REPORT

Using Stories to Story Instructed, Usage-Based L2 Learning

Humaira Mariyam B.

An international symposium was conducted by Teachers College, Columbia University Roundtable in Second Language Studies (TCCRISLS) on February 2-3, 2023, via the Zoom platform. The twelve papers presented in the symposium, "Using Stories to Story Instructed, Usage-Based L2 Learning," explored the potential of using stories to aid second language (L2) development. The themes covered in the symposium included:

- Digital and collaborative storytelling,
- Using stories to promote L2 literacy skills; and
- Sharing storytelling task design and teachers' experiences.

The symposium commenced with a keynote address by Sandie Mourao, who spoke on mediation strategies, with examples, for fostering skills in interpreting picture books. Six presentations followed the keynote address.

The first presentation, using empirical data, discussed articulation of identities through digital storytelling. Thirty Taiwanese high school students were given story-listening tasks and an interventional course on script writing and production. The findings showed that listening to stories enabled students to better narrate stories with emotions and intonations and express their identities.

The second presentation discussed two activities for reading comprehension based on the Total Proficiency in Reading and Storytelling framework (TPRS). One was to use Reader's Theatre to combine reading practices, creation and performing texts. The other was to listen to conventional texts and recreate them as graphic novels.

The third presentation was a qualitative study on teachers' attitudes

using content and language-integrated learning. According to the findings, teachers evinced a sense of self-efficacy. They increased the motivation of learners to produce spontaneous oral English when they integrated content and language.

The following presentation discussed using children's literature to develop tense in Spanish using the approach of presentation, attention, co-construction, and extension (PACE). Since students' learning experiences differed, the conclusion stressed that the PACE model may only be appropriate for some learners.

The fifth and the sixth presentations were on collaborative storytelling/ creation. The fifth paper used gamification (map drawing game) and improvisation for communicative student-centred language learning. The presenter observed that the value of gamification is that it can be used in any context regardless of proficiency level. The second value was that its use in multicultural contexts was enriching because students collaboratively created stories from different cultural perspectives.

The first day of the symposium ended with a presentation of a case study of a Mandarin-Chinese teacher who used collaborative story creation as a pedagogy in her hybrid class. The presentation provided the process details, showing that student interaction during story creation contributed more to topic development than other instructional activities. The day ended with a note emphasizing teachers letting go of control to provide students more space to contribute to topic development.

The second day of the symposium saw six more presentations. The topic of the first presentation was a multimodal analysis of a few storytellers' performances while telling stories to children.

These features include verbal, vocal, and visual features such as pitches, meditation of voice, and digital features of different gestures and facial expressions. These features were used to scaffold the participation of children in storytelling.

The second presentation discusses the effect of reading aloud graded and authentic Spanish picture books and its contribution to language proficiency. The presentation cautions that story reading may be one of many causes of improving proficiency. The presenter also shared the importance of using diverse materials, enabling learners to choose the text they wanted to read.

The third presentation, from India, is an exploratory study on creating and narrating stories from graphic assemblages created by the learners using online comic builder platforms for developing the speaking proficiency of tertiary-level learners in English as a second language (ESL). The presenter reports that learners could speak longer with complex sentences and fewer fillers throughout the storytelling.

The fourth presentation focused on verbatim theatre in higher secondary ESL learners in Canada, which involves authentic utterances and integrates listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. Its use allows learners to develop and perform with social and cultural awareness and a high degree of autonomy. The presenter touched on the challenges of using verbatim theatre as highly time-consuming, demanding a high level of attention, and risky for the learners as the task entails fieldwork.

The implementation of story-based activities on science fiction for advanced English learners was analyzed in the fifth presentation. The analysis showed two effects: (a) an increase in linguistic and multimodal awareness, and (b) creating semiotically rich resources through collaboration and increased exposure to target language materials.

The final presentation was a report on designing and implementing an innovative pedagogy, Virtual Field Experiences (VFE), to support language learning, literacy, and cultural awareness. The learners used VFEs to document stories that promote local-global connections. According to the presenters, VFE promotes learner agency and autonomy as they can choose what they want to work on and enhance critical thinking and collaboration skills.

Zhao Hong Han concluded the symposium by mentioning the highlights of the symposium. In her closing remarks, she addressed the gap between research and its implementation in the classroom by engaging diligently in research to obtain robust evidence for implementation and making recommendations.

After the symposium, participants broke out into two groups to share learnings and key takeaways. This session helped participants build contacts and get to know people working on storytelling from multiple perspectives.

Humaira Mariyam B. is a Research Scholar in the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences at the National Institute of Technology, Tiruchirappalli (NIT-T), India. She is currently working in English Language Education and Critical Posthumanities. humairamariyam1606@gmail.com