**LIVE ORAL STORYTELLING IN**

**“MIDNIGHT SUN AND OTHER STORIES”**

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**Abstract**

*Teaching is considered as an art. Art is closely related to enjoyment and entertainment. There are a lot of efforts should be done to attain the good result of learning. Storytelling can be used as one of forms in teaching in joyfulness. It can be given to the students of all ages at all levels of English proficiency. Live oral storytelling is interesting since the listeners not only can interpret but also express the facial expression and the gestures the storyteller makes.*

*“Midnight sun and other stories” written by Wisnubroto Widiarso published by Kanisius can be used as the alternative in choosing live oral storytelling materials. These stories are meant not only to give readers or listeners knowledge about the difference between Indonesian and Western cultures but also the abilities in four language skills, especially listening one. They can arouse the student’s interest since they express the real life. The teacher can attract the student to be in a warm teaching and learning activities.*

*Teacher as a storyteller should be dynamic and creative in searching the interesting stories. Meanwhile publisher should publish the qualified stories. The student motivates himself to enlarge their knowledge by having reading and listening habit.*

**INTRODUCTION**

Teaching is considered as an art. Art is closely related to enjoyment and entertainment. So by having teaching and learning, students and teachers involved in their togetherness in joyfulness. There are of course many forms of teaching and storytelling can be used as one of them.

Some experts said that actually it is the original form of teaching and can be given to the students at all levels of English proficiency and with the students of all ages. Live oral storytelling will always be up to date although there are many kinds of the electronic storytelling of television on visual aids. An interesting and simple narrative will be challenging and be the wonderful art of teaching.

Live oral storytelling develops listening skills in a unique way. The listener observes the speech created on the spot. The teacher or storyteller can create the affective benefit for social and emotional development by providing the time to share the feelings. So, the mutual confidence between storyteller and listener is built up through a relaxed, sweet relationship. In short, storytelling gives the benefits to listener creating the positive effect through their own experiences.

As having been stated before that storytelling is a part of art, it is brought to life in performance. So the storyteller’s performance will determine the results. His / her positive background, such as the choice of setting and detail and the way to perform the story such as the choice of words, sounds and language patterns; her / his body language as the tools to support the story such as the voice, face, hands. So the production will appear as a shared human experience based on words, expression and imagination.

**STORYTELLING AND THE ART OF TEACHING**

Storytelling is the original form of teaching. There are still societies in which it is the only form of teaching. Through attempts have been made to imitate or update it, like the electronic storytelling of television, live oral storytelling will never go out of fashion. A simple narrative will always be the cornerstone of the art of teaching.

In dealing with stories, learners have an experience with the powerful real language of personal communication, not the usual “teacherese” of the foreign-language classroom. Colloquial or literary, unaffected or flowery-the full range of language is present in stories. Oral stories develop listening skills in a unique way. The listeners benefit from observing non-polished speech created on-the-spot.

While listening to stories, student develops a sense of structure that will later help them to understand the more complex stories of literature.

Through traditional tales, people express their values, fears, hopes and dreams. Oral stories are a direct expression of a literary and cultural heritage; and through them that heritage is appreciated, understood and kept alive.

Through a story, listeners experience a vicarious feeling for the past and an oneness with various cultures of the present as they gain insight into the motives and patterns of human behavior. However, many storytellers feel that cognitive enrichment is not the primary aim of their art. Stories have numerous affective benefits for social and emotional development. A story session is a time to share feelings. A relaxed, happy relationship between storyteller and listener is established, drawing them together and building mutual confidence. Stories help students to know themselves and to know others so they can cope with the psychological problems of growing up. As Augusta Baker and Ellin Greene (1997:17) assert,

Storytelling brings to the listeners heightened awareness – a sense of wonder of mystery, of reference for life. This nurturing of the spirit-self comes first. It is primary purpose of storytelling, and all other uses and effects are secondary.

Storytelling is also a living art. Like music and dance, it is brought to life in performance. A story will be altered by the storyteller’s background: his/her choice of setting and detail, and the raport established with the audience. The storyteller’s building materials are words, sounds and language patterns. The tools are the voice, face and hands. The product is the creation of a shares human experience based on words and imagination.

Storytelling is an art individual art, and an imposed method or ready-to-use plan will prove inadequate. Beginning storytellers must go beyond the rules. They must know their personal strengths and develop their own unique style. As master storyteller, Ruth Sawyer (1952:26) puts it, “The art of storytelling lies within the storyteller, to be searched or, drawn out, made to grow.”

**STORYTELLING AS COMMUNICATION AND CULTURAL LITERARY**

Garvie sees communication succeeding if both the child and the storyteller are good language users. In her terms, a good language user possesses and awareness of linguistic, psycholinguistic, sociolinguistic, strategic, cognitive and semantic features o the language.

Since beginner is unlikely to be a good language user, teacher should provide a classroom environment that will stimulate thought and feeling while cultivating listening and speaking skills. Stories contribute to establishing that kind of environment.

Storytelling is experience. This is both life experience and linguistic experience. The story mirrors the surrounding world and constructs a reality o its own, meeting the cognitive, psychological and emotional needs of the child. The Russian psychologist Zaporozhets pointed out that storytelling gives students a play-like experience. He called their mental participation “active perception” believing that it enabled the student to enter the story, identify with its characters and actively participate in all of its events.

The experience that storytelling offers is not only personal experience, but it is universal experience encompassing world cultures. Story offers a cultural experience. Fairy tales are part of ordinary “folk” modern stories mirror personal and or national experiences.

A fresh look in the 1980s at the interconnection between culture and language has opened up a new dimension for foreign-language teaching methodology. Language has come to be viewed as a major means to acquire “cultural literacy”, a term popularized by E.D. Hirsh. In early language teaching, storytelling can be one of the main tools for student to become culturally literate.

**STORYTELLING AS COMPREHENSION**

Personal observation of classroom routines has given new appreciation for the role of listening comprehension. Comprehension can be described as that process which enables the receiver to make meaning from verbal and nonverbal information. Nonverbal information may include background knowledge based on past experience or visual information (pictures). To understand how children comprehend aural text, we must discover what ‘clues’ they pick up in the flow o speech to form a mental representation of the story. If there is no construction or rather reconstruction of meaning on the part of the student, the story will make no sense.

The point is to teach students “how to mean” in a foreign language. They can not construct reconstruct meaning without prior experience with life and language to cope with this new experience. With storytelling we must teach strategies or text comprehension.

**STORY GENRES**

Story genres vary greatly from one another in vocabulary, literary style and content. Here are some descriptions of popular genres:

1. Autobiography

Autobiographies are personal histories in which the writer tells of persons known and things done sharing one’s own thoughts and emotions with the reader. The most basic genre of stories, autobiographies are usually informal in style.

1. Humor

Humorous stories induce smile or thought laughter. They may be gentle, silly or sarcastic. Writers of humor draw upon real concerns and contemporary issues, but through irony, exaggeration and satire, they make the serious funny. Humor may be autobiographical in nature or a social commentary.

1. Romance

Similar to fairy tales and legends, these stories appeal to a reader’s romantic fantasies. In highly, emotional, overblown language, romances tell of love and adventure, escapist in nature, painting an idealized picture of human relationship.

1. Horror Stories

Melodramatic and containing mysterious and supernatural events, horror stories aim at frightening their readers. Set in a gloomy, forbidding location, suspense is heightened by overblown descriptions, unaccountable sounds, darkness, and premonitions of death. Horror stories of today present characters who fail to understand important clues and take on investigations that only get them into trouble – of worse.

1. Historical Fiction

This story genre presents fictitious characters interlinked with actual events and figure of history. Historical characters are portrayed speaking in first person as though and actual record exists of the event. Whatever their chronology the characters of historical fiction speak in the idiom of the author, not of their day.

1. Westerns

Western features the stories and mythology of the American frontier of the nineteenth century. Typical heroes are through, self-reliant men with a love for the land. Native Americans are often an important presence in the story. Like the typical Western hero, the language of the Western is unadorned, with the dialogue often in dialect.

1. Science Fiction

After World War II with developments in nuclear energy and space travel, science fiction became a popular form of literature as people realized it tales might actually happen. Though set in the future, the characters of science fiction act like people we know and they confront events that advances in science could make possible.

1. Detective Stories

Detective stories present a puzzle in the form of a mystery that must be solved. A detective, and vicariously the reader, conducts a search or clues. With the “Hard Boiled” school of detective fiction, detectives are presented as though, honest individuals, ruthless nut in pursuit of the social good. Like the detective himself, the language of “hard-boiled” detective fiction is streetwise and direct.

1. Spy Thrillers

Derived from the detective story, the spy hero is a modern fantasy figure. Rebellious against authority or guilt-ridden from his despections, the spy symbolizes the amorality of modern society. Though writer of spy thrillers go into great detail in their descriptions of procedures, events and tool of the trade, character development of the spy tends to be limited, perhaps appropriately so.

**LIVE ORAL STORYTELLING IN “MIDNIGHT SUN AND OTHER STORIES”**

The writer tired to search the interesting stories based on the intermediate level. She found unique stories from abroad “Midnight Sun” and other stories written by Wisnubroto Widiarso. In his book, he mentioned that the stories are meant to give readers two things, namely knowledge and materials to improve reading skill. They are based on his real experiences long time ago when he was a seaman on a cruise ship. Actually these stories can also be used to enrich listening and speaking skills since they express the real life. The following stories are written in his book.

1. **Genre Checked Blanket**

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| --- | --- |
| Story Genre : | Funny, culture fiction |
| Synopsis : | At the first maiden voyage to Carribean, he had one night in Miami. He got the experience to meet one man from West Java Unique blanket, called Sarong. |
| Value : | The man from West Java could not leave his habit wearing Sarong among Americans when he was in the states. |

1. **One Minute Mannequin**

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| --- | --- |
| Story Genre : | Funny, culture fiction |
| Synopsis : | In one hot afternoon, he strolled down a busy street in Orangestad, in the Carribean. He saw many people crowding in front of a shop looking inside through the glass window and laughing a group of models displaying new fashion seems so unusual. |
| Value : | It is more difficult to be a lifeless mannequin than a life one. |

1. **The American Way of Eating Rice**

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| --- | --- |
| Story Genre : | Funny, culture fiction |
| Synopsis : | Indonesians who have just arrived in states are eager to every American food, especially those American favorites: Hotdogs and hamburgers. After months, they get bored and try in every way to come back in their staple food, eating rice. He found Chinese food to have rice with agreeable taste. The rice was nicely arranged on an oval plate and accompanied by only fork. She was not back right away. Turning to the Americans customers sitting at the table next to him, eating rice, he realized the way to eat rice with a fork. |
| Value : | Apparently that is the American way of eating rice with fork. It is quite different from Indonesians. |

1. **Vending Machines Versus Vendors**

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| --- | --- |
| Story Genre : | Culture fiction |
| Synopsis : | He tries to find a stamp culture to mail his letter to Indonesia. The shape of this machine is similar to that of a card telephone. He took some coins, inserted them into the slot, and pushed the button. The stamps came out from another slot.  In the U.S. there are many kinds of vending machines e.g. cigarettes, coffee, newspapers, etc. they can be found in public places.  In Indonesia, where they are a great number of unskilled workers, vending machines are not desirable. |
| Value : | Life in U.S. has somehow more mechanical than in Indonesia which needs plenty of jobs for the people with limited skills, so vending machines are still for ahead. |

1. **Bus Ride**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Story Genre : | Culture fiction |
| Synopsis : | In the U.S. bus passenger can get on and off the bus only on bus stops or bus shelters. Usually busses have fixed time tables sometimes they are late, but most of the time they are more or less punctual. There is neither a ticket-man not a driver’s assistant in the bus. Passenger must get on the bus through the front door only.  Next to the driver’s seat there is a cleax box with a slot on top or it through which they insert their coins. The driver will not closely check whether passengers pay enough or not. He completely trusts them. He will not give them change, either. They have to pay with exact coins. Everybody has to be seated. |
| Value : | Bus ride in the U.S. is quite different from Indonesia. |

The ways to perform the story should have preparation and presentation.

**Preparation**

1. Learn the story

The storyteller learns the story to make it in his own way. He should master the structure of the story.

1. Outline the story

The storyteller may not memorize word by word but learn the story incident by incident. He would be better notes that will help him remember this structure.

1. Control the story’s length and vocabulary

Count how long the story is presented to arrange the time, and make it lively by coloring the words. Don’t worry if the listener doesn’t know every word; guessing is a part of language learning.

1. Refine the storytelling style

Stand in front of mirror to detect the facial expression and gestures during presentation. Create the intonation to make the interesting story. Do breathing, stretching and vocal exercises.

**Presentation**

A story should be presented not only in a way that emphasizes the ‘what’ of the story but also the ‘how’ o the telling.

1. Start on the right foot. The beginning introduces the characters, sets the scene, established the mood defines the conflict or predicament of the protagonist, and arouses pleasurable anticipation. Then the narrative carries the action. It is sometimes essential for comprehension, before beginning a tale, to make some background comments on new or difficult vocabulary or the cultural assumptions and setting of the story. You might share an object related to the story or light a ritual candle to signal the beginning of the special storytelling time.
2. Be your best self. Express enthusiasm, spontaneity, creativity and enjoyment. You can create a mood through your psychical appearance and mannerisms. Don’t rush or ramble. Don’t be condescending or phony. Don’t reveal nervousness or embarrassment. And most of all, don’t let your technique show.
3. Concentrate on your voice. The audience absolutely must hear everything loudly and clearly! Try for a pleasant, intimate smooth, low-pitched tone of voice. You will need vocal energy for projection, articulation, enunciation, and intonation. Altering, your speed and pitch – for example, giving different tones to different characters – add to the emotional impact.
4. Maintain eye contact. Eye contact is of the utmost importance as it not only holds the listener’s attention and involves the listener in the story, but it check’s understanding and gives instant feedback.
5. Help with your hands and body. The hands also create. Use only gestures that come naturally, but be aware of your hands; don’t hide them or flap them about. Facial expressions and movement are also vital aids. Some tellers use very limited movement; others almost mime a story.
6. Use proper sparingly. Some storytellers are strongly against the use of objects, puppets, costumes, bells, etc. they consider them a clever showman’s device and unnecessary distraction. Try them out and see the effect.
7. Pay attention to the psychical setting, some rooms can kill a good story. You need a quiet, well – lit, acoustically acceptable, comfortable space. You can tell a story standing up (for more freedom of movement) or sitting on a stool (for better eye-contact) before a semi-circle of chairs or (for more intimacy) sitting in tight circle on a carpet.

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