

Telling Stories to Young Learners: The Teachers' Beliefs and Practices

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Abstract

The story conveyed many positive things to people including young learners. Teachers can provide telling activities in class. Finding various storytelling activities among young learner teachers who integrate digital technology is important. This research explores teachers' beliefs and practices in telling stories to teach young learners. In this study an explanatory sequential design with 105 samples was carried out. The results of the Interviews explain in more detail the survey results and it can be concluded that telling a story can cultivate children's vocabulary and pronunciation, cultivate children's imagination, curiosity, and communication skills, and introduce cultural understanding. In addition, when dealing with online teaching, teachers of young learners used to download digital stories, read aloud, online storytelling, and interactive videos from YouTube channels to tell stories. Telling stories can support the concept of "play and learn" and the teachers believed that young learners enjoy and develop their communication through this activity.

Keywords: Belief, Practice, Telling Story, Young Learner.

INTRODUCTION

The stories provided events and characters. For young learners, stories can be used to share something. Stories are complete in the context and have inherent meaning. They provide an intelligible source of truth for the second/third language input and can reduce suppression. Storytelling helps develop learners' listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. Therefore, teachers should integrate telling stories into teaching, especially for young children. After appreciating and understanding a story, there will be plenty of opportunities for listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Teachers can adjust stories according to learners' interests, needs, and second language or foreign language proficiency. The method is to carefully select appropriate books and modify the language during storytelling or oral reading. Picture books provide the advantage of illustrations to explain most of the vocabulary. The repetitive pattern provides additional help for language learning. Indeed, everyone likes to listen to other people's stories, and also to tell their own stories to others. Everyone loves to listening others' stories and telling their stories to the other. Some research was conducted and the results presented that telling stories bring out positive effects to the learners' communication development such as (Bartan, 2020; Kervin & Mantei, 2016; Knauf, 2020; Ko & Lee, 2013). It can be derived that stories provide good benefits for listeners and it is better to be applied as part of teaching for learners, especially for young children.

There are some benefits of using storytelling as a strategy in teaching young learners. Storytelling helps the students to empower themselves in language mastery and where they can communicate and express their feelings through the story. They also can build up their confidence and motivation in learning. It also finds out that various storytelling activities among young learner teachers who integrate digital technology. The result of the research hopefully can be as the evaluation of the early childhood/ young-learners teachers to figure out their activities in telling stories dealing with digital media.

Some research focused on the teachers' digital technology competencies to support digital learning during the implementation of online learning such as (Andema, 2009; Anggeraini et al., 2019; Celik & Aytin, 2014; Gilakjani, 2012; Phuapan et al., 2015; Traxler, 2018). Rajeswaran (2019) implied

that universities and teacher education programs around the world must recognize the relevance of mobile technology in making effective language classroom and help teachers find creative ways to provide mobile technology with English materials and classrooms activities to enhance students' English skills.

When teachers are telling the story, the children know, recognize and understand various good characters in the story that are a verbal communication. Stories can be used as a tool to stimulate aspects of child development because telling stories activities are identical with children. It is doubtful to remember that the story has many benefits for children. In this case, the children around five to ten years old. Some research was conducted in the form of storytelling such as (Bartan, 2020; Knauf, 2020; Satriana et al., 2018). It can be derived that the effects of storytelling on learners' first language literacy were extended to second/third language learning too.

Some results of the research indicated some positive effects of the telling story activity on the use of storytelling even in digital storytelling to the learners. First, Al-Mansour and Al-shorman (2011) indicated that storytelling can develop communication skills and students realize the morals and emotions of the characters in the stories. Second, telling stories through digital storytelling allowed the students to participate actively and work collaboratively (Yentri Anggeraini, 2020).

Some research has focused on the concept of telling stories in the classroom such as storytelling (Al-mansour & Al-shorman, 2011; Kasami, 2017; Mokhtar et al., 2011), digital storytelling (Yentri Anggeraini & Afifah, 2017; Foelske, 2014; Nassim, 2018; Smeda et al., 2014; Tang, 2016), and Read-Aloud (Amer, 1997; Omar, 2016; Oueini et al., 2008) and video (Chae, 2018; Jassim & Dzakiria, 2018; Saed et al., 2021; Yükselir, 2017). Traditional storytelling (Face-to-face storytelling) is a recent technique in telling stories that have been known and applied from generation to generation, while digital storytelling incorporates digital technologies composed of various multimedia such as photos, pictures, audio, text, video, and animation. This study focused on two research questions: 1) What are the teachers' beliefs in telling stories to young learners? And 2) How do the young learners' teachers implement "telling stories"?

METHODOLOGY

This study used mixed method study and an explanatory sequential design was employed to carry out the teachers' belief and practices in telling stories to young learners. For quantitative data, the researchers did the following steps: preparing the questionnaire, taking a try-out of the questionnaire to get reliable items, validating it, administering the questionnaire, and calculating the data by percentage analysis. Next, for qualitative data, the researchers did the following steps: preparing the interview items, validating the interview items, administering interview to volunteer participants who had time and follow the interview process, and analyzing the data, and drawing conclusion. 105 participants which 42 of them were teachers of elementary schools and 63 of them were early childhood education teachers. This study also employed a purposive sampling method where the invited study participants were asked to complete a survey questionnaire that measured their beliefs and practices in telling stories and 15 of them followed the interview process. It addresses two questions about the teaching process and how they tell stories, conducted through interviews.

The teachers' belief and practice questionnaire is a 21-item instrument adopted (Mokhtar et al., 2011; Robin, 2016), the instrument uses a five-point Likert scale from 1 to 4 high score represents agreement on the statements on beliefs and practices of telling stories. The internal consistency of the instruments is measured using Cronbach alpha reliability estimate. The reliability of the questionnaire scale was 0.820. The reliable and valid teachers' belief and practice questionnaire (21 items) is administered to the participants. To support survey result, interview analysis was applied. Percentage analysis and thematic analysis were used. In addition, the researchers analyzed these items using the "Item Analysis" method to get a deep understanding of the results from the questionnaire. The data from interview was analysis by following the steps from (Creswell, 2012).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Participants' Information

The information about the age, teaching experience, and teaching background of the participants is displayed on the following chart. Chart 1 presents the information about participants' ages.

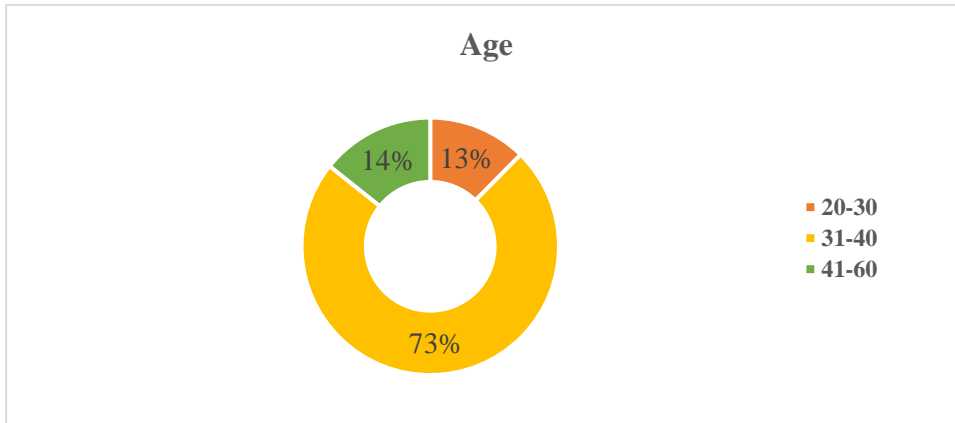


Chart 1. Participants' Ages

Chart 1 displays 13 (14%) of the participants are in the age 20-30 category, 77 (73%) of the participants are in the age 31-40 category, and 15 (14%) of the participants are in the age 41-60 category. Meanwhile, the information on the participants' teaching background is displayed on Chart 2.

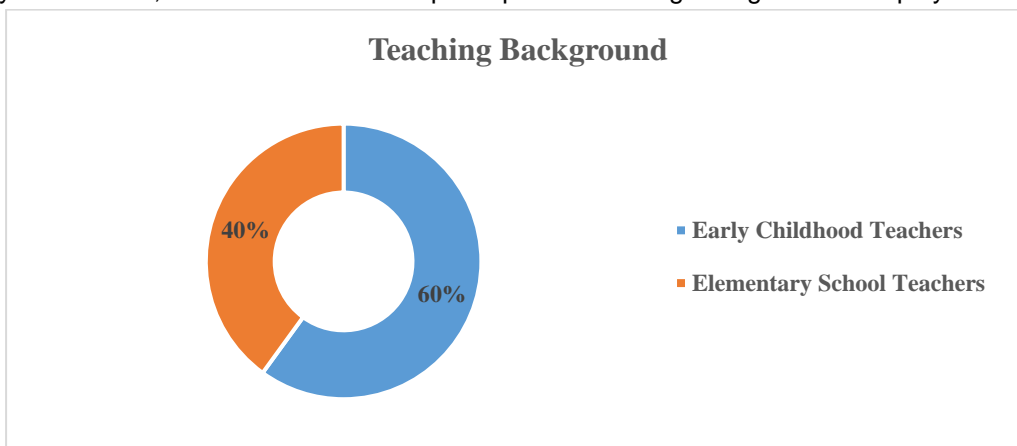


Chart 2. Teaching Background

Chart 2 presents 63 (60%) of the participants are early childhood teachers and 42 (40%) of them are elementary school teachers.

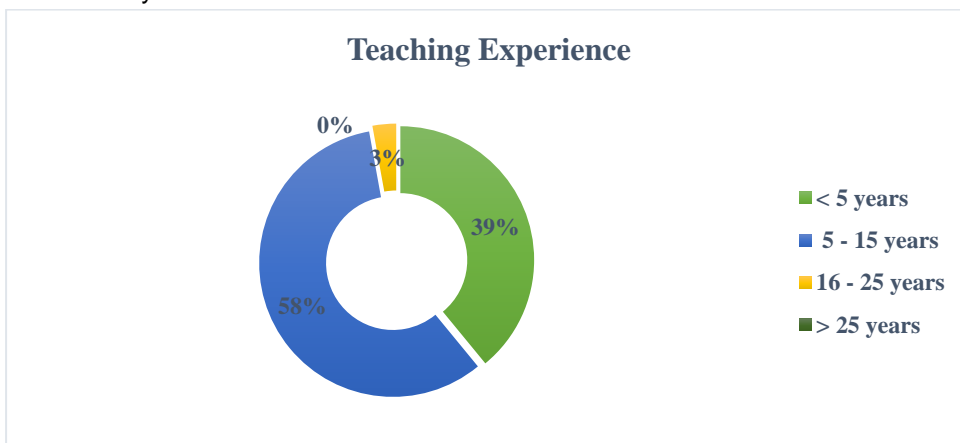


Chart 3. Teaching Experience

Chart 3 displays 41 (39%) of the participants have less than 5 years teaching experience

category, 61 (58%) of the participants choose between 5-15 years teaching experience category, and 3 (3%) of the participants choose between 16-25 years, and none of the participants has teaching experience more than 25 years.

The Teachers' Beliefs in Telling Stories to Young Children

The questionnaire responses' results were analyzed to determine the percentage of the participants' frequency toward each question (item) in the questionnaire. The objective of the questionnaire distribution was to evaluate the information about the teachers' belief in telling stories for young learners. The following Table 1 displays descriptive statistics regarding the teachers' belief in the benefits of telling stories for young learners among participants.

Table 1
The Teachers' Belief on the Benefits of Telling Stories for Young Learners

No	The Benefits of Telling Stories	Category				Total
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	
1	Increase young learners' vocabularies	0 (0%)	1 (1%)	99 (94%)	5 (5%)	105 (100%)
2	Build young learners' communication skills	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	84 (80%)	21 (20%)	105 (100%)
3	Cultivate young learners' imagination	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	81 (77%)	24 (23%)	105 (100%)
4	Cultivate young learners' pronunciation	0 (0%)	2 (0%)	93 (89%)	10 (9%)	105 (100%)
5	Introduce cultural understanding	0 (0%)	6 (6%)	96 (91%)	3 (3%)	105 (100%)
6	Support young learners' character-building	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	55 (52%)	50 (48%)	105 (100%)
7	Teach second/third language	0 (0%)	10 (10%)	73 (69%)	22 (21%)	105 (100%)
8	Promote brain developments	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	51 (49%)	54 (51%)	105 (100%)
9	Promote strengthens relationships between teacher and young learners	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	73 (70%)	32 (30%)	105 (100%)
10	Facilitate "play and learn" for young learners' teaching concept	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	42 (60%)	63 (40%)	105 (100%)

Table 1 displays the frequency of information on the benefits of telling stories for young learners of the 105 participants. It indicated that 99 (94%) the 105 participants agree that telling stories, 84 (80%) of them agree that TSs can build young learners' communication skills, 81 (77%) the participants agree that TSs cultivate young learners' imagination, 93 (89%) the participants agree that TSs cultivate young learners' pronunciation, 96 (91%) the participants agree that TSs introduce cultural understanding, 55 (52%) the participants agree and 50 (48%) strongly agree that TSs support young learners' character building, 73 (69%) the participants agree that TSs can teach second/third language, 51 (49%) the participants agree and 54 (51%) of them strongly that TSs can promote brain developments, 73 (70%) the participants agree and 32 (30%) of them strongly agree with TSs promote strengthens relationships among teacher and young learners, and 42 (60%) the participants agree and 63 (40%) of them strongly agree with TSs facilitate "play and learn" for young learners' teaching concept. So, it could be concluded that telling stories builds up students' communication skills and also their confidence in learning.

Table 2
 The Information on How the Young Learners' Teachers Implement Telling Stories

No	Telling Stories Strategies	Category					Total
		Never	Ever	Sometimes	Often	Always	
1	Traditional storytelling /Face to Face storytelling	0 (0%)	5 (5%)	15 (14%)	78 (74%)	7 (7%)	105 (100%)
2	Online storytelling	1 (1%)	10 (10%)	73 (69%)	21 (20%)	0 (0%)	105 (100%)
3	Digital Storytelling	0 (0%)	5 (5%)	30 (28%)	63 (60%)	0 (0%)	105 (100%)
4	Interactive video from YouTube Channel	0 (0%)	4 (4%)	7 (7%)	73 (69%)	21 (20%)	105 (100%)
5	Read Aloud	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	7 (7%)	18 (17%)	80 (76%)	105 (100%)
6	Comic Strip	47 (45%)	34 (32%)	18 (17%)	6 (6%)	0 (0%)	105 (100%)
7	PowToon	50 (47%)	29 (28%)	23 (22%)	3 (3%)	0 (0%)	105 (100%)

Table 2 displays the frequency of telling stories strategies used by 105 participants. It indicated that none of the participants claims they never apply traditional/ face to face storytelling, 5 (5%) of them claim they ever apply traditional/ face to face storytelling, 15 (14%) of them claim they sometimes apply traditional/ face to face storytelling, 78 (74%) of them claim they often apply traditional/ face to face storytelling, 7 (7%) of them claim they always apply traditional/ face to face storytelling. In addition, 1 (1%) of them claim they never apply online storytelling, 10 (10%) of them claim they ever apply online storytelling, 73 (69%) of them claim they sometimes apply online storytelling, 21 (20%) of them claim they often apply online storytelling, none of them claim they always apply online storytelling. Next, none of the participants claims they never apply digital storytelling, 5 (5%) of them claim they ever apply digital storytelling, 30 (28%) of them claim they sometimes apply digital storytelling, 63 (60%) of them claim they often apply digital storytelling, none of them claim they always apply digital storytelling. Then, none of the participants claims they never apply interactive video from YouTube channel, 7 (7%) of them claim they ever apply interactive video from YouTube channel, 30 (28%) of them claim they sometimes apply interactive video from YouTube channel, 73 (69%) of them claim they often apply interactive video from YouTube channel, 21 (20%) of them claim they always apply interactive video from YouTube channel. Moreover, none of the participants claims they never apply Read Aloud in telling stories, none of them claims they ever apply Read Aloud in telling stories, 7 (7%) of them claim they sometimes apply Read Aloud in telling stories, 18 (17%) of them claim they often apply Read Aloud in telling stories, 80 (76%) of them claim they always apply Read Aloud in telling stories. Furthermore, 47 (45%) of them claim they never apply comic strip, 34 (32%) of them claim they ever apply comic strip, 18 (17%) of them claim they sometimes apply comic strip, 6 (6%) of them claim they often apply comic strip, none of them claim they always apply comic strip. Last, 50 (47%) of them claim they never apply PowToon, 29 (28%) of them claim they ever apply PowToon, 23 (22%) of them claim they sometimes apply PowToon, 3 (3%) of them claim they often apply PowToon, none of them claim they always apply PowToon. From the data shown in Table 2, it could be concluded that most of the participants used digital storytelling as media in reading the story.

The Interview Result

The participants' beliefs on the implementation of telling stories for young learners are presented sequentially based on the order of questions asked in the interview as follows in Table 3:

Table 3
The Result of the Interview

No	Questions	Responses
Q1	<i>Have you ever told the story in your classroom?</i>	<p><i>“Yes. I saw a video to the students and then guided them to listen to the story in the video.....” (IS.1)</i></p> <p><i>“Of course, I have told stories to my students directly.” (IS.2)</i></p> <p><i>“Yes, I ever told it in my class” (IS.3)</i></p> <p><i>“Not as telling the story as usual... Yes. I have ever told the story in my class.” (IS.4)</i></p>
Q2	<i>How do you tell a story to your class?</i>	<p><i>“..... As we know, young learners like a video so I used downloaded interactive video, and then I saw it in class..... (IS.1, Elementary School Teacher)</i></p> <p><i>“.....In telling a story, I read the story to the students, and then I asked them to continue my reading and then sometimes I record it, when the students read aloud.....” (IS.2)</i></p>

The result of the interview in Table 3 showed that the teacher used digital storytelling like a video and also read the story directly. The teacher also recorded it, it can be used as a learning reflection for teachers and students. The interview result implied that the teachers prefer applying face-to-face storytelling because they can interact and see whether the students' focus and felt curious during telling stories activities.

The result of the study indicated that 74 % of the early childhood and elementary teachers applied traditional storytelling (face-to-face storytelling). They believed that TS delivers some positive things, especially for the development of young learners' communication skills. This finding is in line with the research results done by (Isik, 2016; Solichah & Suminar, 2020). The result implied that storytelling stimulates verbal words that indicate an understanding of the feelings or thoughts of others. Moreover, traditional storytelling can strengthen relationships among learners and teachers and it is good for social interaction and communication building for young ages. It is in line with the findings from (Kervin & Mantei, 2016; Wright et al., 2013). Hopefully, TS can be applied when we have offline classes usual. It could be said that 60 % of early childhood and elementary teachers applied digital storytelling, 69% of them used YouTube channels by downloading the video and sharing it in class, and 81 % of them never and ever applied comic strip and PowToon applications in telling stories. It could be concluded that the teacher implemented different methods in telling stories for the students, sometimes she used digital media such as video and or interactive telling stories in other ways.

CONCLUSION

Telling stories still exists among young learner's teachers in various ways and depend on offline or online learning. It can be derived that early childhood and young learner teachers implement face-to-face storytelling (offline storytelling), read aloud, digital storytelling, online storytelling, and showing interactive videos from YouTube channels in telling stories in the classroom. Telling stories provides some benefits such as increasing young learners' vocabularies, building communication skills, cultivating imagination and pronunciation, introducing cultural understanding, supporting young learners' character building, promoting brain developments, promoting strengthened relationships among teachers and young learners, and facilitating "Play and Learn" for young learners' teaching concept. The research sample was limited to two provinces; thus the findings cannot be generalized to all higher education institutions (universities) in Indonesia. As this research was carried out with 105 participants among early childhood teachers and elementary teachers in South Sumatra and West Java, it is suggested that similar research with a large number of samples including the other moderator variables. Early childhood teachers can apply one of the techniques in telling stories both offline and online learning process.

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