachers. The research reveals that all of the teacher respondents state that the storytelling in-service training has

_____ the teachers understanding on how to implement storytelling as routine
_____. It has also motivated the teachers to conduct more storytelling activities
_____ the chosen lessons. While in an Indonesian context, the teacher respondents
_____ that they regretted for not being trained how to teach English through
_____ (Ananthia, 2010) especially for elementary school English teachers
_____ from English Department of UPI before 2006 and PGSD before 2008.

_____ studies had been conducted to reveal PGSD students' teaching
_____ in the context of English language. One of them is a research conducted
_____ningsih, Yanthi, and Ananthia (2008) which identifies that PGSD students
_____ have difficulties on the aspects of vocabulary, pronunciation, and diction. In the
_____ stage, the PGSD students designed the lesson plan in Bahasa Indonesia,
_____ translated it into English, which makes their classroom language, was not the
_____ one. Another research shows that PGSD students have difficulties in the
_____ of English Meaning, Form, Pronunciation and Appropriacy (MFPA)
_____, Yuliariatiningsih and Setyaningsih, 2010). This paper is mainly focused to
_____ the challenges faced by PGSD students in teaching English through
_____ to the elementary school students.

_____ Method

_____ PGSD students (three females and one male) who were doing teaching practice
_____ conducting classroom action research for their bachelor thesis were recruited as the
_____ of the study. Each of them taught three graders in four different classes in
_____ private schools in Bandung. All of them were delivering story in their
_____ lessons. Two participants delivered the stories using storytelling method,
_____ the remains delivered the stories using story-reading method. This study
_____ a qualitative descriptive method with questionnaire, in-depth interview, field
_____ video recording as research instruments for the data collection. The collected
_____ organized and prepared for analysis before coding. The next step was
_____ redundancies in the coding process by sorting, comparing and contrasting
_____ the codes into several categories. The last stage of the data analysis was
_____ key concepts/ themes emerging from the categories. Pseudonyms were used
_____ participants' names.

_____ Findings

_____ attempts to identify the challenges of teaching English through storytelling
_____ PGSD students. When conducting the story time in the English lesson, the
_____ implemented different techniques and media as presented at table 1.

Table 1. The techniques, story and media used by the respondents

Techniques of delivering the story	Names (Pseudonym)	Story	Media
storytelling	Shinta	Adapted from *English for Elementary School* course textbook.	Word-less pop up big book owned-made.
	Hani	Adapted from	Series of big pictures.

		English for Elementary School course textbook.	
Story-reading	Deni	Written by PGSD English Concentration students	*Big book* (handmade, UPI Kampus Cibiru collections).
	Tuti	Created by her.	1x2m Styrofoam comic.

The finding of the study is presented through the respondents perceptions, as follows:

3.1.   Shinta

Generally, Shinta did not find any difficulties in teaching through storytelling. The learning process went smoothly and every student actively involved during the English lesson. However, Shinta stated that in the process of storytelling she found difficulty when she forgot how to pronoun a particular word from the story. Besides the pronunciation, she also said that giving instruction in English was quite a big challenge for her. Especially when her students did not respond her, Shinta confused whether or not the students could not do her command, or just did not understand her instruction. To assure the student's understanding, Shinta translated the instruction into Bahasa Indonesia. Despite her thought of having difficulties, the researcher did not notice that Shinta had experienced such difficulties during the process of storytelling.

Besides pronunciation problem, Shinta stated that another difficulty happened at the preparation stage, namely how to choose the right story. Shinta stated that it is one of the difficult parts since students' characteristics and developmental stage should be considered. Not only choosing the right story, design the right activities was also a big challenge since:

...the designed activities should match with the focused language skill, for instance, I want to develop the students' listening skill, so I have to design the right activity, to develop the students' listening skill, not activities focus to reading skill development (Shinta, interview).

That things made the decision of the learning objectives become difficult things to do since it should be matched with the students' English level, the target language to be achieved and the focus of language skill that would be developed.

3.2.   Hani

In the preparation stage, Hani said that choosing the right story is a quite challenging thing to do since she had to consider the relevance of the story with the theme suggested by the curriculum. Besides that factor, as the teacher and the storyteller, it was important for Hani, herself to like the story being delivered to her students. For her, it was impossible to urge the students to like the story if she, as the teacher and storyteller did not like the story. Besides choosing the right story, the preparation of the media also plays an important part. Hani stated that in the process of the storytelling in the context of teaching English, visualization was very important. Therefore Hani argued that the storytelling process should be accompanied by the presence of pictures. On the other hand, she had difficulties in providing the pictures

which are relevant to the story since she said that she was not a good drawer. Not only preparing media and choosing the right story, Hani thought that she experienced difficulties in deciding indicators and designing the scoring rubric to assess the students' language skills after the storytelling activity.

Besides the preparation stage, Hani experienced difficulties in the teaching process. The most significant difficulties found in the using of classroom language, including giving the instructions in English. Although she had prepared the classroom language before teaching, Hani still experienced difficulties since the real situation was different from her anticipation. Hani realized that this happened because she were not able to use English instruction in a more spontaneous and natural way. Her English limitation made her could not improvise when she forgot few parts of the story. Hani also made pronunciation mistake during the storytelling and giving the classroom instruction.

During the teaching process, Hani seemed to experience difficulties in organizing the classroom layout. The students were sitting on their chairs with the desks in front of them in four rows. This kind of position made the students quite difficult to stay focus to the storytelling process. It was also difficult for Hani to build eye contacts with all of the students.

Deni

In the preparation stage, Dani stated that he did not experience any difficulties in preparing the lesson. Deni used big book as the media in the storytelling process. The big book were available at UPI Kampus Cibiru, therefore he did not have to make his own media to support the storytelling activity. Deni decided to choose a simple story with the assumption that it would be easier for him in conducting the teaching of English through storytelling.

In the teaching process, Deni experienced difficulty caused by the choice of the "too simple" story. The story became counter-productive in making the students to be actively involved in miming the action of the story and acting out using their body language. Besides, Deni also had difficulties in pronouncing the word during the storytelling process. Deni experienced difficulties in giving instruction in English, mastering the concept of English singular-plural. He seemed confused in differentiate 'leg-leg' and 'leg-legs'. Furthermore, Deni also had difficulties in organizing the classroom layout. The students were sitting on their chairs with the desks in front of them which made it was quite difficult in maintaining the teacher-students interaction.

Tuti

In the preparation stage, Tuti experienced several difficulties related to the making of comic as the teaching media. The first challenge was selecting the right theme and the right story. Tuti's main consideration in choosing the story was its relevance with the curriculum. After that the next challenge would be the making of the comic including the story and picture making. The challenge in writing the story in English was the possibility of making grammatical mistakes. While the challenges in making the pictures for the comic related to the size of the pictures.

Tuti presented the story from her comic using story-reading technique. Tuti chose this technique to minimize mistakes that might happen since she was not native speaker of English. However, this technique could not avoid Tuti from making pronunciation mistakes. Tuti made several mispronunciations, words such as *'fly'* and *'hurt'* were pronounced differently (*'fly'* or *'play'* and *'hurt'* or *'heart'*). Not only that, Tuti seemed to have difficulties in using the right classroom language, such as when she was giving instruction in English, for example *"Now a holiday time!"*, which should be *"Now is a holiday time!"*. Besides, she also had difficulties in saying the right expression, such as: when she meant *"Please go back to your chair"*, she said *"please come back your chair"*. Tuti also had difficulty in motivating the students during the storytelling process.

4. Discussion

From the findings of the study, the challenges and difficulties faced by the respondents teaching English through storytelling at the elementary school level have been identified. The difficulties and challenges could be categorized into two classifications, namely; 1) at the preparation stage and 2) at the teaching and learning process.

4.1. The preparation stage

At the preparation stage, there are three kinds of difficulties faced by the respondents. The first difficulty is related with the story selection. All of the respondents realized that the story presented in the lesson should be able to develop the elementary school students' language skill. Therefore the topic of the story should be relevant with the learning objectives and curriculum. Selecting the story is quite challenging since the teacher, personally, should also like the story. It would be unfair if the teacher urged his/her students to like the story, while he/she did not like it (Collins, 1999; Haven, 2000; and Kuyvenhoven, 2009).

Secondly, the challenge happened during the making of media. Haven (2000:217) states that visual media is not needed during storytelling. It is said that as long as the storyteller could present the story with variety of voice vocalization, gestures, facial expressions and body, movement. However, Ananthia (2010) argues that it does not go the same in the context of teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL). In EFL context, visual media is one of the important elements in storytelling since it could give and create meaning for the students as the audiences. By giving visual media during the storytelling process, the teacher does not have to worry that the students will not be able to understand the story. Therefore, the translating method could be avoided. Another problem might happen when the teacher is not able to draw pictures related to the story. However, the visual media could be presented in another form, such as photograph or getting them from available pictures in the internet.

Finally, the third challenge in this stage is designing the right and suitable activities. The designed activities should be relevant with the students' language level- not too easy nor too difficult, and the focused language skill to be developed. The teacher should also consider the fun side of the designed activity, since students learn best when they feel relaxed (Brewster, *et al*, 2002). However, fun only is not enough; the activities should also be filled with meaningful material relevant with the learning

...tives (Linse, 2005). Therefore, in designing the right activities, the teachers ... understand the students' characteristics and the level of the students' ability.

The teaching and learning process stage

In the teaching and learning process, four challenges were identified. The ... of those challenges were connected and tended to be overlapping. The first challenge related to the process of telling the story. The respondents faced big challenge when they had to put on voice vocalisation, gestures, facial expressions and ... movement during the storytelling. Haven (2000) contends that when doing the ..., there are two important components, namely, 1) "the what" and 2) "the ...". The second component is believed to be the key success of doing the ..., which was quite a challenge for the respondents. Besides, the respondents ... difficulty since the story should be presented in English. There was a risk ... they might forget the story. Pronunciation was also one of the problems in this ... To overcome those problems, of course English teacher who applied storytelling ... learning process should practise a lot. Kuyvenhoven (2009) states that the soul of ... storytelling is memory and heart, therefore, the most important thing is to ... the content and the plot of the story. In the beginning, the teacher as the ... could try to practise by trying to deliver a shorter story loudly in front of a ... accompanied a suitable intonation, gestures, and body language (Kuyvenhoven, ...). Not only that, Kuyvenhoven (2009) also suggests teacher to visit storytelling ... learn from another storytellers and also join a storytelling community.

The second challenge at this stage is the implementation of the after story ... The challenge related to giving instruction. The teachers were recommended ... target language (English) during the whole lesson (Brewster, et al., 2002). It ... considered as a problem since the respondents are not able to produce English ... and naturally. This problem could be minimized by preparing and ... the classroom language that would be said at the class and put it in the ... plan. By doing this, the teacher could practise saying the classroom language, ... giving instruction in English.

The third challenge relates with the using of classroom language in the whole ... process. Problem happened when the respondents should say natural English ... in a correct pronunciation. Similar with the second challenge, this problem ... minimized by preparing and predicting the classroom language that would be ... have it written down in the lesson plan. The teacher could prepare some ... language related to how: to give reinforcement, to give compliment, to ... the students, and to give instruction. While the pronunciation problem could be ... by listening to English or checking the International Phonetic Alphabet ... assure how to pronounce English words.

The last challenge was how to manage the classroom. Classroom layout is one of ... the classroom management. This point is important to be considered since ... the teaching and learning process. Wright (1997 and 1995) states, in the ... process, the most effective position is to have the students much nearer to ... teacher. The reason why that position would be more effective, partly because it is ... for the students to see the teacher and the visual media. But the most

87

important thing is because it changes relationship between the teacher and the students-that the teacher is going to share something special (Wright, 1995). Furthermore, Wright (1995) suggests that the students could be asked to sit on the floor around the teacher. However, for some Indonesian elementary schools, it would be quite difficult to have students sitting on the floor. Some schools have big chairs and desks with limited space which make it difficult to create a carpet time. Besides the classroom layout, another problem emerged when some of the students lost their focus and attention. Teacher should be able to handle uncondusive situation by giving warning or asking them to be quiet (Read, 2000). But again, this one was a big challenge because of the teacher had limited spoken English. To overcome that situation, the teacher is advised to practice the classroom language that could be applied in the process of teaching and learning.

5. Conclusion and Recommendation

Based on the finding and the discussion, it can be concluded that the challenges faced by PGSD students teaching English through storytelling could be classified into two classifications, namely, 1) the preparation stage, and 2) the teaching and learning process stage. In the preparation stage, the challenges are the story selection, the media preparation, and activities design. While challenges at the teaching and learning process stage are: 1) variation of voice vocalization, gestures, facial expressions, body movement, and pronunciation during the storytelling process, 2) the implementation of activities after the storytelling, 3) the using of classroom language, and 4) how to manage the classroom.

This study also proposes some recommendations to improve PGSD students' storytelling skills. Firstly, since the PGSD students face difficulties in the process of storytelling related to the using of classroom language, PGSD students are recommended to keep practising to deliver story through storytelling activity. Secondly, as future teachers, PGSD students are advised to visit storytelling events to learn from other storytellers to improve their techniques in doing the storytelling.

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