영어어문교육, 15권 1호 2009년 봄

Effect of Using English Storybooks for Improving Korean English Learners' Reading and Writing Skills and Their Learning Attitudinal Factors

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Kim, Ji-Sun & Im, Byung-Bin. (2009). Effect of using English storybooks for improving Korean English learners' reading and writing skills and their learning attitudinal factors. *English Language & Literature Teaching, 15*(1), 71-98.

This paper explores the effect of using children's storybooks through a variety of activities for improving Korean primary school EFL students' reading and writing skills and their learning interest, confidence, and motivation. It focuses on why and how children's storybooks can be a fundamental context for increasing students' reading and writing skills and their learning attitudinal factors. One hundred and twenty Korean 5th grade English students were randomly chosen and participated in this study. Data was gathered through pre- and post- tests in terms of reading and writing skills and pre- and post- questionnaires with regard to their interest, confidence, and motivation. The analysis revealed that: (1) the students who received the lessons through children's English storybooks performed better on reading and writing skill post-tests than those who learned only through the English course book; and (2) the students in the experimental group showed more significant increase in their interest, confidence, and motivation than those in the control group. The results of this study conform with the educational values of using English storybooks for Korean primary school EFL students. The pedagogical implications for EFL educators and teachers are described.

[English storybook use/reading and writing skills/ learning attitudinal factors]

I. INTRODUCTION

Learning another language is important not only to communicate with other people, but

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also to develop knowledge, a sense of awareness, respect, and understanding of other cultures. The rise and spread of English as a world language has an enormous influence on educational systems in many countries. Learning English is considered as one of the most important tasks for many students of non-English speaking countries. However, learning English is not an easy task for both individuals and society. For individuals, it takes a lot of time, energy, and money and society, as a whole, has to invest an enormous amount of valuable resources in order to introduce foreign language instruction in the national educational system. As the demand for learning English increases, the non-English speaking world like Korea will certainly continue to put a great emphasis on English education.

The English education at primary school is a starting point and can be a basis of life long learning of English. The students' faulty learning experiences will have a negative influence on learners. At this point, it is essential to speculate on what factors can account for lack of success in English education in Korea.

Renandya (2006) suggests that the following can be considered to be attributable factors for the lack of success: inappropriate teaching methodology, outdated course books, crowded classrooms, under-qualified and underpaid teachers, unmotivated learners, inefficient learning strategies, lack of opportunity to use the target language, and lack of language input. All the factors are thought to be of importance, but lack of suitable input and opportunity to use the target language can be accountable factors for the undesirable outcome of language learning in Korea, considering the language learning environment in Korea (Cho & Krashen, 1995, 1994; Cho & Seo, 2001; Elley, 1997, 1991; Elly & Mangubahi, 1983; Hafiz & Tudor, 1990; Lee & Park 2001). In an EFL environment where English education takes place within the confines of the classroom setting, it is not easy to foster language acquisition naturally. Students are not provided with ample opportunities of using English in social situations, and natural language input is rather limited.

Krashen (1982) claims, L2 learners need to be exposed to abundant quantities of “comprehensible input” in low-anxiety environment. Language input is abundantly available in L1 learning environment. Spoken as well as written language input is constantly provided to children learning their first language. However, in EFL situation, English is not a common medium of communication. Rather, it is taught as a foreign language and is seldom used beyond the English language classroom. The amount of input is severely limited and the quality of language input is not that suitable.

The introduction of children's storybooks into the children's language learning settings has been supported by a number of researchers and teachers, making an effort to produce wholistic literacy instructional approaches (Gilles, 1991; Huck, 1989; Hunt, 1991; Peterson & Edes, 1990; Rha, 2002; Smith, 1998). Stories in the EFL primary school classroom are enjoyable. Stories can expose children to other cultures, and they can be used to introduce

and recycle language (Brewster, Ellis, & Girard, 2002; Slatterly & Willis 2001). Moreover, stories help children develop a sense of the target language (Wright, 1995). Rha (2002) states, through introducing literature into the classrooms, children can learn about the fundamental nature of language in terms of the importance of imagination and keep children's natural curiosity and love of learning.

In order to increase the learners' language skills of the target language, learners need more exposure to it. Storybooks are common language learning instruments that provide and stimulate a very large amount of that language. As Krashen (1985) notes, reading stories to children with limited skills and knowledge of the target language on a frequent basis can be beneficial because they help students acquire language, figure out the grammar, and make predictions. Literature is a powerful form of communication and is considered as one of the most efficient tools teachers can use to help students of all ages learn a new language.

The Korean 7th National English Curriculum is in line with the emphasis of CLT in that the target language needs to be taught in the learning environment where L2 learners are able to immerse themselves and to be exposed to the target culture. Storybooks are recommended to be employed to in every 4th class of each chapter of the primary English textbooks in the 7th National English Curriculum. However, the contents and language seem not to be natural, authentic, and sufficient. The 3rd and 4th graders might have fun with simple dialogue provided in their course books, but as they become the 5th and 6th graders, they often get bored and lose motivation. Hill (2001) points out how surprising it is that modern ELT course books and syllabi do not make more use of stories which are a fundamental and enjoyable aspect of the target language.

As Brewster et al. (2002) mention, the skills most studies have emphasized are to learn vocabulary, listening and speaking. However, using storybooks to read and write are generally neglected. Therefore, it is necessary to explore more practical teaching models of story-based instruction through in-depth experimental research on the effect of English storybook use on the improvement of EFL learners' reading and writing skills.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the effect of using English storybooks for improving Korean 5th-grade English learners' reading and writing skills and their English learning attitudinal factors including motivation, confidence, and interest. The research hypotheses are as follows:

1. Korean 5th-grade English learners whose teacher uses English storybooks through a variety of activities will exhibit higher improvement on their English reading and writing skills than those whose teacher does not use English storybooks.
2. Korean 5th-grade English learners whose teacher uses English storybooks through a variety of activities will exhibit higher improvement on their English learning attitudinal

factors including interest, confidence, and motivation than those whose teacher does not use English storybooks.

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

1. Literature in Language Learning

It is difficult to acquire a language without being exposed to that language. The use of literature has been acknowledged as conductive to academic, intellectual, cultural, and linguistic learning (McKay, 1982; Oster, 1989; Sage, 1987; Spack, 1985). In L1 context, educators, especially, whole language advocates, have recommended the use of literature and authentic materials (e.g. Goodman,1992; Harste, Woodward, & Burke, 1984), maintaining that teaching through literature enables teachers to provide their students with the opportunity to practice integrated language skills, as well as to be exposed to the natural, authentic language learning materials.

L2 researchers and educators who regard communication as the primary goal of instruction also encourage the use of literature. Sages (1987) maintains that literature presents various uses of the language, conventional and literary, and displays a broader range of communication strategies. When students read literature, they learn the target language in a whole context rather than memorizing words and rules. Different from the formal learning of vocabulary and language structure in the classroom, literature provides an informal but supportive environment for students to naturally develop their linguistic system. Likewise, Mitchell (1989) asserts that the use of literature is a way of ensuring informal encounters between the ESL learners and the proficient native language user (the author) with the language, both inside and outside the classroom. Moody (1971) also states that in addition to reading, literature helps build up students' listening comprehension when used aurally, encourages oral practice through discussion and offers many interesting chances to write. Therefore, functional language skills are developed in meaningful, communicative activities.

Danielson and Labonty (1994) propose teaching a language through literature, pointing out the following advantages literature pertains. First, literature includes meaningful and different kinds and genres of stories through which children can develop their conceptual knowledge and affluent vocabulary. Second, literature, children's books in particular, contains pictures and repeated words that become useful resources for learners to predict contexts. In addition, beginning learners will have easy access to learn a language with confidence. Third, literature and stories provide learners with the opportunity to indirectly experience a variety of lives, and in return, to have an eye for the world. Fourth, books

provide a lot of information about the world of science, history, technology, nature, and so on. Children's inquisitiveness and learning motivation would be stimulated as they are exposed to those materials. Fifth, literature includes various writing styles, therefore, different styles of writing to which children are exposed will be good models of writing styles. Sixth, literature deals with multi-racial, muti-cultural matters. Literature will contribute children to have unbiased views on different cultures and people.

Brumfit and Carter (1987) highlight the importance of literature in children's language, cultural, and cognitive development. They emphasize that literature provides learners with language materials through which they can explore a variety of vocabulary use, and syntactic rules that authors provide, and they, in return, amplify their linguistic knowledge and improve their language skills. In addition, children will be able to develop their creativity of language use by being experienced with writers' expressions and ideas.

Cameron (2001) points out advantages of using story books in ESL learning. First, story books serve as a motivating factor for subsequent eliciting of oral as well as written language. Second, the child's attention is quickly captured and easily maintained, if, in particular, the initial presentation is accomplished by stimulating visual aids. Third, any type of linguistic phenomena desired by the teacher can be easily included in the language of the story and later extracted for oral drills, and for cultural and cognitive development.

Kang (1998) maintains that children's experience with various types of literature in their mother tongue they have had since they were born plays an important role in their learning a second or foreign language. According to him, their previous experience with and knowledge from poetry, songs, children stories, old time stories, puppet plays, and cartoons would transfer to understanding stories written in another language.

Wright (1995) claims, stories, which rely so much on words, offer a major and constant source of children’s language experience. Stories are motivating, rich in language experience and inexpensive. He, therefore, suggests, stories should be a central part of the work for all primary teachers, whether they are teaching the mother tongue or a foreign language.

2. Ways of Implementing Children’s Stories to Language Learning

How to deal with children’s English storybooks in the classroom is an important issue. This section presents several instructional techniques for implementing storybooks in the classroom. Wright (1995) suggests a way to implement storybooks for language learning in three stages: activities before the story; during the story; and after the story. The following introduces some sample activities used for this study.

1) Activities before the Story

Activities before the story are used to make the students more familiar with the content of and the concepts in the story (Ellis & Brewster, 1991). Activities are also used to introduce, explain, or revise some of the key language items in the story including key words and key structural patterns which are crucial to understanding the story. Activities described here are mainly conducted to activate students' background information or previous knowledge, and to introduce the new language for students' better understanding of the story.

(1) Activating Prior Knowledge

Those who view reading as a constructive process claim that prior knowledge be a prerequisite to making sense of written language. According to Spivey (1997), activating prior knowledge before and during reading to make maximum use of it is an indispensable part of the reading process. Activating prior knowledge also motivates learners. Children become motivated when they realize the possibility of increasing their competencies and extending their prior understandings. The student's prior knowledge would then be the bridge to new knowledge.

① Showing the Cover

In order to contextualize the story and to motivate students, show students the cover of the book and ask some general questions, saying, “What can you see in this cover?”, “What is it?”, “What color is it?” ,“What do caterpillars (or some other animals) eat?” etc. To do this, the teacher asks questions in simple English, and if necessary, the mother tongue can be used.

② Brainstorming

Brainstorming can be the most basic way to call up what is already known and is used frequently as a first step to explore a topic or a book. When brainstorming, learners spontaneously associate ideas, linking thoughts in their own way. The teacher writes down the brainstormed ideas on a white board or on the overhead transparency, and the class can talk about them. If the teacher prepares for the topic of fruit or vegetables, students might be called up by the teacher's initiating questions such as “What kinds of fruit or vegetables do they like or dislike?” Calling up or talking enhances students' readiness to learn more about the topic.

③ Meaning Mapping

The teacher shows the class the cover of the story and asks, “Who” or “What will be in

the story?" (generating the characters of the story), "When" and "Where does the story happen?" (generating the settings of the story), and "What will happen?" The teacher draws meaning mapping based on the students' responses.

④ Simulation Games

Simulation re-creates real-life experiences as closely as possible. When students play the roles of different characters in a story before reading the story, they can gain the appropriate background knowledge to understand texts and develop concepts in context, and can be motivated to read further. Given the essential words from the story and the settings, the students make their own skit and play simulation games.

⑤ Gapped Story

Give students a version of the story with some gaps in the text. The teacher can put it on the board for the class work or on paper for pair work. Ask students to read it and begin to imagine what words might be missing. The teacher can make this task easier by giving students a list of words to choose from.

⑥ Making a Mini-book

The book could be made in the shape of the fruit, vegetable, animal, or other shapes of objects from which students select.

(2) Introducing and Learning Vocabulary in Meaningful Settings

Introducing new words in meaningful settings can be the best way to begin vocabulary instruction. Meaningful settings mean that they relate to students' world, and tap individuals' interests and concern. Students in meaningful settings tend to acquire new words for authentic reasons.

① What Is Missing?

Prepare the picture cards of food or fruit and stick them on the board. The number of the items the teacher includes will depend on the level of students. However, it is better to limit them to a maximum of ten. Ask students to come to the front, close their eyes and remove an item from the board. Students then open their eyes and are asked to tell what is missing. The teacher can ask the rest of the students, "Is he or she right?" This game can be done as a team game. Divide the class into two teams and play as above with each team taking a turn. Each time a student or a team is correct he/she or the team wins a point.

② A Word Wall

Select five words each week and add them to a wall or bulletin board in the classroom.

The selection of the words needs to include words that students will need often in their reading and that are easily confused with other words. For example, in *The Very Hungry Caterpillar,* there are many words that students can learn such as days of the week, fruit, food, adjectives and so on. Each week the teacher or the whole class decides on which words the class will concentrate. Then, the teacher adds words on the wall or bulletin board.

③ Using Objects, Illustrations and Pictures

Much of the vocabulary at the early stage of children's learning will consist of concrete nouns. This means that using objects can be useful to show meanings. Introducing a new word by showing the real objects helps students memorize the word through visualization. Alternatively, objects can be substituted by drawing, illustrations or pictures. The teacher asks students either to bring pictures of objects from magazine or to make his/her own visual aids. Such visual support helps students understand the meaning and helps make the word more memorable.

④ Word Stars

This activity can be used to introduce rhyming words. For example, in *Pat the Cat*, there are several words rhyming with *Pat*. Draw an empty word star on the board. Briefly discuss the concept of rhyming in students' mother tongue, if necessary. And then, ask students to say any words they know that rhyme with *Pat* by changing the initial consonant only. If students seem to have difficulty doing this, the teacher presents some words from the story or among what the students have already learned by showing pictures. The students repeat and practice pronunciation and arrange the words on their word star.

2) Activities during the Story

The primary purposes of activities during the story are to let the students listen to, read, understand, and enjoy the story (Wright, 1995, p. 39). Visual supports such as pictures, objects, masks, or puppets can be used to help children understand.

(1) Story Reading Activities

① Storytelling

There are a lot of techniques the teacher can use when reading stories aloud to make storytelling more enjoyable and successful for students. Ellis and Brewster (1991, pp. 27-28) suggest guidelines through which the teacher can improve his/her storytelling skills:

a) In order to create a relaxed, informal atmosphere, and to make it easier for students to hear and to see any visuals the teacher uses, have students sit on the floor around the teacher in a circle.
b) Read slowly and clearly so that children can exercise their imagination while listening to the story, and ask questions.
c) Make comments about the illustrations. When the teacher says a word, he/she points to the illustration at the same time.
d) Encourage students to take part in storytelling by repeating key vocabulary items and phrases. If the story has repetitive phrases, students can join reading those parts with their teacher.
e) While reading aloud, the teacher needs to check students' understanding by asking questions and responding to their questions, whenever needed.
f) Use gestures, mimes, facial expressions, varied pace and tone. The teacher's passion for reading realistically can contribute to increase students' motivation to imitate reading. Teacher's non-verbal factors like facial expression, a change in teacher's voice can make story reading more alive.

Reading stories aloud is not an easy task and any teacher, whether a native speaker or not, needs to practice. For non-native speaker, use cassette recordings to copy as a model, and try to rehearse at home. Record oneself and compare it with the model. This will develop confidence and provide chances to know which area need improving. When reading aloud becomes one of students' daily activities, students will anticipate that time. It can be done before the regular classes start in the morning or during the recess between the classes.

② Using the Cassette Recording

According to Brewster et al. (2002), using a cassette recording can be beneficial for the following reasons:

a) Using a cassette recording provides students with chances to hear a variety of English spoken by someone else other than their teacher, i.e., another voice, another accent, and so on.
b) The recording provides a constant model and examples spoken by a native speaker.
c) Amusing sound effects contained in some recordings can motivate and help students guess the meanings of unknown words.
d) The recording provides a model for the teacher to imitate by demonstrating a number of storytelling techniques, such as disguising the voice for different characters, intonation patterns, stress and rhythm, alternation of the pace of the voice, and so on.

It is, however, essential to keep in mind that using a cassette recording of a story can become a mechanical activity if it is not used in a way that actively involves students in listening tasks. Therefore, it is recommended to be used as a supplementary.

③ Shared reading

Shared reading refers to the process in which the teacher and the children read a book together. According to Holdaway (1979), the shared reading simulates the kind of lap-reading that may take place in the student's homes at their younger ages. On the first several readings, the teacher usually does all the reading. As the students become more familiar with the book, they are invited to join in and share the reading. The best kinds of books to use are predictable books which contain repeated patterns, refrains, pictures, and rhyme that allow students to experience pretend reading. From this pretend reading, they develop the confidence that they will be able to do the same way the teacher does.

(2) Comprehension Monitoring and Language Practicing Activities

① Stopping and Asking

While telling a story, the teacher stops whenever it seems appropriate and asks about the story like "What is this?" "What did the caterpillar eat on Saturday?", "What will happen next?" This invites students to the storytelling and provides students with the opportunity to show their understanding.

② Chorusing

Children's stories contain the repeated structures which are good for students to take part in speaking aloud. Thus, when storytelling or reading a story, the teacher invites students to speak aloud the repeated sentences like “Come and help us, please.” “We can't pull up the turnip.”, “…but he was still hungry.” The teacher makes some gestures and waits for the students to say them first

③ Learning Logs

The teacher requires students to formulate questions about the story or to write down specific notes of what they do not understand well, using a learning log. The teacher collects the learning logs and checks them, providing teacher's feedback. This activity can be done in students' mother tongue, depending on the learners' proficiency level. As the teacher reviews student’s logs, he/she can identify concepts that he/she may need to clarify. In addition, learning logs provide the teacher to evaluate a student's progress.

④ Directed-Reading-Thinking Activity (DA-TA)

The teacher covers parts of a story with an index card on the overhead projector and asks students to predict what they think will happen next. The teacher asks questions beginning with who, what, when, where, and why. In doing this, the teacher does not correct students' mistakes, but encourages them to make more predictions to gain experience in predicting and monitoring their comprehension (Peregoy & Boyle, 1993, p. 134).

⑤ Response Journals

Ask students to prepare one notebook in which students write informal comments about the stories they are reading, including their feelings and reactions to characters, setting, plot, or others. To help students do this task easier, provide sample questions such as "What do you like about the book?", "How do you feel about the characters?" or "What would you do, if you were an old man?" The teacher can allow students to write their responses in their mother tongue, depending on the students' proficiency level.

⑥ Speech Bubbles

Write the speech bubbles on the index cards, and draw and cut some of the characters in the story. Students in groups or pairs listen to or read the story and match pictures of characters with the appropriate speech bubble.

3) Activities after the story

After reading a story, the class can have time to discuss and exchange freely what they comprehend and how they feel. The follow-up activities like role-playing, retelling or changing the story, games or chant can contribute to consolidate what they have learned throughout story reading. Providing students with the opportunity to retell the story with their own language can encourage them to think and speak in English, while the teacher shows only the picture part of the story. After the class has finished reading the story, the storybook needs to be kept in the classroom book corner, so that students can return to that book any time they want.

(1) Story Retellings/Re-creations

Asking students to retell or re-create a story in a foreign language is a very demanding task. However, students have some kind of support from stories they have already read and understood. If students are asked to retell or re-create the story at the same level or a little beyond the story they have known, they will possibly produce their own story. In order for this task to make easier, students can draw a set of pictures or cartoon strips of the story as prompts first, and write a set of simple sentences to match with the pictures or strips.

① Making Masks

Give each student a paper plate and ask them to choose which character they would like to be. Students can then make a mask by drawing a face and cutting out holes for the eyes, nose and mouth for the people. Students can add ears and whiskers for the animals. Thin elastic is knotted through a hole on each side of the plate to keep the mask in place. Students retell the story, saying their character's lines when appropriate. This activity can be used for any stories.

② Creating a Story and Making a Book

Students choose other foods that the caterpillar might eat and put their ideas into new stories of their own. The book could be designed in the shape of a caterpillar. The teacher can ask students to think about other animals and their foods to make a different book.

③ Acting Roles

The teacher separates the dialogue from the narrative in a story. If necessary, simplify the story in a short and easy version. Or rather than using all the dialogue, sections of the story can be chosen. The teacher becomes the narrator and students dress up and act out the dialogue. This could be done among students taking turns their roles or using puppets.

(2) Consolidating Language Items

Children learn new language items relatively quickly but they also forget them quickly too. Once new language items have been introduced and practiced, students should be encouraged to devise techniques they can use on their own to consolidate and revise them.

① Picture Dictionaries

Encourage students to create their own picture dictionaries or vocabulary books. The class discusses ways of organizing them alphabetically or by topic. It is useful for students to use a ring-folder so they can add new pages when needed. Students collect or draw pictures to illustrate the meaning of a word.

② Collages

The class collects pictures around a particular theme. For example, hot and cold objects in *The Snowman*. The students stick pictures on to a large sheet of paper which can be used to decorate the classroom. This collage can be changed as the class moves to another book or theme. Making collages is a useful way of revising vocabulary.

③ Making a Fruit Basket for a Special Person

Ask students to draw a big basket and then draw their favorite fruit inside. Students decorate a basket and fruit with different colors they like. Students make a presentation with a picture, saying, “This is for my mom' birthday.” and “My mom likes bananas, apples, pears.” etc.

④ Tennis Game

Divide the class into two teams, A and B. One student from team A first says the name of an animal and the other student from team B responds with another animal. The teams keep going for as long as they can. The winner is the team who knows most animals. This activity can be done to revise vocabulary with a range of topics: animals, parts of animals, things animals eat, places animals live in etc.

III. METHOD

This present study used an experimental design in order to investigate if the difference in teaching methods has a positive effect on the development of Korean 5th grade English learners' reading and writing skills and their interests, confidence, and motivation. This chapter presents the methodology used in the present study. The information on the participants, instruments and research design and procedures is provided.

1. Participants

The participants were 120 students who attended one of the primary schools located in Gong-ju, Chungnam. Among six classes at the fifth grade level, four classes were chosen to participate, depending on the teacher's willingness to participate in the research study. Initially, there were 130 students attending at the four classes of the 5th grade, but the researcher needed to discard the data of 10 students since 5 students were absent on one of the testing days and 5 students did not respond to the test questions with usable answers as data.

These four classes were randomly divided into two groups, experimental and control. The two classes with 30 students each were employed in the experimental group, the other two with 30 students each in the control one. Before the treatment, the researcher administered the first questionnaire regarding the students' English learning experience during the first week of the 7 month's research study session.

2. Instruments

The following instruments to gather data were used in this study:

1) The English language proficiency tests regarding reading, and writing skills administered as the pre- and post-tests to explore if the difference in teaching methods influences the improvement of students' reading and writing ability. Each test consisted of 10 to 13 questions, selected from English proficiency test provided by KICE (Korea Institute for Curriculum and Evaluation) (see APPENDIX A for examples) and scored 2 points for each correct item.

2) The two kinds of questionnaires were developed. The first one was developed to find out what English learning experiences the participants have had regarding how long they have studied English and for what purposes they are studying English. It was administered for the first week of the research session. This questionnaire was only administered once before the treatment. The second questionnaires, pre- and post-, were developed to investigate if the difference in teaching methods influences the participants' interest, confidence, and motivation toward English learning (see APPENDIX B for examples).

3. Procedures

This research was conducted for about 7 months from the first week of May, 2006 to the second week of December, 2006, excluding 4 weeks from the last week of July till the third week of August, during which the school was on the summer vacation.

The teacher for the experimental classes was an experimenter and the other for the control classes was a volunteer teacher who has majored in English education at Kongju National University and has been teaching English part-time at several colleges for many years. The experimenter met the volunteer teacher before and after the classes to have mini-workshops about classes.

The Korean English curriculum requires 2 hours of English lesson each week for the fifth grade students. Therefore, during the research session, every week the experimental group was given one hour of their regular English lesson based on the English course book and one hour of the experimental English lesson based on the research design, that is a story-based syllabus. The control group was given the two hours of their regular lesson, based on their course book each week.

The researcher utilized English storybooks for two different purposes: one for in-class reading, the other for the out- class listening and reading activity and student's self-selected reading. Storybooks were displayed in the classroom book corner.

The list of the in-class reading storybooks were *Meg and Mog, The Snowman, Pat the Cat, The Very Hungry Caterpillar, and The Turnip*. The researcher chose those books since the stories included the appropriate level of language, that is vocabulary or structures, any language features such as interesting rhyme, onomatopoeia, intonation, visual support, and repetition. The storybooks also came with the cassette recording.

The following Table 1 shows how five stories were used as the teaching material throughout the whole research period, illustrating the language in terms of language functions and structures, and vocabulary from each story. It also shows how each story forms a mini syllabus and how it is developed to become an overall syllabus. As Brewster and Ellis (1991) suggests, making a syllabus this way enables to include both the introduction of new language and other language recycled in a syllabus.

TABLE 1

Summary of Language Functions and Structures, and Vocabulary from Stories

	The Title	Language Function/structures	Vocabulary
The First Five Week	The Snowman	*Asking for information, using Yes/No and Wh-questions *Asking for permission, using can *Asking for and telling the time *Greeting *Showing someone Around a house, using, "This is the ____ ."	part of the body the weather clothes colors numbers rooms in a house furniture numbers 1-12

↓

	The Title	Language Functions/Structures	Vocabulary
The Second Five Week	Meg and Mog	* Asking for and giving information, using Wh-questions and Yes/No questions * Describing people, using present continuous tense * Describing clothes, using adjectives and nouns * Asking for and telling the time * Giving instructions, using the imperative	clothes colors adjectives of size animals numbers food meals

↓

	The Title	Language Functions/Structures	Vocabulary
The Third Five Week	The Very Hungry Caterpillar	*Asking for and giving information, using Yes/No and Wh-questions *Asking for and giving the date, using Wh-questions and word order * Making statements using the verb, ‘ to be’ * Giving instructions, using the imperative * Asking about and expressing likes and dislikes	days of the week numbers fruits colors food life-cycle of the butterfly: egg, caterpillar, coccon adjectives

↓

	The Title	Language Functions/Structures	Vocabulary
The Fourth Five Week	Pat the Cat	* Asking for and giving information, using Where .....?, Who's ....?, What's its name? * Giving instructions, using the imperative and prepositions * Expression emotions * Greetings * Describing the location of things	parts of the body animals clothes prepositions adjectives of size

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	The Title	Language Functions/Structures	Vocabulary
The Fifth Five Week	The Turnip	*Recounting past events, using simple past tense (regular/irregular verbs) * Describing and comparing size, using 'much' and 'big/bigger' etc. * Giving commands, using the imperative without 'to'	animals adjectives of size determiners: much verbs parts of vegetables: root, leaf, fruit linking words: but, so

Once a storybook selected, the researcher made photocopies of the selected in-class use storybook, in order for each student in experimental groups to have each copy. During the first class session, the students were asked to make their own mini book to use for in-class and out-class listening and reading activity. Each book was used for about five weeks for in-class learning and also for out class listening and reading activity. In order to provide students with more opportunity to experiment with the storybook, the researcher asked the experimental groups to have the out class listening and reading activity which was done

once a day during either the morning self study session before their regular classes started or twenty minutes of their regular break time which was scheduled after the first two classes finished. The researcher asked the homeroom teacher to administer the out class listening and reading activity for the experimental groups, since the researcher assisted them for only the lectures. The length of the cassette recordings of the whole stories lasted for about 5 minutes and the participants listened to the story twice. For the first listening the students were asked to pay attention as they listened, and for the second listening they were encouraged to read silently along as they listened. Two copies of the original book, a cassette player, and a cassette tape were usually kept at the class book corner, so that the students could use them whenever they wanted to.

As mentioned previously, the researcher believes that the more chances Korean EFL learners have to be exposed to the authentic English, the more possibility they will have for their English proficiency to be improved. Therefore, the researcher planned to set up a classroom book corner in the room for both the experimental and control ones where the participants read or listened to the stories whenever they wanted. Stocking a classroom book corner with books only prepared by the researcher was not easy and costly, so the researcher was able to provide 30 different books to each class and those books were rotated every month, so that the participants were able to utilize as many different books as possible. The researcher chose books that are available on audio cassette.

They were displayed at the classroom book corner both for the control and experimental groups and used at school and checked out for home reading as well for three days. Since the researcher was not able to be with the participants all the time, the researcher asked the homeroom teacher to manage the classroom book corner and the book borrowing procedure. For both groups, there were the book corner record cards to be recorded by students and the personal reading logs to be kept by the individual student. The researcher asked the homeroom teacher to recommend students to use the book corner as frequently as possible and to use it voluntarily. The researcher checked them once a week and gave two students who most frequently used the book corner some kind of prize each week.

Once a storybook has chosen, it is necessary to think about how to use it in the classroom. As mentioned previously, the researcher designed the lesson procedure based on the Wright's (1995) suggestion which is to implement storybooks in three stages: activities before the story; during the story; and after the story. Since one book was planned to use for five weeks, the five week lessons were conducted based on the following procedures: the first week was mainly used for activities before the story, the second and third weeks for activities during the story, the fourth and fifth weeks for activities after the story. The sample activities used for the experimental classes are already presented in the previous section. During the last research class session, the reading and writing skill posttests and the post questionnaire were administered to both the experimental and control

groups.

IV. RESULTS

1. The Results of the Questionnaire on the Students' Previous English Learning Experience

Based on the students' responses from the first questionnaire before the treatment, about the half of the students answered that they have been studying English for about 1 year, about 20 percents of the students for about 2 years, about 10 percents of the students for 3 years, and another 10 percents of the students for 4 years. With regard to the students' primary purpose of studying English, about 40 percents of the students answered that it's because English is an international language. About 20 percents of the students answered, they study English in order to communicate with native speakers of English. From the first questionnaire it was revealed, even though the majority of the participants have experienced English study for only one year, they have recognized the importance of knowing English and being able to communicate in English these days.

2. The Relationship between the Teaching Method and the Students' Reading and Writing Skills

The first hypothesis of this study was to determine whether students' reading and writing skills would be improved depending on the teaching methods or not. In order to collect the data, the language proficiency pre- and post-tests were administered and the mean differences of each test between two groups were compared based on ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) and ANCOVA (Analysis of Covariance).

1) The Results of Reading Pre-test

Before the treatment, in order to find out if the experimental and control groups were the same in terms of their reading skill, the two groups were administered reading pre-test. ANOVA results of the students' reading pre-test are shown in Table 2. The mean of the experimental group was 16.22, and the mean of the control group was 19.12, which means the students' reading proficiency in the control group was higher than the one in the experimental group. ANOVA revealed that there was significant difference in mean scores between two groups ($F=6.48$, $p=.012$). This means that before the treatment the two groups were not at the same level in terms of reading proficiency. Therefore, for the analysis of the

students' reading post-test, it is necessary to use ANCOVA which is used to analyze the mean differences of the reading post-test by keeping the mean differences of two groups' reading pre-test under control.

TABLE 2

ANOVA Results of the Reading Proficiency Pre-test

	Group	N	M	SD	F	P
Pre-test	Control	60	19.12	6.00	6.48	.012
	Experimental	60	16.22	6.48		

2) The Results of Reading Post-test

After the treatment, in order to find out if there is any difference between the experimental and control groups in terms of their reading skill, the two groups were administered reading post-test and the ANCOVA results of the two groups' reading post-test are presented in Table 3. The mean of the experimental group was 20.33, and the mean of the control group was 19.73. ANCOVA revealed that there was significant difference in mean scores between two groups (F=33.56 p=.000). Therefore, after the treatment the experimental groups' reading proficiency were improved higher than the control ones and this means that the treatment has a positive effect on the improvement of the students' reading proficiency.

TABLE 3

ANCOVA Results of the Reading Proficiency Post-test

	Group	N	M	SD	F	P
Post-test	Control	60	19.73	5.64	33.56	0.00
	Experimental	60	20.33	4.65		

3) The Result of Writing Pre- and Post-tests

As seen in Table 4, the mean of the experimental group of the writing pre-test was 20.30 and the mean of the control group was 19.87. ANOVA revealed that there was no significant difference in mean scores between two groups (F=.24, p=.624). Therefore, before the treatment the two groups were at the same level in terms of writing proficiency.

After the treatment, the mean of the experimental group was 22.73 and the mean of the

control group was 20.80. ANOVA revealed that there was significant difference in mean scores between two groups (F=17.03 p=.000). Therefore, after the treatment the experimental groups' writing proficiency were improved higher than the control ones and this means that the treatment has a positive effect on the improvement of the students' writing proficiency.

TABLE 4

ANOVA Results of Writing Proficiency Pre- and Post-tests

Categories	Test	Control			Experimental			F	P
		N	M	SD	N	M	SD		
Writing	Pre-	60	19.87	5.49	60	20.80	4.42	.24	.624
	Post-	60	20.80	4.42	60	22.73	3.29	17.03	.000

2. The Relationship between the Teaching Method and the Students' Attitudinal Factors

The second hypothesis of this study was developed to determine whether students' attitudinal factors including interest, and confidence in English learning, and also motivation to learn English would be improved depending on the teaching methods or not. In order to collect the data, the pre- and post-questionnaires were administered and the mean differences of each questionnaire between two groups were compared using ANOVA.

1) The Results of Students' Interest in Learning English

As seen in Table 5, the mean of the experimental group before the treatment was 3.74 and the mean of the control group was 3.76. ANOVA revealed that there was no significant difference in mean scores between two groups (F=.01, p=.911). Therefore, before the treatment the two groups were at the same level in terms of their interest in English learning.

However, the mean of the experimental group was 4.32, and the mean of the control group was 3.78. ANOVA revealed that there was significant difference in mean scores between two groups (F=45.13 p=.000). Therefore, after the treatment the experimental groups' interest in English learning was improved higher than the control one and this means that the treatment has a positive effect on the improvement of the students' interest in English learning.

2) The Result of Students' Confidence in English Learning

As seen in Table 5, the mean of the experimental group was 3.13 and the mean of the control group was 3.19. ANOVA revealed that there was no significant difference in mean scores between two groups (F=.11, p=.743). Therefore, before the treatment the two groups were at the same level in terms of their confidence in English learning.

After the treatment, the mean of the experimental group was 3.62 and the mean of the control group was 3.24. ANOVA revealed that there was significant difference in mean scores between two groups (F=21.61 p=.000). Therefore, after the treatment the experimental groups' confidence in English learning was improved higher than the control one and this means that the treatment has a positive effect on the improvement of the students' confidence in English learning.

3) The Result of Students' Motivation to Learn English

As seen in Table 5, the mean of the experimental group was 3.73 and the mean of the control group was 3.69. ANOVA revealed that there was no significant difference in mean scores between two groups (F=.07, p=.799). Therefore, before the treatment the two groups were at the same level in terms of their motivation to learn English.

After the treatment, the mean of the experimental group was 4.19 and the mean of the control group was 3.71. ANOVA revealed that there was significant difference in mean scores between two groups (F=24.03, p=.000). Therefore, after the treatment the experimental groups' motivation to learn English was improved higher than the control one and this means that the treatment has a positive effect on the improvement of the students' motivation to learn English.

TABLE 5

ANOVA Results of the Students' Attitudinal Factors

Categories	Questionnaire	Control			Experimental			F	P
		N	M	SD	N	M	SD		
Interest	Pre-	60	3.76	.82	60	3.74	.81	.01	.911
	Post-	60	3.78	.87	60	4.32	.55	45.13	.000
Confidence	Pre-	60	3.19	.96	60	3.13	1.03	.11	.743
	Post-	60	3.24	.98	60	3.62	.78	21.61	.000
Motivation	Pre-	60	3.69	.74	60	3.73	.87	.07	.799
	Post-	60	3.71	.83	60	4.19	.58	24.03	.000

V. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

So far, this study aimed to examine the effect of using English children's storybooks on the improvement of Korean primary school EFL learners' reading and writing skills and their interest and confidence in English learning, and their motivation to learn English and yielded the following major findings:

First, there was a significant difference in the degree of participants' reading and writing skill improvement between the experimental group and the control one. The students who received the lessons through English children's storybooks performed better on their reading and writing skill post-tests than those who learned only through the English course book.

Second, there was a significant difference in the degree of the increase in students' interest, confidence, and motivation between the two groups. The results of the students who received the experimental treatment showed more significant increase in their interest, confidence, and motivation than those who got the control one. This study suggests the following pedagogical implications for EFL educators and teachers:

First, in order to provide EFL learners with more opportunity to explore and experience authentic language use, teachers need to use storybooks as an alternative to the course book as much as they can. However, there are certain agendas that must be resolved for teachers to easily utilize storybooks in their instruction. The following proposes solutions for agendas teachers face. The first agenda involves limited information and time restraints for teachers in preparing their lectures. An answer to this is to precede a list of stories so that teachers can use when instructing students. Since the 7th English curriculum adapts only one published version of the course book, it would be helpful to make a list of stories for each chapter or for each grade from which teachers can pick and use in their lectures. Along with a list of stories, a teacher’s guidebook that provides detailed guidance for teaching students in this story-based method must be made. Another proposal is to provide pictures and illustrations for students since most youngsters prefer classes with visual materials. Finally, it is crucial to encourage teachers to meet and exchange any helpful information about books, class materials and lesson plans, or receive feedback from each other.

Second, as Chang (2003) mentions, in order to improve English textbooks appropriate for cultivating communicative competence of Korean students, it is necessary to develop the syllabus. It is necessary to give teachers a freehand so that they can teach by selecting or developing their curriculum, syllabus, and teaching materials on their own that are most suitable for the students' language level, their needs, and interest.

Third, for this study, the researcher were able to provide only about 30 books for each

class every month, since providing more books was too costly for the researcher. There was not a single book written in English available not only in the classrooms but in the school where this study was conducted. As Brewster et al. (1991) claim, having a book corner or a classroom library where students can read books of their own choice and at their own pace promotes a positive attitude towards reading and create enthusiasm among children for books. The problem many teachers or schools face is how to acquire a sufficient quantity of reading materials. Stocking a classroom library corner of the room or a school library with books purchased with money from school budgets or district grants is not an easy task. Nevertheless, it is necessary for teachers and educators to search for any available funds. Start stocking only 10-20 books each classroom and share books among classrooms can be a beginning step to invite storybooks to our classroom. Once reading materials are obtained, students choose what to read from the collection and set aside about 20 minutes of the school day for individual reading.

Fourth, as mentioned previously, children were recommended to read books or listen to the stories using the cassette recording whenever they want at school or to check them out to use at home. There were the book corner record cards to be recorded by students and the personal reading logs to be kept by the individual student. The researcher asked the homeroom teacher to recommend students to use the book corner as frequently as possible and to use it voluntarily. Although the researcher checked them once a week and gave two students who used the book corner the most some kind of prize each week, the number of the students who used frequently was not satisfactory for what the researcher expected. Throughout the research period, about 7 to 8 students in the each experimental group, and about 2-4 students in the each control group used the book corner regularly. The researcher tried to figure out and came up to an underlying reason that the students were recommended to use the book corner freely and the book corner was managed by the homeroom teacher. In order for the book corner to be efficiently utilized, it would be better for the students to have the teacher's guidance through which the whole class set aside about 20 minutes of the school day for individual reading with self-selected books from the book corner.

Several positive findings from the previous studies mentioned so far have been encouraging teachers to employ English storybooks for teaching English. The results of this study also conform to the educational values of using English storybooks for Korean primary school EFL learners. Yet, further research should explore more practical teaching models of story-based instruction for teachers, depending on learner's proficiency levels and their characteristics.

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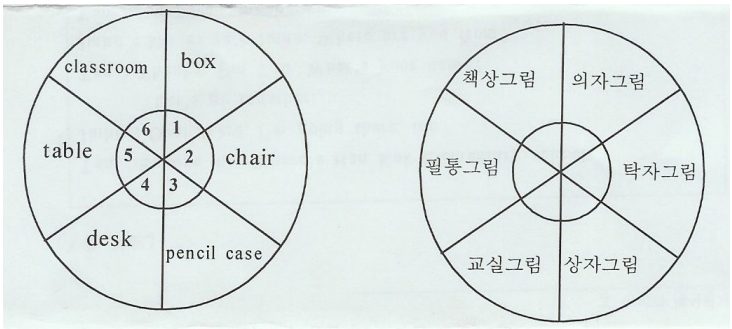
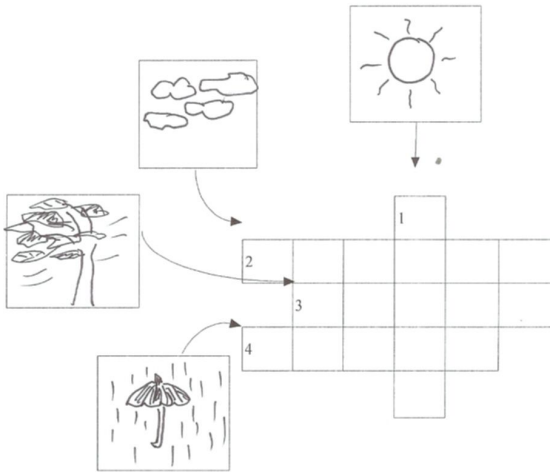
Appendix A

<Sample Pre-test Items of Reading and Writing Skills>

* 다음 낱말을 읽고 해당하는 그림을 찾아 그 번호를 쓰세요. (1-6)



* 그림이 나타내는 날씨에 해당하는 낱말을 보기에서 골라 빈칸에 쓰세요. (7-10)

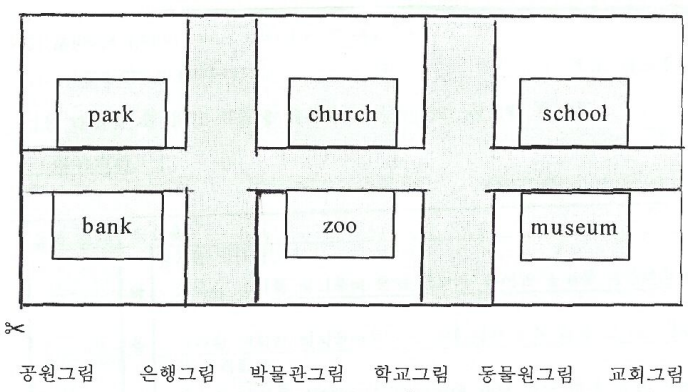


보기: rainy cloudy windy sunny

(문항 11-22 까지 생략 되었음)

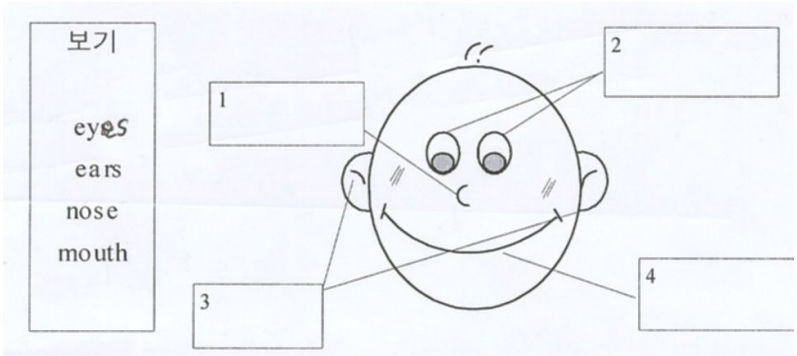
<Sample Post-test Items of Reading and Writing Skills>

* 다음 낱말을 읽고 각 위치에 알맞은 그림을 붙여 마을 지도를 완성하세요. (1-6)



공원그림 은행그림 박물관그림 학교그림 동물원그림 교회그림

* 그림에 알맞은 낱말을 보기에서 골라 쓰세요. (7-10)



(문항 11-22 까지 생략 되었음)

Appendix B

<Sample Question Items in Questionnaires>

Direction: The following questions are to know about your opinion in terms of interest, and confidence in learning English and motivation to learn English. Please indicate your agreement with the following statements by placing √ below the appropriate category.

	Content	Strongly agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1	I want to be good at English.					
4	I am interested in English.					
5	I do my best to learn English.					
12	I think I can improve English language skills if I study hard.					
14	I study English harder since I think English is the most important subject of all.					

(문항6-14까지 생략되었음)

Examples in: English
Applicable Languages: English
Applicable Levels: Primary

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Received in January, 2009
Reviewed in February, 2009
Revised version received in March, 2009