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PhD Dissertation Defense

Entitled

*DRAMATIC STORYTELLING AS A TOOL TO DEVELOP EMERGENT LITERACY IN EFL:
EVIDENCE FROM THE UAE KINDERGARTENS*

by

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MS Teams Link

<https://rb.gy/ph56v>

Abstract

Stories are a main vehicle used in early childhood education (ECE) to engage children in language learning. Although previous studies have found dramatic storytelling to be particularly effective in developing children's emergent literacy in English as the first language, little is known about the effect in EFL settings. Also, there is little empirical research that examines "how" the potential effect of dramatic storytelling can be realized. Adopting a combination of quasi-experiment and action research design, this study developed, implemented, and evaluated an intervention model that provided the kindergarteners with intensive experiences with dramatic storytelling. The samples were a total of 200 children from 10 classes of three kindergartens in Al Ain, Abu Dhabi. A total of 107 children from five of the 10 classes received intervention (intensive dramatic storytelling), and 93 children from the other five classes served as comparison group. The intervention program covered four English dramatic stories that were taught in 16 sessions in eight weeks. The dramatic storytelling sessions were characteristic of use of print copy of storybook, multimodality, dramatization, mediation, and scaffolding.

Both quantitative and qualitative data were used to examine the effect of dramatic storytelling on kindergarten children's acquisition of emergent literacy in EFL. The quantitative data were collected through observation of child activities which measured the young children's emergent literacy skill and knowledge before and after the intervention as well as parent survey that assessed the children's interest in EFL and act to learn EFL at home. The qualitative data were collected through informal participant observations (fieldnotes), photos, videos, children's work samples, and informal conversations. General linear model repeated measures revealed that the main effect of group (intervention and control) and time (pre- and post-) in predicting the mean score of the composite of six activities was significant, $F(5,194) = 7.789, p < 0.001$, partial eta squared = 0.167. The main effect of group and time in predicting the mean score of the composite of two types of learning English at home (interest in EFL, act to learn EFL) was insignificant, $F(1,146) = 0.539, p = 0.464$, partial eta squared = 0.004.; however, the effect of group and time in predicting the mean score of act to learn English at home was significant, $F(1,146) = 6.363, p = < .05$, partial eta squared = 0.042. Qualitative data analysis confirmed fidelity of the intervention. This study developed and tested a micro-curriculum model of a dramatic storytelling approach to EFL teaching, which may serve as a conceptual and operational framework for the development of kindergarten-based EFL curriculum in the UAE and similar contexts.

Keywords: dramatic storytelling, emergent literacy, EFL, kindergarten, UAE

